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Excavations at West Drive, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire 1997-9

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Excavations at West Drive, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire 1997–9

By TOBY CATCHPOLE

With contributions by Jane Timby, Ian Baxter and Ruth Shaffrey

Introduction

West Drive is located north of Cheltenham town centre and west of the A435 Evesham road (Fig. 1). The area, situated at *c.* 55 m above O.D., slopes slightly down towards Wyman's Brook to the north and is located on Cheltenham sand (Ordnance Survey 1988). Two excavations were carried out to the west of West Drive in a former playing field of *c.* 2.3 hectares, centred on O.S. Nat. Grid SO 95162331. The first, in 1997, was on the site of new premises for Dunalley School and the second, in 1998, was on the site of a new housing estate. In 1999 a small excavation was carried out to the north-east, in the garden of Rose Cottage at O.S. Nat. Grid SO 95282338, where a house was to be constructed. In each case the fieldwork comprised evaluation followed by excavation of the footprints of the proposed buildings; watching briefs were subsequently carried out on groundworks outside the excavated areas. A summary of the results is presented here. A full archive report is to be deposited at Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum (accession no. 1997:200). Features and locations A–M referred to in the text are given on Fig. 2.

Archaeological background

Very little archaeological work has been carried out in Cheltenham, and no major Romano-British sites have been recorded in the town. However, several chance finds of Romano-British artefacts are recorded from the West Drive area and elsewhere in Cheltenham on the County Sites and Monuments Record. Ten sherds of Romano-British pottery, iron slag and a bronze pin were retrieved from the garden of 104 Evesham Road, which backs onto West Drive (Fig. 1). A coin of Theodosius was found 400 m to the south-east and a coin of Maximinus I was found 350 m to the south-west. Antiquarian records suggest that a focus of Romano-British activity may be present in the area of the former St. James's railway station, 1.5 km to the south-west, where burials and numerous finds were recorded in the 1820s (Goding 1863). A recent evaluation on the station site uncovered a single Romano-British ditch and numerous undated features (Coleman 1999).

SITE LAYOUT

Occupying the majority of the area to the west of West Drive was a rectilinear pattern of ditches aligned roughly NNE–SSW and ESE–WNW (Fig. 2). In the central part of the Dunalley

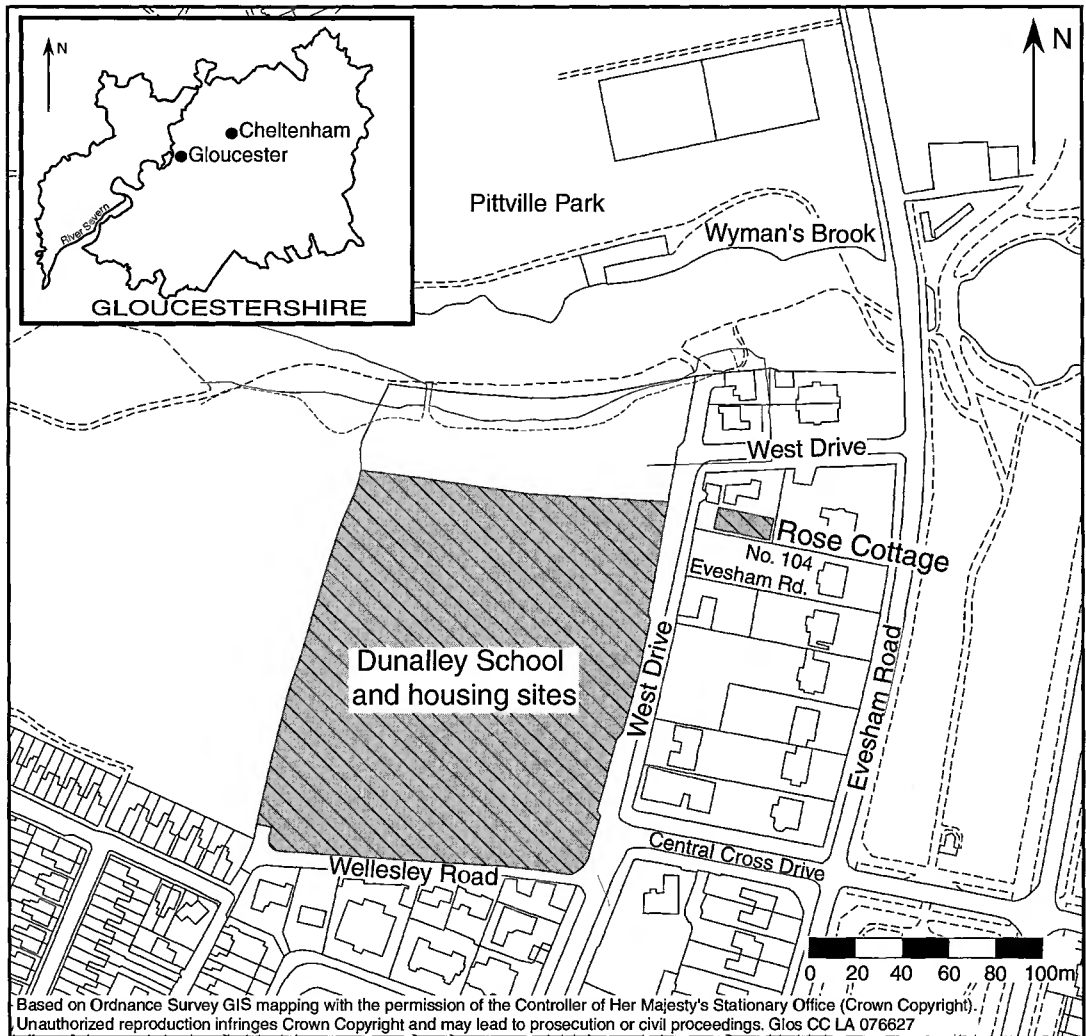


Fig. 1. Location of excavated areas at West Drive, Cheltenham.

School excavation these measured as little as 10–15 m in length by 5–10 m in width (where a coherent pattern could be distinguished). The rectilinear enclosures were sub-divided by a series of relatively small gullies, forming a grid with the main enclosure ditches. Larger areas were delineated in the north-western part of the site. The lack of features towards the western and southern limits of the site may also indicate large enclosures.

The rectilinear system was delineated to the west (A; Fig. 3, section 1) and east (B) by major boundaries, which were frequently recut. The northern extent of the system may be indicated by a turn to the east at the north-eastern corner of the Dunalley School excavation (C). The rectilinear enclosures seemed to continue at least as far south-east as a ditch located centrally within evaluation trench 5 (D).

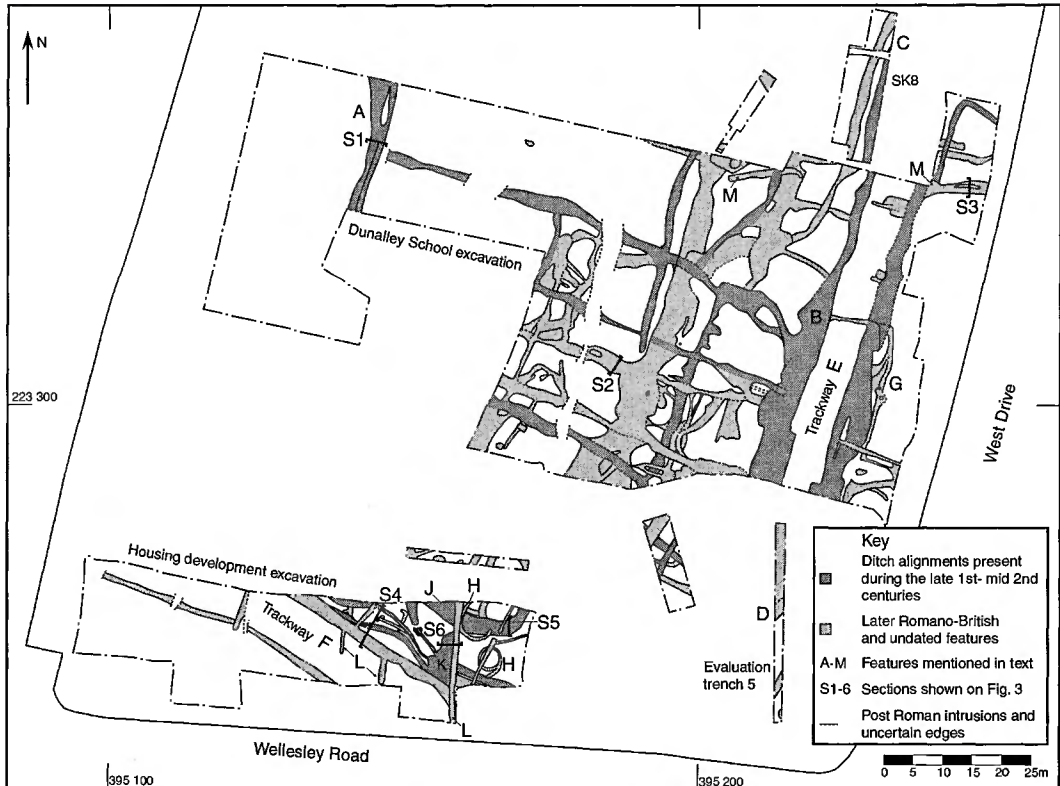


Fig. 2. Simplified plan of Romano-British features to the west of West Drive.

Boundary ditch (B) and a parallel series further to the east appear to define a trackway (E) at least 6 m in width, aligned N-S and giving access to fields on either side. A similar feature forms a southern boundary to the enclosures (trackway F; Fig. 3, section 4). The projected conjunction of the two trackways is towards the junction of West Drive and Wellesley Road.

There is a marked difference in the character of the enclosure ditches on either side of trackway (E), with the rectilinear layout to the west and a less structured pattern to the east. The layout to the east suggested a sequence of successive irregular enclosures. A ditch (G) that ran E-W at the south-east corner of the site, and turned to run parallel to the trackway for *c.* 23 m before turning to the west, may represent a fenced enclosure.

Numerous features within the rectilinear ditch system did not conform to the general layout. These were present in the central southern part of the Dunalley School site and the eastern part of the housing site and, although complicated by the presence of the rectilinear ditches, they suggest curving and irregular enclosures. For example, two features were excavated in the eastern part of the housing excavation (H) which could be interpreted as roundhouses. However, as each produced only a single sherd of Severn Valley ware, a density of finds similar to that in surrounding features, an interpretation as animal enclosures is equally plausible.

The excavations indicated that the Romano-British enclosure system continued at least as far east as Rose Cottage. The excavation there revealed ditches oriented roughly N-S at the eastern

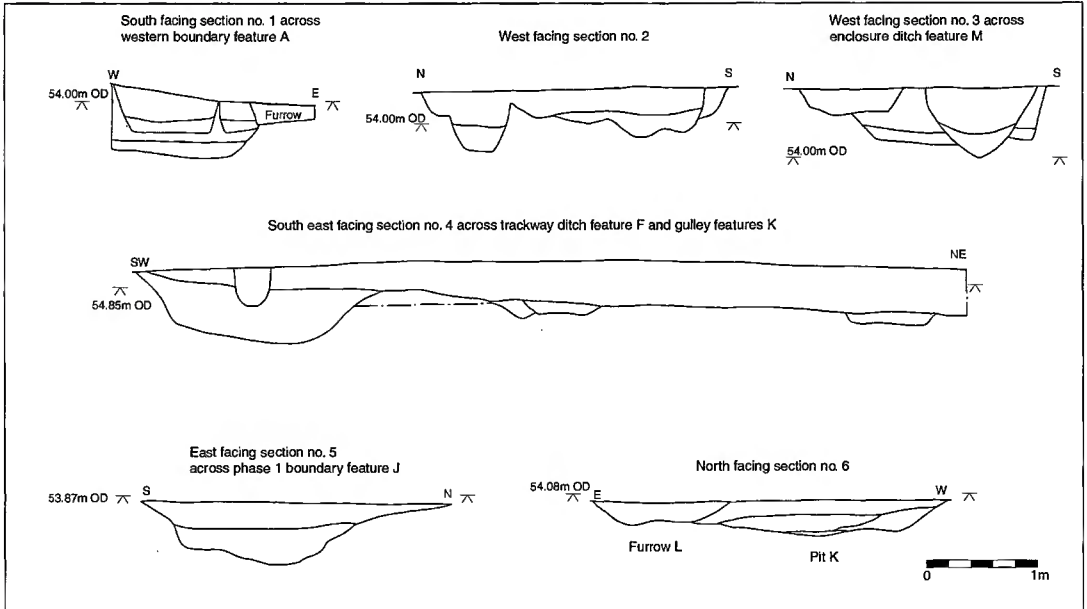


Fig. 3. Selected sections across enclosure ditches.

and western limits of excavation. The western ditch ran parallel with trackway (E) and other features to the west; the eastern was on a more true N-S alignment. Both ditches began to be backfilled in the mid 2nd century. A third ditch ran E-W along the southern boundary of the site at right angles to the western ditch (Nichols 2000). The only finds from the feature, four sherds of unspecified prehistoric date (Timby 2000a), may suggest an earlier origin for the field system or they may have been residual within a Romano-British feature.

There was no conclusive evidence of domestic occupation within the excavated areas. Three stakeholes and a single posthole were isolated and could be interpreted as evidence of stockades, fences or other agricultural features. The extensive truncation of the site by ploughing and levelling for the playing field may well have removed the majority of ephemeral negative features and deposits.

Twelve features interpreted as pits were excavated. Of these only one appeared to have had a final use as a rubbish pit, producing 98 sherds of pottery. No other pit produced more than 7 sherds, was more than 0.4 m in depth or displayed any clear evidence of function.

THE FINDS

THE POTTERY by Jane Timby

Introduction

Some 1,416 sherds (220 kg) of pottery were recovered, mostly of Romano-British date with some Saxon, medieval and post-medieval pieces. The pottery was associated with 92 contexts; the quantity per context was very variable, ranging from a single sherd to 242 sherds in layer 2022. The pottery is in relatively good condition with an average sherd weight of 15.5 gm. Surface preservation was generally poor.

Methodology

The assemblage was sorted macroscopically into fabrics and quantified by sherd count, weight and estimated vessel equivalents (eve). Rim sherds were coded, where possible, to vessel type. The data was entered on to an Excel spreadsheet (site archive). Regional fabrics are coded in accordance with the national Romano-British fabric reference collection (Tomber and Dore 1998). A similar approach has been adopted for more locally based types or sub-types (see Table 1 for complete list). Gloucester type fabric codes have also been added for some of the wares.

The pottery was used to create a ceramic phasing by isolating the more datable elements of the assemblage. This was conflated with evidence provided by the horizontal disposition of the features.

Discussion

The general scarcity of Roman pottery from Cheltenham to date makes this collection of some interest. The assemblage suggests an essentially native rural establishment, dating perhaps from the later 1st century A.D. and using traditional local wares directly linked with the later Iron-Age pottery industries of the area.

Most of the assemblage appears to belong to the 2nd to early 3rd centuries, showing a more ‘Romanised’ character than the earlier material and the appearance of some continental and regional imports. Sites of a similar nature and date have been investigated at Brockworth (Rawes 1981) and more recently at Birdlip Quarry, Cowley (Mudd *et al.* 1999). The main pottery suppliers to all these sites are from the Severn Valley and from Poole, Dorset; imports, tablewares and other specialised wares are rare. Severn Valley ware accounts for 57% by weight, Dorset black burnished wares for 16% and Malvernian wares for 9%. By contrast Oxfordshire products only account for 2–3% emphasising a likely decline, shift, or abandonment of activity around this time. The assemblage composition is very similar to contemporary material excavated from Home Farm, Bishop’s Cleeve (Barber and Walker 1998). A fall-off in the amount of pottery dating to the 4th century suggests either a less intense phase of use or a shift in focus away from the area excavated.

The range of forms is quite restricted with jars accounting for *c.* 47% by eve. Most are everted rim forms (e.g. Figs. 4 and 5, nos. 3, 14–17 and 19). The wide-mouthed, triangular rim bowl/jar form found in the SVW OX industry is well represented (Figs. 4 and 5, nos. 14 and 17) and accounts for 14% (eve). Bowl/dish types account for around 12% (eve) with several large, flat rim, hemispherical SVW OX, handled bowls such as Fig. 4, no. 12. Imported fine wares are quite sparse being limited to 13 sherds of samian (Dragendorff forms 31, 38 and Curle 11). Other tablewares such as flagons and cups are absent and specialised forms such as mortaria are quite rare.

Six sherds from a single, handmade, closed vessel of Saxon date (6th–9th century) were found (unstratified). The fabric contains organic matter and limestone and the exterior is roughly burnished. The presence of Saxon material has considerable regional interest and is probably the first to be recorded from Cheltenham. Comparable material has been well documented from Bishop’s Cleeve to the immediate north (Timby 1998a; 1999) and from Wycomb (Timby 1998b) to the east of Cheltenham.

Catalogue of illustrated sherds (Figs. 4 and 5)

1. Handmade barrel-shaped jar in a black fabric with a burnished finish. MAL REA. Ditch [1036] (1035).
2. Black, handmade, everted rim jar with two girth grooves around base of rim. MAL LI. Ditch [2094], upper fill (2095).
3. Necked bowl with two girth grooves. SVW CH. Ditch [1113–14] (1101).

Table 1. Pottery fabric quantification.

	Fabrics	Description	Ref.	No.	%	Wt	%	EVE	%
Imports	CG SAM	Central Gaulish Samian		13	1	259	1	22	1.5
	BAT AM	Baetican (Dressel 20) Amphora	T&D 1998, 84	2	*	91	*	0	0
Regional	DOR BB1	Dorset Black Burnished Ware	T&D 1998, 127	121	10	3,391	16	316	22
	LVN CC	Lower Nene Valley Colour-Coat	T&D 1998, 118	1	*	13	*	0	0
	OXF RS	Oxon Colour-Coat	T&D 1998, 174	12	1	199	1	18	1
	OXF/WIL WH	Oxon/N Wilts Whiteware	T&D 1998, 174	10	*	81	*	41	3
	OXF WHM	Oxon Whiteware Mortaria	Young 1977, 56	3	*	286	1	54	4
	OXF WSM	Oxon White-Slipped Mortaria	Young 1977, 117	1	*	26	*	0	0
	MAH WH	Mancetter-Hartshill Mortaria	T&D 1998, 189	1	*	9	*	0	0
	SAV GT	Savernake-Type Ware	T&D 1998, 191	11	1	178	*	0	0
	WILOX OX	Wilts/Oxon Oxidised Ware		18	1.5	136	*	10	*
	WIL RE1	Wiltshire Reduced Ware		45	3.5	471	2	94	6.5
	WIL RE2	Wiltshire Reduced Ware		3	*	48	*	7	*
	WIL RE3	Wiltshire Reduced Ware		1	*	3	*	0	0
	MIC GW	Micaceous Greyware	Glos TF 5	112	*	1,002	5	75	5
	ROB SH	Midlands Shelly Ware	T&D 1998, 212	19	8	118	*	0	0
	Native	MAL LI	Malvernian Limestone	Glos TF 33	22	2	192	1	15
MAL REA		Malvernian Rock-Tempered	T&D 1998, 147	77	6	708	3	36	2.5
GROG		Grog-Tempered	Glos TF 2A	26	2	250	1	17	1
GRSAND		Grog and Sand-Tempered		3	*	58	*	0	0
SSTONE		Sandstone-Tempered	Glos TF 30	1	*	18	*	0	0
Local	MAL RO	Malvernian Roman Ware	Glos TF 19	47	4	1,133	5	32	2
	SVW OX	Severn Valley Ware— Oxidised	T&D 1998, 149	559	45	9,527	45	565	39
	SVW RE	Severn Valley Ware— Reduced		55	4.5	695	3	56	4
	SVW CH	Severn Valley Ware— Charcoal	Glos TF 17	5	*	221	1	31	2
	SVW SJ	Severn Valley Ware— Storage Jar	Glos TF 23	36	3	1,683	8	26	2
	GREY1	Well-Fired Grey Ware		1	*	10	*	0	0
	GREY2	Black Sandy with Red Core		1	*	9	*	0	0
	GREY3	Bb1 Imitation Sandy Wares		3	*	63	*	22	1.5
	GREY4	Fine Grey Ware, Red Core		2	*	27	*	0	0
	GREY5	Medium Sandy Black Ware		13	1	107	*	8	*
	GREY6	Well-Fired Grey Sandy Ware		3	*	7	*	0	0
	Misc	GREY	Miscellaneous Grey Sandy Wares		22	2	112	*	6
OXID		Miscellaneous Orange Wares		1	*	3	*	0	0
Total				1,250	100	2,113	100	1,451	100
Saxon		Limestone and Organic-Tempered		6		107		0	
Med		Minety Ware		1		2		0	
Postmed		Various		52		555		NM	
Total				59		664		0	

Key: * Below 1%; T&D, Tomber & Dore; NM, not measured.

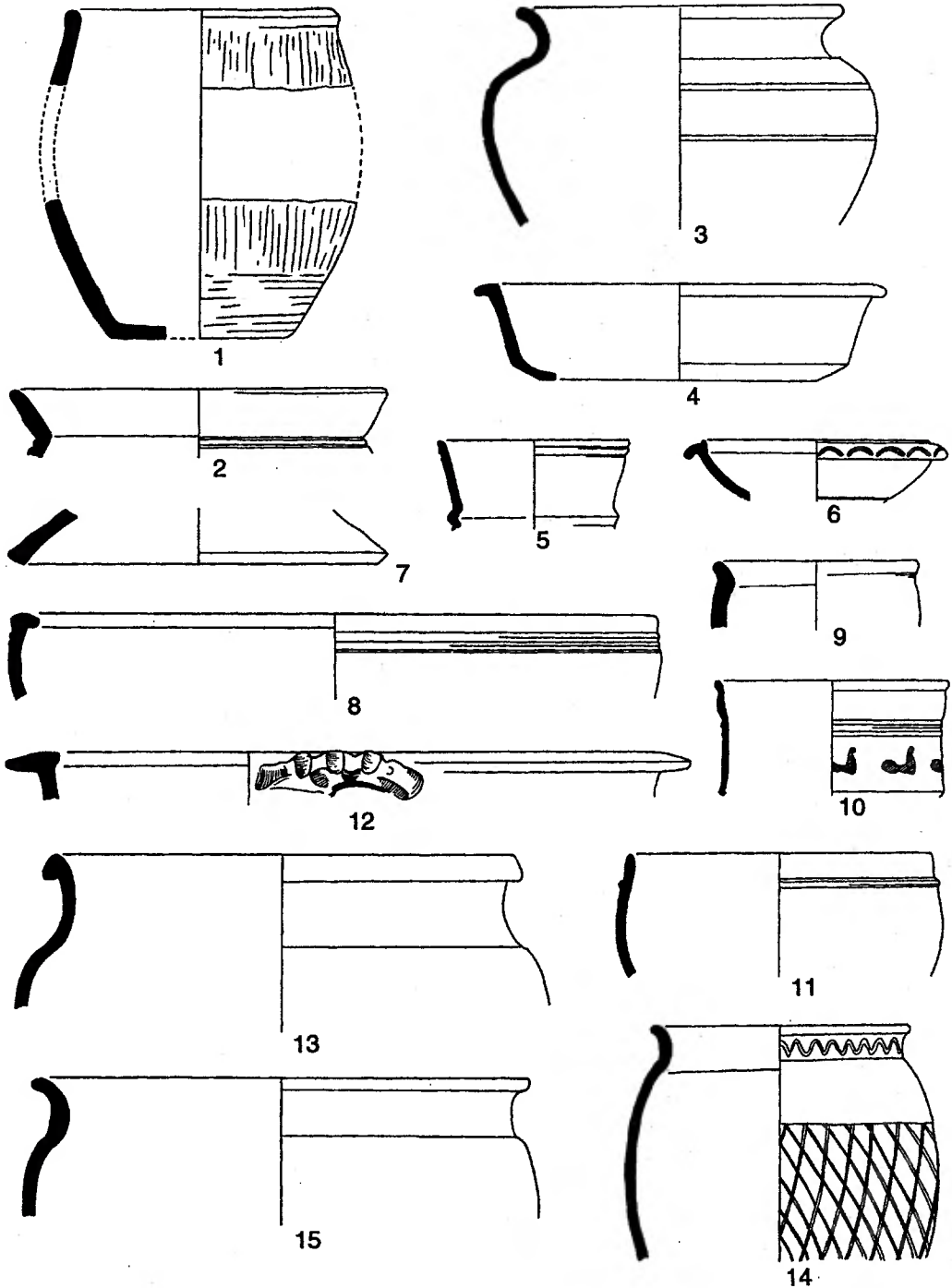


Fig. 4. Pottery (scale 1:4).

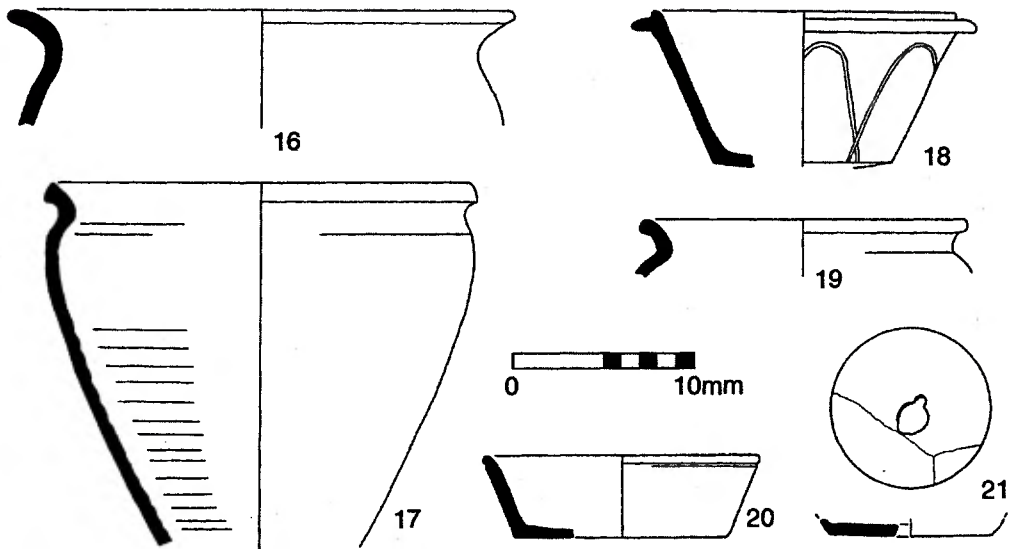


Fig. 5. Pottery (scale 1:4).

4. Flat rim bowl, originally burnished. DOR BB1-type. Slightly atypical fabric. Ditch [1113-14] (1101).
5. Small carinated cup. SVW OX. Ditch [1113-14] (1101).
6. Segmented bowl with red-orange barbotine decoration on the flange. The vessel is burnt. Similar to Young (1977) form O39. Either an Oxfordshire or a North Wiltshire product. Ditch [1113-14] (1101).
7. Grey ware lid. SVW RE. Ditch [1113-14] (1101).
8. Large bowl. SVW OX. Ditch [1113-14] (1101).
9. Small, handmade jar, burnished on the exterior. MAL REA. Ditch [1113-14], primary fill (1135).
10. Wall-sided carinated bowl in a fine oxidised fabric with white barbotine decoration. Either an Oxfordshire or North Wiltshire product (WIL/OX OX). Ditch [701] (700). Cf. Young 1977, form O42.
11. Hemispherical bowl with a cordon. SVW OX. Ditch [701] (700).
12. Large flanged rim, hemispherical bowl with a horizontal handle formed with a handle-grip. SVW OX. Ditch [1145] (1144).
13. Wide diameter necked bowl. SVW OX. Ditch [1145] (1144).
14. Wide diameter necked bowl. SVW OX. Ditch [1014] (1012).
15. DOR BB1 jar with acute burnished lattice. Pot in ditch [2143] (2023).
16. Everted rim, wheelmade jar. MAL RO. Ditch [1014] (1012).
17. Wide-mouthed jar. SVW OX. Pit [1032] (1031).
18. Flanged rim conical bowl. DOR BB1. Pit [1032] (1031).
19. Everted rim jar. GREY5. Ditch [1273], upper fill (1037).
20. Small dish, internally burnished. GREY5. Ditch [1273], upper fill (1037).
21. Base from a DOR BB1 jar with a central hole drilled after firing. Layer (2022).

THE ANIMAL BONE by Ian Baxter

Introduction

The total assemblage from the site amounts to just under 700 fragments of which 680 (98%) are from Romano-British features. Due to the small size of the assemblage, further temporal

Table 2. Number of identifiable fragments of bones of each species.

Taxon/Period		Romano- British	Post- Medieval	Modern	Total
Horse	<i>Equus caballus</i> L.	11	1	0	12
Cattle	<i>Bos</i> f. domestic	121	3	2	126
Pig	<i>Sus</i> f. domestic	9	3	0	12
Sheep/Goat	<i>Ovis/Capra</i> f. domestic	49	0	0	49
Large Mammal		103	0	0	103
Medium Mammal		50	2	0	52
Medium/Small Mammal		1	0	0	1
Indeterminate		336	0	3	340
Total		680	9	5	694

division of the bone into phases would be redundant. The number of identifiable fragments of bones of each species (NISP) by taxon and period is presented in Table 2. There are many recent breaks but canine damage is limited and, although some bone was residual at the time of deposition, preservation is fair to good.

Methods

All identifiable bones are included in the fragment counts (Thomas and Catchpole 2000). Bone measurements are based on von den Driesch (1976) and are retained in the archive. Withers height calculations for cattle and sheep are based on multiplication factors in Matolcsi (1970) and Teichert (1975). Long bone, rib and vertebrae fragments of indeterminate species are recorded as Large Mammal, Medium Mammal and Medium/Small Mammal. For most purposes these can be considered together with cattle and sheep.

Notes on the species

The remains of horse account for nearly 6% of fragments identified to species. Ages range from c. 4 years to over 20 years.

Cattle account for 64% of fragments identified to species. The two mandibles complete enough to calculate wear stages came from beasts under 2 years, but the more frequent maxillary and post-cranial remains are dominated by older animals. Only two bones were sufficiently complete to calculate withers height: a radius from a beast 1.19 m high at the shoulder, and a tibia with recently fused proximal epiphysis from an animal that stood 1.09 m high.

Pig remains are infrequent and generally consist of isolated fragments. They account for less than 5% of fragments identified to species.

Sheep/goat fragments account for 26% of fragments identified to species. No remains could be identified as goat. Three out of five mandibles recovered came from animals aged less than 1½ years. The only bone complete enough to provide a withers height is a calcaneum, from an animal 0.65 m high at the shoulder.

Summary and conclusion

The small bone assemblage limits what can meaningfully be said about husbandry regimes or butchery techniques. However, the assemblage is typical of a rural farmstead site in which cattle are the main domestic stock, followed by sheep and some pig. Spatial distribution of the animal remains suggests that the excavated site is peripheral to the main settlement (Wilson 1996). The

relatively high proportion of cattle bones compared to those of sheep suggests a 'Romanised' farmstead, e.g. villa, rather than a native settlement (King 1978).

OTHER FINDS

A catalogue of worked stone is presented at Table 3. Full reports into the pottery, bone and worked stone are contained in the archive report (Thomas and Catchpole 2000). Only very small assemblages of other types of find were present. A few fragments of slag, ceramic building material, and daub were recovered. Iron nails were present, but only within the post-medieval ploughsoil that sealed the Romano-British features. Metallic objects of all other types were absent.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Development of the enclosures

Due to the lack of differentiation between features, detailed phasing solely on the basis of stratigraphic evidence has not been possible, except within the housing site. Detailed ceramic phasing was also complicated by the small size of the assemblage. Only six features produced more than fifty sherds and only seventeen other features produced more than ten sherds. In some cases the stratigraphic evidence and ceramic dating is contradictory. The combination of the stratigraphic record with the ceramic evidence provided by Jane Timby has allowed clear differentiation between early (late 1st–mid 2nd centuries) and later (mid 2nd–late 4th centuries) groups of features and suggested the following more detailed sequence.

It appears that the basic layout of the rectilinear enclosure system was present by the late 1st to mid 2nd centuries. It included the eastern N–S trackway (E) but the southern E–W trackway (F) produced no finds dating before the mid 2nd century. A large curving ditch slightly further north may represent the southern extent of the rectilinear enclosure system at this time (J; Fig. 3, section 5). A series of curvilinear gullies running into a large shallow pit was present to its south during this phase (K; Fig. 3, sections 4 and 6). Enclosures of this first phase between the major western boundary (A) and the trackway (E) are indicated by three E–W and three N–S divisions.

Elements of the first phase of enclosures continued into the late 2nd and 3rd centuries, notably the trackway (E) and western boundary (A). However, the rectilinear enclosure system was substantially redefined in the second half of the 2nd century and maintained into the 3rd century. The southern trackway (F) dates to this period as does the majority of the features excavated. Three ditches running N–S across the housing site (L) produced only Romano-British pottery but ran parallel with later furrows elsewhere and not with other Romano-British features. The features dated to the 3rd century suggest continuing use of the enclosures but perhaps a less intensive programme of maintenance.

Fourth-century and post-Roman finds indicate continued activity in the general vicinity but few deposits were present that clearly indicated the cutting (or recutting) of the enclosure system in the 4th century or later. Two ditches, one of which was recut at least three times, represent the only features clearly assigned to this phase (M; Fig. 3, section 3).

Context and Interpretation

The West Drive/Wellesley Road site represents the first excavation of a Romano-British site in Cheltenham. While the site cannot be fitted into a local context its pattern of enclosures is

Table 3. Catalogue of worked stone (Ruth Shaffrey).

Rotary Quern Fragments

1. SF4, Unstratified. Fragment of upper millstone. Maximum thickness of 100 mm. The grinding surface is engraved with very deep grooves in the lava quern or 'Saalburg' style and the other surface with deep spaced peck marks. These are rare on ORS querns, but present on several at Ashton Keynes (Saunders 1998) and they may have been a form of decoration or 'non-functional embellishment' (Caulfield, 1977, 121). The fragment is made from a very pale pink/grey, almost pure quartz sandstone of the Upper Old Red Sandstone from the Forest of Dean. Roman, probably 3rd century or later.
2. (101). Chunk of upper stone of rotary quern of 'beehive-style'. Pecked all over although the upper surface has been worn and the grinding surface is extremely well worn and appears to have been used for polishing as well. The handle slot is set into the upper surface at an angle. Made from slightly pebbly sandstone of the Upper Old Red Sandstone from the Forest of Dean. There is a gradual hopper. Late Iron Age.
3. Unstratified. Approximately 1/8th of the upper stone of 'beehive' style rotary quern. The diameter measures something less than 0.4 m, and it is 55 mm thick at the edge and 30 mm thick at the centre. The quern's grinding surface is extremely well worn but it appears to have been 'pecked' all over. Made from a very feldspathic, medium grained, very well sorted sandstone, probably Drybrook Sandstone from the Forest of Dean. Grinding surface is worn very smooth and it was also subsequently reused—at least one non-grinding surface has been worn smooth and used as a whetstone. Late Iron Age.
4. Unstratified. Fragment of upper stone of rotary quern. Diameter of approximately 0.35 m with maximum thickness of 48 mm (at centre) and minimum of 37 mm (at edge). Pecked all over and in such a fashion on the edges as to appear in vertical lines. The grinding surface is very well worn. It was made from moderately pebbly sandstone of the Upper Old Red Sandstone from the Forest of Dean. One long deep and wide channel carved into one surface is evidence of reuse for sharpening. Roman.
5. (1201). Approximately 1/8th of upper stone of a rotary quern of the disc type (Curwen 1937). It has a diameter of 0.4 m with maximum thickness of 65 mm at the edge and 35 mm at the centre. The grinding surface is moderately angled and although pecked is well worn. The upper surface and edges are also pecked with the edges pecked into vertical patterning. The upper surface has a gently sloping hopper with a diameter of 100 mm and a circular perforation of 50 mm diameter. It was made from very pebbly pale sandstone of the Upper Old Red Sandstone from the Forest of Dean. It contains pebbles of both pink and green siltstone and pink quartz pebbles. Roman.
6. (1065). Small fragment of rotary quern, probably from the upper stone. The grinding surface appears to have been fairly flat and is worked rather than pecked. The other surface and the edges appear to have been pecked. It was made from moderately pebbly sandstone of the Upper Old Red Sandstone from the Forest of Dean. Dating—?

Whetstones

1. (1031). Two of the faces and one of the edges are worn very smooth and very well used—they have been worn down from 27 mm thick at the unused end to 14 mm thick at the other end. There is a groove where it has also been used for sharpening. Made from fine-grained, micaceous olive sandstone, probably pennant sandstone. Slightly burnt.
2. SF1, Unstratified. Well-used whetstone measuring 112 mm long by 40 by 21-16 mm. It has been made from fine grained micaceous sandstone probably from the Old Red Sandstone. It may be slightly burnt. The wider faces are those used for polishing as they have been worn into concave faces.
3. (1204). Whetstone fragment measuring 27 mm long (all that is remaining) by 28 mm by 33 mm. Made from very well cemented quartzitic sandstone.

Other Worked Stone

1. (1061). Probable architectural fragment. A roughly cubed shaped chunk measuring approximately 140 × 160 × 160 mm with 3 of the faces being flat. The main feature of the stone is a quarter of a circle channel cut into the stone, which leaves one corner free. By the wearing on the stone this looks like it might have been part of some part of pivot stone. The opposite face to the one which has the channel carved in it is worn smooth suggesting that it was either walked upon or rubbed upon something. The only piece of architectural stone that was recovered from the site. Made from very weathered oolitic limestone containing many large shells. Also slightly burnt.

broadly consistent with that around Romano-British settlements in the Severn Valley and elsewhere in the region. The site can be compared with similarly dated sites excavated 4–5 km to the north at Bishop's Cleeve and 10 km to the north-west at Tewkesbury (Thomas and Walker 1998). Current evidence regarding the Romano-British utilisation of the Bishop's Cleeve area suggests that a villa was surrounded by an extensive system of agricultural enclosure boundaries containing discrete areas set aside for horticulture and small-scale industrial activities (Parry 1999). Home Farm, Bishop's Cleeve, produced (amongst other features) a layout of ditched garden plots or paddocks similar to that at West Drive, mostly of the 2nd to 4th century (Barber and Walker 1998).

The overall patterning of the enclosures at West Drive can be compared to those recorded at Barnsley Park villa, which produced a layout of buildings with small-scale enclosures nearby and larger fields further away (Webster *et al.* 1985). That pattern may be repeated here. The enclosures can also be compared with those at Roughground Farm, Lechlade (Allen *et al.* 1993), where enclosures recorded to the east and south-east of the villa appear similar in plan to those at West Drive.

Conclusive evidence of the use to which the enclosures were put was not retrieved. Features of the type recorded at West Drive are generally interpreted as representing paddocks and droveways. The location of the site on sand may have been a determining factor in the nature of activity carried out. The enclosures excavated at Tewkesbury, however, were located on lias clay subsoil (Thomas and Walker 1998). If the enclosures there were used for pasture then the location on clay subsoil may not have been disadvantageous. The silt fills of enclosure ditches at Roughground Farm were interpreted as indicating grassed pasture rather than turned and dug-over garden plots (Allen *et al.* 1993). A similar argument could be applied to West Drive, where the fact that feature fills showed no evidence of a greater humic content than the natural sand suggests that the ground had not been frequently turned and manured, as would be the case in garden plots.

Although there was no conclusive evidence of structures within the study area, there was limited evidence for settlement in the vicinity. The hearth waste present in some of the features at West Drive and the presence of daub, quern fragments and limited amounts of ceramic building material suggest nearby domestic settlement. The overall distribution of finds falls off towards the south-west. Six features produced more than fifty sherds and these are all located towards the north-eastern side of the two larger excavated areas. The pottery, bronze pin and iron slag retrieved from 104 Evesham Road may also indicate that a focus of domestic settlement lay in that direction.

Evidence regarding the status of the population that utilised the enclosures at West Drive is contradictory. The low density of finds adds to the difficulty of interpretation. The pottery assemblage is indicative of 'a farmstead as opposed to a well-appointed villa-type establishment' (Timby 2000b). The unstratified mill stone recovered from West Drive is of a type usually encountered at urban or villa sites (Saunders 2000). The bone evidence suggests that the site was occupied by a highly 'Romanised' population (Baxter above). If the percentage of cattle bone can be used as a rough guide to the level of Romanisation (King 1978), then the 64% found at Cheltenham can be compared with the 55% found at Home Farm, Bishop's Cleeve (Barber and Walker 1998), and the 58% encountered during the final, most cattle-rich, phase at Frocester Court (Noddle 1979). The proportion of cattle bones may, however, be influenced by the excavated area being peripheral to a settlement (Wilson 1996) and by the use to which the enclosures were put. A possible interpretation of the combined evidence is that the recovered finds originated from a settlement near the excavated area, which was engaged in providing the

food requirements of a Romanised élite but was physically detached from the site actually occupied by that élite.

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Excavations at West Drive, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire 1997–9

By TOBY CATCHPOLE

With contributions by Jane Timby, Ian Baxter and Ruth Shaffrey

Introduction

West Drive is located north of Cheltenham town centre and west of the A435 Evesham road (Fig. 1). The area, situated at *c.* 55 m above O.D., slopes slightly down towards Wyman's Brook to the north and is located on Cheltenham sand (Ordnance Survey 1988). Two excavations were carried out to the west of West Drive in a former playing field of *c.* 2.3 hectares, centred on O.S. Nat. Grid SO 95162331. The first, in 1997, was on the site of new premises for Dunalley School and the second, in 1998, was on the site of a new housing estate. In 1999 a small excavation was carried out to the north-east, in the garden of Rose Cottage at O.S. Nat. Grid SO 95282338, where a house was to be constructed. In each case the fieldwork comprised evaluation followed by excavation of the footprints of the proposed buildings; watching briefs were subsequently carried out on groundworks outside the excavated areas. A summary of the results is presented here. A full archive report is to be deposited at Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum (accession no. 1997:200). Features and locations A–M referred to in the text are given on Fig. 2.

Archaeological background

Very little archaeological work has been carried out in Cheltenham, and no major Romano-British sites have been recorded in the town. However, several chance finds of Romano-British artefacts are recorded from the West Drive area and elsewhere in Cheltenham on the County Sites and Monuments Record. Ten sherds of Romano-British pottery, iron slag and a bronze pin were retrieved from the garden of 104 Evesham Road, which backs onto West Drive (Fig. 1). A coin of Theodosius was found 400 m to the south-east and a coin of Maximinus I was found 350 m to the south-west. Antiquarian records suggest that a focus of Romano-British activity may be present in the area of the former St. James's railway station, 1.5 km to the south-west, where burials and numerous finds were recorded in the 1820s (Goding 1863). A recent evaluation on the station site uncovered a single Romano-British ditch and numerous undated features (Coleman 1999).

SITE LAYOUT

Occupying the majority of the area to the west of West Drive was a rectilinear pattern of ditches aligned roughly NNE–SSW and ESE–WNW (Fig. 2). In the central part of the Dunalley

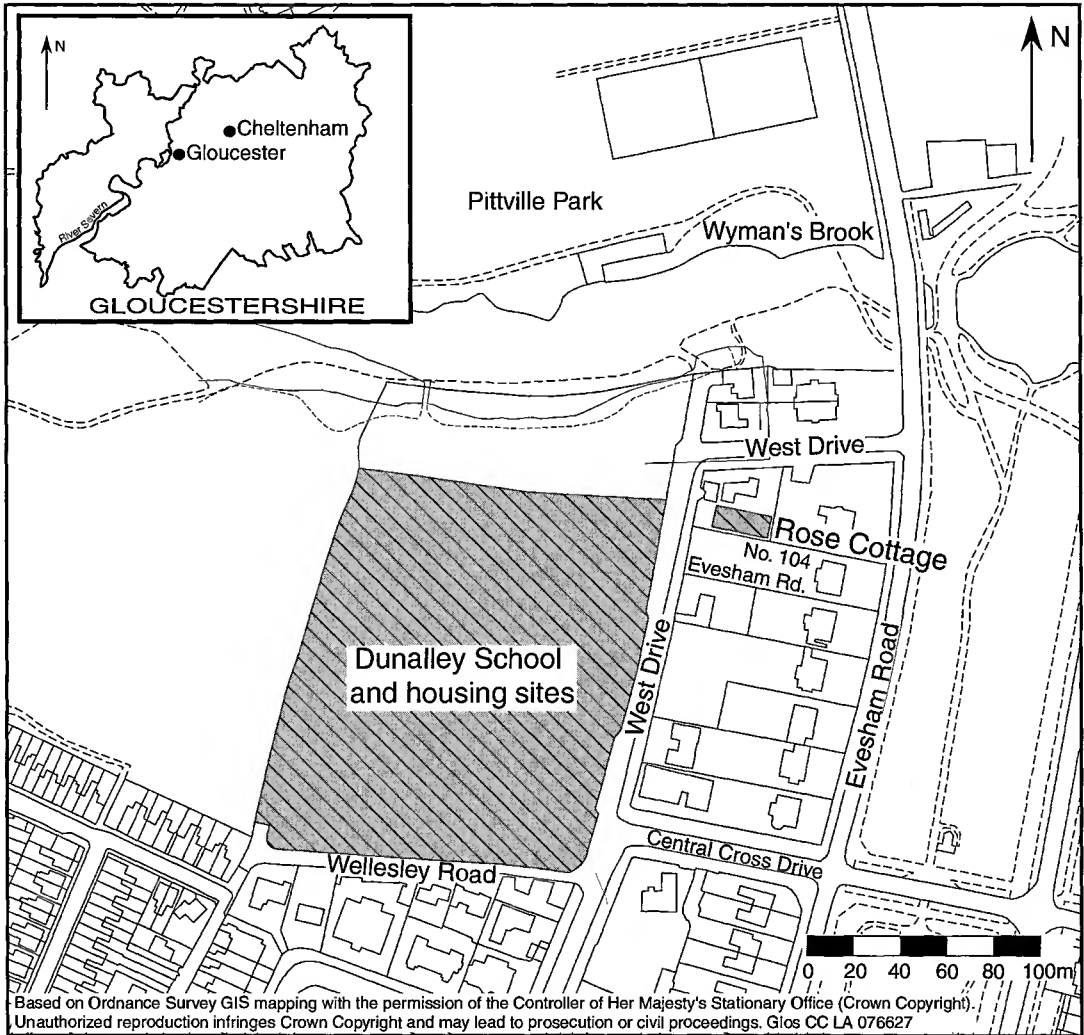


Fig. 1. Location of excavated areas at West Drive, Cheltenham.

School excavation these measured as little as 10–15 m in length by 5–10 m in width (where a coherent pattern could be distinguished). The rectilinear enclosures were sub-divided by a series of relatively small gullies, forming a grid with the main enclosure ditches. Larger areas were delineated in the north-western part of the site. The lack of features towards the western and southern limits of the site may also indicate large enclosures.

The rectilinear system was delineated to the west (A; Fig. 3, section 1) and east (B) by major boundaries, which were frequently recut. The northern extent of the system may be indicated by a turn to the east at the north-eastern corner of the Dunalley School excavation (C). The rectilinear enclosures seemed to continue at least as far south-east as a ditch located centrally within evaluation trench 5 (D).

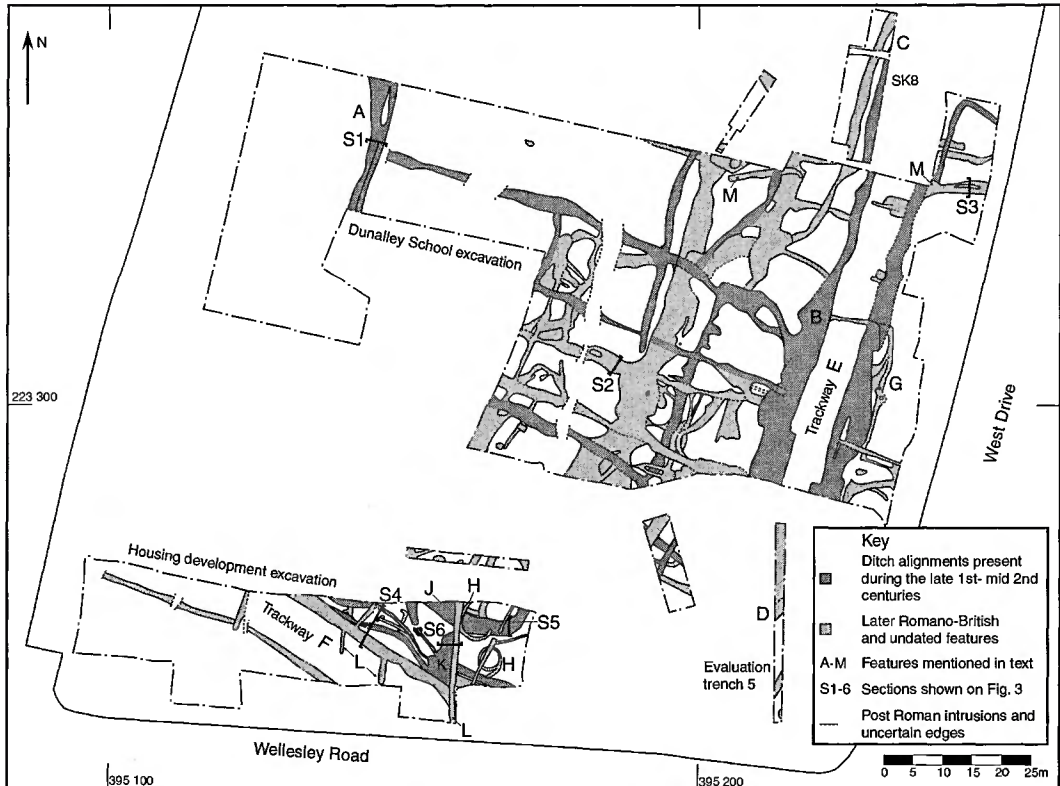


Fig. 2. Simplified plan of Romano-British features to the west of West Drive.

Boundary ditch (B) and a parallel series further to the east appear to define a trackway (E) at least 6 m in width, aligned N-S and giving access to fields on either side. A similar feature forms a southern boundary to the enclosures (trackway F; Fig. 3, section 4). The projected conjunction of the two trackways is towards the junction of West Drive and Wellesley Road.

There is a marked difference in the character of the enclosure ditches on either side of trackway (E), with the rectilinear layout to the west and a less structured pattern to the east. The layout to the east suggested a sequence of successive irregular enclosures. A ditch (G) that ran E-W at the south-east corner of the site, and turned to run parallel to the trackway for *c.* 23 m before turning to the west, may represent a fenced enclosure.

Numerous features within the rectilinear ditch system did not conform to the general layout. These were present in the central southern part of the Dunalley School site and the eastern part of the housing site and, although complicated by the presence of the rectilinear ditches, they suggest curving and irregular enclosures. For example, two features were excavated in the eastern part of the housing excavation (H) which could be interpreted as roundhouses. However, as each produced only a single sherd of Severn Valley ware, a density of finds similar to that in surrounding features, an interpretation as animal enclosures is equally plausible.

The excavations indicated that the Romano-British enclosure system continued at least as far east as Rose Cottage. The excavation there revealed ditches oriented roughly N-S at the eastern

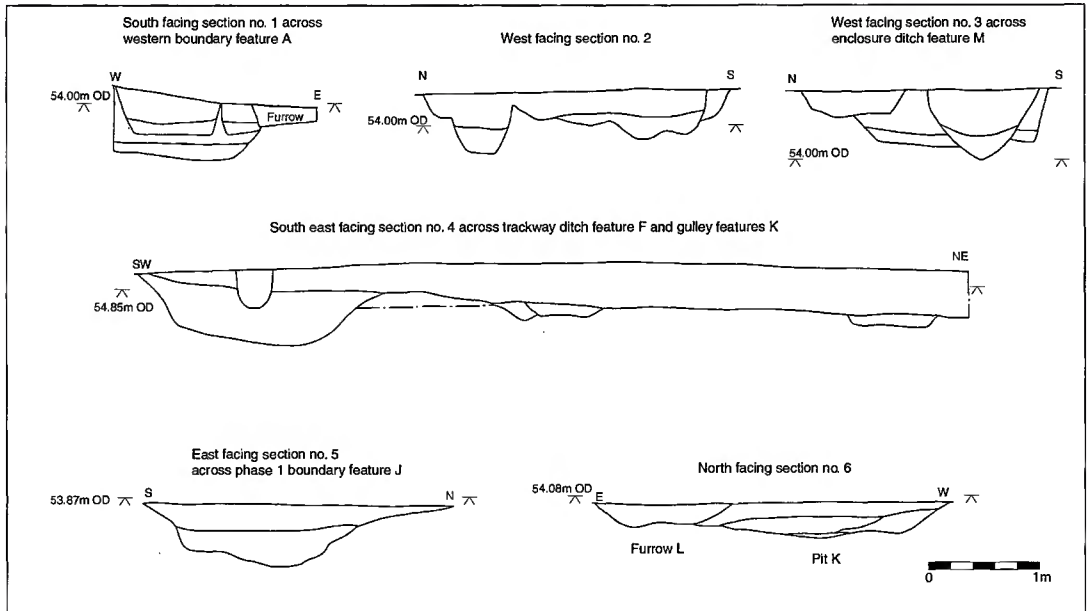


Fig. 3. Selected sections across enclosure ditches.

and western limits of excavation. The western ditch ran parallel with trackway (E) and other features to the west; the eastern was on a more true N-S alignment. Both ditches began to be backfilled in the mid 2nd century. A third ditch ran E-W along the southern boundary of the site at right angles to the western ditch (Nichols 2000). The only finds from the feature, four sherds of unspecified prehistoric date (Timby 2000a), may suggest an earlier origin for the field system or they may have been residual within a Romano-British feature.

There was no conclusive evidence of domestic occupation within the excavated areas. Three stakeholes and a single posthole were isolated and could be interpreted as evidence of stockades, fences or other agricultural features. The extensive truncation of the site by ploughing and levelling for the playing field may well have removed the majority of ephemeral negative features and deposits.

Twelve features interpreted as pits were excavated. Of these only one appeared to have had a final use as a rubbish pit, producing 98 sherds of pottery. No other pit produced more than 7 sherds, was more than 0.4 m in depth or displayed any clear evidence of function.

THE FINDS

THE POTTERY by Jane Timby

Introduction

Some 1,416 sherds (220 kg) of pottery were recovered, mostly of Romano-British date with some Saxon, medieval and post-medieval pieces. The pottery was associated with 92 contexts; the quantity per context was very variable, ranging from a single sherd to 242 sherds in layer 2022. The pottery is in relatively good condition with an average sherd weight of 15.5 gm. Surface preservation was generally poor.

Methodology

The assemblage was sorted macroscopically into fabrics and quantified by sherd count, weight and estimated vessel equivalents (eve). Rim sherds were coded, where possible, to vessel type. The data was entered on to an Excel spreadsheet (site archive). Regional fabrics are coded in accordance with the national Romano-British fabric reference collection (Tomber and Dore 1998). A similar approach has been adopted for more locally based types or sub-types (see Table 1 for complete list). Gloucester type fabric codes have also been added for some of the wares.

The pottery was used to create a ceramic phasing by isolating the more datable elements of the assemblage. This was conflated with evidence provided by the horizontal disposition of the features.

Discussion

The general scarcity of Roman pottery from Cheltenham to date makes this collection of some interest. The assemblage suggests an essentially native rural establishment, dating perhaps from the later 1st century A.D. and using traditional local wares directly linked with the later Iron-Age pottery industries of the area.

Most of the assemblage appears to belong to the 2nd to early 3rd centuries, showing a more 'Romanised' character than the earlier material and the appearance of some continental and regional imports. Sites of a similar nature and date have been investigated at Brockworth (Rawes 1981) and more recently at Birdlip Quarry, Cowley (Mudd *et al.* 1999). The main pottery suppliers to all these sites are from the Severn Valley and from Poole, Dorset; imports, tablewares and other specialised wares are rare. Severn Valley ware accounts for 57% by weight, Dorset black burnished wares for 16% and Malvernian wares for 9%. By contrast Oxfordshire products only account for 2–3% emphasising a likely decline, shift, or abandonment of activity around this time. The assemblage composition is very similar to contemporary material excavated from Home Farm, Bishop's Cleeve (Barber and Walker 1998). A fall-off in the amount of pottery dating to the 4th century suggests either a less intense phase of use or a shift in focus away from the area excavated.

The range of forms is quite restricted with jars accounting for *c.* 47% by eve. Most are everted rim forms (e.g. Figs. 4 and 5, nos. 3, 14–17 and 19). The wide-mouthed, triangular rim bowl/jar form found in the SVW OX industry is well represented (Figs. 4 and 5, nos. 14 and 17) and accounts for 14% (eve). Bowl/dish types account for around 12% (eve) with several large, flat rim, hemispherical SVW OX, handled bowls such as Fig. 4, no. 12. Imported fine wares are quite sparse being limited to 13 sherds of samian (Dragendorff forms 31, 38 and Curle 11). Other tablewares such as flacons and cups are absent and specialised forms such as mortaria are quite rare.

Six sherds from a single, handmade, closed vessel of Saxon date (6th–9th century) were found (unstratified). The fabric contains organic matter and limestone and the exterior is roughly burnished. The presence of Saxon material has considerable regional interest and is probably the first to be recorded from Cheltenham. Comparable material has been well documented from Bishop's Cleeve to the immediate north (Timby 1998a; 1999) and from Wycomb (Timby 1998b) to the east of Cheltenham.

Catalogue of illustrated sherds (Figs. 4 and 5)

1. Handmade barrel-shaped jar in a black fabric with a burnished finish. MAL REA. Ditch [1036] (1035).
2. Black, handmade, everted rim jar with two girth grooves around base of rim. MAL LI. Ditch [2094], upper fill (2095).
3. Necked bowl with two girth grooves. SVW CH. Ditch [1113–14] (1101).

Table 1. Pottery fabric quantification.

	Fabrics	Description	Ref.	No.	%	Wt	%	EVE	%
Imports	CG SAM	Central Gaulish Samian		13	1	259	1	22	1.5
	BAT AM	Baetican (Dressel 20) Amphora	T&D 1998, 84	2	*	91	*	0	0
Regional	DOR BB1	Dorset Black Burnished Ware	T&D 1998, 127	121	10	3,391	16	316	22
	LVN CC	Lower Nene Valley Colour-Coat	T&D 1998, 118	1	*	13	*	0	0
	OXF RS	Oxon Colour-Coat	T&D 1998, 174	12	1	199	1	18	1
	OXF/WIL WH	Oxon/N Wilts Whiteware	T&D 1998, 174	10	*	81	*	41	3
	OXF WHM	Oxon Whiteware Mortaria	Young 1977, 56	3	*	286	1	54	4
	OXF WSM	Oxon White-Slipped Mortaria	Young 1977, 117	1	*	26	*	0	0
	MAH WH	Mancetter-Hartshill Mortaria	T&D 1998, 189	1	*	9	*	0	0
	SAV GT	Savernake-Type Ware	T&D 1998, 191	11	1	178	*	0	0
	WILOX OX	Wilts/Oxon Oxidised Ware		18	1.5	136	*	10	*
	WIL RE1	Wiltshire Reduced Ware		45	3.5	471	2	94	6.5
	WIL RE2	Wiltshire Reduced Ware		3	*	48	*	7	*
	WIL RE3	Wiltshire Reduced Ware		1	*	3	*	0	0
	MIC GW	Micaceous Greyware	Glos TF 5	112	*	1,002	5	75	5
	ROB SH	Midlands Shelly Ware	T&D 1998, 212	19	8	118	*	0	0
	Native	MAL LI	Malvernian Limestone	Glos TF 33	22	2	192	1	15
MAL REA		Malvernian Rock-Tempered	T&D 1998, 147	77	6	708	3	36	2.5
GROG		Grog-Tempered	Glos TF 2A	26	2	250	1	17	1
GRSAND		Grog and Sand-Tempered		3	*	58	*	0	0
SSTONE		Sandstone-Tempered	Glos TF 30	1	*	18	*	0	0
Local	MAL RO	Malvernian Roman Ware	Glos TF 19	47	4	1,133	5	32	2
	SVW OX	Severn Valley Ware— Oxidised	T&D 1998, 149	559	45	9,527	45	565	39
	SVW RE	Severn Valley Ware— Reduced		55	4.5	695	3	56	4
	SVW CH	Severn Valley Ware— Charcoal	Glos TF 17	5	*	221	1	31	2
	SVW SJ	Severn Valley Ware— Storage Jar	Glos TF 23	36	3	1,683	8	26	2
	GREY1	Well-Fired Grey Ware		1	*	10	*	0	0
	GREY2	Black Sandy with Red Core		1	*	9	*	0	0
	GREY3	Bb1 Imitation Sandy Wares		3	*	63	*	22	1.5
	GREY4	Fine Grey Ware, Red Core		2	*	27	*	0	0
	GREY5	Medium Sandy Black Ware		13	1	107	*	8	*
	GREY6	Well-Fired Grey Sandy Ware		3	*	7	*	0	0
	Misc	GREY	Miscellaneous Grey Sandy Wares		22	2	112	*	6
OXID		Miscellaneous Orange Wares		1	*	3	*	0	0
Total				1,250	100	2,113	100	1,451	100
Saxon		Limestone and Organic-Tempered		6		107		0	
Med		Minety Ware		1		2		0	
Postmed		Various		52		555		NM	
Total				59		664		0	

Key: * Below 1%; T&D, Tomber & Dore; NM, not measured.

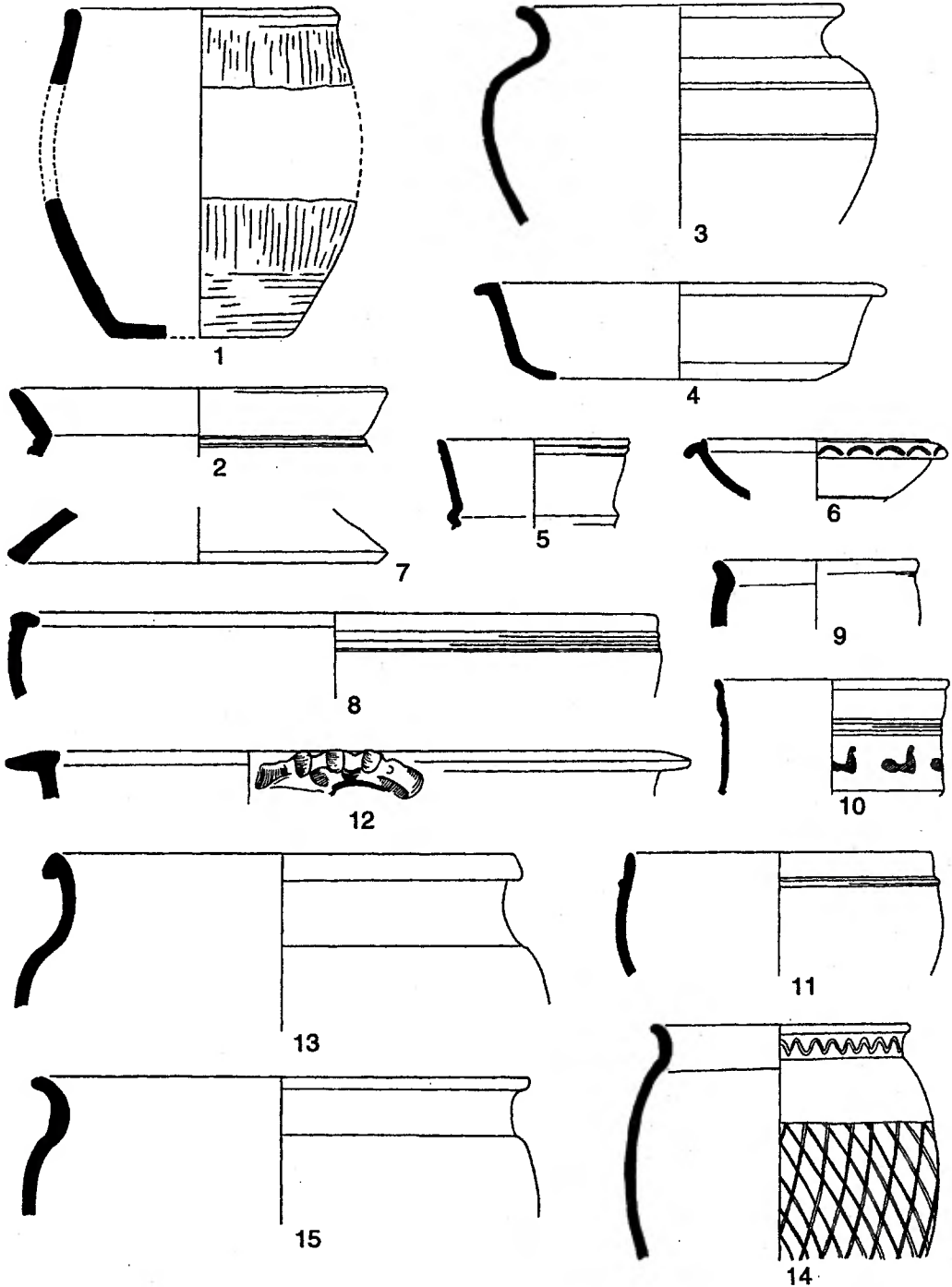


Fig. 4. Pottery (scale 1:4).

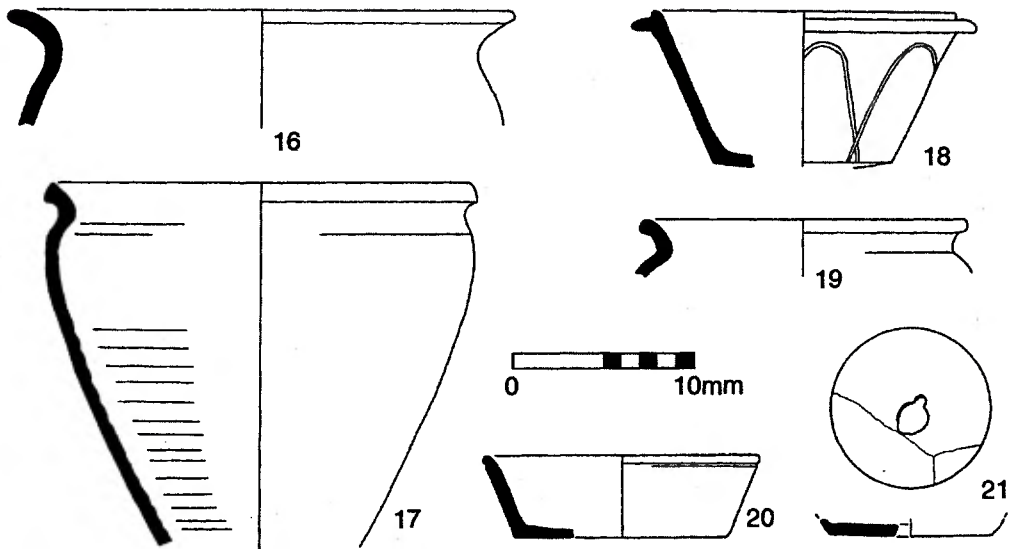


Fig. 5. Pottery (scale 1:4).

4. Flat rim bowl, originally burnished. DOR BB1-type. Slightly atypical fabric. Ditch [1113-14] (1101).
5. Small carinated cup. SVW OX. Ditch [1113-14] (1101).
6. Segmented bowl with red-orange barbotine decoration on the flange. The vessel is burnt. Similar to Young (1977) form O39. Either an Oxfordshire or a North Wiltshire product. Ditch [1113-14] (1101).
7. Grey ware lid. SVW RE. Ditch [1113-14] (1101).
8. Large bowl. SVW OX. Ditch [1113-14] (1101).
9. Small, handmade jar, burnished on the exterior. MAL REA. Ditch [1113-14], primary fill (1135).
10. Wall-sided carinated bowl in a fine oxidised fabric with white barbotine decoration. Either an Oxfordshire or North Wiltshire product (WIL/OX OX). Ditch [701] (700). Cf. Young 1977, form O42.
11. Hemispherical bowl with a cordon. SVW OX. Ditch [701] (700).
12. Large flanged rim, hemispherical bowl with a horizontal handle formed with a handle-grip. SVW OX. Ditch [1145] (1144).
13. Wide diameter necked bowl. SVW OX. Ditch [1145] (1144).
14. Wide diameter necked bowl. SVW OX. Ditch [1014] (1012).
15. DOR BB1 jar with acute burnished lattice. Pot in ditch [2143] (2023).
16. Everted rim, wheelmade jar. MAL RO. Ditch [1014] (1012).
17. Wide-mouthed jar. SVW OX. Pit [1032] (1031).
18. Flanged rim conical bowl. DOR BB1. Pit [1032] (1031).
19. Everted rim jar. GREY5. Ditch [1273], upper fill (1037).
20. Small dish, internally burnished. GREY5. Ditch [1273], upper fill (1037).
21. Base from a DOR BB1 jar with a central hole drilled after firing. Layer (2022).

THE ANIMAL BONE by Ian Baxter

Introduction

The total assemblage from the site amounts to just under 700 fragments of which 680 (98%) are from Romano-British features. Due to the small size of the assemblage, further temporal

Table 2. Number of identifiable fragments of bones of each species.

Taxon/Period		Romano- British	Post- Medieval	Modern	Total
Horse	<i>Equus caballus</i> L.	11	1	0	12
Cattle	<i>Bos</i> f. domestic	121	3	2	126
Pig	<i>Sus</i> f. domestic	9	3	0	12
Sheep/Goat	<i>Ovis/Capra</i> f. domestic	49	0	0	49
Large Mammal		103	0	0	103
Medium Mammal		50	2	0	52
Medium/Small Mammal		1	0	0	1
Indeterminate		336	0	3	340
Total		680	9	5	694

division of the bone into phases would be redundant. The number of identifiable fragments of bones of each species (NISP) by taxon and period is presented in Table 2. There are many recent breaks but canine damage is limited and, although some bone was residual at the time of deposition, preservation is fair to good.

Methods

All identifiable bones are included in the fragment counts (Thomas and Catchpole 2000). Bone measurements are based on von den Driesch (1976) and are retained in the archive. Withers height calculations for cattle and sheep are based on multiplication factors in Matolcsi (1970) and Teichert (1975). Long bone, rib and vertebrae fragments of indeterminate species are recorded as Large Mammal, Medium Mammal and Medium/Small Mammal. For most purposes these can be considered together with cattle and sheep.

Notes on the species

The remains of horse account for nearly 6% of fragments identified to species. Ages range from c. 4 years to over 20 years.

Cattle account for 64% of fragments identified to species. The two mandibles complete enough to calculate wear stages came from beasts under 2 years, but the more frequent maxillary and post-cranial remains are dominated by older animals. Only two bones were sufficiently complete to calculate withers height: a radius from a beast 1.19 m high at the shoulder, and a tibia with recently fused proximal epiphysis from an animal that stood 1.09 m high.

Pig remains are infrequent and generally consist of isolated fragments. They account for less than 5% of fragments identified to species.

Sheep/goat fragments account for 26% of fragments identified to species. No remains could be identified as goat. Three out of five mandibles recovered came from animals aged less than 1½ years. The only bone complete enough to provide a withers height is a calcaneum, from an animal 0.65 m high at the shoulder.

Summary and conclusion

The small bone assemblage limits what can meaningfully be said about husbandry regimes or butchery techniques. However, the assemblage is typical of a rural farmstead site in which cattle are the main domestic stock, followed by sheep and some pig. Spatial distribution of the animal remains suggests that the excavated site is peripheral to the main settlement (Wilson 1996). The

relatively high proportion of cattle bones compared to those of sheep suggests a 'Romanised' farmstead, e.g. villa, rather than a native settlement (King 1978).

OTHER FINDS

A catalogue of worked stone is presented at Table 3. Full reports into the pottery, bone and worked stone are contained in the archive report (Thomas and Catchpole 2000). Only very small assemblages of other types of find were present. A few fragments of slag, ceramic building material, and daub were recovered. Iron nails were present, but only within the post-medieval ploughsoil that sealed the Romano-British features. Metallic objects of all other types were absent.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Development of the enclosures

Due to the lack of differentiation between features, detailed phasing solely on the basis of stratigraphic evidence has not been possible, except within the housing site. Detailed ceramic phasing was also complicated by the small size of the assemblage. Only six features produced more than fifty sherds and only seventeen other features produced more than ten sherds. In some cases the stratigraphic evidence and ceramic dating is contradictory. The combination of the stratigraphic record with the ceramic evidence provided by Jane Timby has allowed clear differentiation between early (late 1st–mid 2nd centuries) and later (mid 2nd–late 4th centuries) groups of features and suggested the following more detailed sequence.

It appears that the basic layout of the rectilinear enclosure system was present by the late 1st to mid 2nd centuries. It included the eastern N–S trackway (E) but the southern E–W trackway (F) produced no finds dating before the mid 2nd century. A large curving ditch slightly further north may represent the southern extent of the rectilinear enclosure system at this time (J; Fig. 3, section 5). A series of curvilinear gullies running into a large shallow pit was present to its south during this phase (K; Fig. 3, sections 4 and 6). Enclosures of this first phase between the major western boundary (A) and the trackway (E) are indicated by three E–W and three N–S divisions.

Elements of the first phase of enclosures continued into the late 2nd and 3rd centuries, notably the trackway (E) and western boundary (A). However, the rectilinear enclosure system was substantially redefined in the second half of the 2nd century and maintained into the 3rd century. The southern trackway (F) dates to this period as does the majority of the features excavated. Three ditches running N–S across the housing site (L) produced only Romano-British pottery but ran parallel with later furrows elsewhere and not with other Romano-British features. The features dated to the 3rd century suggest continuing use of the enclosures but perhaps a less intensive programme of maintenance.

Fourth-century and post-Roman finds indicate continued activity in the general vicinity but few deposits were present that clearly indicated the cutting (or recutting) of the enclosure system in the 4th century or later. Two ditches, one of which was recut at least three times, represent the only features clearly assigned to this phase (M; Fig. 3, section 3).

Context and Interpretation

The West Drive/Wellesley Road site represents the first excavation of a Romano-British site in Cheltenham. While the site cannot be fitted into a local context its pattern of enclosures is

Table 3. Catalogue of worked stone (Ruth Shaffrey).

Rotary Quern Fragments

1. SF4, Unstratified. Fragment of upper millstone. Maximum thickness of 100 mm. The grinding surface is engraved with very deep grooves in the lava quern or 'Saalburg' style and the other surface with deep spaced peck marks. These are rare on ORS querns, but present on several at Ashton Keynes (Saunders 1998) and they may have been a form of decoration or 'non-functional embellishment' (Caulfield, 1977, 121). The fragment is made from a very pale pink/grey, almost pure quartz sandstone of the Upper Old Red Sandstone from the Forest of Dean. Roman, probably 3rd century or later.
2. (101). Chunk of upper stone of rotary quern of 'beehive-style'. Pecked all over although the upper surface has been worn and the grinding surface is extremely well worn and appears to have been used for polishing as well. The handle slot is set into the upper surface at an angle. Made from slightly pebbly sandstone of the Upper Old Red Sandstone from the Forest of Dean. There is a gradual hopper. Late Iron Age.
3. Unstratified. Approximately 1/8th of the upper stone of 'beehive' style rotary quern. The diameter measures something less than 0.4 m, and it is 55 mm thick at the edge and 30 mm thick at the centre. The quern's grinding surface is extremely well worn but it appears to have been 'pecked' all over. Made from a very feldspathic, medium grained, very well sorted sandstone, probably Drybrook Sandstone from the Forest of Dean. Grinding surface is worn very smooth and it was also subsequently reused—at least one non-grinding surface has been worn smooth and used as a whetstone. Late Iron Age.
4. Unstratified. Fragment of upper stone of rotary quern. Diameter of approximately 0.35 m with maximum thickness of 48 mm (at centre) and minimum of 37 mm (at edge). Pecked all over and in such a fashion on the edges as to appear in vertical lines. The grinding surface is very well worn. It was made from moderately pebbly sandstone of the Upper Old Red Sandstone from the Forest of Dean. One long deep and wide channel carved into one surface is evidence of reuse for sharpening. Roman.
5. (1201). Approximately 1/8th of upper stone of a rotary quern of the disc type (Curwen 1937). It has a diameter of 0.4 m with maximum thickness of 65 mm at the edge and 35 mm at the centre. The grinding surface is moderately angled and although pecked is well worn. The upper surface and edges are also pecked with the edges pecked into vertical patterning. The upper surface has a gently sloping hopper with a diameter of 100 mm and a circular perforation of 50 mm diameter. It was made from very pebbly pale sandstone of the Upper Old Red Sandstone from the Forest of Dean. It contains pebbles of both pink and green siltstone and pink quartz pebbles. Roman.
6. (1065). Small fragment of rotary quern, probably from the upper stone. The grinding surface appears to have been fairly flat and is worked rather than pecked. The other surface and the edges appear to have been pecked. It was made from moderately pebbly sandstone of the Upper Old Red Sandstone from the Forest of Dean. Dating—?

Whetstones

1. (1031). Two of the faces and one of the edges are worn very smooth and very well used—they have been worn down from 27 mm thick at the unused end to 14 mm thick at the other end. There is a groove where it has also been used for sharpening. Made from fine-grained, micaceous olive sandstone, probably pennant sandstone. Slightly burnt.
2. SF1, Unstratified. Well-used whetstone measuring 112 mm long by 40 by 21-16 mm. It has been made from fine grained micaceous sandstone probably from the Old Red Sandstone. It may be slightly burnt. The wider faces are those used for polishing as they have been worn into concave faces.
3. (1204). Whetstone fragment measuring 27 mm long (all that is remaining) by 28 mm by 33 mm. Made from very well cemented quartzitic sandstone.

Other Worked Stone

1. (1061). Probable architectural fragment. A roughly cubed shaped chunk measuring approximately 140 × 160 × 160 mm with 3 of the faces being flat. The main feature of the stone is a quarter of a circle channel cut into the stone, which leaves one corner free. By the wearing on the stone this looks like it might have been part of some part of pivot stone. The opposite face to the one which has the channel carved in it is worn smooth suggesting that it was either walked upon or rubbed upon something. The only piece of architectural stone that was recovered from the site. Made from very weathered oolitic limestone containing many large shells. Also slightly burnt.

broadly consistent with that around Romano-British settlements in the Severn Valley and elsewhere in the region. The site can be compared with similarly dated sites excavated 4–5 km to the north at Bishop's Cleeve and 10 km to the north-west at Tewkesbury (Thomas and Walker 1998). Current evidence regarding the Romano-British utilisation of the Bishop's Cleeve area suggests that a villa was surrounded by an extensive system of agricultural enclosure boundaries containing discrete areas set aside for horticulture and small-scale industrial activities (Parry 1999). Home Farm, Bishop's Cleeve, produced (amongst other features) a layout of ditched garden plots or paddocks similar to that at West Drive, mostly of the 2nd to 4th century (Barber and Walker 1998).

The overall patterning of the enclosures at West Drive can be compared to those recorded at Barnsley Park villa, which produced a layout of buildings with small-scale enclosures nearby and larger fields further away (Webster *et al.* 1985). That pattern may be repeated here. The enclosures can also be compared with those at Roughground Farm, Lechlade (Allen *et al.* 1993), where enclosures recorded to the east and south-east of the villa appear similar in plan to those at West Drive.

Conclusive evidence of the use to which the enclosures were put was not retrieved. Features of the type recorded at West Drive are generally interpreted as representing paddocks and droveways. The location of the site on sand may have been a determining factor in the nature of activity carried out. The enclosures excavated at Tewkesbury, however, were located on lias clay subsoil (Thomas and Walker 1998). If the enclosures there were used for pasture then the location on clay subsoil may not have been disadvantageous. The silt fills of enclosure ditches at Roughground Farm were interpreted as indicating grassed pasture rather than turned and dug-over garden plots (Allen *et al.* 1993). A similar argument could be applied to West Drive, where the fact that feature fills showed no evidence of a greater humic content than the natural sand suggests that the ground had not been frequently turned and manured, as would be the case in garden plots.

Although there was no conclusive evidence of structures within the study area, there was limited evidence for settlement in the vicinity. The hearth waste present in some of the features at West Drive and the presence of daub, quern fragments and limited amounts of ceramic building material suggest nearby domestic settlement. The overall distribution of finds falls off towards the south-west. Six features produced more than fifty sherds and these are all located towards the north-eastern side of the two larger excavated areas. The pottery, bronze pin and iron slag retrieved from 104 Evesham Road may also indicate that a focus of domestic settlement lay in that direction.

Evidence regarding the status of the population that utilised the enclosures at West Drive is contradictory. The low density of finds adds to the difficulty of interpretation. The pottery assemblage is indicative of 'a farmstead as opposed to a well-appointed villa-type establishment' (Timby 2000b). The unstratified mill stone recovered from West Drive is of a type usually encountered at urban or villa sites (Saunders 2000). The bone evidence suggests that the site was occupied by a highly 'Romanised' population (Baxter above). If the percentage of cattle bone can be used as a rough guide to the level of Romanisation (King 1978), then the 64% found at Cheltenham can be compared with the 55% found at Home Farm, Bishop's Cleeve (Barber and Walker 1998), and the 58% encountered during the final, most cattle-rich, phase at Frocester Court (Noddle 1979). The proportion of cattle bones may, however, be influenced by the excavated area being peripheral to a settlement (Wilson 1996) and by the use to which the enclosures were put. A possible interpretation of the combined evidence is that the recovered finds originated from a settlement near the excavated area, which was engaged in providing the

food requirements of a Romanised élite but was physically detached from the site actually occupied by that élite.

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