

**Land West of Ratby
Hinckley
Leicestershire**

Archaeological Excavation



for:
Lagan Homes

CA Project: MK1074
CA Report: MK1074_2
CA Site Code: RATB24
Accession Number: X.A47.2023

December 2024



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SUMMARY

Project name:	Land West of Ratby
Location:	Hinckley, Leicestershire
NGR:	450526 306406
Type:	Excavation
Date:	24 June–5 July 2024
Planning reference:	22/00648/OUT
Location of archive:	To be deposited with Leicestershire County Museum Service and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)
Accession number:	X.A47.2023
Site code:	RATB24

In June and July 2024, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological excavation on land west of Ratby, Hinckley, Leicestershire. A single excavation area measuring c. 2,875m² was opened. This area was located to investigate Late Iron Age/Early Roman features identified by a previous archaeological trial trench evaluation.

The archaeological excavation recorded ditches associated with a Middle/Late Iron Age–Early Roman field system, as well as the possible remnants of a ring gully associated with an Iron Age roundhouse. A small number of pits and postholes were apparently associated with this late prehistoric/Roman activity.

The archaeological excavation also recorded the remnants of a medieval or earlier post-medieval ridge and furrow agricultural system.

A small number of modern features were recorded, as were modern made ground layers directly overlaying the natural geological substrate.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. In June and July 2024, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological excavation on land west of Ratby, Hinckley, Leicestershire (centred at NGR: 450526 306406; hereafter 'the Site'; Fig. 1). This excavation was undertaken for Lagan Homes.

1.2. Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has granted outline planning permission (ref: 22/00648/OUT) for residential development of the site. Condition 14 of this planning permission requires the implementation of a staged programme of archaeological work:

No demolition/development shall take place on site unless and until a staged programme of archaeological work, commencing with an initial phase of trial trenching has been undertaken. Each stage will be completed in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI), which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. For land that is included within the WSI, no demolition/development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed WSI, which shall include the statement of significance and research objectives, and:

- The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works.*
- The programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication and dissemination and deposition of resulting*

No development shall then take place other than in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation.

Reason: *To allow proper investigation and recording of the site, which is potentially of archaeological and historic significance in accordance with Policies DM11, DM12 and DM13 of the adopted Site Allocations Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2016).*

1.3. A geophysical survey (Phase Site Investigations 2023) and an archaeological trial trench evaluation (CA 2023) recorded two Late Iron Age/Early Roman ditches within the southern end of the Site (see *Archaeological Background*, below). Based on the results of these investigations, William Kelly (Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council) requested targeted archaeological excavation in order to mitigate the impact of the proposed development upon the Site's

archaeological resource (Leicestershire County Council Senior Planning Archaeologist comments on application to discharge condition; ref 24/00003/DISCON).

- 1.4. The excavation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CA (2024a) and approved by the Leicestershire County Council Senior Planning Archaeologist. The excavation was also in line with:
- *Standard for archaeological excavation* (CIfA 2023a);
 - *Universal guidance for archaeological excavation* (CIfA 2023b);
 - *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (HE 2015a); and
 - *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (HE 2015b).

The Site

- 1.5. The Site is approximately 5.47ha in extent and is located on the north-western edge of the village of Ratby.
- 1.6. The Site currently comprises arable fields. It is bounded by Markfield Road to the north, residential properties to the east, further fields to the south, and woodland to the west. The ground levels within the central and eastern parts of the Site undulate gently between 105m and 110m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). A steep slope is present along the western edge of the Site.
- 1.7. The underlying bedrock geology across the majority of the Site is mapped as Edwalton Member mudstone, which formed 237–228.4 million years ago during the Triassic Period. This is overlain by superficial deposits of Thussington Member diamicton, which formed 480,000–423,000 years ago during the Quaternary Period. Cotgrave Sandstone Member (formed 237–228.4 million years ago) and Gunthorpe Member mudstone (formed 247.1–237 million years ago) are mapped along the western edge of the Site; these are overlain by superficial alluvial deposits (formed around 11,800 years ago) (BGS 2024).
- 1.8. Modern made ground deposits measuring 0.18m–1.1m in thickness are present in the Site's central, north-western and north-eastern fields. This made ground is redeposited topsoil and subsoil displaced during the adjacent first phase of

development. Spoil heaps resulting from recent groundworks are also present in the south-eastern part of the Site.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The archaeological background of the Site has been presented in detail in the reports on a geophysical survey (Phase Site Investigations 2023), an archaeological trial trench evaluation (CA 2023) and a historic environment desk-based assessment (CA 2024b). The following text is summarised from these sources. Codes in parentheses are Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) references.

Prehistoric (pre-AD 43)

- 2.2. A number of Mesolithic artefacts have been identified in the area, including a Mesolithic flint scatter and a pebble hammer c. 700m north of the present excavation area (MLE7063 and MLE2775) and two flint microliths c. 1km south-west of the present excavation area (MLE7062). These artefacts are indicative of seasonal occupation in the Mesolithic period.
- 2.3. Neolithic and Bronze Age artefacts have also been recorded within the wider area, including a Neolithic axe (MLE7245) c. 1km south-west of the present excavation area and two Neolithic or Bronze Age flints (MLE7558) c. 1.2km north of the excavation area. A flint knife (MLE7246) and Bronze Age pottery (MLE6361) have also been recovered from Bury Camp hillfort (see below).
- 2.4. There is evidence for more extensive late prehistoric activity within the wider area. An Iron Age hillfort known as Bury Camp (1005079, MLE3100) is located c. 1km south-west of the present excavation area. The cropmarks of a possible Iron Age enclosure (MLE3112) have been identified c. 800m north of the present excavation area. An Iron Age bridle bit (MLE9392) has been found c. 500m west of the present excavation area.

Roman (AD 43–AD 410)

- 2.5. The most important local focal point during the Roman period was *Ratae* (Roman Leicester), which lay c. 7.5km east of the present excavation area.
- 2.6. The HER records the putative route of a Roman road, the *Via Devana*, extending across the northern edge of the wider application Site on a north-west/south-east alignment. Previous archaeological works recorded the remains of a Roman road to

the north (ML4345). No evidence of a Roman road was identified within the Site by the recent geophysical survey and trial trenching.

- 2.7. Remains of Roman date are known within the wider area, including possible settlement activity c. 1km south-west of the current excavation area (MLE3107) and c. 1.1km south-east of the excavation area (MLE17523). Roman pottery sherds have also been recovered from Bury Camp (see above), and numerous findspots of Roman artefacts are recorded within the surrounding area by the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

Early medieval (AD 410–1066) and medieval (1066–1539)

- 2.8. Ratby village has early medieval origins. It was recorded by the Domesday survey (1089) as comprising six ploughlands and a mill (Powell-Smith 2022).
- 2.9. The HER records the extent of the medieval village as bordering the eastern edge of the Site (MLE10075). The site is therefore likely to have been within the agricultural hinterland associated with the village. Several areas of possible medieval ridge and furrow are known, one of which lies partially within the northern area of the Site; this was recorded by an earlier geophysical survey (Archaeological Surveys 2005).
- 2.10. A medieval deer park, known as Burgh Park (921296), was located c. 1.3km west of the current excavation area. Burgh Park was first mentioned in 1270; it was last recorded in 1512.
- 2.11. An earthwork bank is recorded c. 675m east of the Site. This bank potentially represents a medieval trackway, although an earlier date is possible.
- 2.12. Numerous isolated findspots of medieval artefacts are also recorded in the surrounding area (e.g. MLE15779; MLE16413; MLE9384).

Post-medieval (1540–1800) and modern (1800–present)

- 2.13. During the post-medieval period, the Site and its surrounding area were subject to enclosure in order to create new agricultural fields and parks. The land within the Site and the majority of the surrounding area was enclosed into small irregularly-shaped fields. A post-medieval park known as Groby Park (MLE2779) was located c. 1.6km to the north-west of the current excavation area.

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- 2.14. The Enclosure map of Ratby (1773) depicts the Site as 19 parcels of land under mixed ownership. There is no indication of the land use, but it is likely that the Site was under agricultural cultivation.
- 2.15. By the time of the 1885 Ordnance Survey map, several of fields within the Site had been amalgamated. The 1930 Ordnance Survey map depicts two areas of allotment gardens to the north and south of Burroughs Road, to the south of the site. Further amalgamation of fields within the site took place in the 20th century.

Previous investigations

- 2.16. The majority of the anomalies recorded during the geophysical survey of the Site (Phase Site Investigations 2023) were interpreted as the result of modern material, agricultural activity and possible natural variations. Some trends of uncertain origin were also identified. The location of the present excavation area could not be surveyed due to the presence of soil heaps.
- 2.17. The archaeological trial trench evaluation of the Site (CA 2023) recorded a Late Iron Age ditch terminus and a Late Iron Age/Early Roman ditch in the south-eastern part of the Site (Trench 23). North-east/south-west aligned furrows of possible medieval or early post-medieval date were encountered across the central and southern parts of the Site, corresponding to weak trends identified by the geophysical survey.
- 2.18. A series of archaeological investigations were undertaken to the east of the Site in advance of development (planning ref: 20/00462/FUL). These investigations included a desk-based assessment (University of Leicester Archaeological Services 2005), geophysical surveys (Archaeological Surveys 2005 and Stratascan 2014), a fieldwalking survey (Browning 2014) and a trial trench evaluation (Archaeological Research Services 2021). These works identified a scatter of post-medieval pottery, plough furrows and a single undated ditch.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The general objectives of the archaeological excavation were to:
- identify, investigate and record any significant buried archaeological deposits/features at the site prior to their destruction by the proposed development;
 - recover and analyse any artefactual evidence;

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- sample and analyse environmental remains to create a better understanding of past land use and economy;
 - report on and publish the archaeological results at a level appropriate to their significance; and
 - compile a stable, ordered, accessible project archive.
- 3.2. The specific objective of the excavation was to further investigate and record the Late Iron Age/Early Roman ditches recorded by the previous evaluation (CA 2023).
- 3.3. Based on the results of the evaluation, no meaningful contributions can be made to any research objectives set out in the online *East Midlands Historic Environment Research Framework* (Research Frameworks Network 2022 <https://researchframeworks.org/emherf/>) or in the previous versions of the research framework (Cooper 2006; Knight *et al.* 2012). As a minimum, a short summary of the findings will be submitted to the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* or another appropriate regional journal.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. One excavation area measuring c. 2,875m² was opened (Fig. 2). This area was located to investigate a Late Iron Age ditch terminus and a Late Iron Age/Early Roman ditch identified in Trench 23 of the previous archaeological trial trench evaluation (CA 2023). With the approval of the Leicestershire County Council Senior Planning Archaeologist, the edges of the north-western corner of the excavation area were revised from those proposed in the WSI (CA 2024a), due the presence of a public footpath.
- 4.2. The excavation area was set out on OS National Grid co-ordinates using Leica GPS. Overburden was stripped from the excavation area by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. All machining was conducted under archaeological supervision to the top of the natural substrate, which was the level at which archaeological features were first encountered.
- 4.3. Archaeological features/deposits were investigated, planned and recorded in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.4. Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential and samples were taken in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*.

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- 4.5. Artefacts were processed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.
- 4.6. CA has made arrangements with Leicestershire County Museum Service for the deposition of the site archive and, subject to agreement with the legal landowner(s), the artefact collection. Accession number X.A47.2023 has been issued.
- 4.7. A digital archive will be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS).
- 4.8. The archives (museum and digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with: *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020); *Archaeological Archives: A Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Curation* (Archaeological Archives Forum 2011); *Standard and Guide to Best Practice for Archaeological Archiving in Europe: EAC Guidelines 1* (Europae Archaeologia Consilium 2019); and *Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives* (ClfA/Historic England 2019; updated March 2022).
- 4.9. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix D, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the excavation results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A. Details of the artefactual material recovered from the site are given in Section 6 and Appendix B. Details of the environmental samples (palaeoenvironmental evidence) are given in Section 7 and Appendix C.
- 5.2. Artefactual dating evidence recovered from the Site indicates four phases of activity:
- **Phase 0:** geology
 - **Phase 1:** Middle/Late Iron Age (400 BC–AD 43)–Early Roman (AD 43–AD 200)
 - **Phase 2:** medieval (1066–1539)/post-medieval (1540–1800)
 - **Phase 3:** modern (1800–present)

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- 5.3. Some features yielded no dateable material and could not be definitively assigned to a period based on stratigraphy or dating evidence. Where possible, such features have been phased through spatial association with features of known date. Where dating remains impossible, features have been assigned to an **Undated** phase.

Phase 0: geology

- 5.4. The natural geological substrate was encountered at a depth of 0.22m–0.75m below present ground level and comprised compact pale yellow sandy clay with bands of dark red/pale grey-blue clay and mudstone brash.
- 5.5. The natural substrate was overlain by topsoil in the south-western part of the excavation area, and by modern made-ground deposits (Phase 3) across the remainder of the area.

Phase 1: Middle/Late Iron Age (400 BC–AD 43)–Early Roman (AD 43–AD 200) **Ditch C (Fig. 4)**

- 5.6. Ditch C was a short length of east/west aligned ditch in the east-central part of the area. This ditch was 4.1m long, 0.3m wide and 0.12m deep, with moderately steep concave sides and a concave base. It contained a single fill, from which one sherd of Late Iron Age pottery was recovered (fill 1049).

Ditch D (Fig. 5)

- 5.7. Curved Ditch D was located within the southern part of the excavation area. This ditch was approximately 5.5m long, 0.2m wide and 0.38m deep, with moderately sloping, concave sides and a concave base. It contained a single fill, from which 33 sherds of Middle/Late Iron Age pottery were recovered (fill 1022).

Ditches A and B (Fig. 3)

- 5.8. Ditch A ran across the southern half of the excavation area on a north-west/south-east alignment. This ditch was 0.94m wide and 0.46m deep, with steep, straight sides and a concave base. It contained four fills, the majority of which appear to have derived from natural erosion and silting. The exception was fill 1043 (present in the north-western end of the feature only), the high charcoal content of which may suggest deliberate deposition of waste material. Ditch A contained 17 sherds of Middle/Late Iron Age pottery and one sherd of Early Roman pottery (fills 1024 and 1043).

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- 5.9. Ditch A had been re-cut on the same alignment by Ditch B. This later ditch was 0.41m–0.55m wide and 0.25m deep, with an asymmetrical profile and a concave base. It contained a single fill, from which three sherds of Middle/Late Iron Age pottery were recovered (fill 1041).

Ditch E (Fig. 6)

- 5.10. North-east/south-west aligned Ditch E was 0.5m wide and 0.54m deep, with a single fill. Ditch E was undated artefactually. It was, however, at a 90 degree angle to adjacent Iron Age Ditches A and B; it was also cut across by furrow 1010, in the same manner as Ditches A and B. It is therefore likely that Ditch E forms part of the same Iron Age/Roman enclosure system as Ditches A and B.
- 5.11. Due to the presence of furrow 1010 and a former evaluation trench in the area of intersection between Ditches A/B and E, the stratigraphic relationship between the ditches could not be established.

Postholes 1027 and 1029 (Fig. 5)

- 5.12. Intercutting postholes 1027 and 1029 were located adjacent to Ditch D.
- 5.13. Posthole 1029 survived to 0.35m in diameter and 0.2m in depth. It contained a single fill (1075), from which two sherds of early Roman pottery were recovered. Posthole 1029 was truncated on its south-western side by posthole 1027, which measured 0.5m in diameter and 0.14m in depth. Posthole 1027 contained a single undated fill (1028).

Phase 2: medieval (1066–1539)/post-medieval (1540–1800)

- 5.14. The excavation area was crossed by eight north-east/south-west aligned furrows. These furrows are the remnants of a medieval or earlier post-medieval ridge and furrow agricultural system. The furrows were separated from each other by a distance of 7.5m–8.8m (centre to centre). They cut across earlier ditches A, B and E.
- 5.15. Four furrows were investigated by hand-excavation (1006, 1008, 1012 and 1034). These were 1.15m–2.6m wide and 0.15m–0.24m deep and contained single fills (Fig. 8).
- 5.16. The excavated slot through furrow 1008 (fill 1009) produced a pottery sherd dating to the 15th century, as well as a medieval copper alloy candlestick fragment. Furrow 1012 (fill 1013) contained a sherd of medieval pottery and a lead alloy weight; and

furrow 1034 (fill 1035) contained a sherd of prehistoric pottery and a post-medieval copper alloy buckle.

- 5.17. A post-medieval lead alloy rod was collected from the surface of furrow 1010 (fill 1011); while a post-medieval/modern pistol shot was identified in the top of fill 1031 of furrow 1030. A post-medieval copper alloy button was collected from the surface of furrow 1032 (fill 1033).

Phase 3: modern (1800–present)

- 5.18. Posthole 1070 (Fig. 9) measured 0.46m in diameter and over 0.35m in depth (its base was not exposed). This posthole contained a concrete base. Post-medieval/modern artefacts were recovered from fill 1071.
- 5.19. Modern sub-rectangular pit 1073 (Fig. 9) was 3.2m long and 1.88m wide. This feature was recorded in plan only.
- 5.20. Modern land drains had been laid along the bases of the medieval/earlier post-medieval furrows.
- 5.21. The natural geological substrate was overlain by c. 0.25m of modern made ground across the majority of the excavation area (Fig. 9). The remnants of modern spoil heaps were also present in southern part of the area.

Undated

Pits 1062 and 1064 (Fig. 6)

- 5.22. Pit 1064 lay immediately adjacent to probable Iron Age/Roman Ditch E. This pit survived to a maximum width of 0.4m and a depth of 0.14m. It contained a single undated fill (1065).
- 5.23. Pit 1064 was truncated by pit 1062, which also truncated the edge of probable Iron Age/Roman Ditch E. Pit 1062 was 1.03m long, 0.45m wide and 0.21m deep. It contained a single undated fill (1063).

Postholes 1052 and 1050 (Fig. 7)

- 5.24. These postholes lay in the southern part of the excavation area. They measured 0.26m–0.29m in diameter and 0.02m–0.05m in depth. They each contained single undated fills.

Pit 1014 (Fig. 7)

- 5.25. Pit 1014 lay between Ditches A and D. This pit was 1.95m wide and 0.42m deep, with two undated fills (1015 and 1016).

6. THE FINDS

- 6.1. Quantities of pottery, ceramic building material and metal objects were recovered from the Site. These are discussed below. A finds concordance is presented in Appendix B.

Pottery

- 6.2. A total of 60 sherds of pottery (327g) were recovered from eight deposits. This pottery was predominantly of Middle–Late Iron Age date, although small amounts of Early Roman and medieval material were also present.

Material	Period	Count	Weight (g)
Pottery	Iron Age	55	291
	Roman	3	11
	Medieval	2	25
CBM	Post-medieval	1	570
Metal	Copper alloy	3	21
	Iron	3	12
	Lead alloy	3	39
Total		70	969

Table 1: Finds quantification

- 6.3. Pottery was recorded directly to an Access database in accordance with the 'Basic Record' level (Barclay *et al.* 2016, 16–17). Sherds from each context were sorted according to fabric, with these groups being further subdivided where sherds could be deemed to have derived from the same vessel. Each resulting group was recorded using fabric codes derived from the system for Leicestershire (Pollard 1994) for Roman material, with prehistoric codes derived from guidelines set out by the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (2010). Form codes derive from the CA in-house system. Details of use-wear, surface treatment, decoration, firing faults (etc.) were also recorded.
- 6.4. Pottery was quantified using sherd count, weight (to the nearest whole gram), Estimated Vessel Equivalent (EVE) by summation of surviving rim circumference, and Minimum Number of Vessels (MNV) by presence of joining rim sherds.

Iron Age

- 6.5. A total of 55 sherds (291g) of handmade pottery can be dated to the Middle–Late Iron Age period. The late prehistoric rim EVEs equate to 0.05.
- 6.6. Iron Age material was predominantly recovered from Ditch D, which produced 33 sherds (122g) from a vessel in sandy shelly fabric QSH2 (fill 1022). Material from linear features formed a secondary component, with Ditches A, B and C (fills 1024, 1041, 1043 and 1049) producing 21 sherds (152g) and furrow 1034 (fill 1035) producing one sherd (17g).
- 6.7. This group is highly fragmented, as illustrated by the low mean sherd weight of 4.7g. Condition is poor, with heavy wear noted on most surfaces and fractures.
- 6.8. The late prehistoric fabrics are described below. While statistical analysis is not appropriate owing to the small size of the group, fabrics containing shell as a principal inclusion (SH2 and QSH2) account for a large proportion of the assemblage, although it should be noted that the sandy shell-tempered fabric QSH2 occurs as sherds from a single vessel. Sandy fabric Q2 forms a secondary component, while sandy fabrics with organic (QV2) and rock tempers (QR3) and grog-tempered wares (GR2) form minor components.
- 6.9. It is likely that the identified fabrics would have been produced locally. The shell-tempered fabrics may derive from outcrops of Lincolnshire limestone or local limestone present in the boulder clays (Marsden 2008, 38; Charles *et al.* 2000, 173). It is also possible that they derive from sources further south – for example, Northamptonshire, where shelly wares are known to dominate owing to the local availability of Jurassic clays containing fossil shells.
- 6.10. The prominence of fabrics characterised by the presence of quartz sand is typical for the region, with clay sources likely deriving from superficial deposits associated with sandy river terraces, such as those of the nearby River Soar. The occurrence of granitic rock-temper is also to be expected in Iron Age Leicestershire, owing to the close proximity of the granitic (granodiorite) outcrops at Mountsorrel.
- 6.11. The local availability of these resources in the local geology meant that these fabrics were long lived and were utilised throughout the Iron Age in the region, although granitic rock-tempering is characteristic of the Middle–Late Iron Age in the region and acts as a chronological marker of activity from the 4th century BC and later.

Iron Age: fabric descriptions

Shell-tempered fabrics (1 sherd; 6g)

- 6.12. SH2: Common to very common, poorly sorted, sub-angular, medium shell. Buff to black with black cores. Shell $\leq 3\text{mm}$.

Quartz sand and shell-tempered fabrics (33 sherds; 122g)

- 6.13. QSH2: Moderate, moderately sorted, sub-rounded, fine quartz; sparse to moderate, poorly sorted, sub-angular, medium shell. Orange to black with black cores. Quartz $\leq 0.5\text{mm}$; shell $\leq 3\text{mm}$.

Quartz sand fabrics (16 sherds; 106g; 0.05 EVE)

- 6.14. Q2: Moderate to common, poorly sorted, sub-rounded, medium quartz. Brown to black with grey-black cores. Quartz $\leq 1\text{mm}$.

Quartz sand and rock-tempered fabrics (1 sherd; 17g)

- 6.15. QR3: Common to very common, poorly sorted, sub-rounded, coarse quartz; moderate to common, mostly sub-angular, Granodiorite rock inclusions. Buff to black with black cores. Quartz $\leq 3\text{mm}$; rock $\leq 4\text{mm}$.

Quartz sand and organic-tempered fabrics (3 sherds; 33g)

- 6.16. QV2: Moderate to common, poorly sorted, sub-rounded, medium quartz; rounded voids with burning around the margins/organic material. Brown to black with grey-black cores. Quartz $\leq 1\text{mm}$.

Grog-tempered fabrics (1 sherd; 7g)

- 6.17. GR2: Moderate, moderately sorted, sub-rounded, fine grog. Orange to black. Grog $\leq 3\text{mm}$.

Iron Age: vessel forms

- 6.18. Only one vessel was represented by the presence of a rim sherd (MNV); this was recovered from Ditch A (fill 1024). While form could not be determined, the vessel occurs in sandy fabric Q2 and has a plain upright rim (rim type sur). This is typical for the period and region.
- 6.19. One body sherd from a possible crucible was also recovered. This sherd was tentatively identified owing to evidence of heat exposure on the interior surface and

possible metalworking residue, suggesting that the vessel may have been utilised in the heating and processing of metal. Metal type could not be inferred.

Roman

- 6.20. Roman material was recovered from bulk soil samples 1 and 6, which were taken from Ditch A (fill 1043) and posthole 1029 (fill 1075), respectively. The Roman material totals three sherds (11g) of pottery, equating to .24 EVEs.
- 6.21. The pottery from Ditch A is a rim sherd (1 sherd, 5g) from a typologically early Roman lid-seated jar (form j;lds) equating to 0.07 EVEs. This is in a sandy fabric with calcareous and grog inclusions (fabric MG1), similar to fabrics of the Upper Nene Grog-tempered industries.
- 6.22. The pottery from posthole 1029 comprises two sherds (6g) of a beaker with an everted rim (.17 EVEs). This is in an unsourced sandy white ware fabric (bk;evr, WW4) which is typologically early Roman in nature.
- 6.23. The Roman assemblage is suggestive of activity in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD.

Medieval

- 6.24. The medieval group consists of two sherds of pottery (25g), recovered from furrows 1008 (fill 1009) and 1012 (fill 1013). Both sherds were Midlands Purple Ware (MIDP), which dates to the 15th century. The sherd from plough furrow 1013 bore glaze on the interior surface.

Ceramic building material

- 6.25. A single brick fragment weighing 570g was recovered from posthole 1070 (fill 1071). This was identified in fabric fscp, a pink/orange fabric characterised by fine sand and red/cream clay lenses/pellets throughout. Four finished surfaces were present. The fragment measured 73mm in thickness. Close dating was not possible, but the fragment is likely of post-medieval date.

Metal objects

- 6.26. A total of nine items of metalwork (c. 72g) were recovered. These have been recorded on the Microsoft Access finds concordance database for the project and have been analysed in line with the *CIfA Toolkit for Specialist Recording* (CIfA 2021). In addition to visual analysis, they have been examined with the assistance of low powered

magnification and digital x-ray plates; these plates will be deposited with the site archive.

- 6.27. No particular concentration of metalwork was evident. The majority of the metal objects were encountered on a singular basis within individual furrows, although posthole 1070 (fill 1071) produced three items. Those finds which can be confidently identified range in date from the late medieval period to the modern period.
- 6.28. The metalwork assemblage has been categorised into functional groupings adapted from those devised by Crummy (1983, 1988).

Dress accessories

- 6.29. Furrow 1034 (fill 1035) contained a double-looped copper alloy buckle frame of mass-produced design (Ra. 6). Each loop is oval and is bevelled internally. A sub-triangular knop with floral decoration projects from the front edge of each loop. Smaller triangular knops adorn the terminals of the central strap bar. Ferrous corrosion product adhering to sections of the upper frame likely represents a now corroded away iron pin. Buckles of this form are extremely prevalent (Margeson 1993, 28) and generally date to the earlier post-medieval period (c. 1550–1650). An identical buckle is illustrated by Whitehead (2003, 66, no. 408); a further example, from Norwich, was dated to c. 1600–1650 (Margeson 1993, 31, no. 174).
- 6.30. A dress button (Ra. 4) was recovered from furrow 1032 (fill 1033). This artefact was probably manufactured from high-zinc ‘tombac’ metal, which has a silvery appearance. It is circular in plan and is domed, with a raised central ‘pimple’ projecting from its upper face. The rear face is featureless, although ferrous corrosion product probably represents the remains of an internal iron wire shank. Such buttons tend to be dated to the middle of the 17th century (Bailey *et al.* 2016, 30).

Household objects

- 6.31. Furrow 1008 (fill 1009) contained a fragment of a circular pedestal base/drip tray from a late medieval ‘bunsen’ type candlestick (Ra. 1). This fragment is broken on all sides and originates from one edge of the base’s upper section. It would originally have been roughly cylindrical in form, with an everted upper rim and a projecting lower element. The outer face bears numerous concentric marks indicative of lathe-finishing. The upper surface is decorated with two deeply incised, concentric grooves.

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- 6.32. A similar candlestick was recovered from deposits associated with the 1507 Great Fire in Norwich (Margeson 1993, 84, no. 537). A further example with similar decorative double grooves was recovered from St Mary in the Marsh, Kent (Diggle 2023). An unstratified, broken base was also recorded at Brooke, Rutland (Scott 2014). The Ratby example, however, appears to have had a more strongly projecting rim than these other examples, flaring beyond the extent of the midsection and lower body.
- 6.33. These ‘bunsen’ type candlesticks appear to have been an English innovation of the 15th century and are found elsewhere only rarely (Bangs 1995, 52). They appear to have remained in use after the 15th century, as demonstrated by the Norwich example cited above, as well as by examples from London (Egan 2005, 81, no. 337) and Winchester (Rees 2008, 263–265, no. 1799) which were retrieved from contexts dating to the 16th century.

Fixtures and fittings

- 6.34. Three iron nails measuring 47mm–57mm in length were recovered from fill 1071 of posthole 1070.
- 6.35. Two examples are virtually complete, with neat, flattened, circular heads characteristic of Manby (2024, 16) type 1 ‘general use’ forms. The third example is preserved as a shank fragment only.
- 6.36. One nail has partially mineralised wood around its head, suggesting a very recent origin. This observation is supported by the circular shank cross-sections, which indicate machine manufacture. A post-1800 date is certain.

Weaponry

- 6.37. Furrow 1010 (fill 1011) produced a crudely chopped section of cylindrical lead rod (Ra. 3). This item is approximately 16mm long and 16mm in diameter. It is comparable with Civil War-era examples from Beeston Castle, Cheshire (Courtney 1993, 156–160, cat. nos. 35-36). These objects are thought to be connected with the manufacture of musket balls (ibid., 159).
- 6.38. Furrow 1030 (fill 1031) contained a 48-bore pistol ball (Ra. 6). This is c. 12mm in diameter. One side is flattened due to impact damage
- 6.39. Both of these objects are datable only broadly to the later 17th to early 19th centuries.

Unidentified/miscellaneous objects

- 6.40. Furrow 1012 (fill 1013) contained a small, pyramidal lump of lead (Ra. 2). This object is of uncertain date and function. Its sub-rectangular base is largely flat, with a prominent dimple sited at its midpoint. It measures approximately 13mm in width.
- 6.41. This artefact may have functioned as a small, crude standing weight of home-made character (e.g. Biggs 2018, 40–41). Alternatively, it may just be a fortuitously shaped melted piece of structural lead.

Discussion

- 6.42. The pottery assemblage provides limited evidence for activity in the vicinity of the site during the Middle to Late Iron Age, Early Roman, and medieval periods. The assemblage is small, and the scarcity of diagnostic sherds precludes any further meaningful conclusions.
- 6.43. The small metalwork assemblage is late medieval to post-medieval/modern in date. The securely identifiable objects represent commonplace object types utilised widely by individuals and households of lower to middling social status. The small number of metal finds is not indicative of particularly intense activity, suggesting that the site was peripheral to areas of human occupation in the late medieval period and later.
- 6.44. The presence of most of the metal objects within agricultural furrows indicates that the metal assemblage represents 'background scatter' – i.e. objects discarded as refuse or lost casually in the course of day-to-day activity – although it is possible that some items (e.g. the candlestick base fragment) may have been deposited via nightsoiling/manuring.

Selection strategy

- 6.45. The Prehistoric and Roman pottery should be retained in its entirety. The medieval pottery and post-medieval CBM is not recommended for long-term curation and can be discarded.
- 6.46. The small metalwork assemblage is of late medieval to post-medieval/modern date and represents commonplace object types. It is not recommended for long-term curation.

7. THE BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

- 7.1. A total of eight bulk environmental samples were taken from features across the site during the fieldwork. After an initial review by the CA environmental officer to identify the most promising samples, a total of six samples (79 litres of soil) were chosen for processing to evaluate the preservation of palaeoenvironmental remains from the Site and with the intention of recovering environmental evidence of domestic or industrial activity in this area. The samples were processed in accordance with CA *Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*.
- 7.2. Identifications of plant macrofossils are noted in Appendix C, following nomenclature of Stace (2019) for wild plants, and traditional nomenclature, as provided by Zohary *et al.* (2012), for cereals.
- 7.3. The flots varied in size and there was a mixed quantity of rooty material. The charred material displayed varying levels of preservation. The charcoal was round wood and comminuted fragments.

Iron Age/Roman

- 7.4. Sample 1 (Ditch A, fill 1043) contained a single grain of spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta*) and an abundant quantity of charcoal.
- 7.5. Sample 6 (posthole 1029, fill 1075) contained a grain of hulled wheat (*Triticum cf. spelta*) and an abundant quantity of charcoal.
- 7.6. Sample 8 (Ditch D, fill 1022), contained a few fragments of hazelnut shell (*Corylus avellana*) and an abundant quantity of charcoal.

Undated

- 7.7. Sample 4 (pit 1062, fill 1063) contained an abundant quantity of charcoal but no charred plant remains.
- 7.8. Sample 5 (pit 1014, fill 1015) contained some indeterminate cereal fragments and a hulled wheat grain (*Triticum sp.*), as well as an abundant quantity of charcoal.
- 7.9. Sample 7 (posthole 1027, fill 1028) contained abundant quantities of charcoal and a fragment of hazelnut shell.

Discussion

- 7.10. The very small amount of charred plant material is likely to represent wind-blown/dispersed domestic waste material. These assemblages provide evidence for low level settlement activity in the area, although they provide no detailed information regarding the range of crops utilised or the nature of the settlement. There was no evidence for crop processing.
- 7.11. This is not uncommon for Iron Age sites in Leicestershire. Three nearby Iron Age sites – Hamilton (Monckton 2008), Birstall (Speed *et al.* 2010) and Enderby (Monckton 1992) – all produced small quantities of domestic waste from cereal consumption (barley and hulled wheat).

8. DISCUSSION

- 8.1. The archaeological excavation recorded ditches associated with a Middle/Late Iron Age–Early Roman field system, as well as the possible remnants of a ring gully associated with an Iron Age roundhouse. A small number of pits and postholes were apparently associated with this late prehistoric/Roman activity.
- 8.2. The archaeological excavation also recorded the remnants of a medieval or earlier post-medieval ridge and furrow agricultural system.
- 8.3. A small number of modern features were recorded, as were modern made ground layers directly overlaying the natural geological substrate.

Phase 1: Middle/Late Iron Age (400 BC–AD 43)–Early Roman (AD 43–AD 200)

- 8.4. Ditches A, B and E are likely to represent boundaries within an agricultural field system. The intercutting nature of Ditches A and B provides evidence for maintenance/recutting of the boundaries over time. Associated dating evidence was predominantly Middle–Late Iron Age in origin, although there was a single sherd of Early Roman pottery in Ditch A.
- 8.5. Ditch D was within the area defined by one of the enclosures. The curved nature of Ditch D may indicate that it is the truncated remnants of a ring gully associated with an Iron Age roundhouse. The relatively large amount of pottery recovered from this shallow ditch (33 sherds of Middle/Late Iron Age pottery) may support a domestic settlement interpretation.

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- 8.6. Intercutting postholes 1027 and 1029 were located adjacent to Ditch D and may possibly be associated with the ditch, although posthole 1029 contained two sherds of early Roman pottery.
- 8.7. Ditch C was on a different alignment to the putative field system defined by Ditches A, B and E, although it also contained Middle–Late Iron Age pottery. The function of this ditch is uncertain.
- 8.8. Two undated pits (1062 and 1064), two undated postholes (1050 and 1052) and one undated pit (1014) were present within the southern half of the site, within the area of Middle/Late Iron Age–Early Roman activity described above. It is possible that these undated features are associated with this activity, although this cannot be stated definitively.
- 8.9. There is evidence for late prehistoric activity within the wider area, including an Iron Age hillfort (Bury Camp) located c. 1km south-west of the Site and a possible Iron Age enclosure located c. 800m north of the Site. There is also known Roman activity in the area, including a possible Roman road to the north of the Site and possible Roman settlements c. 800m south-west of the Site and c. 1.1km east of the Site. The field system and possible small settlement recorded by the present works represent another element within the known late prehistoric/early Roman exploitation of the area.

Phase 2: medieval (1066–1539)/post-medieval (1540–1800)

- 8.10. The excavation area was crossed by eight furrows, representing the remnants of a medieval or earlier post-medieval ridge and furrow agricultural system. These furrows provide further evidence that the Site lay within the agricultural hinterland of Ratby village.

Phase 3: modern (1800–present)

- 8.11. A modern posthole (1070) and a pit (1073) were recorded. A series of modern land drains had been laid along the bases of the medieval/earlier post-medieval furrows.
- 8.12. It was apparent that the original topsoil and subsoil layers had been removed relatively recently, as the natural geological substrate was directly overlain by modern made ground across the majority of the excavation area. This made ground is understood to be redeposited topsoil and subsoil displaced during the adjacent first phase of development. The stripping of topsoil and subsoil from the Site is likely to

have partially truncated the archaeological remains present, although the extent of this truncation could not be verified.

9. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 9.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Nat Pacholek, assisted by Dom Allen, Gemma Deaney, Mark Davies, Rory Bateman and Nick Botschin.
- 9.2. This report was written by Nat Pacholek; it was edited by Daniele Pirisino and Derek Evans. The finds report was written by Lanah Hewson (pottery and ceramic building material) and Alex Bliss (metal objects). The biological evidence report was written by Carolyn Smith. The report illustrations were prepared by Charlie Patman.
- 9.3. The project archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Clare Bond.
- 9.4. The project was managed for CA by Daniele Pirisino.

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context	Type	Fill of	Feature	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1000	layer			Topsoil	Mid grey brown clayey sand, friable with occasional small to medium sub-rounded stones			0.22	
1001	layer			Natural	Light yellow to orange sandy clay, friable with occasional mudstone brash and bands of dark red and light grey blue silty clay.				
1002	layer			Made ground	Remnant of spoil heap; Heterogeneous mid brown red silty clay, compact with frequent stones of varying sizes.			0.28	
1003	layer			Made ground	Heterogeneous mid to dark black and red brown silty clay, firm with frequent modern CBM, plastic, glass and organic material.			0.25	
1004	cut			Furrow	Unexcavated furrow. NE-SW aligned linear in plan.	>14	2.3		
1005	fill	1004		Furrow fill	Uppermost fill of unexcavated furrow. Mid orange brown sandy clay, friable.	>14	2.3		
1006	cut			Furrow	NE-SW aligned linear with moderately sloping straight sides and flat base.	>20	1.15	0.15	
1007	fill	1006		Furrow fill	Mid orange brown sandy clay, friable with frequent small to medium rounded stones.	>20	1.15	0.15	
1008	cut			Furrow	NE-SW aligned linear in plan with gently sloping straight sides and slightly concave base	>36	2.1	0.23	
1009	fill	1008		Furrow fill	Mid orange brown sandy clay, compact with occasional rounded small stones and charcoal flecks.	>36	2.1	0.23	C15
1010	cut			Furrow	Unexcavated furrow. NE-SW aligned linear in plan.	>40	2.2		
1011	fill	1010		Furrow fill	Uppermost fill of unexcavated furrow. Mid orange brown sandy clay, friable.	>40	2.2		PM
1012	cut			Furrow	NE-SW aligned linear in plan with gently sloping convex sides and flat base.	>40	2.6	0.24	
1013	fill	1012		Furrow fill	Mid orange brown sandy clay, compact with moderate small rounded stones.	>40	2.6	0.24	Med
1014	cut			Pit	Oval in plan with gently sloping concave NW side, moderately sloping straight SW side and concave base.	1.95	1.25	0.42	

Context	Type	Fill of	Feature	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1015	fill	1014		Pit fill	Light blue grey silty sand, friable with moderate sub-angular stones, fired clay and frequent charcoal flecks.	1.95	0.84	0.15	
1016	fill	1014		Pit fill	Light orange brown sandy clay, friable with occasional small sub-angular stones and charcoal flecks.	1.87	1.25	0.25	
1017	cut		Ditch D	Ditch	Curvilinear in plan with moderate to steep concave sides and flat base	>6	0.2	0.07	
1018	fill	1017	Ditch D	Ditch fill	Light grey silty clay, firm with frequent charcoal flecks and infrequent sub-rounded small stones.	>6	0.2	0.07	
1019	cut		Ditch D	Ditch	Curvilinear in plan with moderately sloping concave sides and concave base.	>6	0.3	0.08	
1020	fill	1019	Ditch D	Ditch fill	Light grey silty clay, compact with occasional charcoal flecks.	>6	0.3	0.08	
1021	cut		Ditch D	Ditch	Curvilinear in plan with steep concave side at S, moderate at N, and concave base	>6	0.25	0.09	
1022	fill	1021	Ditch D	Ditch fill	Light grey silty clay, firm with frequent small sub-angular stones and charcoal flecks.	>6	0.25	0.09	IA
1023	cut		Ditch A	Ditch	SE -NW aligned linear in plan with steep straight sides, concave base and rounded break of slope at the base.	>33	0.8	0.47	
1024	fill	1023	Ditch A	Ditch fill	Light blue grey with silty sand, compact with red brown mottling, charcoal flecks and small to medium sub-angular stones	>33	0.52	0.14	IA
1025	VOID								
1026	fill	1023	Ditch A	Ditch fill	Light brown grey silty clay, compact with red brown mottling, occasional medium rounded stones.	>33	0.71	0.24	
1027	cut			Posthole	Circular in plan with vertical to moderate straight sides and flat base.		0.5	0.14	
1028	fill	1027		Posthole fill	Mid brown grey silty clay, compact with occasional charcoal flecks .		0.5	0.14	
1029	cut			Posthole	Circular in plan with moderately sloping straight sides and concave base.		0.35	0.2	
1030	cut			Furrow	Unexcavated furrow. NE-SW aligned linear in plan.	>16	0.6		

Context	Type	Fill of	Feature	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1031	fill	1030		Furrow fill	Uppermost fill of unexcavated furrow. Mid orange brown sandy clay, friable.	>16	0.6		PM/Mod
1032	cut			Furrow	Unexcavated furrow. NE-SW aligned linear in plan.	>40	2.5		
1033	fill	1032		Furrow fill	Uppermost fill of unexcavated furrow. Mid orange brown sandy clay, friable.	>40	2.5		PM
1034	cut			Furrow	NE-SW aligned linear in plan with gradually sloping straight gradually and flat base.	>40	1.78	0.16	
1035	fill	1034		Furrow fill	Mid orange brown sandy clay, compact occasional small to medium rounded stones.	>40	1.78	0.16	PM
1036	cut		Ditch A	Ditch	NW-SE aligned linear in plan with steep straight sides and concave base.	>33	0.92	0.46	
1037	fill	1036	Ditch A	Ditch fill	Mixed light brown red to orange silty sand, friable with frequent small to medium mudstones and infrequent charcoal flecks	>33	0.68	0.1	
1038	fill	1036	Ditch A	Ditch fill	Light grey silty sand, friable with Infrequent small to medium sub-angular stones and infrequent charcoal flecks.	>33	0.8	0.13	
1039	fill	1036	Ditch A	Ditch fill	Light brown grey silty clay, compact with frequent occasional small sub-angular and rounded stones and infrequent charcoal flecks.	>33	0.52	0.27	
1040	cut		Ditch B	Ditch	NW-SE aligned linear in plan with steep straight side at NW, moderate concave at SE and concave base.	>33	0.44	0.3	
1041	fill	1040	Ditch B	Ditch fill	Mid grey brown silty clay compact with red clay patches, small sub-angular and rounded stones, infrequent charcoal flecks.	>33	0.44	0.3	IA
1042	cut		Ditch A	Ditch	SE-NW aligned linear in plan with steep straight sides, concave base and rounded break of slope at the base.	>33	0.94	0.37	
1043	fill	1042	Ditch A	Ditch fill	Dark grey black silty clay, friable with very frequent charcoal flecks and organic matter	>1	0.52	0.1	Rom
1044	fill	1042	Ditch A	Ditch fill	Light blue grey silty sand, soft with red brown mottling, occasional charcoal flecks and medium sub-angular stones.	>33	0.88	0.15	

Context	Type	Fill of	Feature	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1045	fill	1042	Ditch A	Ditch fill	Light brown grey ,silty clay, compact with red to orange mottling, occasional medium sub-angular stones and charcoal flecks.	>33	0.47	0.18	
1046	cut		Ditch B	Ditch	SE-NW aligned linear in plan with moderate to steep straight sides and concave base.	>33	0.41	0.22	
1047	fill	1046	Ditch B	Ditch fill	Mid grey brown silty clay, compact with red clay patches and occasional medium sub-angular stones.	>33	0.41	0.22	
1048	cut		Ditch C	Ditch	E-W aligned linear in plan with moderate to steep concave sides and concave base	>4.5	0.3	0.12	
1049	fill	1048	Ditch C	Ditch fill	Mid red brown silty sand, friable with blue, orange and red clay patches, frequent small sub-angular to rounded stones and rare charcoal flecks.	>4.5	0.3	0.12	IA
1050	cut			Posthole	Circular in plan with gently straight sides and concave base. Only base remnants left of feature.		0.29	0.02	
1051	fill	1050		Posthole fill	Mid grey brown silty clay, compact with moderate charcoal flecks.		0.29	0.02	
1052	cut			Posthole	Circular in plan with shallow sides and flat base. Only base remnants left of feature.		0.26	0.01	
1053	fill	1052		Posthole fill	Dark grey brown, silty clay, compact, no inclusions.		0.26	0.01	
1054	cut			Ditch	NW-SE aligned linear in plan with steep concave sides and base.	>33	0.4	0.19	
1055	fill	1054		Ditch fill	Sterile mid brown grey silty clay, compact.	>33	0.4	0.19	
1056	cut		Ditch C	Ditch	E-W linear in plan with steep concave sides and flat base,	>4.5	0.21	0.09	
1057	fill	1056	Ditch C	Ditch fill	Mid red brown silty sand, friable with blue, orange and red clay patches, frequent small sub-angular to rounded stones and rare charcoal flecks.	>4.5	0.21	0.09	
1058	cut		Ditch C	Ditch	E-W linear in plan with steep concave sides and flat base,	>4.5	0.3	0.07	
1059	fill	1058	Ditch C	Ditch fill	Mid red brown silty sand, friable red clay patches, frequent small sub-angular to rounded stones and rare charcoal flecks.	>4.5	0.12	0.07	

Context	Type	Fill of	Feature	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1060	cut		Ditch E	Ditch	SW-NE aligned linear in plan with steep slightly convex sides and tapered flat base,	>7.5	0.63	0.56	
1061	fill	1060	Ditch E	Ditch fill	Light brown silty clay, compact with red, orange blue patches, occasional small sub-angular stone inclusions.	>7.5	0.63	0.56	
1062	cut			Pit	Oval in plan with moderately steep straight sides and concave base.	1.03	0.45	0.21	
1063	fill	1062		Pit fill	Dark grey brown silty clay, compact frequent charcoal flecks, isolated burnt bone and rare large sub-angular stones.	1.03	0.45	0.21	
1064	cut			Pit	Circular in plan with steep convex sides and flat base.		0.6	0.14	
1065	fill	1064		Pit fill	Light grey brown silty clay, compact with moderate sub-angular stones		0.6	0.14	
1066	cut		Ditch E	Ditch	SW-NE aligned linear in plan steep convex sides and tapered flat base	>7.5	0.73	0.63	
1067	fill	1066	Ditch E	Ditch fill	Light brown silty clay, compact with red, blue, orange, occasional small sub-angular stones.	>7.5	0.73	0.63	
1068	cut		Ditch B	Ditch	SE-NW aligned linear in plan with moderate to steep straight sides and concave base.	>33	0.55	0.27	
1069	fill	1068	Ditch B	Ditch fill	Mid brown grey silty clay, compact with red clay patches and occasional medium sub-rounded stones.	>33	0.55	0.27	
1070	cut			Posthole	Circular, in plan steeped sides and unexposed base.		0.46	>0.35	
1071	fill	1070		Post-pipe	Dark brown grey clayey silt, friable with Infrequent angular stones of varying sizes and wood fragments.		0.16	>0.35	PM/Mod
1072	fill	1070		Posthole fill	Mixed mid red to grey brown silty clay compact with infrequent small sub-angular stones		0.46	0.14	
1073	cut			Pit	Rectangular in plan; unexcavated	3.2	1.88		
1074	fill	1073		Pit fill	Dark brown to black silty clay, compact with frequent CBM; unexcavated	3.2	1.88		
1075	fill	1029		Posthole fill	Sterile light brown grey silty clay, compact.		0.35	0.2	Rom

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Table B1: Finds concordance

Context	Class	Description	Fabric Code	Count	Weight(g)	Spot-date
1009	Medieval pottery	Midlands purple	MIDP	1	18	C15
	Copper alloy	Candlestick		1	10	
1011	Lead alloy	Rod		1	23	Post-medieval
1013	Medieval pottery	Midlands purple	MIDP	1	7	Medieval
	Lead alloy	Weight		1	10	
1022	Prehistoric pottery	Shelly ware	QSH2	33	122	Iron Age
1024	Prehistoric pottery	Shelly ware	Q2	5	20	Iron Age
1031	Lead alloy	pistol shot		1	6	Post-medieval/modern
1033	Copper alloy	button		1	4	Post-medieval
1035	Prehistoric pottery	Granitic rock-tempered ware	QR3	1	17	Post-medieval
	Copper alloy	Buckle		1	7	
1041	Prehistoric pottery	Sandy organic-tempered ware	QOR2	3	33	Iron Age
1043	Prehistoric pottery	Sandy ware	Q2	11	86	Roman
	Prehistoric pottery	Grog-tempered ware	GR2	1	7	
	Roman pottery	Sandy grog-tempered ware	MG1	1	5	
1049	Prehistoric pottery	Shelly ware	SH2	1	6	Iron Age
1071	Iron	Nails		3	12	Post-medieval/modern
	CBM	Brick	fscp	1	570	
1075	Roman pottery	White ware	WW4	2	6	Roman

Table B2: Summary of pottery by fabrics

Period	Fabric	Description	Count	Weight (g)
Middle to late Iron Age	GR2	Grog-tempered ware	1	7
	Q2	Quartz sandy ware	16	106
	QR3	Quartz sand and rock-tempered ware	1	17
	QSH2	Quartz sand and shell-tempered ware	33	122
	QV2	Quartz sand and vegetation-tempered ware	3	33
	SH2	Shelly ware	1	6
Roman	MG1	Sparse grog with moderate sand and calcareous inclusions	1	5
	WW4	Medium sandy ware	2	6
Medieval	MIDP	Midlands Purple Ware	2	25
Total			60	327

Table B3: Summary of metal objects by context and functional category

Context	Feature	Dress accessories	Household items	Fixtures/ fittings	Weaponry	Uncertain/ misc. objects	Total
1009	Furrow 1008	-	1	-		-	1
1011	Furrow 1010	-	-	-	1	-	1
1013	Furrow 1012	-	-	-		1	1
1031	Furrow 1030	-	-	-	1	-	1
1033	Furrow 1032	1					1
1035	Furrow 1034	1	-	-	-	-	1
1071	Posthole 1070	-	-	3	-	-	3

APPENDIX C: THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

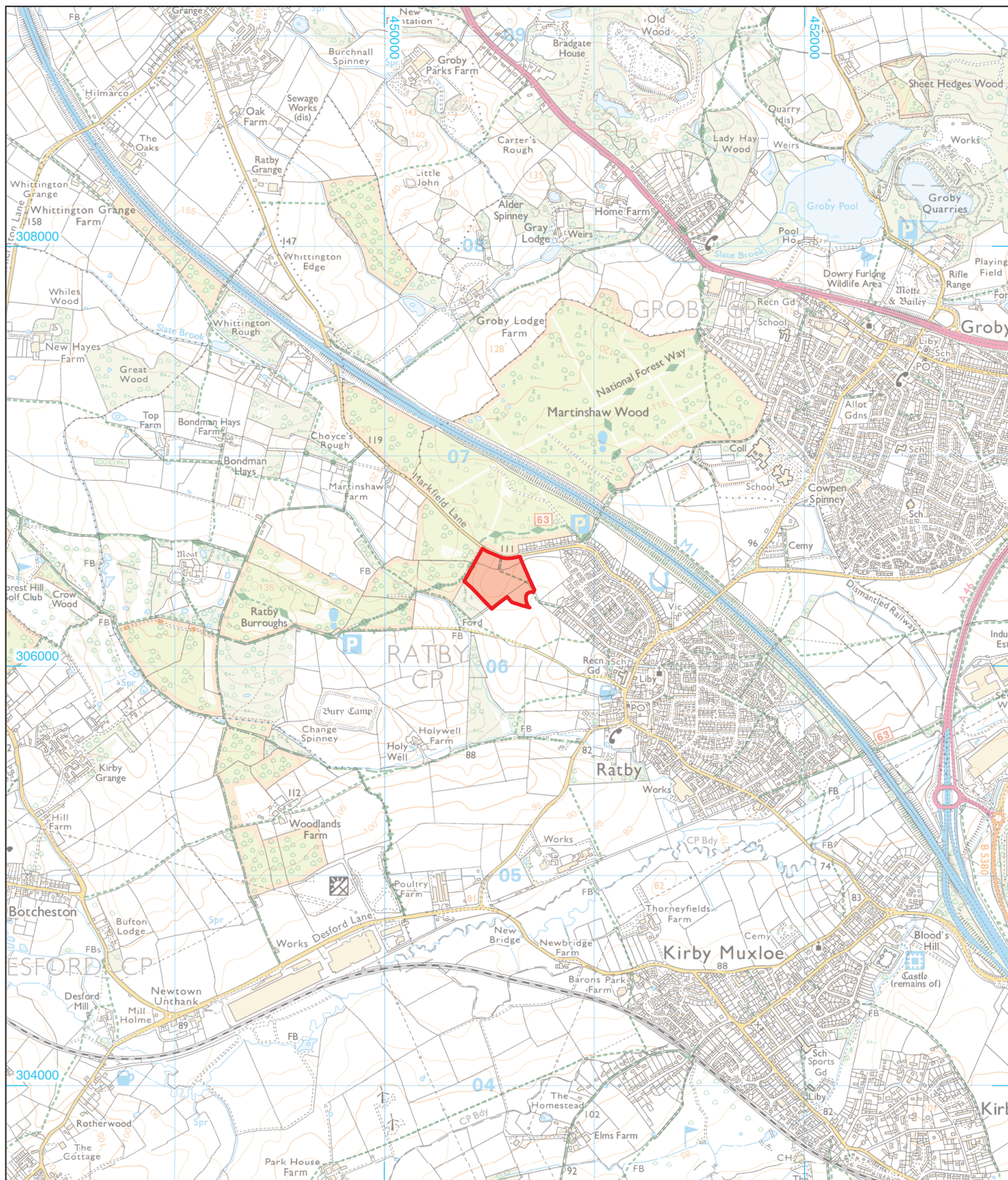
Table C1: Assessment table of the palaeoenvironmental remains

Feature	Context	Sample	Processed vol (L)	Flot size (ml)	Roots %	Grain	Chaff	Cereal Notes	Charred Other	Charred Other Notes	Charcoal > 4/2mm
1021	1022	8	20	2	80	-	-	-	*	shell; <i>Corylus avellana</i> 1, parenchyma	***/*
1027	1028	7	10	2	1	-	-	-	*	shell; <i>Corylus avellana</i> 3	**/*
1042	1043	1	10	15	1	*	-	<i>Triticum spelta</i> 1	-	-	****/*
1029	1075	6	9	1	70	*	-	<i>Triticum cf spelta</i> 1	-	-	**/*
1062	1063	4	10	3	5	-	-	-	-	-	***/*
1014	1015	5	20	56	10	*	-	Cereal 3, hulled <i>Triticum</i> sp 2	-	-	***/*

Key * = 1–4 items; ** = 5–19 items; *** = 20–49 items; **** = 50–99 items; ***** = >100 items,

APPENDIX D: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Land West of Ratby, Hinckley, Leicestershire	
Site code	RATB24	
Short description	In June and July 2024, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological excavation on land west of Ratby, Hinckley, Leicestershire. A single excavation area measuring c. 2,875m² was opened. This area was located to investigate Late Iron Age/Early Roman features identified by a previous archaeological trial trench evaluation. The archaeological excavation recorded ditches associated with a Middle/Late Iron Age–Early Roman field system, as well as the possible remnants of a ring gully associated with an Iron Age roundhouse. A small number of pits and postholes were apparently associated with this late prehistoric/Roman activity. The archaeological excavation also recorded the remnants of a medieval or earlier post-medieval ridge and furrow agricultural system. A small number of modern features were recorded, as were modern made ground layers directly overlaying the natural geological substrate.	
Project dates	24 June–5 July 2024	
Project type	Excavation	
Planning reference number	22/00648/OUT	
Development type	Residential	
Previous work	Field evaluation (Cotswold Archaeology 2023) Geophysical survey (Phase Site Investigations 2023) Historic environment desk-based assessment (Cotswold Archaeology 2024b).	
Future work	Unknown	
Methodology	One excavation area measuring c. 2,875m² was excavated. This area was located to investigate a Late Iron Age ditch terminus and a Late Iron Age/Early Roman ditch identified by a previous archaeological trial trench evaluation.	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	Land West of Ratby, Hinckley, Leicestershire	
Study area (m ² /ha)	2,875m ²	
Site co-ordinates	450526 306406	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Daniele Pirisino	
Project Leader	Nat Pacholek	
Funder	Lagan Homes	
SCIENTIFIC DATING UNDERTAKEN	No	
ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING	Yes	
MONUMENT TYPE	Ditches, pits and postholes (undated, Iron Age/Roman)	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	Iron Age/Roman pottery	
RESEARCH FRAMEWORKS	No	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive (museum/accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	Leicestershire County Museum Service / X.A47.2023	Ceramics
Paper	Leicestershire County Museum Service / X.A47.2023	Site recording forms/drawings, report, registers
Digital	ADS	Digital photographs, digital archive, survey data
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Cotswold Archaeology 2024 <i>Land West of Ratby, Hinckley, Leicestershire: Archaeological Excavation</i> CA typescript report MK1074_2		



 Site boundary

0 1:25,000 1km

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Ordnance Survey 0100031673



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PROJECT TITLE

Land West of Ratby, Leicestershire

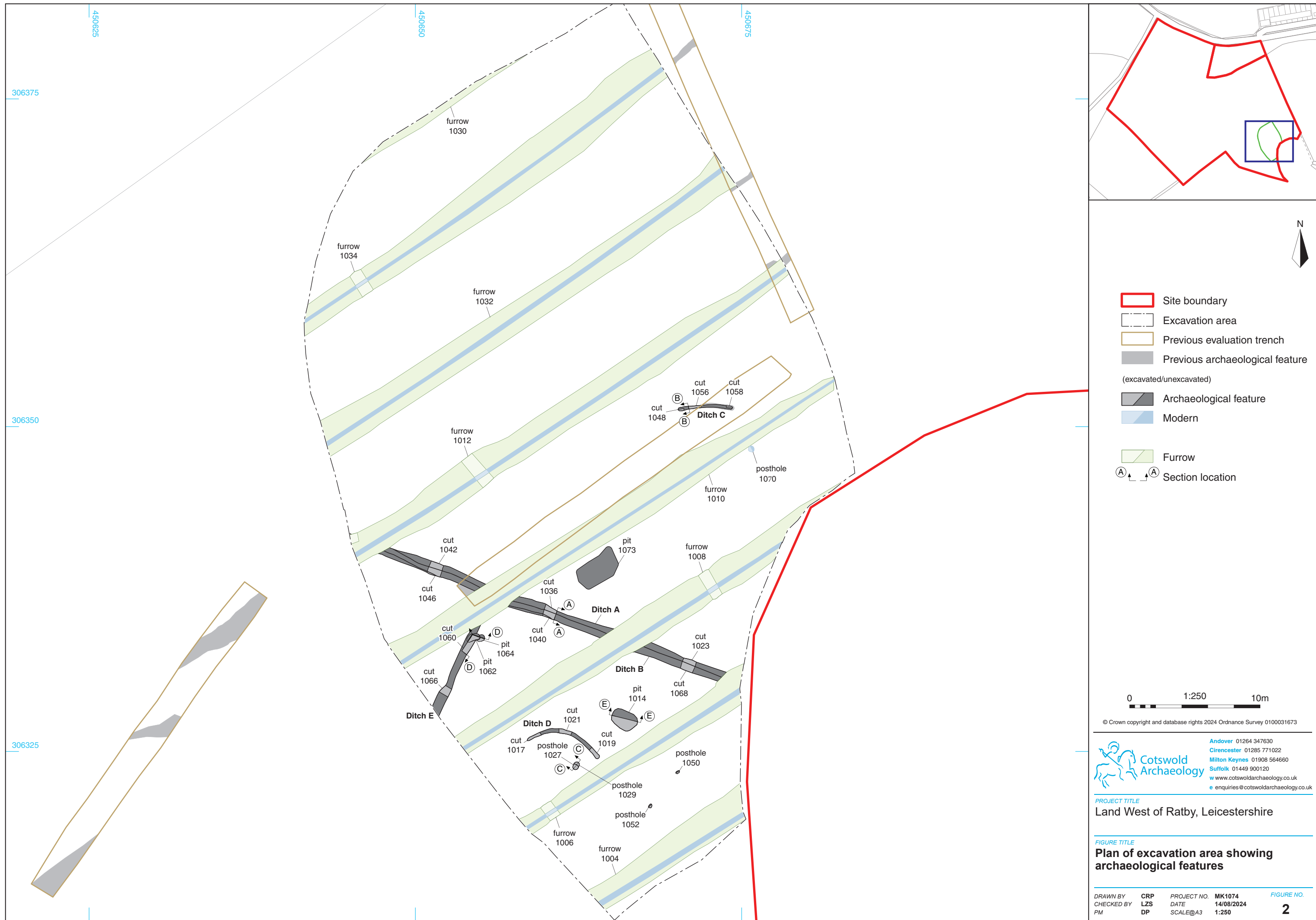
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Site location plan

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CHECKED BY LZS DATE 14/08/2024
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FIGURE NO.

1



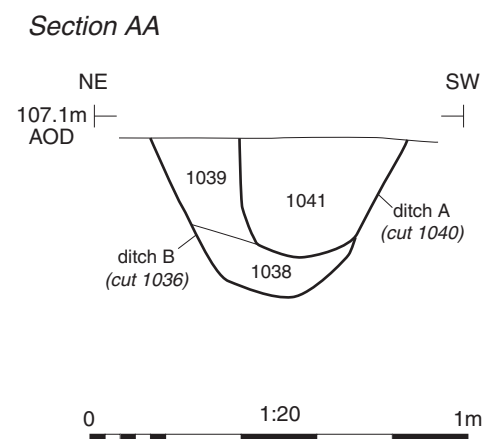
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PROJECT TITLE
Land West of Ratby, Leicestershire

FIGURE TITLE
Plan of excavation area showing archaeological features

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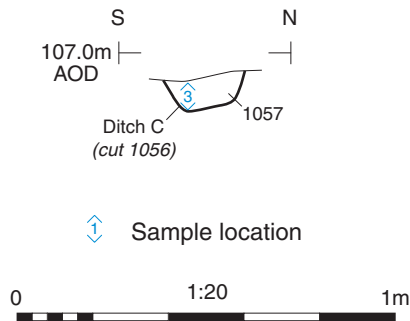


Intercutting ditches A (cut 1036) and B (cut 1040), looking south-east (0.4m scale)



Intercutting ditches A (cut 1042) and B (cut 1046), looking north-west (0.4m scale)

Section BB



Ditch C (cut 1056), looking west (0.2m scale)



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PROJECT TITLE

Land West of Ratby, Leicestershire

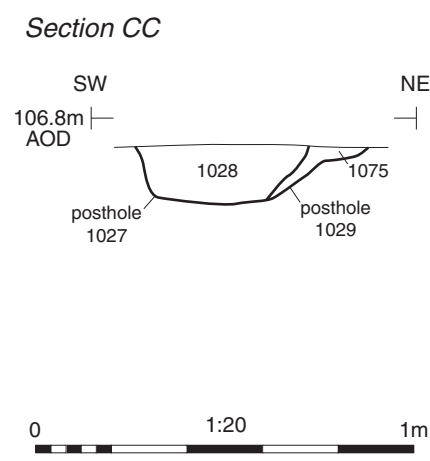
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Ditch C: section and photograph

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PM DP SCALE@A4 1:20

FIGURE NO.

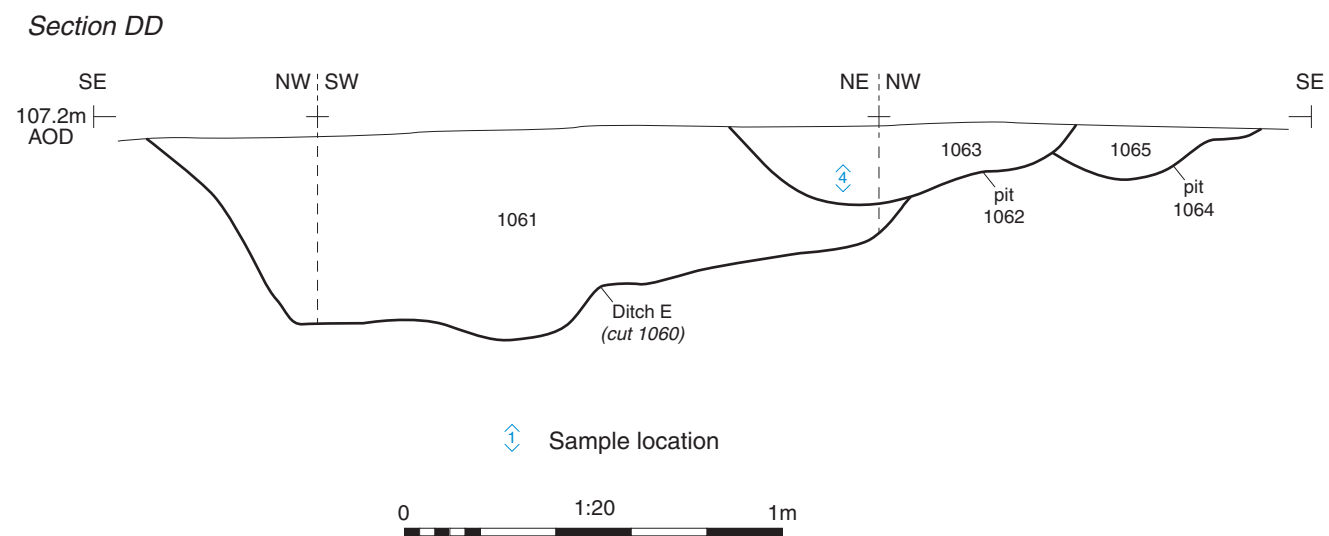
4



Ditch D (cut 1021), looking west (0.2m scale)



Intercutting postholes 1027 and 1029, looking north-west (0.3m scale)



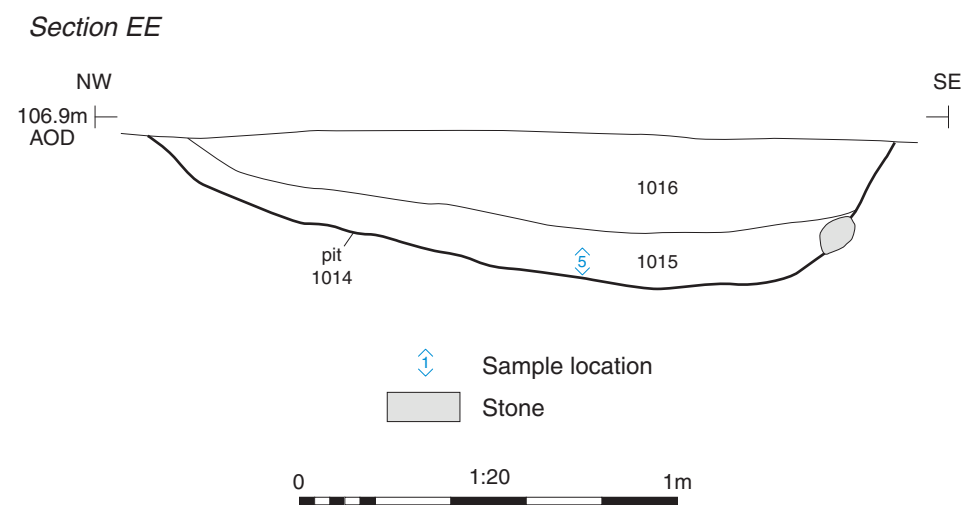
Ditch E (cut 1066), looking south-west (0.4m scale)



Intercutting ditch E (cut 1060) and pit 1062, looking north-west (1m scale)



Intercutting pits 1062 and 1064, looking north-east (1m scale)



Pit 1014, looking north-east (1m scale)



Posthole 1050, looking north-west (0.2m scale)



Posthole 1052, looking north-west (0.2m scale)



Furrow 1006, looking south-west (1m scale)



Furrow 1012, looking north-east (1m scale)



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PROJECT TITLE

Land West of Ratby, Leicestershire

FIGURE TITLE

Furrow photographs

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FIGURE NO.

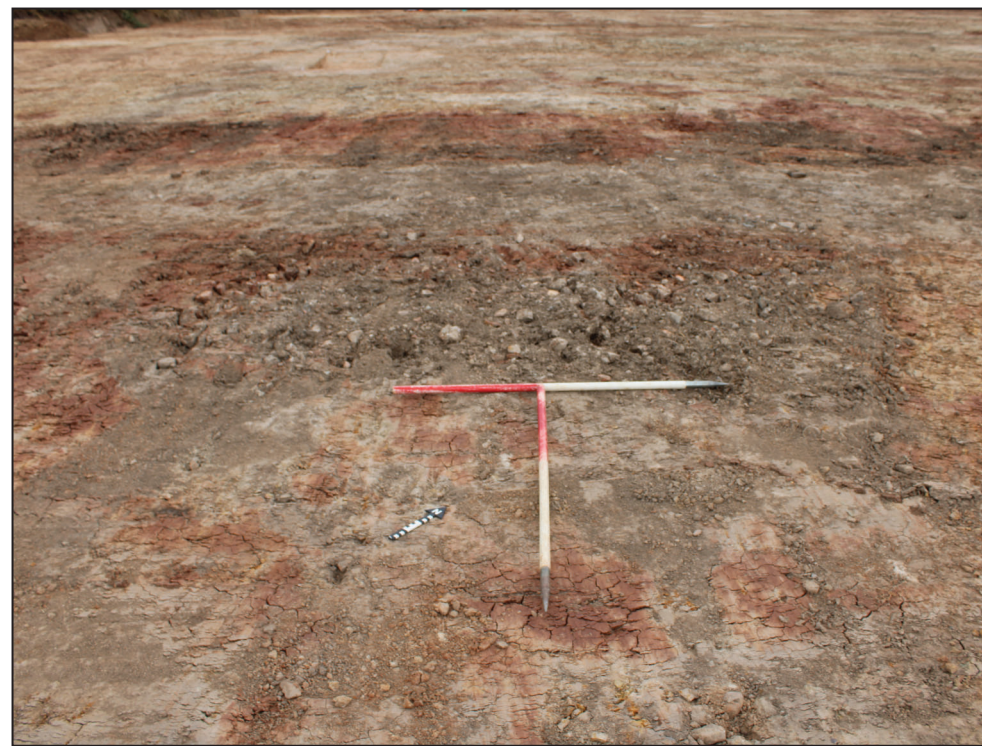
8



Modern posthole 1070, looking north-east (0.4m scale)



Modern ground 1003, looking north-east (1m scale)



Modern pit 1073, looking north-west (1m scales)

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