Castleshaw Roman Fort:
Archaeological Evaluation
of land east of the fort defences

2021

Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts volunteers undertaking the evaluation

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Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts

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Background

As part of the Castleshaw Roman Forts Hinterland Survey, the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts (FoCRF) carried out an archaeological evaluation of an area of land east of the defences at Castleshaw Roman Fort (Heritage Asset No. 1017837), centred on grid reference SD99830953. The land is owned by United Utilities and farmed by David Hirst.

There were no investigations in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. The proposal for the 2021 investigations was to:

a) Undertake archaeological test pitting and trenching in the area to the east of the Roman fort's eastern rampart, between the fort east gate and the south-east rampart corner and bounded on the east by Dirty Lane.
b) Define the line and extent of survival of the road exiting the east gate
c) Determine the presence/absence of archaeological remains in this area
d) Help understand why there are no defensive ditches on this side of the fort

Aerial view of fort showing the area covered by the 2021 investigations east of the fort defences

Investigation of this area was designed to complement and complete evaluation of the area outside the eastern defences of the fort, which are notable for their absence of a defensive ditch system. Archaeological evaluation reports have been produced for the area to the north of the road exiting the east gate, the latest being in 2019 (*Castleshaw Roman Fort: Archaeological Evaluation of land east of the fort defences*, by Norman Redhead, April 2020). Further definition of features exposed in the 2018 evaluation was undertaken through the excavation of 2 targeted trenches and 21 x 1 metre square test pits in the 2019 investigations of land east of the Roman fort and north of the east gate. This work yielded important results which help inform our understanding of activities in this area. The key findings are as follows:

- No ditch exists along the eastern defences but test pitting has narrowed down the area where a terminus can be anticipated, near to the north east corner of the fort defences.

- A ‘rampart style’ deposit of decayed turf and clay found several metres east of the rampart may relate to a berm or a different rampart.

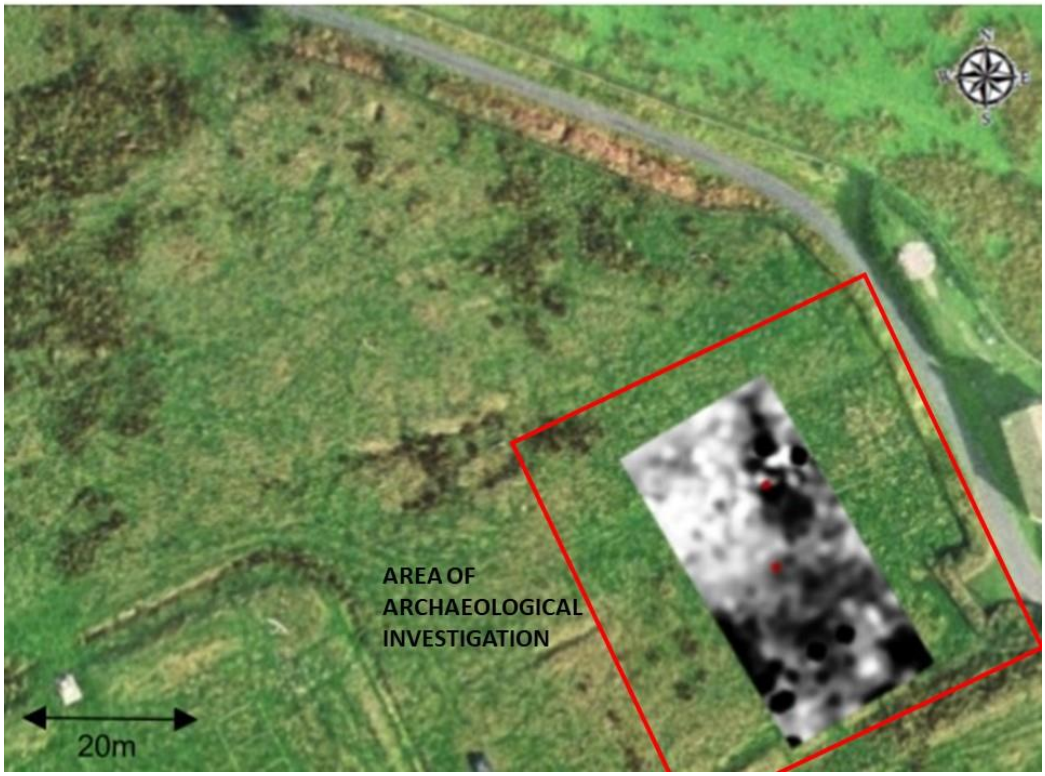
- A bath house function for the ‘wall’ and ‘furnace’ exposed in Bruton’s trench and partly investigated by the Friends in 2018 can be ruled out. Instead, these remains can now be interpreted as two domed stone-built bread ovens, with the possibility of a third to the west.

- A narrow rectangular stone flagged surface, of two phases, has been defined on its north, east and south sides, but not on the west. It is c 2.5 metres wide by at least 7 metres long and might be associated with a timber building evidenced by two post holes, a possible dwarf stone wall and a foundation trench. To the south of the stone surface a clay base for a domed oven was found, whilst to the north there was also evidence of burning and a potential oven/hearth nearby.

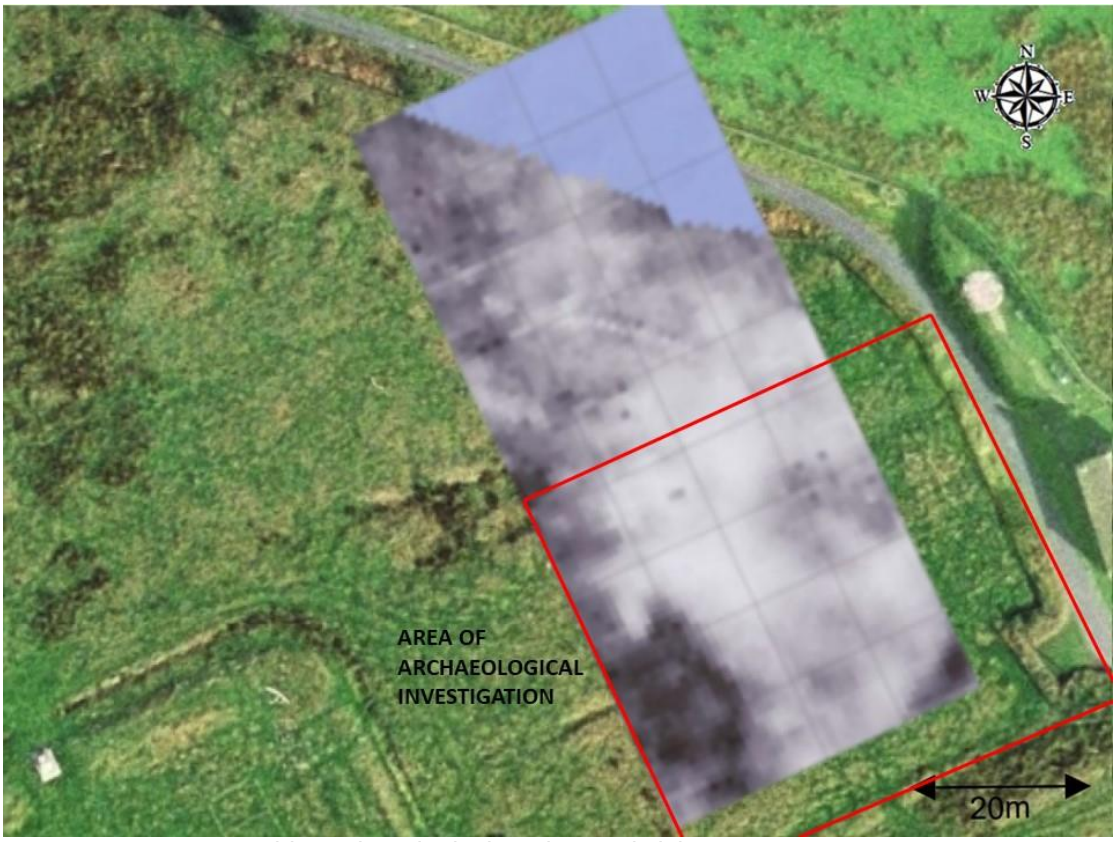
- On the north side of Dirty Lane, on a narrow flat spit of land, there are indications of a shallow ditch and a Roman deposit cut by the ditch

A picture is starting to emerge of how this area east of the fort rampart was used. The concentration of ovens suggests a special function as the garrison would have had recourse to its own ovens within the fort. It is possible that this area was dedicated to supplying cooked food for travellers or military personnel using the main trans-Pennine highway that the fort sits alongside and guards. The gradient up to Standedge immediately above the fort is very severe and it is possible the fort was used as a staging post for those making the climb.

The area east of the fort defences and south of the east gate had not yet been evaluated through trenching or test pitting. A resistivity survey undertaken by the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts in 2019 (Barrett) and Tameside Archaeology Society in 2014 showed up several anomalies or high resistance areas worthy of further archaeological investigation. Currently the course of the road exiting the east gate is not well defined so that it is not known how it joins with the main highway. A substantial section of the road within and running out of the east gate was exposed and recorded in the 2014 community excavation, but its course beyond this does not show up clearly in the geophysical survey data. Given the extent of Roman activity to the north of the east gate, it can be anticipated that a number of Roman features will exist in this area, and this is certainly suggested by the geophysical survey data which is shown below overlain on the attached aerial photograph. However, it is worth noting the presence of an extensive low resistance/blank area.



Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts resistivity survey June 2019



Tameside Archaeological Society resistivity survey June 2014

The resistivity surveys of 2014 and 2019 cover most of the 2021 investigation area, with just the sites of former post medieval buildings on the eastern edge being missed out. The surveys correlate well with both showing a blank area east and south-east of the former east gate and with areas of high readings further east and south beyond the blank area.

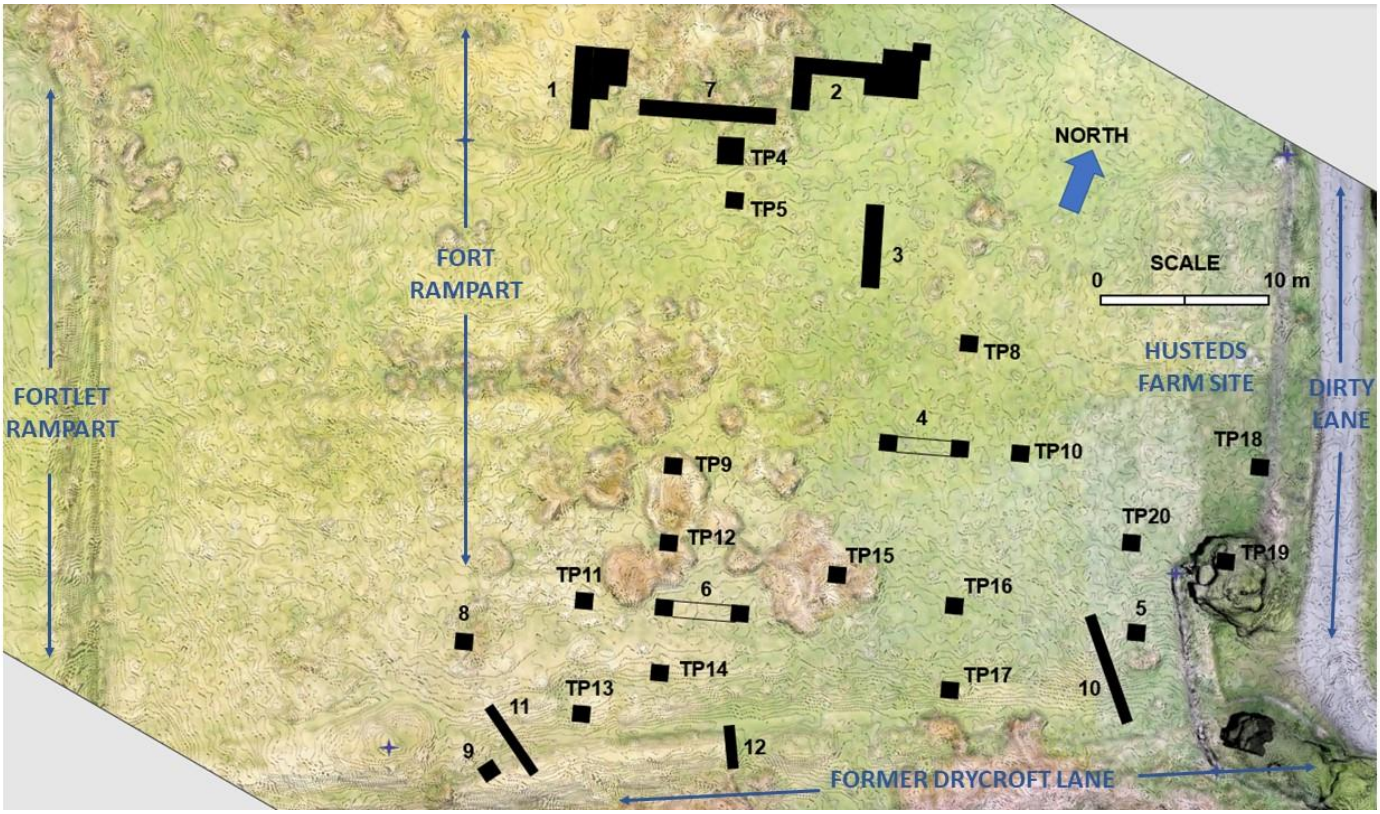
Evaluation Methodology for the 2021 Investigations

The 2021 investigations were carried out within the research framework strategies 8, 9 and 10 in the 'Excavation Strategy' (March 2013), which also contains the excavation methodology, and following the granting of Scheduled Monument Consent. The 2021 excavation report, which details the results, is lodged as a pdf under the 'Documents' section of the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts website: www.castleshawarchaeology.co.uk

Initially 6 trenches were proposed to target areas adjacent to the east gate exit road revealed in Trench 6 in 2014 along with areas of high resistivity readings in the hope that these would represent buried remains. These trenches were to be 5 metres long and 1 metre wide. There were also two smaller trenches in the south-west corner to look for the fort ditch and across the site of an old excavation trench on the rampart a few metres north of the south-west corner. The trenches were complemented by a spread of 1 metre square test pits to give a good coverage across the investigation site. All trenches were hand dug by volunteers from the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Fort under the supervision of Norman Redhead (archaeological adviser to the Friends). 24 volunteers took part in the excavations over 10 days (8 in August and 2 in October). Phil Barrett led further geophysical survey in August. The volunteers' energy and enthusiasm were amazing and their much valued, continued support is crucial in furthering our understanding of this enigmatic Roman site.

Trench 1 slightly overlapped the southern edge of the 2014 Trench 6 to define the edge of the road surface and to see if this, southern, side of the east gate also had the stone platform that was discovered to the north of the exit road at the end of the 2014 excavation season. The trench encountered a stone spread across most of its length and so was extended eastwards to define the character and edge of the stone deposit. Trench 2 slightly overlapped the south-east corner of the 2014 Trench 6 with the intention of determining the extent and alignment of the fort road running eastwards. As the remains were very patchy,

the trench was extended both southwards and eastwards to define the stone spread better and to allow appropriate investigation of post holes and a pit.



Plan of trenches and test pit locations for the 2021 investigations east of the fort defences

Trench 3 was fully opened but found to have negative archaeology. In order to save time and not expend unnecessary effort, a more tentative approach was subsequently adopted for Trenches 4, 5 and 6. Initially 1 metre square test pits were excavated at the extreme ends of the trenches with a view to only extending these if the archaeology and available time justified it. Excavation did not go beyond the two test pits at the ends of Trenches 4 and 6, whilst Trench 5 saw only a 1 metre trench dug at its eastern end. The results in Trench 5 led to a re-evaluation of its west to east orientation and it was replaced by a new trench, 10, which was dug on north-west to south-east axis.

Trench 7 was a new trench which was designed to fully expose the width of the angled road discovered in Trench 1 and to facilitate a more informed interpretation – it ended up being 8 metres long by 1 metre wide. It started as Test Pits 1, 2 and 3 but these were joined up to become Trench 7 once the extent of the Roman road remains became evident. 2 test pits were dug to the south of Trench 7 to define the extent of the road's survival as it went south.

Trench 8 also did not go beyond a 1 metre square test pit and was abandoned once the top of the Roman rampart material was revealed. The trench across the south-west defences was re-numbered as Trench 9, number 7 having already been allocated. Trench 9 also did not go beyond the initial 1 metre square area as the archaeology was important enough to replace this with a new trench, 11, a couple of metres to the north-east where there was more room and away from disturbance caused by an 18th or 19th century drain. One more trench was excavated, this being Trench 12 across the bank running alongside the former Drycroft Lane at the southern extremity of the investigation area.

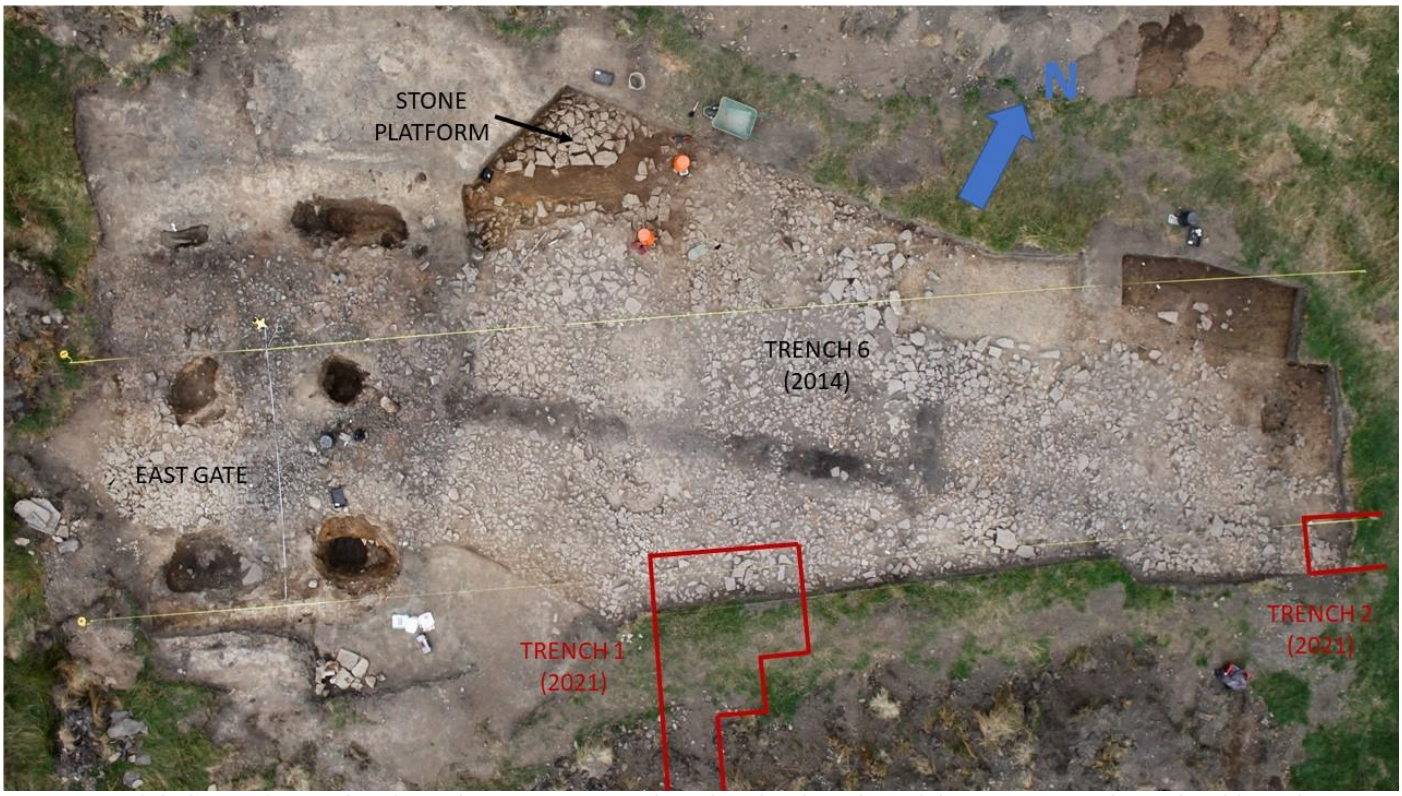
There were 20 test pits in all, including the 5 already mentioned in and around Trench 7. The locations of these are shown on the plan above. An area showing blank on the resistivity survey in the middle western part of the investigation area saw little in the way of investigation. This is because Test Pit 4, Trench 3, Test Pit 9 and the 2014 Trench 7 demonstrated that the Roman archaeology had been removed in this area by post medieval landscaping beyond the fort rampart.

The investigation area totalled 2,250 square metres of which 70 square metres (3%) were excavated.

Results

Trench 1

Trench 1 was located adjacent to the south side of the east gateway to define the parameters of the Roman road previously excavated in 2014 as well as to determine the presence of a stone platform similar to that encountered on the north side of the gateway in 2014. Starting as a 5 metre by 1 metre trench on a south to north axis, Trench 1 was subsequently extended eastwards to better define the road with a 3 by 1 metre extension then, finally, a further 2 by 1 metre extension. The location of the trench can be seen in the trench plan above and in relation to the 2014 excavation on the aerial photo below.



Aerial photo of Trench 6 from the 2014 excavation showing location of the 2021 Trench 1 edged in red

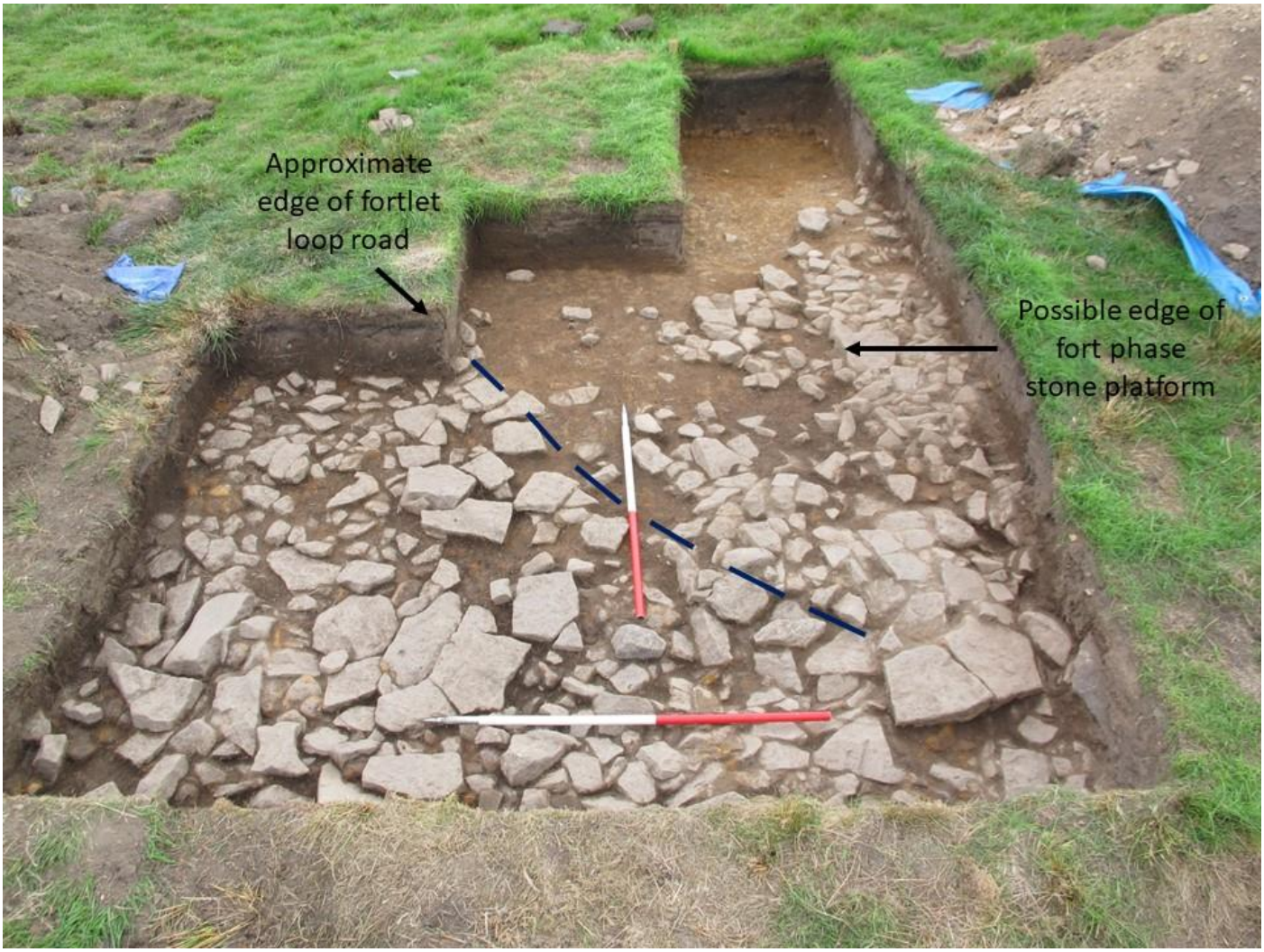
Trench 1: showing the first extension of the trench eastwards after stone surface revealed (left) and towards the end of the excavation with final extension (right)

The southern-most 1 metre of the original 5 metres long trench was found to be devoid of stones, with an angled edge to the spread of stones being apparent. Extending the trench allowed us to follow this edge and make more sense of the stone surfaces that were revealed. The north side of Trench 1 formed a 1 metre-wide overlap with the south edge of Trench 6 from the 2014 excavation. This overlap allowed us to

accurately marry together the two trenches. Trench 1 could be divided into three distinct areas of archaeology. As stated above, the southern part of the trench comprised very few stones and was characterised by sub-natural brown-yellow silty clay loam with no finds. Along the west side of the trench was a concentrated spread of stones made up predominantly of small to medium angular grit stones. There appeared to be a straight edge to the dense concentration of stones. This edge ran south to north 40 cm in from and parallel with the trench edge. One larger stone appeared to form the boundary of the densely packed stone. The surface level of the stone spread was at 277.22 m aOD (above Ordnance Datum). Another group of stones, comprising mainly medium sized flat laid gritstones, formed a rough surface in a rough semi-circular formation, projecting eastwards. These stone arrangements may well correspond to the stone platform on the opposite side of the gateway, although the stones are not as regular and there is no distinct kerbing. However, it is possible that a similar arrangement would be exposed if Trench 1 was extended westwards. If the western edge of Trench 1 is extrapolated across to the other side of the east gateway, as excavated in 2014, it can be seen that it has only exposed the easternmost part of the stone platform, where the remains are less well formed. Another complication is that the possible stone platform in Trench 1 is disturbed and cut across by a later stone feature which forms the third archaeological element: the fortlet phase exit road.

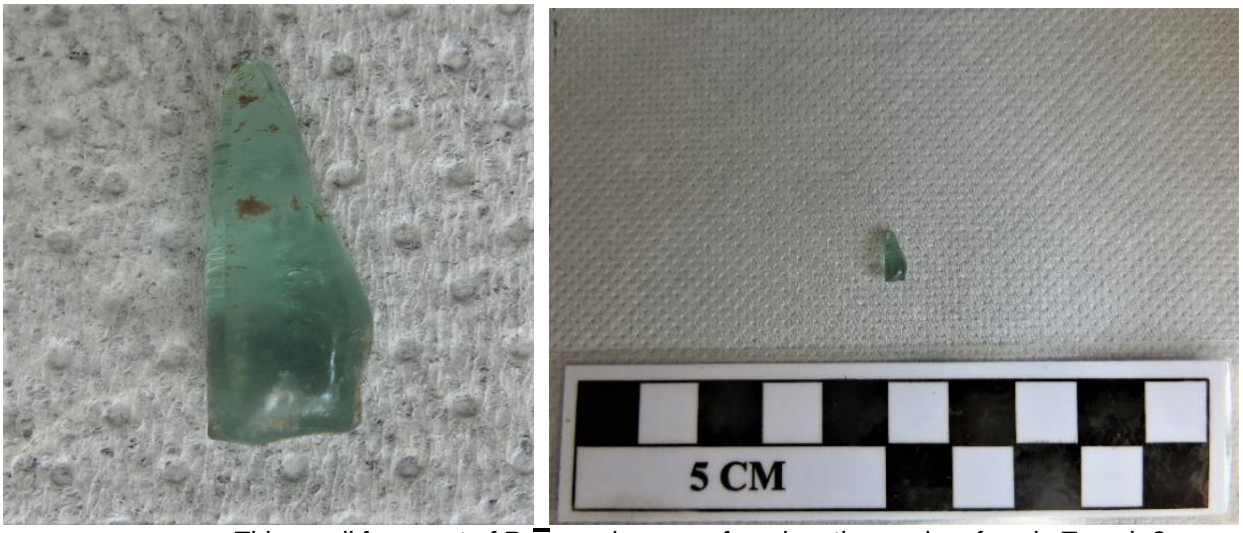
The northern half of Trench 1 was taken up with a spread of stones continuing from the Roman road surface exposed and recorded in the 2014 Trench 6. There were numerous large angular flat stones amongst the small to medium sized ones that made up most of the road material in Trench 6. It is possible that these are disturbed kerb stones or formed part of the road surface at one time. Within the road material were several patches of charcoal and burnt daub or Roman tile. The level of the road surface ranged from 277.15 to 277.01m aOD, the lowest point being in the north-east corner of the trench. An edge to the road was evident where the stones died away to sub-natural soil. This edge continued into Trench 7 and demonstrates that the road angles sharply away to the south-east immediately after leaving the east gateway, linking back to the main trans-Pennine highway. It is suggested that the road belongs to the fortlet phase. It is on a different alignment to the fort phase road which runs at a much shallower angle according to Bruton's 1907 excavation report and confirmed by the 2014 Trench 6 excavation. The fortlet loop road running around the back (north side) of the fortlet is known to have run at a tight angle through the former west gateway of the fort and this arrangement appears to be replicated on the east side. The fortlet road re-used the east gateway before turning sharply to re-join the main road. It appears to cut through the earlier stone platform associated with the fort gate structure. Further excavation to the west of Trench 1 and a more detailed investigation of the relationship between the platform and the road is recommended.

Trench 1 looking north, with the stone platform on the left-hand side and the road above and to the right



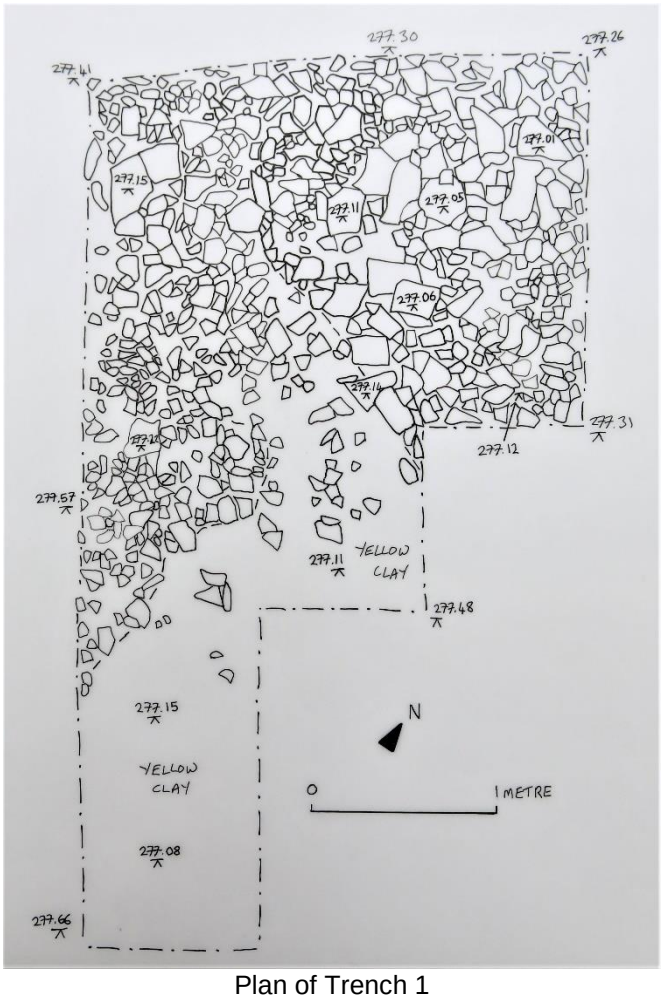
Trench 1 looking south, showing the road (bottom) and on the left-hand side and the stone 'platform' far right

Only one Roman find came from Trench 1 (see glass fragment below), but this might reflect the fact that no Roman deposits or features were excavated. Some potential pieces of broken tile were evident amongst the stones of the road remains. From the top and plough soil layers overlying the Roman archaeology came a variety of black glazed earthenware, including several handles, a couple of trail and feather slip wares, and an assortment of other glazed pottery fragments. There was also a clay pipe stem, piece of glass, and an iron nail. This material dated from the 18th to 20th centuries.



This small fragment of Roman glass was found on the road surface in Trench 2

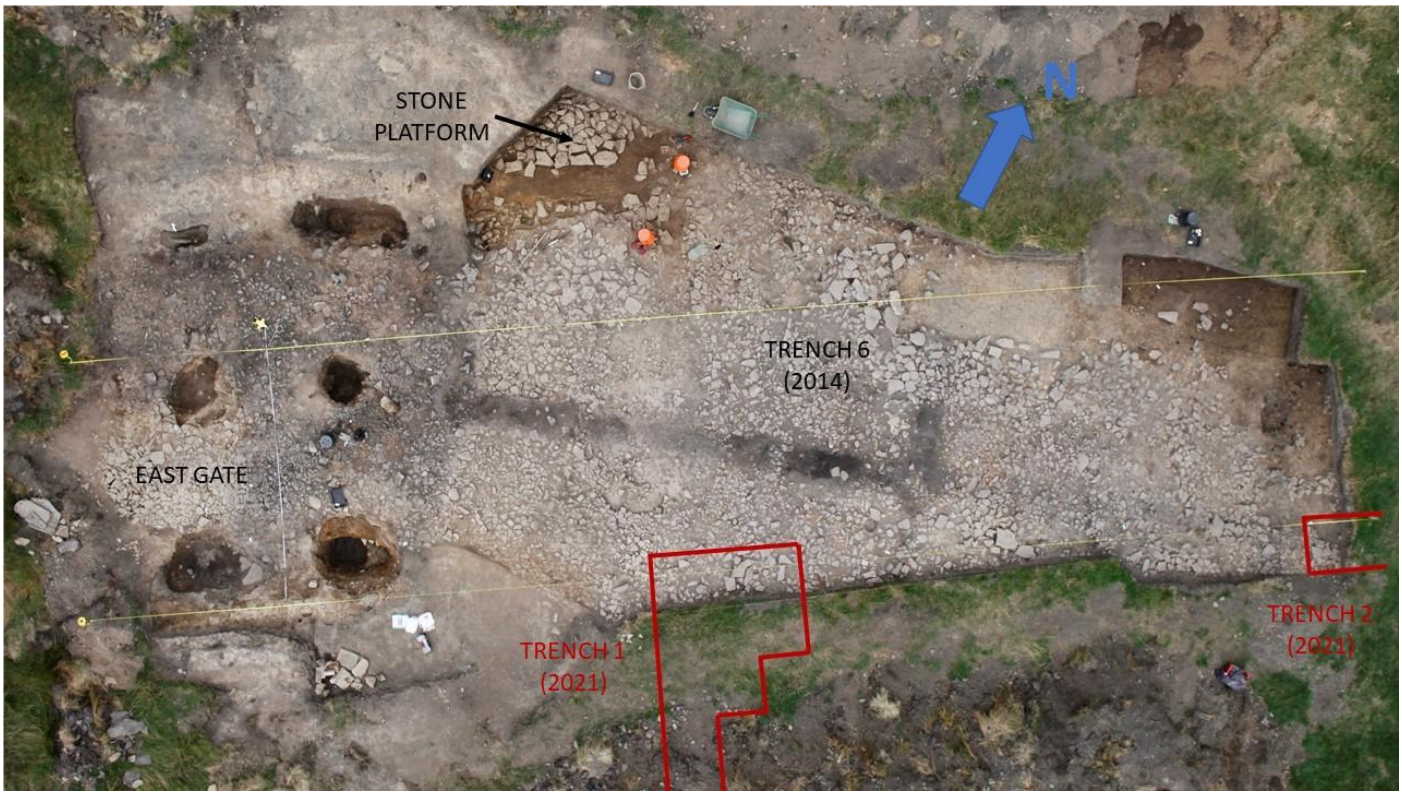
A typical assemblage of post medieval pottery and a few other finds came from the topsoil and plough soil in Trench 1: top left shows finds from the original trench excavation, top right are from the first extension east, and below are the few finds from the final eastern extension



Plan of Trench 1

Trench 2

This commenced as a 5 metre long trench, 1 metre wide, running on a roughly west to east axis from the edge of the former 2014 Trench 6 and slightly overlapping the south-east corner of the 2014 excavation area by 1 metre. Trench 2 was designed to trace and define the character of the Roman road recorded in Trench 6 and by Bruton in 1907/8.



The location of the western edge of Trench 2 (lower right) mapped against the 2014 Trench 6 excavation area

Trench 2 during initial stages of excavation (left) and showing stone surfaces looking east (right)

As can be seen in the aerial view of the 2014 Trench 6 above, it was already apparent that the road surface was breaking up towards the eastern edge of that trench. Bruton excavated a narrow trench along what was understood to be the spine of the road emerging from the east gate (showing as a broad black line on the aerial view above), and his plan suggested the road angled towards the northern corner of the house on the opposite side of Dirty Lane. After excavating through around 30cm of top and plough soil, the road surface was seen to continue in a very patchy manner. It only ran for another 1 metre from the eastern edge of the old Trench 6 (two metres from the western edge of the 2021 Trench 2). The stones were predominantly small to large angular grit stones laid flat but with some stone-free soil patches. There was then a one and a 1.5 gap in the stones, where sub-natural was present, before they picked up again for a length of 3 metres with the same sort of metalling running through the trench's eastern edge. This easterly spread of stones was only about 1 metre wide, resembling a path more than a road. The stones were associated with a compact deposit of mid-yellow clay mixed with brown silty clay loam.

Trench 2 was extended in two places to determine the extent of the stone surface. At the west end of it was extended 2 metres to the south. This came onto sub-natural yellow clay and demonstrated an absence of stones suggesting that the road had been totally removed here, or it was never in this location, with the stones revealed in other parts of Trench 2 being related to a narrow track or path.

Trench 2 southerly extension at western edge of the trench, looking south, showing the lack of stones.

The eastern end of Trench 2 was enlarged considerably. Firstly, it was extended by 2 metres eastwards to follow the narrow spread of stones. These became sparser towards the eastern trench edge. The trench was also extended 3 by 1 metres southwards to define the southern extent of the stone spread. A ragged but well-defined edge against the compact yellow clay deposit was revealed. The northern side of the stone feature was also revealed and confirmed by a 1 metre square extension to the north; on this side there was a curved edge so that the stones narrowed to only 40 cm wide but then splayed out again to 100 cm width towards the eastern trench edge. The stone spread surface gently sloped from 277.12 m aOD at the western end of Trench 2 to 277.04 m aOD at the eastern end. A decorative bronze artifact was recovered from the top of the stone surface. Initially thought to be a Roman period brooch, Heather Beeton, North West Finds Liaison Officer for the Portable Antiquities Scheme, kindly examined it and identified it is part of a decorative shoe buckle of 18th century date. Around the mid-point of the southern extension a potential post hole was revealed (F2 on the plan). This was evident as a roughly circular patch of light to mid-brown silty clay loam defined by a ring of tilted small to medium stones.

Excavation in progress on the easterly extension of Trench 2, with Trench 1 being dug in the background (left) and showing the straggly stone spread with the potential post hole visible in the middle left side of the photo (right). The white tag marks the position of the find pictured below.

The 18th century fragment of decorative bronze shoe buckle found on the stone surface in Trench 2

There was little else of archaeological interest beyond the potential post hole in the southern extension, and certainly no evidence of the stone surface in this area, but the northern side of the stone spread was more irregular and further exploration was desirable; therefore, the trench was extended 2 by 1 metres to the north. The potential for cut features soon became apparent, with another potential post hole (F1), a linear spread of stones (F5) and, in the north-east corner, another compact group of stones (F4) being revealed. The compact, mixed yellow clay deposit was found to partly overlie these features and was therefore removed to better reveal early, cut features. The clay was found to be up to 8 cm deep and associated with the stone path as it thinned considerably away from this feature. It's compactness and mixed nature is suggestive of a trample deposit probably associated with the laying of the stones to form a path. The stones and clay deposit were removed in the easternmost 1 metre of Trench 2 to reveal another potential post hole (F3).

The eastern part of Trench 2, looking south, after removal of some of the stone spread and clay, showing all the cut features F1 to F5.

F1 was half sectioned to confirm it was a post hole. It was circular in plan measuring 40 cm diameter at the surface. It was 36 cm deep and had a 'U'-shaped profile. The fill comprised a mixed medium grey and brown silty clay loam with a few small to medium grit stones and one patch of yellow-cream clay. At half-way down was a shallow flat grit stone lying over another flatly laid grit stone. These stones may have provided a level base for the post to be set on, with the other stones and clay providing packing. At the base of the post hole was a shallow deposit of light grey silty clay. There were no finds. The top level of the post hole was 276.98 m aOD and the base was at 276.62 m aOD.


Post hole F1 in Trench 2, shown half excavated looking south (left) and detail of section (right)

Half sectioning of F2 showed this also to be a post hole. This feature formed an oval shape on the surface measuring 40 cm by 55 cm. It was 40 cm deep and had a 'V' shaped profile but with a gently sloping base. The fill comprised an upper deposit of densely packed small grit stones in a mid-grey silty clay loam. Under this was a *c* 8 cm deep layer of cream-coloured silty clay with small patches of mid-orange silty clay. This in turn was over a shallow layer of light grey silty clay. The top of the post hole was as 277.04 m aOD and the base at 276.64 m aOD. There were no finds. This feature appears to be of two phases, with the post hole re-used as a shallow post setting with the base and packing formed by the deposit of tilted small grit stones.


Post hole F2 in Trench 2, showing the upper layer of densely packed small grit stones partly excavated (left) and with the post hole half sectioned (right).

F3 only became visible after removal of c 10 cm of a firm mixed clay deposit and some of the stones forming the possible path which sealed this post hole. Therefore, it is clearly of an early phase of activity; it is assumed it is of Roman date although once again there were no finds within this post hole's fill. The top level of the post hole was 276.88 m aOD and the base was at 276.62 m aOD. A sub-rectangular patch of light yellow-grey silty clay, measuring 23 cm by 12 cm, indicated the position of a post pipe. This material was excavated to reveal a hole with steep sides and flat base being 24 cm deep. The fill of the wider post pit, which was 51cm in diameter and 26 cm deep, comprised a compact mid-grey and yellow silty clay loam with a cluster of tilted medium-sized grit stones. These were located on just the west side and were clearly used as post packing. There was also a large number of small, rounded grit stones within the fill. Running westwards from the post hole was a shallow gully 35 cm wide and less than 5 cm deep. This appears to be a potential beam slot with the suggestion that the post hole was part of a post and beam foundation for a timber building. This feature was only visible for 0.5 metres before disappearing under the stone spread. Further investigation is needed to confirm this interpretation.



Post hole F3: Pre-excavation looking south (left), post pipe after excavation with stone packing looking south (centre), and showing two-thirds of the post pit excavated looking north (right). Below: looking west at post hole F3 with possible beam slot linear depression to left of scale between the post hole and the stone spread. Features F5 and F1 are to the right.

F5 was a linear stone-filled feature, measuring 90 cm long and 35 cm wide, located in the northern extension of Trench 2. On the surface it was characterised by a dense concentration of mainly medium sized grit stones tilted at various angles which suggested they filled a cut feature. A section was dug across the southern terminus of the feature and evidence was found for a deep cut with steeply angled sides. The bottom level was not fully established due the packed nature of the fill and time constraints, but it was at least 60 cm deep, being 276.96 m aOD at the top and 276.36 m aOD at the base. As with F2 there was evidence for two phases and re-use. A layer of flat-laid medium sized grit stones formed a platform at *c* 15 cm depth. Above this was a wedge-shaped deposit of compact light orange-brown silty clay against the west side of the feature's side, whereas on the east side there were steeply pitched medium sized grit stones. These would have formed the packing for a post set on the stone platform. Removal of the flat-laid stones showed a mid- to dark grey silty clay loam surrounded by medium sized grit stones set vertically tight against the side of the cut feature. This strongly suggested another post setting. There was not enough time to excavate the rest of the stone filled linear feature but the part that was dug appears to show a post hole of two phases. It is not known how the rest of the feature relates to this; it possible that there was a line of post settings here, but further investigation is needed to form a better understanding.

Feature F5 beside the photo scale, with post hole F1 at top of photo. F5 is shown here with its southern end part excavated (on left side of the stone spread), revealing a flat stone surface about 15 cm down (arrowed).

South end of F5 showing section cut through the stone deposits, looking north, with an overhead view (right) showing stone packing for a post.

F4 was partly revealed as a dense concentration of stones indicating a feature in the north-east corner of Trench 2. This led to the trench being slightly enlarged by 0.5 metres to reveal and record most of the feature. At the surface F4 measured 60 cm wide by 85 cm long. However, the northern edge of the feature

was not excavated as it was found, on excavation, that the feature ran under the north baulk of Trench 2. It was 29 cm deep with a surface level of 276.82 m aOD and base at 276.53 m aOD. The feature had steep sides with a gently sloping base to create a ‘U’ shaped profile. The fill was dominated by medium to large grit stones arranged haphazardly, with some lying flat and others pitched at various angles. They had the look of having been dumped in the pit rather than being deliberately placed to pack around a post, and there was no evidence for a post pipe to indicate the former location of a post. The stones were in a layer of light brown silty clay and they made up around 50% of the fill. A thin, maximum 5 cm deep, layer of soft light grey clay lay over the base of the pit. There were no finds. It can be concluded that this feature was a pit with stones dumped into it.

Trench 2 extension showing the concentration of stones (F4) in left hand corner of photo

Pit F4 in Trench 2 half excavated looking west (left), showing nature of stone fill, and post excavation looking north (right)

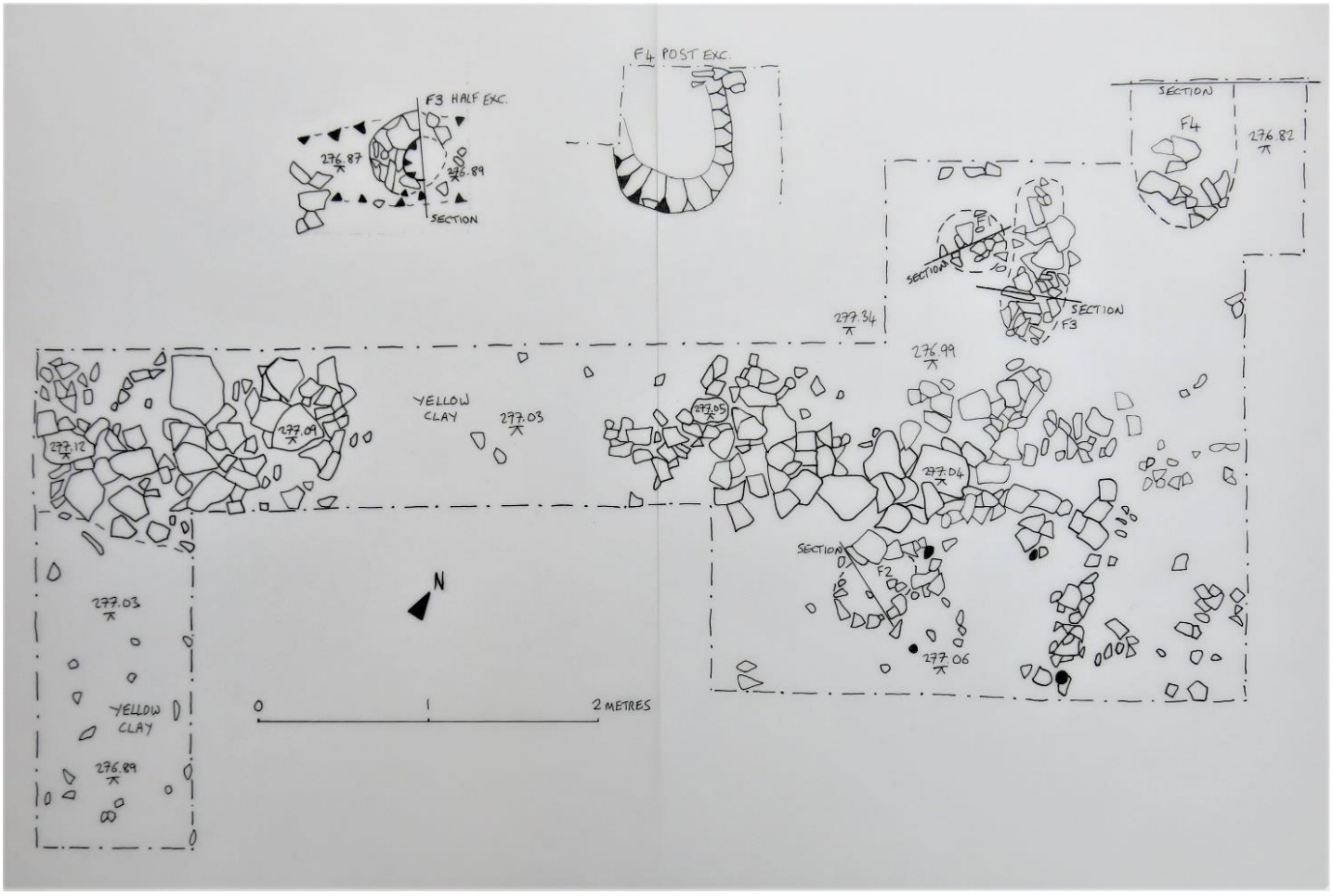
There were many post-medieval finds from the topsoil and brown plough soil layers in Trench 2 and its various extensions, but not one Roman find. There were several sherds of 17th or 18th century dark glazed earthenware amongst the many 19th and 20th century pottery fragments, including a 17th or 18th century rim sherd of trail slipped ware and an 18th century buff ware base with dark glaze body. An unworked flake of grey flint was also found, possibly a Mesolithic waste flake. There were several clay pipe stems but no bowls. A piece of grit stone appeared to have some applied decoration, possibly letters, but it was difficult to decipher these. The finds are shown in the images below.

Finds from the original Trench 2 excavation (left) and the eastern extension (right)

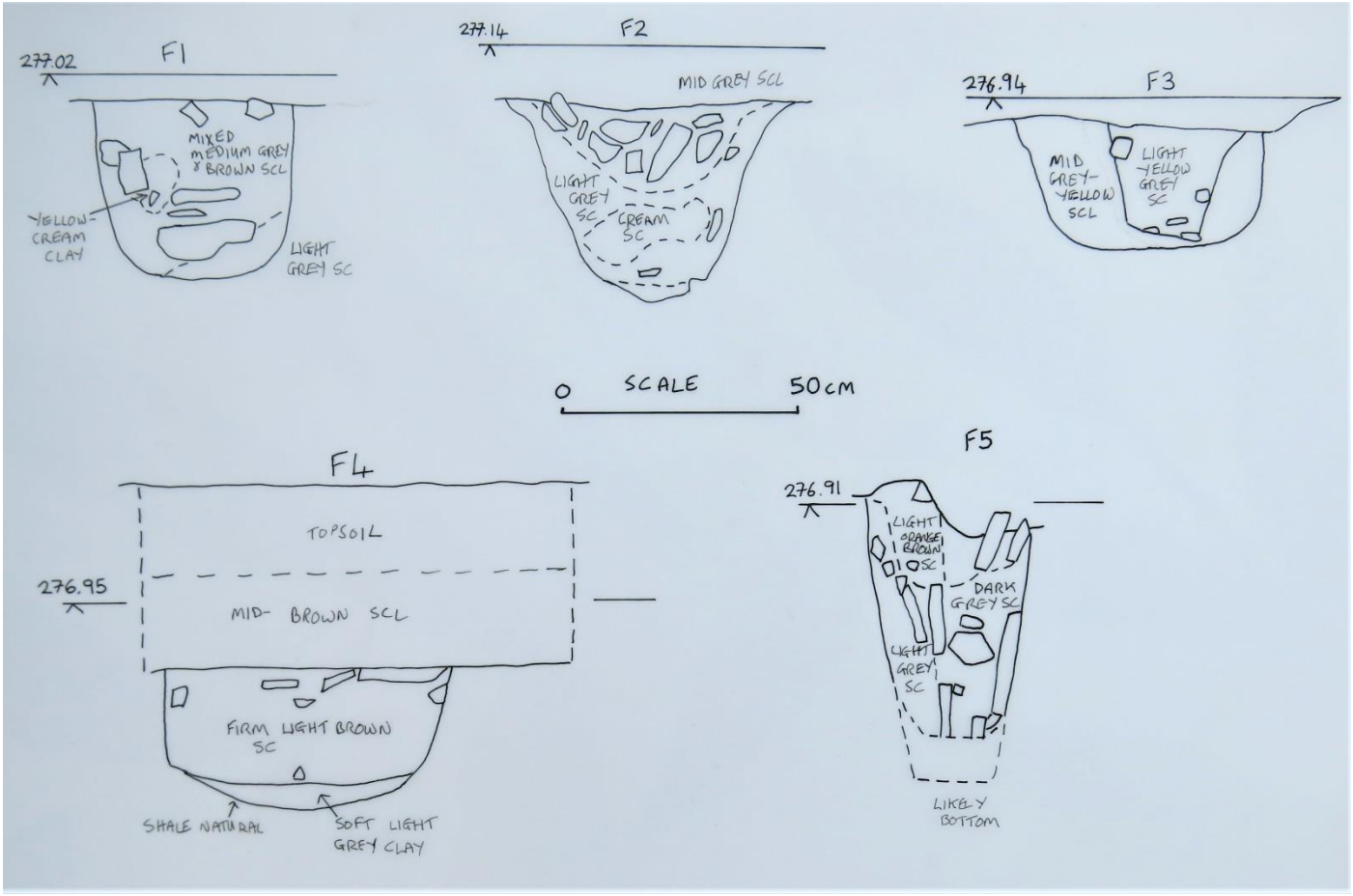
Finds from the Trench 2 southern extension at its western end (left) and the northwards extension (right)

Unworked flint flake (left) and rim sherd of trailed slipped ware plus clay pipe stem from north-east corner trench extension (right)

Trench 2 has provided strong evidence for timber buildings being constructed outside of the eastern gate, alongside the exit road. Two of the post settings provided indications of two phases of activity. Frustratingly, there were no stratified finds of Roman date but some of the cut features are sealed by later deposits of stone and clay material and it is suggested that the timber buildings belong to the fort phase of activity. Future investigations in this area are recommended to define the extent of the buildings partly represented by the cut features in Trench 2, and to see how they relate to the Roman features identified in the evaluation trenching of 2019. Patchy remains were found of what was thought to be the main, fort phase, road exiting the east gate. However, it is likely that these remains are of post-Roman date and could relate to a trackway or path associated with the adjacent Husteds Farmstead just to the east. If this is the case, then the fort phase road has been removed and recycled or it is not present here because it angles further south to re-join the main highway and was therefore not visible in Trench 2. The discovery of features representing the presence of timber buildings supports the latter hypothesis.



Trench 2 Plan



Trench 2 Section Drawings

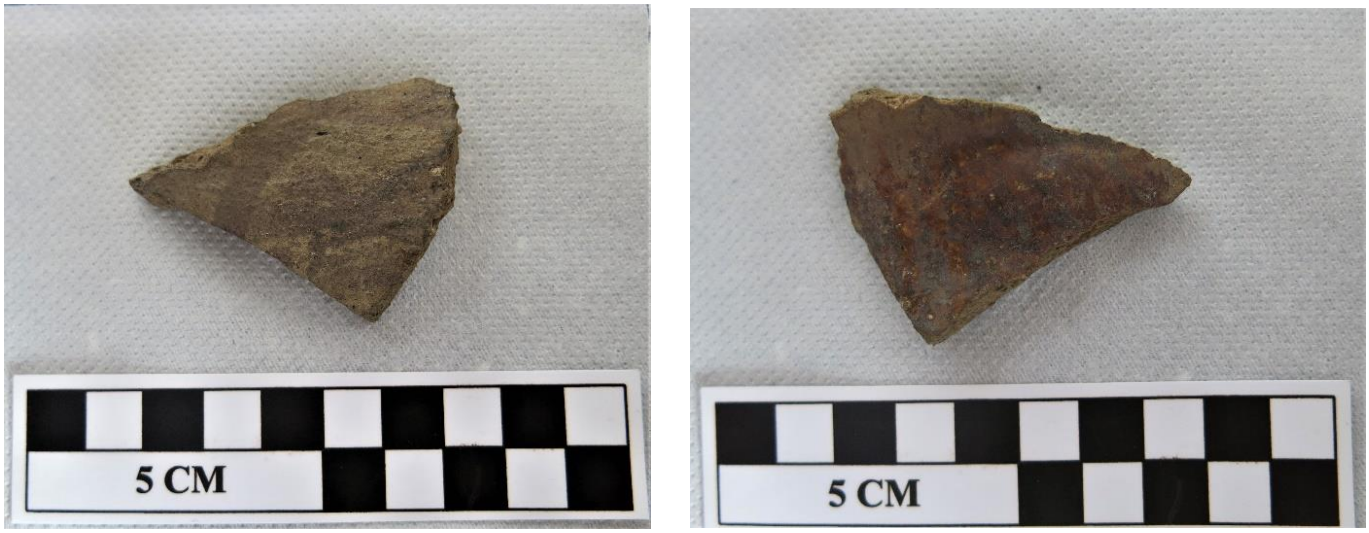
Trench 3

This was a 5 metre long trench on a south-east to north-west axis positioned in the area east of the east gate and west of the site of Husteds farmstead. The trench was in a flat area outside of the compound and hard standing area used for the 1980s and 2014 excavations. No previous investigations had been undertaken here. This trench tested part of a large area showing blank on the geophysical survey.

The trench was hand excavated in its entirety, which proved to be hard work for little reward. Removal of 20 to 25 cm of topsoil revealed a shallow 10 cm deep layer of mixed yellow and light brown silty clay loam. This came off onto natural grey shale and predominantly yellow clay. No features were visible. A sondage was excavated in one corner of the trench which confirmed that this was a sub-natural deposit which, at 20cm depth, came down on to firmer natural grey shale. The finds highlights were a sherd of decorative slipware (probably early 18th century) and a decorated body sherd of possible 15th or 16th century date. This latter sherd is photographed below and took the form of a gritty grey fabric with internal slip decoration and external iron glaze. This may have come from Husteds Farm nearby and it is worth noting that a sherd of glazed medieval pottery was found at the Husteds Cottage site in the 2014 excavation. The trench was backfilled and recorded. It provides useful negative evidence for Roman activity in this area and suggests this area was truncated and levelled, probably in the post-medieval period. The top of the middle part of the trench at turf level was 277.37 m aOD and the sub-natural yellow clay surface was 277.05 m aOD.

Trench 3 during excavation

Trench 3 looking south, showing the lack of archaeological features, and the sondage cut into the south-east corner



The possible 16th century body sherd showing exterior slip decoration (left) and internal glazing (right)

The finds from excavating Trench 3

Trench 4

This was intended to be a 5 metre long trench running on a west to east axis c 10 metres west of the Husteds Cottage site, which was excavated in Trench 8 in 2014. Trench 4 lay in a previously unexcavated area straddling the edge of anomalies and a large blank area identified in the geophysics survey. Rather than dig the whole of the 5 metres it was decided to excavate a 1 metre square test pit at each end of the trench. The western end test pit proved to be negative with just sub-natural mid-brown-yellow silty clay being exposed under 25 cm of topsoil and a thin, *c* 7 cm layer of mid-brown soil (possibly plough soil). The turf level here was 277.62 m aOD and the base of the test pit was 277.30 m aOD. The eastern end test pit was much more interesting with two features cut into the sub-natural. The turf level here was 277.70 m aOD and the sub-natural clay surface was 277.35 m aOD. One of the features was a post hole which showed as a sub-circular shape measuring 27 cm in diameter. On being half sectioned it was found to be 43 cm deep (base at 276.92 m aOD), with the hole having vertical sides and narrowing to 16 cm wide at 11

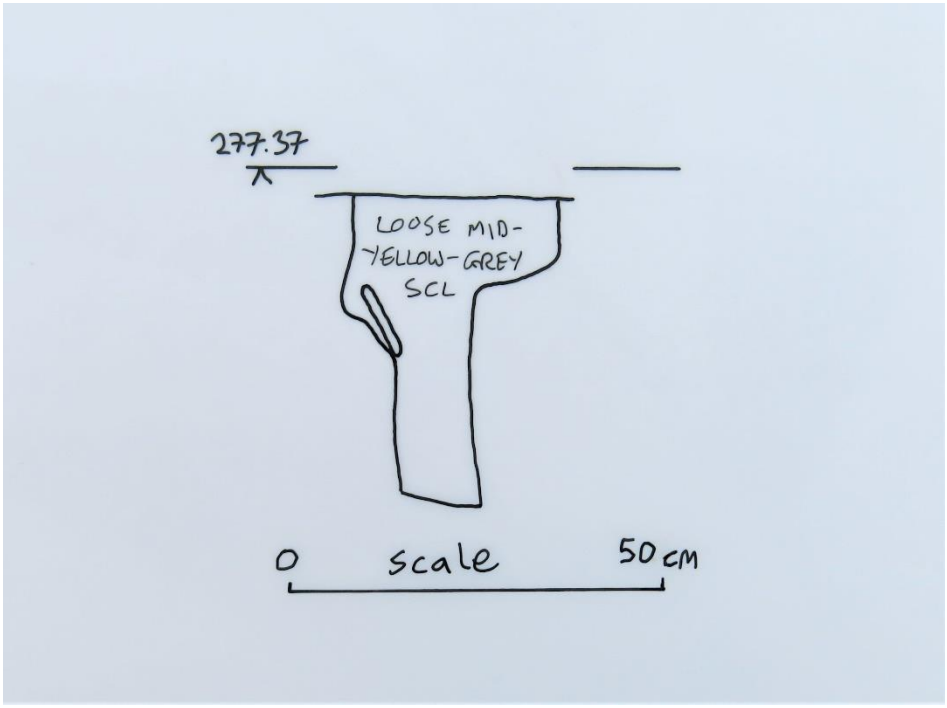
cm deep, then narrowing again a further 6 cm down to become a rectangular or square post hole measuring 10 cm across. The fill was very loose comprising mid- to dark grey silty clay loam. There was one thin grit stone laid on edge at the side of the post hole, presumably to help with securing the post. There were no finds so it is difficult to date this feature so it could be Roman or related to the farmstead/cottage nearby. In the north-east corner of the test pit was a second feature. This was evident as a patch of mid-grey silty clay with frequent small grit stones and pieces of shale, contrasting with the sub-natural mid-orange yellow silty clay, and with a curving edge. On excavation it was found to be a deep feature, around 67 cm at 276.68 m aOD, and with a homogenous fill of loose mid-yellow-grey silty clay loam with frequent shale fragments and small grit stones. The sides were near vertical and the edge was curved, with the base formed of natural grit stone bedrock. There were no finds and it is not clear whether this was a pit or larger feature but the vertical edges suggest it was human-made. The stony/shaly nature of the fill may account for the high geophysical readings (anomaly) in this area. Finds from the topsoil and plough soil layers were typically post medieval.

Trench 4 looking north, showing the western square metre test pit on the left of the photo and the eastern end test pit in the centre of the photo. The completed western end test pit is the right photo.

Trench 4: the eastern end metre square test pit after initial excavation (left) and showing the post hole half excavated and the excavated negative feature in the corner (centre), and the post hole part excavated (right).

The finds comprised a variety of glazed pottery sherds of 17th to 19th century date, including dark glaze earthen and trail-slip wares, a stoneware jar rim sherd, cream wares and a clay pipe stem. There was a body sherd of Staffordshire slip ware of early 18th century date.

Finds from Trench 4 topsoil and plough soil, from the western metre square (left) and the eastern metre square (right)



Trench 4 post hole section

Trench 5

This was intended to be a 5 metre long trench running from near the fence in the south-east corner of the investigation area on a east to west alignment. As with Trench 4, a 1 metre square test pit was excavated at one end of the proposed trench to test the archaeology. This was at the east end near the fence. Under *c* 25 cm of topsoil was a mixed layer of orange silty clay and dark grey silty clay loam of 10 cm depth with no suggestion of the brown plough soil layer seen in many of the test pits trenches elsewhere on the fort site. This came off onto a compact surface comprising predominantly cream coloured or light grey silty clay with patches of rust coloured silty clay, orange clay and occasional small grit stones. Several small circular or oval-shaped patches of mid-grey silty clay loam were identified and, on excavation, shown to be either root holes or animal disturbance, rather than stake holes, due to their irregular nature. A sondage occupying the easternmost third of the test pit was dug through the compact layer. It was found to be around 25 cm deep with some banding evident. The materials present on the compact surface described above continued through the section but were interspersed with lenses and banding of different material such as a thin layer of mid-brown-grey silty clay loam of only 3 cm depth and 30 cm in length. There was also a lens of light grey silt clay with very dark grey humic patches. This layering effect and character of materials had the hallmarks of rampart material, similar to that seen for the fort and fortlet ramparts in previous excavations,

although here we are a long way east of the fort defences. Under this deposit, the sondage showed a very compact orange clay and stone layer which was deemed to be natural and after 20 cm came off onto natural grey shale and stone. The base of the rampart material was at 277.46 m aOD which was 50 cm below the turf line at this point (277.96 m aOD).

A relatively large quantity of glazed post medieval pottery sherds were recovered from the topsoil, together with one fragment of bone and two of clay pipes. There was a group of fine glazed earthenware rim and base sherds, several being from the same vessel which was of 18th century date and exhibited external sooting from its use as a cook pot. The high quantity of pottery here may reflect its close proximity to the site of Husted's Cottage which was only 8 metres to the north.

The ground sloped southwards from the Trench 5 test pit. It was felt that if the test pit had revealed part of a rampart then the orientation of Trench 5 was not useful and that a trench orientated at right angles to the slope would be more beneficial in determining the width of the 'rampart' material and to see if there might be an associated ditch at the base of the slope. Therefore, Trench 5 was not taken any further and replaced with Trench 10.

Marlene standing beside the one metre square test pit at the east end of Trench 5

East end of Trench 5, showing the rampart-like material exposed in sondage section (left) and the sondage dug through underlying natural (right)

Trench 5 finds assemblage

Trench 6

This was set out as a 5 metre long trench towards the middle southern part of the investigation area, about eight metres east of the fort rampart and straddling a large anomaly shown on the resistivity survey. In 2014 Trench 7 proved there was no ditch on this eastern side of the fort's defences. Could the anomaly be related to the site of a building close up to the rampart? A 1 metre square test pit was dug at each end of the trench but further excavation beyond these was not undertaken.


Trench 6 excavation in progress.

The eastern end of Trench 6 comprised 20 cm depth of topsoil then 15 cm of brown plough soil which came off onto natural mid-yellow clay with moderate small to medium grit stones. The western end test pit had similar top and plough soil but contrasted in the deposit underneath. This was formed of mid-brown-yellow silty clay with a high concentration of randomly angled small to medium grit stones. A third of the northern part of the test pit was excavated as a sondage to determine the depth of the stony deposit which was found to be around 20 cm deep and came off onto natural grey shale forming a band in the eastern half of the test pit, with dark yellow clay in the western half. This looks like a change from clay to shale natural. The turf level for the west end test pit was 277.46 m aOD, the stone and clay surface 277.07 m aOD and the natural shale surface at the base of the sondage 276.86 m aOD. It is not certain if the stones represent

a weathered natural deposit or were deliberately deposited – they certainly account for the geophysical anomaly in this area. Further investigation to further define the character and extent of the stony deposit is recommended.


Trench 6: test pit at east end looking west (left), showing concentration of stones, and (right) showing natural grey shale at base of the sondage looking south.

Trench 6: test pit at west end looking north, showing natural clay.

There were no finds within the western pit sondage and the top and plough soil produced a standard assemblage of post medieval pottery and clay pipe stems.

Finds from Trench 6

Trench 7

This started off as two 1 metre square test pits, TP1 and TP2, aimed at picking up the road surface revealed in Trench 1 just to the west. Following the successful exposure of road remains in both these test pits, TP3 was dug closer to Trench 1 to look for an edge to the road. The test pits were then joined up and extended to the east to find the opposite edge of the road so that Trench 7 ultimately measured 8 by 1 metres. It was able to identify the full width and character of the road.

TP1 and TP2 being excavated in the early stages of what became Trench 7. Looking north-east with Trench 2 behind.

TP1 (left) and TP2 (right) showing the road surface.

TP3, looking north, shown after extension to confirm edge of the road.

Trench 7 during excavation looking west and with TP3 at the far end, being dug by (from top) Jayne, Margaret, Roy and Sue.

At the western end of Trench 7 the edge of the road was clearly defined by a change from the stone spread to stone-free natural mid-yellow clay loam. No kerb stones were evident, nor a drainage ditch. The eastern edge was less well-defined: the stones died away except for a straggly group of medium-sized grit stones, but to the north of these there was an area of mid-brown-yellow clay loam with several possible stake holes evident. This clay loam area had a curving edge on the west and south against the stones of the road. Some of the road stones were larger and flatter and could have been disturbed kerb stones but it was not possible to discern a well-defined edge or roadside drain. At its western end the road level was 277.07 m aOD dropping gently to 276.93 m aOD at its eastern edge, with the central linear depression being 276.90 m aOD.

The road surface was rough and had no evidence of finer metalling – this is a characteristic seen in other excavated sections of the later, fortlet phase, road that looped around the rear (north side) of the fortlet. Generally, the surface comprised predominantly medium-sized grit stones but there were moderate larger grit stones, particularly towards the edges. There appeared to be varying depths to the stone build-up and this may reflect ongoing repairs or less heavily trafficked areas. In the middle of the road was a *c* 2 metre wide band of mid- to dark brown-grey silty clay loam with much sparser stones. It was felt that this might represent an area of erosion from wagon wheel ruts, and it was noted that the stones on either side of this band were denser and more compressed suggesting that this was the part of the road that vehicles mainly travelled along. Whilst Trench 7 did not run at right angles across the road, it was possible to calculate the width using the angle apparent at the western edge; the width was 5 metres.

Trench 7 looking west, showing the full extent of the road. The central less stony band is opposite the orange bucket. In the foreground is the eastern edge of the road and the possible stake holes.

A 2 by 0.5 metre section was dug through the silty clay loam band against the north section of the trench. This was found to be only 15 cm deep and came off onto natural light cream and yellow clay, with only a few stones within this material, and lying on the clay surface. There was some very dark grey humic material on the clay surface. There was no sign of wheel ruts and no Roman finds; it is possible that this area has been previously disturbed perhaps by early 20th century antiquarians. The turf level in the section was at 277.33 m aOD and the natural clay base 276.88 m aOD.

Trench 7 showing section through slight depression and grey silty area in central part of road, looking north.

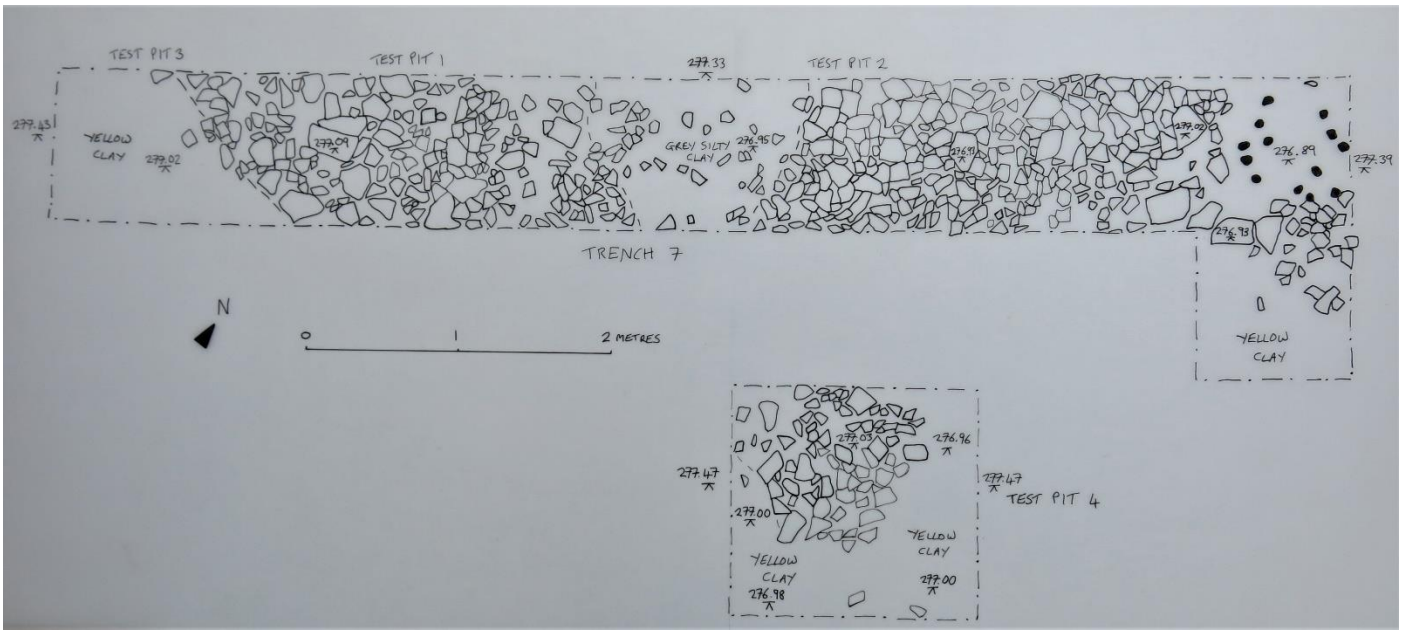
At the east end of the trench the stake holes were investigated and it was found that some were angled and irregular with others being more regular. They may represent a temporary structure set against the road edge, given that the stones respected the stake hole arrangement. The silty clay deposit they were set in was also excavated and this was less than 5 cm deep and formed a shallow depression bounded on the south side by several large grit stones. A few Roman brick/tile fragments came from this deposit.

Trench 7 east end with trench extension, looking west.

Roman tile fragments found at the eastern end of Trench 7 in silts beside the road edge

Finds from TP1 (Trench 7)

Trench 7 finds from top and plough soil. These included 18th century pearl ware, a late 17th or early 18th century dark glazed earthen ware rim sherd and a variety of other dark glazed earthen wares including a base. The finds assemblage was mainly of 18th century date with a couple of 19th century items. There was a grit stone with suggestions of decorative carving; however, this could also be a result of natural processes.



Trench 7 plan, including TP4

Trench 8

This was intended to be a small trench across a linear depression, presumably representing an old excavation trench perhaps of early 20th century date, which ran along the north to south axis of the fort's east rampart near to the south-east corner. In fact, only a 1 metre square area was excavated. 10 cm deep turf and topsoil overlay a shallow layer of very dark brown-grey silty clay loam of similar depth. Under this was yellow clay loam with some light cream patches representing the top of rampart material. It was decided not to investigate this trench further due to more pressing requirements elsewhere. No level was taken.


Cliff standing close to Trench 8 (left) with the top of rampart material and concave section profile of old excavation trench (right)

Trench 9

This was positioned at right angles across a visible old excavation trench across the south-east corner of the fort defences. It was hoped that Trench 9 would shed some light on the location of the fort ditch at this corner. A 1 metre square area was opened and the trench did not extend beyond this. The turf level within the linear depression was at 277.03 m aOD and at a depth of 40 cm (276.63 m aOD) was found a line of capping stones for a drain. The linear depression was actually the sunken backfilled trench for this drain. The fill of the trench comprised mid- to dark brown silty clay loam sealed under a thin layer of topsoil and turf. Two capping stones were removed to investigate the silt within the drain, with a clay base being exposed at 276.33 m aOD. It was interesting that the drain had stone sides but no stone base. There were no finds within the drain fill; however, Bruton's plan of 1908 indicates a drain at this location with the description: 'stone drain ? (modern)'. So Bruton also was not sure of its date, but a post medieval date is suggested for the construction of this land drain, perhaps 19th or 18th century, it being inserted by the farmer based at Husteds Farm nearby.

On either side of the stone drain was a soft, light, silty deposit which was excavated on the north side of the drain and found to be 18 cm deep and 25 cm wide. This was the primary fill of the trench cut to take the drain structure. At the side of and beneath the drain trench was another soft deposit formed of mid-orange yellow silty clay, with moderate flecks of charcoal and small patches of light grey or cream silt. Fragments of a cream-coloured Roman tile or brick were recovered from this material. It is highly likely that this deposit is Roman ditch fill.

Trench 9 cut across the linear depression in the south-east corner of the fort defences, looking north-east.

Trench 9 showing capping stones indicating a drain (left) and after removal of two capping stones (right), looking west.

Pieces of Roman tile or brick recovered from Trench 9's lower deposit.

Trench 10

As explained above (under Trench 5), this trench was positioned at right angles to the bank sloping down from the flat area beside Trench 5. The trench dimensions initially were 4 metres long and 0.5 metres wide, finishing on the flat ground at the base of the slope.


Trench 10 with (right) Nick and Jill who undertook the excavation.

As the results of this initial trench excavation provided evidence of important archaeology extending beyond the north-west end, the trench was subsequently extended 3 metres to the north-west but with a 30 cm baulk left between.

The modern landscape is quite misleading, as the trench demonstrated that a lot of material had been dumped to create the bank and in fact this sealed an early ditch-like feature. Contrary to the topography of the bank, the ground level exposed in the base of the trench sloped down towards the north from a level surface at the southern end. This can be seen in the photographs and section drawing below.


Trench 10 following initial excavation, photographed in two halves

Detail of south-west facing section at the northern end of Trench 10 showing the ditch slope and dumped material to create mounded area.

The north-westerly trench extension defined the edge of the ditch. This was apparent as a dark brown silty clay loam fill providing an edge against the sub-natural dark yellow clay. 0.5 metres beyond the ditch edge was a mixed deposit of light grey and cream coloured silty clay similar to that seen in Trench 5. This was not excavated nor was the full width exposed due to time constraints. However, its similarity to the material in Trench 5 and its location running parallel with the ditch strongly suggest that it represents the truncated base of a rampart.

The fills of the ditch were formed of a light grey silt in the very base, no more than 5 cm deep, above this was a mid-brown-yellow silty clay of c 28 cm deep. Sealing this layer was a band of black humic material of a maximum 5 cm depth which spanned about 2 metres as a concave layer. This had all the hallmarks of a former turf line that had been sealed under later deposition; a similar layer, which lay over the fortlet ditch and sealed under early 20th century Bruton spoil heaps, was recorded in the GMAU excavations of the 1980s. It therefore reflects the original ground surface before landscaping saw a lot of soil deposited to create the later bank. Over this former turf line was deposited layers of soft dark brown silty clay loam (up to 30 cm deep), very dark grey silty clay loam (up to 40 cm deep) then a maximum 50 cm deep compact deposit of mid-brown silty clay loam mixed with patches of yellow silty clay and occasional grit stones. This latter deposit was the major contribution to creating this raised area/bank but it died away to the north. The topsoil varied in thickness but was at its greatest depth (25cm) in the northern part of the trench.

Above the possible rampart material at the northern end of the trench was a 25 cm deep deposit of silty clay loam with moderate small grit stones. To the south of the ditch the stratigraphy was less clear with several lenses of different material, but the base deposit (maximum of 10 cm) was loose mid-brown-yellow silty clay loam with *c* 30% small and occasional medium-sized grit stones and fragments of shale. This overlay compact shale and grit stones which probably represented natural. At the southern edge of the trench were several flat-laid medium grit stones of undetermined function. They might relate to the edge of the former Drycroft Lane, now grassed over, that runs down past the southern edge of the fort and fortlet, or could be weathered bedrock, or perhaps even the edge of the Roman highway. Further investigation southwards from Trench 10 would be beneficial.

The turf level at the northern end of the trench was 278.03 m aOD, remaining fairly flat for 3.5 metres before dropping down to 277.37 m aOD at the bottom of the bank. The surface of the rampart material lay at 277.53 m aOD, the inner (northern) edge of the ditch was at 277.38 m aOD, then sloping at *c* 45 degrees to a gently curved base with the lowest point at 276.50 m aOD. The ditch base ascended more gently on the south side to an edge at 276.97 m aOD, with the natural clay south of this forming a flat surface at 276.86 m aOD. The ditch had a gently curving base with the northern side being cut into the pre-existing slope so that this edge of the ditch was considerably higher than the southern edge. The maximum depth of

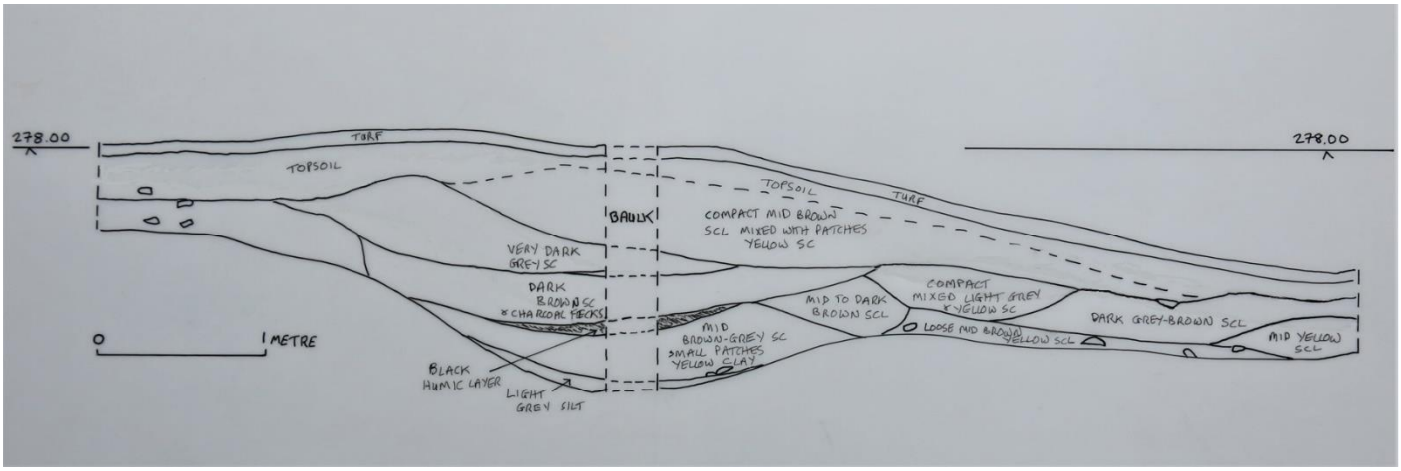
the ditch was 70 cm. The ditch was cut into natural grit stone at the lower level, and natural yellow clay above this which was exposed on the upper level of the ditch cut.

Trench 10 northern extension looking west showing (left) the dark brown ditch fill on the left, natural dark yellow clay then the light grey clay indicating the probable rampart base on the right, and after ditch excavation (right photo).

Detail of possible rampart material (left) and excavated ditch (right)

There were no Roman finds from Trench 10 and the finds that were recovered came from the topsoil and the overburden layers. The finds were predominantly pottery sherds, dominated by dark glazed earthenwares with a few trail slipped wares, including a press-moulded slip ware rim, pearl ware rims, all fitting an 18th century date. There was also a clay pipe bowl and ceramic marble.

Finds from Trench 10



Trench 10 south-west section drawing

Trench 11

This was 4.5 long by 0.5 metres wide, running on a north-west to south-east axis and positioned just a couple metres north-east of Trench 9. It was designed to investigate the fort corner rampart and particularly the ditch, including the possible ditch fill material hinted at in Trench 9, which had been disturbed by the stone drain. As the east side of the fort defences have been shown to be ditchless by previous excavations it was of key importance to establish the terminus and location of the ditch at the corner of the fort.



Mike and Steve look from Trench 12 (left), which they are excavating, across test pits and other trenches being dug at the southern edge of the investigation area. Drycroft Lane is the rush-filled hollow way in front of the fence on the right of the photo. The right-hand image shows the trench on the final day of digging.

It was not possible to complete excavation of the trench due to the depth of material and time constraints. On the upper slope, in the north-west part of the trench was found, at a depth beneath the turf of 35 cm, a compact layer of mixed white and orange clay which is interpreted as being fort rampart material. Between this and the topsoil was mid-yellow-brown silty clay loam which deepened as it went southwards to a maximum of 50 cm depth. From about 1 metre into the trench at its northern end commenced another layer which again became deeper towards the south. This layer was a soft, dark brown silty clay with cream-coloured patches of silty clay and occasional flecks of charcoal and small grit stones. This attained a maximum depth of 25 cm in the middle of the trench and overlay another soft layer comprising mixed

cream, light grey and dark orange silty clay loam with frequent flecks of charcoal. This bottom layer was exposed only in the lowest part of the trench and was only partially excavated. Close up against the southern end of the trench were a few grit stones associated with the mid- to dark brown silty clay loam seen in Trench 9 and probably representing the edge of the drain.

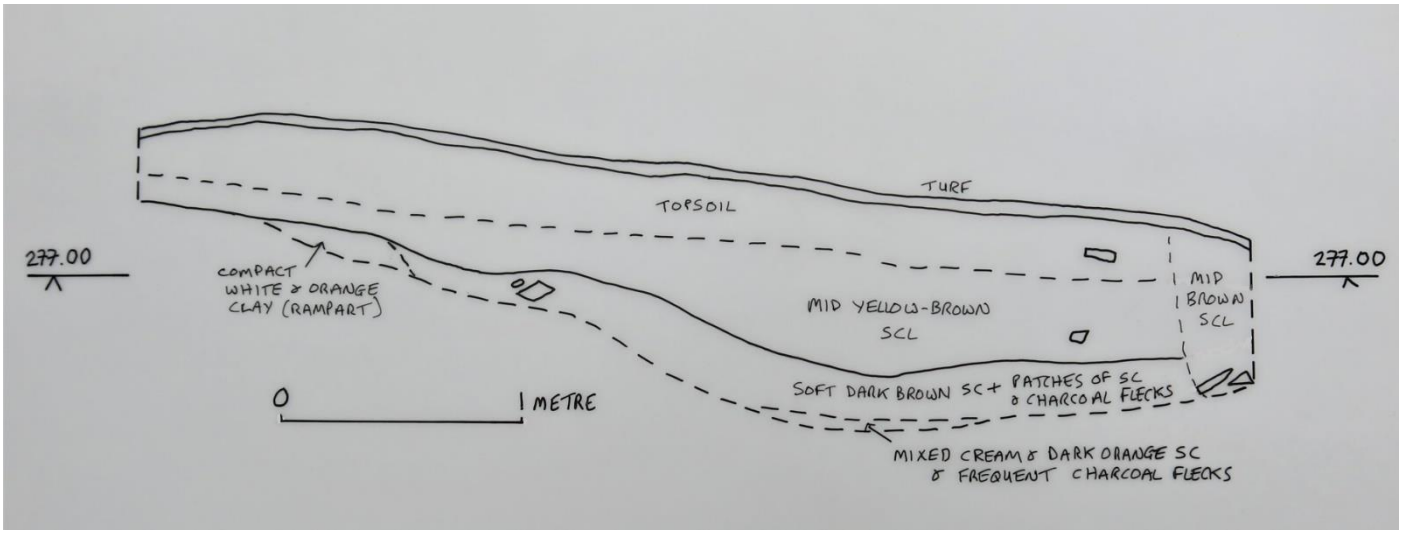
At the northern edge of the trench the turf level was 277.58 m aOD and the base (top of rampart material) was 277.30 m aOD. The trench sloped gently down to the southern edge where the turf level was 277.14 m aOD and the stones in the base were at 276.56 m aOD. The lowest point of the trench base was 276.35 m aOD.

The soft, charcoal flecked layers appear to represent fills within the south-east corner of the Roman fort ditch. These materials are very different to that found in Test Pit 13 only 3 metres to the north-east of Trench 11. This suggests that the ditch terminates somewhere in the space between. There were no Roman finds from the deposits and there was not enough time to expose the base and sides of the ditch, as this would be a significant undertaking, but the evaluation has demonstrated that this will be a key area for future investigation, to define the ditch terminus and to do the same on the opposite north-eastern corner of the fort.

All the finds recovered came from the topsoil and the mid- yellow brown silty clay loam layer beneath. They were mainly black glaze earthen wares of 18th century date, with a brick fragment, clay pipe stem and two sherds of Metropolitan slip ware of perhaps late 17th or early 18th century date.

These photos show the south-west facing section of Trench 11.

The finds from Trench 11, with the trail-slip ware on the right



Trench 11 south-west facing section drawing

Trench 12

This was 2.2 metres long and 1 metre wide and cut at right angles across the earthen bank running east to west along the southern edge of the investigation area. The bank borders and runs parallel with the site of Drycroft Lane which is now grassed over and full of rushy vegetation. This lane follows the southern edge of the Roman fort defences. It was anticipated that the bank would be upcast from creating/maintaining the former lane and the trench was intended to test this interpretation.


Katy, Janet and Roy excavating Trench 12 through the earth bank, with the rush-filled hollow of Drycroft Lane behind.

Under 20 cm of turf and topsoil was a homogenous deposit of mid- to dark brown silty clay loam which had a maximum depth of 62 cm. This came off onto a shelf of natural cream-coloured clay at the south end of the trench, but it was surprising to then encounter the cut of a ditch-like feature c 30 cm into the trench going northwards. The cut was at a *c* 50 degree angle and came down on to natural grey shale. There were two lower fills comprising a 15 cm deep soft, dark brown silty clay overlying the base layer of dark yellow silty clay (10 cm deep) which was revealed when a narrow sondage was dug against the section on the west side of the trench. In the middle of the trench was a light-yellow silty clay layer which was not excavated but appeared to lie over natural shale. The soft, dark brown silty clay layer sealed this and went across most of the trench. Towards the northern end of the trench the archaeology was very different, for here there was an angled cut from the topsoil layer down to a compact stone and natural shale layer. The

northern edge of this cut feature was not exposed within the confines of the trench. The fill of the feature comprised soft, mixed dark grey and brown silty clay loam, with 2 medium-sized grit stones lying at an angle against the side of the ditch cut. This feature cuts through the homogenous deposit which in turn seals the ditch seen on the south side of the trench and clearly makes it the latest event represented in the section. It is likely to be a cut for a drain and, given the nature of its fill, could be a continuation of the drain encountered in Trench 9 and the southern edge of Trench 11.

The turf level at the southern edge of the trench was 276.93 m aOD rising to 277.15 m aOD at the top of the bank in the middle part of the trench and dropping to 276.91 m aOD at the northern edge of the trench. The natural shelf at the southern end of the trench was at 276.65 m aOD, the early ditch base 276.15 m aOD, and the bottom of the drain cut and stone/shale base level was 276.20 m aOD.

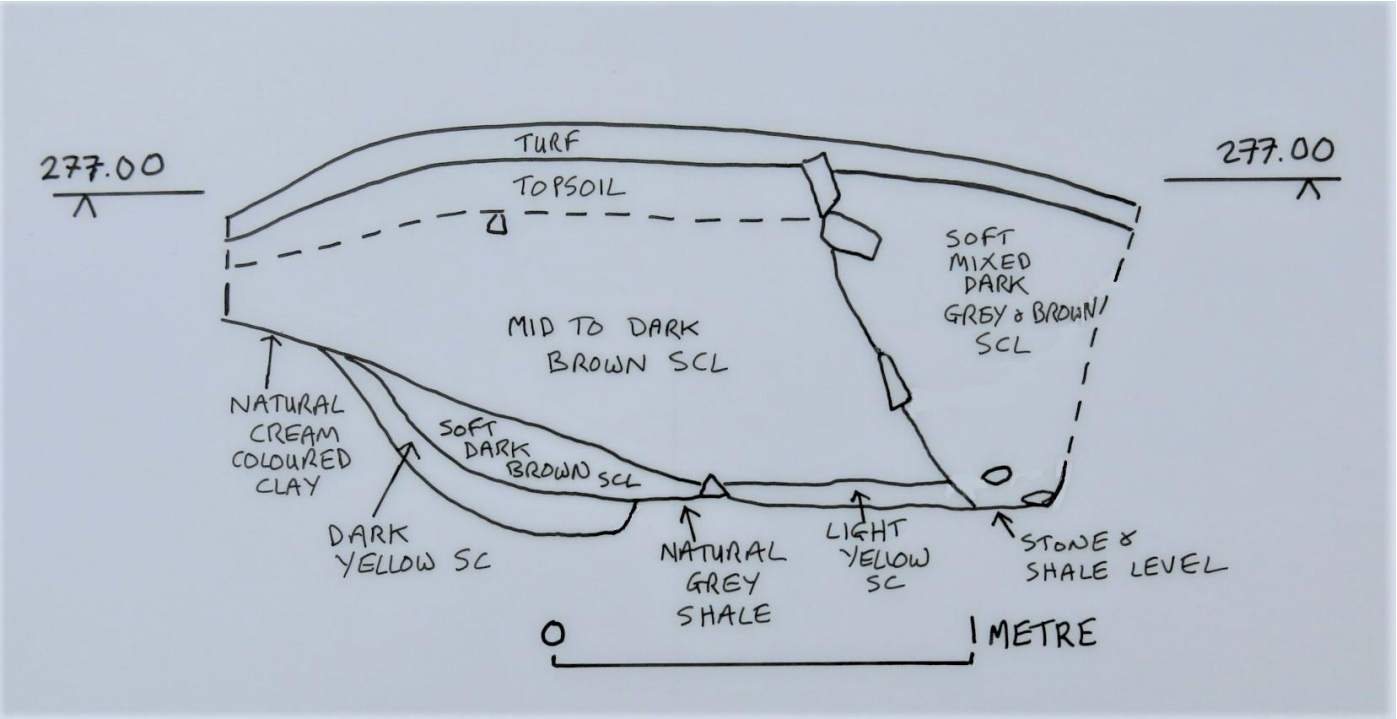
Trench 12 section through the earth bank

Vertical view of the base of Trench 12: southern part on left, northern on right

Detailed views of Trench 12 section: southern part on left, northern on right

As with Trench 10 the current topography is deceptive. The bank hides two cut features, one being the probable drain of perhaps 18th century date whilst the other is a much earlier ditch potentially of Roman date. The bank itself is made mainly of a homogenous material which is likely to be derived from cleaning out silts that have washed down the lane, or from the construction of the lane. Once again, there was an absence of Roman finds which is frustrating, with the finds that came from the topsoil and homogenous deposit being post medieval. These comprised mainly dark glazed earthen wares, a white glazed stone ware rim sherd of 18th century date and 3 gritstone pieces which appeared to be deliberately shaped. Two of these were roughly flat and circular and had been deliberately knapped on the edges. They may have been used as jar lids. The third one was 8cm long and had the appearance of a grit stone cobble perhaps derived from the adjacent former lane. There was also a black basalt ware handle in a hard, grey fabric displaying unusual fine press-moulded stylised motifs. There was not enough time to extend the trench and excavation of the base was hampered by water ingress. If the early ditch identified in Trench 12 is Roman then it suggests a defensive ditch for an annex or even a roadside ditch for the main highway which ran, in the Agricolan phase, just outside the southern fort defences. Currently this can only be conjecture and further investigation is required here to form a better understanding of the parameters and character of the ditch-like feature.

The finds from the topsoil (left) and detailed photo of the finely moulded handle (right)



Trench 12 east facing section drawing

Test Pit 1

See Trench 7 description

Test Pit 2

See Trench 7 description

Test Pit 3

See Trench 7 description

Test Pit 4

This was a 1 metre square test pit positioned 1 metre to the south of Trench 1. Its position is shown on the excavation plan under Trench 7 above. The test pit confirmed the presence of the Roman road identified in Trench 7. At 43 cm depth a well-preserved densely packed stone surface was revealed. This comprised similar stonework seen in Trench 7, being mainly medium-sized grit stones. The angled edge of the road appeared in the south-west corner of the test pit, defined by a patch of stone-free light yellow clay. The edge was consistent with the angled line identified at the western end of Trench 7 and within Trench 1, showing that the road angled sharply towards the south-east immediately after exiting the former fort east gate.

In order to define the road better, Test Pit 4 was extend 0.5 metres to the south and 0.5 metres to the east. This showed that there was only partial survival of the road with the metalling forming a 1 metre by 1 metre tongue-shaped spread surrounded on the west, south and east sides by stone-free natural clay. It was clear that the road had suffered considerable disturbance in this area. The road surface was at 277.03 m aOD, the surrounding clay at 277.00 m aOD and the turf level at 277.47 m aOD.

Finds were limited and all post medieval, comprising 3 pieces of handmade post-medieval brick, a large nail, 2 sherds of dark glazed earthenware and a creamware rim.


TP4 looking east showing edge of road in bottom right hand corner, with Jack and Mark extending the test pit (right).


The extended TP4 looking west and showing the full extent of the stone spread (left) and the finds assemblage (right).

Test Pit 5

This 1 metre square test pit was excavated 4 metres to the south of Trench 7 and designed to check for the continuation of the Roman road south-eastwards from Trench 7 and Test Pit 4. Natural light yellow clay was revealed at a depth of 38 cm in the north-east corner sondage. This was sealed under a layer of mid-brown silty clay loam (plough soil), which in turn was under topsoil which itself was sealed by a layer of 20th century overburden and turf. The clay surface was at 277.01 m aOD and the turf level was 277.39 m aOD.


TP5 looking north with TP4 and Trench 7 in the background (left) and close-up looking east showing natural clay in the sondage (right).

In contrast to Test Pit 4, only 3 metres to the north, Test Pit 5 yielded a good quantity of finds. These were (predominantly) dark glazed earthenware sherds, a couple of trail slipware sherds, two clay pipe fragments, a few whiteware sherds, a brick fragment and a piece of glass. All were post medieval.

This test pit was in the correct location to pick up the line of the road; its absence confirmed the evidence seen in Test Pit 4 and is attributed to a high degree of post medieval landscaping which has removed the stonework.

TP5 finds assemblage

Test Pit 6

This was assigned but not excavated due to other priorities.

Test Pit 7

This was assigned but not excavated due to other priorities.

Test Pit 8

This one metre square test pit was positioned 5 metres south-east of Trench 3 to explore a previously uninvestigated area towards and in front of the site of Husteds Farm. Removal of 18 cm topsoil and turf revealed a mid-brown silty clay loam layer of 15 cm depth (possibly plough soil) which overlay a mid-brown yellow silty clay loam with frequent small circular or oval patches of dark grey silty clay loam and occasional small sandstones. These dark grey patches had no discernible pattern and could be stake or root holes. A sondage was dug in the north-east corner of the test pit and found natural grey shale a further 13 cm down. The turf level was 277.63 m aOD, the surface of sub-natural 277.30 m aOD and the base of the sondage 277.17 m aOD.

There were no Roman finds and the post medieval ones were varied. They included 1 large and 2 smaller nails, a yellow-ware pottery base, several sherds of dark glazed earthenware, 2 brown glazed sherds, a glass fragment and 2 clay pipe stems. The yellow-ware base showed evidence of being a cook pot and can be dated to the late 17th or early 18th century; it had a drilled hole in the base suggesting re-use perhaps as a plant pot.


Marlene digging TP8 in the foreground with Trench 4 in the background (left) and the excavated test pit with corner sondage (right).

The finds from TP5

Test Pit 9

This was 1 metre square and located 4 metres south of the eastern end of Trench 7 from the 2014 excavation. Trench 7 re-excavated an old trench (probably dug in the early 20th century) across the fort east rampart and presumed site of the ditch. The ditch was not presence nor was there any sign of Roman archaeology beyond (east of) the rampart. Test Pit 9 was also 8 metres north of the west end of Trench 6 (2021) described above.

The topsoil was 18 cm deep and the underlying dark brown silty clay loam 15 cm. This came off to reveal a compact layer of grey shale with frequent small grit stones. The shale was natural therefore indicating that there was no archaeology and reflecting the findings from 2014. The nature of this natural also explains the presence of a large anamolous area shown in the geophysics survey. The shale was at 277.20 m aOD and the turf at 277.53 m aOD.

There were no Roman finds. The post-medieval assemblage was dominated by several sherds of dark glazed earthenware although there were also a yellow-ware rim sherd, dark bottle base and clay pipe stem.

Mark digging TP9 in the foreground, with TPs 12 and 11 behind (left) and the excavated test pit showing the natural grey shale and grit stone deposit (right).

The finds from TP9

Test Pit 10

This was 1 metre square and positioned 3 metres to the east of Trench 4 with a view to seeing if the feature identified in the north-east corner at the eastern end of Trench 4 continued further east and to check an area of high resistivity readings.

The topsoil layer was quite deep here, at c 22 cm with a 10 cm deep layer of dark brown silty clay loam underneath. This came off to reveal a surface divided on a south to north axis through the middle of the test pit. There was natural mid-yellow-orange clay loam in the east half (with several sub-circular dark grey shapes representing root holes) and mid-grey silty clay with moderate small grit stones and pieces of shale in the western half. A sondage across this grey material showed it to be filling a feature cut through the orange natural. It was excavated to a depth of 15 cm but time constraints did not allow further excavation although the fill clearly continued down. Whilst the surface of the fill was quite compact, it became looser underneath. This fill material clearly matches that excavated in the feature at the eastern edge of Trench 4. Of course, the dimensions of the cut feature are not yet known other than to state that if is the same feature as that identified in Trench 4 then that gives a width of nearly 3 metres. This might suggest a large pit

rather than a ditch, but this is merely speculation until further investigation can be undertaken. The stones and shale would account for the anomaly defined by the resistivity survey.

The sondage was stopped at 277.28 m aOD with the compact fill continuing down beyond this. The turf level was 277.75 m aOD

There were no Roman finds. 4 sherds of dark glazed earthenware, 1 of creamware and a piece of brick were recoved from the topsoil layer.

TP10 can be seen being dug beyond the two open areas within Trench 4 (denoted by the grid pegs). The right photo is looking south and shows the part excavated test pit with the filled feature clearly discernible on the right side against the natural yellow-orange clay on the left.

The cut feature partly excavated within TP10 (left) with (right) the few finds from the topsoil.

Test Pit 11

This was positioned 4 metres to the west of Trench 6 and was 1 metre square. It lay in an area where the fort's east ditch would be expected. However, as shown by other trenches and test pits, there was no evidence for the dtich. Instead under 20 cm topsoil and 23 cm of mid-brown silty clay loam, was mid- to dark orange silty clay with frequent small to medium grit stones embedded within it. A sondage was dug in the north-west corner which determined that this deposit was 30-35 cm deep and sealed a deposit of loose mid- grey silty clay with over 50% flat medium-sized and small grit stones. The stony layer looks like weathered bedrock lying under sub-natural clay. The turf level was 277.53 m aOD, the surface of the

orange clay 277.10 m aOD and the top of the stony deposit underneath 276.75 m aOD. There was an absence of finds.

TP11 is in the foreground, with TP12 behind.

TP11 showing the orange sub-natural clay layer and the sondage with grey stony deposit underneath the clay (right)

Test Pit 12

This was 1 metre square and located 3 metres north of the west end of Trench 6 and 4 metres south of Test Pit 9. Under 18 cm topsoil was a dark brown silty clay loam layer 20 cm deep which came off on to similar material but with 50% angled small to medium grit stones. These in turn lay over a compact shale material which is considered to be natural and similar to that encountered in Test Pit 9. The turf level was 277.53 m aOD and the base of the sondage was at 277.05 m aOD. There were no Roman finds. The finds came from the topsoil and were dominated by post medieval glazed sherds including 3 dark glaze earthenware handles and there was one clay pipe bowl fragment.

TP12 looking east showing grey shale and stones in eastern half sondage.

TP12 finds.

Test Pit 13

This 1 metre square test pit was designed to look for the ditch swinging round the south-east corner of the fort. It was positioned 3 metres north-east for Trench 11 and 7 metres south-west of Trench 6. The topsoil gave way at 20 cm depth to a mid- yellow-brown silty clay loam 25 cm deep with frequent small grit stones. This changed to a dark brown silty clay loam of 22 cm depth which was excavated in a sondage in the north-east quarter of the test pit. Under this was natural grey shale similar to that encountered in Test Pits 9 and 12. The natural seems to be deeper here perhaps because of the proximty to the lee of the rampart. However, there were no Roman finds and no evidence for the ditch. Finds were from the topsoil and post medieval and included 3 fragments of brick, a clay pipe stem, transfer printed pottery and a black glazed earthenware rim.

The turf level was 277.23 m aOD, the shelf was 276.78 m aOD and the top of the shale deposit in the sondage was 276.56 m aOD

TP13 looking west with the natural grey shale deposit in the base of the sondage on the right at 67 cm deep.

TP13 finds.

Test Pit 14

Located 3 metres to the south of the west end of Trench 6 this 1 metre square test pit lay on slightly higher ground before the topography dropped away to the bank alongside Drycroft Lane to the south. The soil was markedly more compact than in the surrounding test pits. 20 cm depth of turf and topsoil overlay a compact light brown silty clay loam with moderate small grit stones. Under this was a compact mixed layer comprising patches of white, dark orange, light brown and light grey silty clay, with occasional charcoal flecks. This was excavated through a sondage in the north-east corner and found to be 11 cm deep, coming down on to a compact layer of small to medium grit stones in a grey shale. There was not enough

time to investigate further and it is not known if this stony layer represents natural. However, the mixed layer above is similar to that seen in Trench 5 to the east and can be considered to be rampart material – so the stony deposit could be a laid foundation for the rampart. Further investigation is required in this area to determine the width of the rampart-like material, the nature of the stony layer underneath and to see if there is a corresponding defensive ditch as observed in Trench 10.

The turf level was 277.48 m aOD, the top of the rampart deposit was 277.08 m aOD and the top of the stone layer in the sondage was 276.99 m aOD. There were no finds.


TP14 being dug by Carol and Marlene looking south and the potential rampart deposit exposed looking east (right).


TP14 showing the sondage cut through the rampart deposit in north-east corner of the test pit, with the detailed photo showing the character of the rampart material and the compact stony deposit

Test Pit 15

This was dug in an area of rushy vegetation about 5 metres to the east of Trench 6. It aimed to discover if the concentration of rushes reflected an infilled cut feature such as a pit. After removing 25 cm of topsoil and soft mid-brown silty clay loam, natural mid-yellow silty clay was revealed. A strip alongside the north side of the test pit was excavated which confirmed this represented sub-natural. There were no finds. It can be concluded that there was no archaeological interest at this location. Not levellled.

TP15 showing the shallow natural, looking east.

Test Pit 16

This was positioned 12 metres east of Trench 6, 7 metres west of the northern end of Trench 10, and 9 metres south of the east end of Trench 4. It was 1 metre square. There was 20 cm depth of topsoil which came off onto a loose mid-brown silty clay loam with frequent patches of dark grey humic soil and frequent small sandstones, and several patches of cream-coloured silty clay. A sondage in the south-west corner showed this layer to be around 15 cm deep, coming off onto a mid-orange-yellow silty clay loam with 30% small grit stones. The sondage also showed in section a 5 cm deep horizontal spread of cream-coloured silty clay. There was not enough time to investigate this deposit further but it could represent material derived from a rampart which may lie slightly to the south. The turf level was 277.53 m aOD, the top of the brown layer 277.29 m aOD and the base of the sondage was 277.17 m aOD. The only finds, from the topsoil, was a post medieval large nail and rim sherd of trail slip ware.

TP16 is in the foreground. Trench 10 is being dug by Nick and Jill in the background near the fence.

TP16 looking west showing the sondage in the south-west corner and (right) a detailed view of the sondage section with the cream-coloured deposit.

TP16 finds.

Test Pit 17

This was a 1 metre square test pit located 4 metres south of Test Pit 16 and on the edge of the top of the slope before the land drops towards the bank beside Drycroft Lane to the south. There was 25 cm depth of topsoil which in the southern half of the test pit came down on light yellow-cream silty clay with *c* 50% small sub-circular patches of dark grey humic soil. These patches where sample excavated and appeared to be root holes. As the test pit went north the topsoil was thinner and a wedge shaped mid-brown silty clay loam deposit formed, reaching its maximum depth of 20 cm in the north section. Under this in the northern half of the test pit was a thin layer of humic very dark grey soil which sealed a negative cut feature. The cut ran on a west to east axis through the middle of the test pit. The fill of the feature comprised mid-yellow-brown silty clay with moderate small to medium grit stones and moderate small patches of light grey and light orange silty clay and occasional flecks of charcoal. This test pit was dug on the last day of the dig and it was not possible due to the restricted size of the test pit and time constraints to expand the trench; therefore, the cut feature's fill was not fully excavated but it attained a maximum depth of 30 cm against the north section

of the test pit. The turf level was 277.61 m aOD at the north side of the test pit dropping to 277.45 m aOD at the south. The top of the ditch fill and sub-natural clay was 277.28 m aOD and the base of the ditch fill was 276.90 m aOD. There were no finds.

The cut feature is interpreted as the edge of a ditch running west to east and probably linking up to and being a continuation of the ditch recorded in Trench 10 some 9 metres to the east. The southern half of the test pit was covered by sub-natural silty clay which was cut by the ditch-like feature. It will be important to investigate this feature further to define its full width/profile and to see if there are remains of a rampart base just to the north, as seen in Trench 10. It is worth noting that Test Pit 16 lying 4 metres to the north had traces of possible rampart material.

TP17 showing the cut of the ditch on the left side of the test pit, looking east (left) and looking north (right)

Test Pit 18

This 1 metre square test pit was excavated adjacent to the fence east of the site of the former Husteds Cottage which was the subject of excavation in 2014 (Trench 8). The test pit aimed to examine potential for any buried Roman remains behind the cottage. However, the excavation soon revealed a rear extension to the cottage, with the edge of a connecting wall exposed against the northern edge of the test pit. A threshold stone with a central bolt hole ran across the centre of the test pit on a north to south axis. This would have given access into the cottage. On the eastern side of this threshold was a disturbed flagstone floor, whilst to the west the excavators found an electric cable trench had been punched through the remains on a north to south alignment. The excavation ceased at this point. The turf level was 278.14 m aOD and the surface of the threshold stone was at 277.83 m aOD.

TP18 can be seen in the foreground beside the fence, with TP 19 beyond in front of the tree.

TP18 looking east, showing the central threshold stone, broken up flagstone floor and wall stump on left edge, with the cable trench running left to right in front of the threshold stone.

As can be expected, there was a good quantity of domestic refuse from this test pit, including a variety of second half of the 19th and perhaps early 20th century pottery sherds such as a large rim sherd of Buckley ware, stoneware jars, assorted pieces of glass vessels, clay pipe stems and a nail.

The TP18 finds assemblage.

Test Pit 19

This was located just to the south of the former site of Husteds Cottage just beyond the edge of the 2014 excavation area (Trench 8). Against the south side of the test pit was a stepped wall of stones presumably derived from the ruins of the cottage. The wall had no mortar and appeared to be either a stack of stones from clearing the cottage site or a rockery-type landscape feature post demolition of the cottage. Under *c* 35 cm of topsoil was a very smooth stone surface formed of tightly jointed small to large gritstones. A sondage was dug in a disturbed area in the north-west corner of the test pit revealing densely packed small to medium angled grit stones. Space constraints and the compactness of this material prevented this being dug down beyond about 10 cm depth. The smooth stone surface could represent a former floor associated

with an outbuilding for the adjacent cottage, a feature related to the ‘rockery’ landscaping, or just possibly a well-preserved section of Roman road metalling.

The top of the ‘wall’ on the north side of the test pit was at 278.33 m aOD, the turf level (ground surface) by the west side of the test pit was 278.00 m aOD, the smooth stone surface 277.64 m aOD and the sondage base 277.53 m aOD.

The finds were 19th or early 20th century and comprised 2 large nails, a piece of leather, a variety of glazed pottery sherds, a bright green glass fragment, and 2 clay pipe stems.

TP19 looking south (left) and (right) looking east showing the smooth stone surface and rockery-type wall on the left

TP19 finds.

Test Pit 20

This 1 square metre test pit was placed just to the south of the Husteds Cottage excavation trench from 2014 (Trench 8) and 4 metres to the west of Test Pit 19. Under 25 cm of topsoil was a densely packed stone deposit, formed of angled small to medium grit stones. This test pit was dug on the last day and there was not time to excavate through the stones to define their depth and function. The stones may relate to the adjacent farm and cottage but could also represent remains of the Roman road coming from the east gate to re-join the main highway. This is clearly an area worthy of future investigation. The turf level was 277.95 m aOD and the surface of the stones was at 277.68 m aOD. There was a typical assemblage of 19th

and 20th century domestic waste recovered from the topsoil, which included a variety of clear glass bottle fragments, glazed pottery sherds, an iron nail and iron hook.

TP20 looking north.

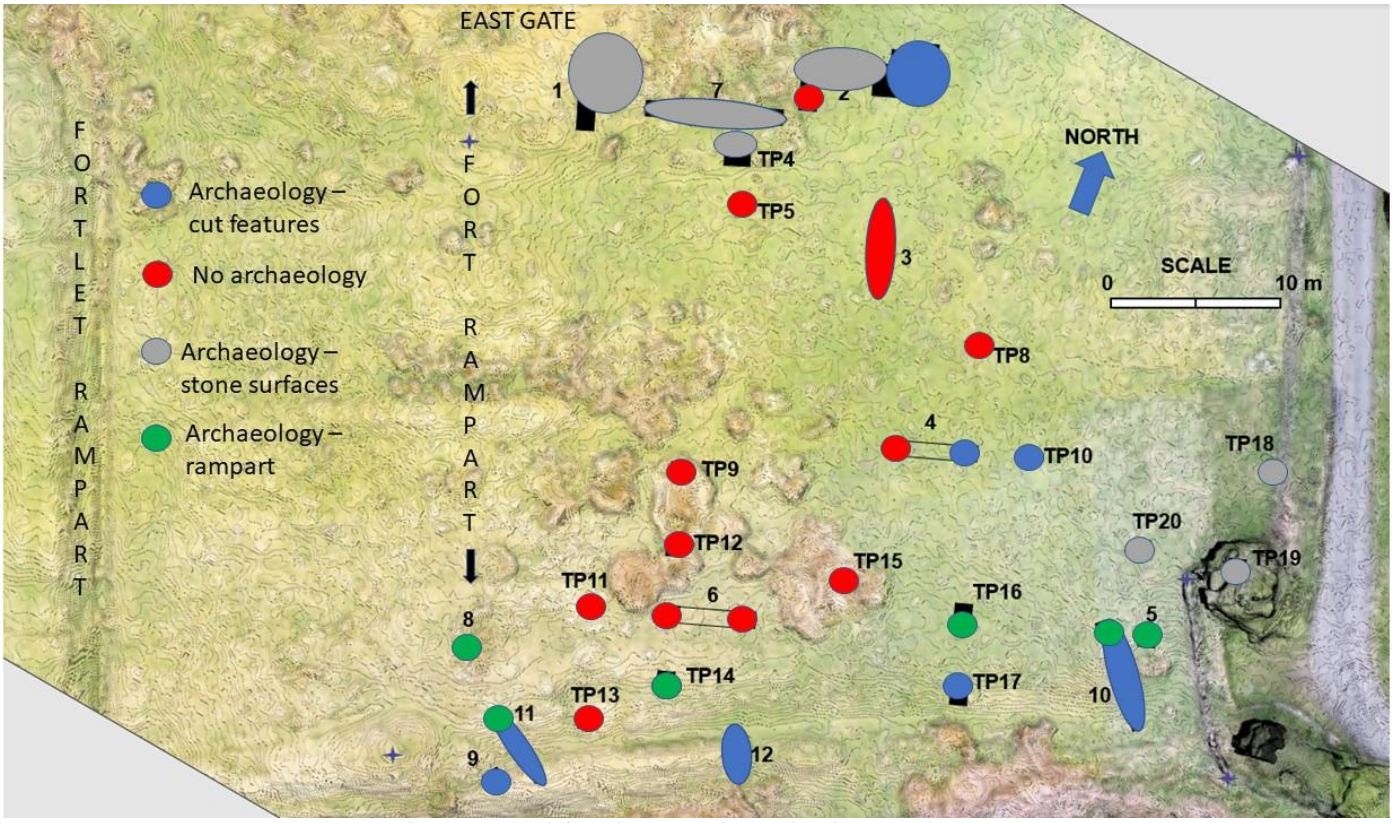
The TP20 finds assemblage.

Discussion

The 2021 evaluation trenches and test pits have made a major contribution to understanding the archaeological potential of the area immediately outside the fort's eastern defences. The plan below provides a colour-coded visual guide to the results of the investigations. The key findings can be summarised as follows:

Trenches 5 and 10 with Test Pits 14 and 16 provided evidence for what is interpreted as rampart material, whilst Trench 10 and Test Pit 17 identified a ditch which appears to run parallel and to the south of the rampart. The latter seems to be severely truncated so that only 10-15 cm of the base survive. It is postulated that these remains represent the southern defences of a military annexe attached to the east side of the fort. Further investigation is required to prove this theory in the form of another trench or two across the ditch and rampart. If this interpretation is correct, then Dirty Lane may represent the eastern

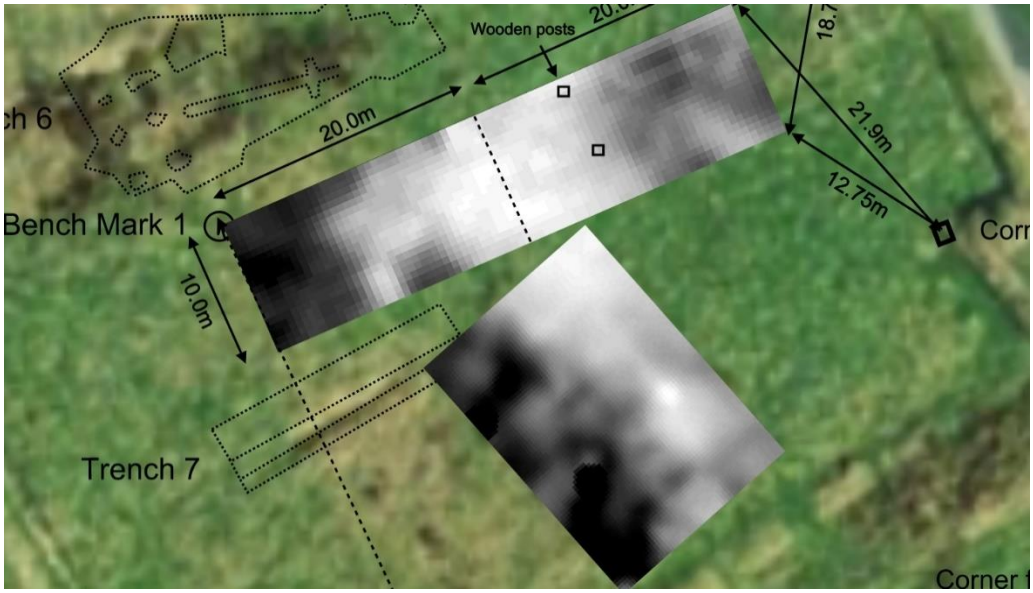
boundary of the annexe. This can be tested by evaluation test pits along the verge of the lane. The northern arm of the annexe defences may be represented by the potential rampart material seen in Test Pit 30 in the 2019 excavations and the possible ditch in Test Pit 33 just to the north of the kink in the lane. Again, further investigation of these areas is recommended.



Plan summarising the 2021 investigation results

The fort's east rampart was identified in Test Pit 8 and the north end of Trench 11. The latter trench revealed the upper fills of the fort ditch, but it was not possible to fully excavated the ditch fills and determine the profile within the limits of the evaluation. Trench 9 also showed probable fort ditch fill, although this was partly cut into by a stone-line drain which appears to be of 18th or 19th century origin. Test Pit 13, which lay just 3 metres north-east of Trench 11, appeared to have no evidence of a ditch so the area between them is critical for defining the terminus of the fort ditch.

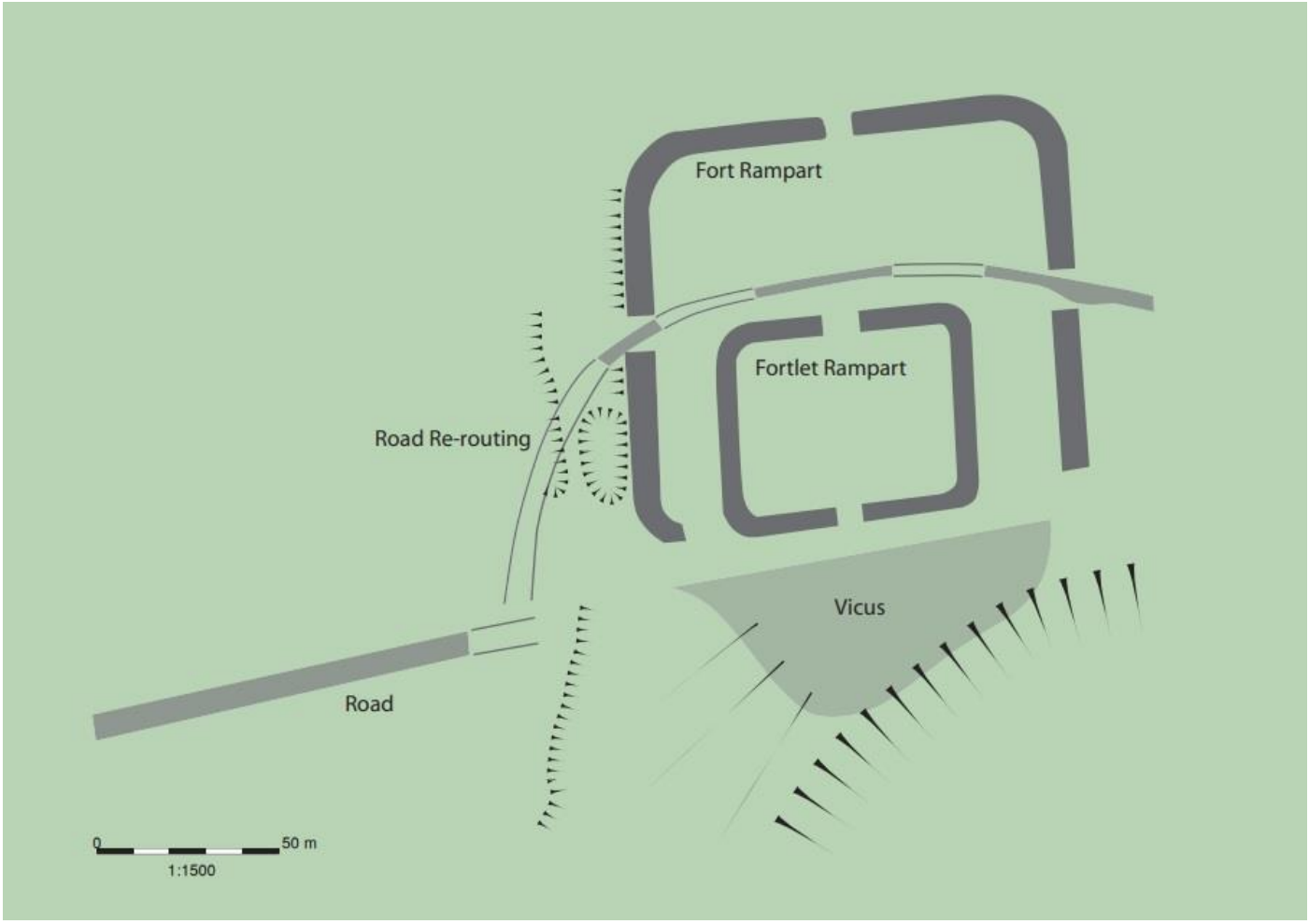
A large swathe of the central and western investigation area was found to be devoid of Roman features or deposits; this being graphically illustrated by the red symbols of no archaeology shown on the plan above. This area is quite flat, certainly more so than the southern part of the area and the area north of the east gate which was investigated in 2019 where Roman features do survive well. It is suggested that considerable landscaping has taken place, perhaps associated with the owners of Husteds Farm just to the east who may have wished to improve this land for crops or livestock. Interestingly, a considerable amount of overburden was evident in the area of Trench 10, totally obscuring the ditch and creating an artificial bank; did this material derive from the landscaping? It was hoped that a large anomaly identified in the geophysical surveys may represent Roman remains, but the natural grey shale and weathered bedrock found in Test Pits 9, 11, 12, 13 and Trench 6 show that this was not the cause. The natural has been found to vary considerably across the investigation area with stone and grey shale occurring close to the surface in the western part but light yellow or orange clay and silty clay subsoil dominating in the eastern side.



During the excavations in August, the Friends re-surveyed the previous geophysical survey area, but covering some new parts to the west and south. The anomalies showing as dark areas on the left side of the lower plot above can now be considered to be caused by the geology, whilst those to the left of the upper plot are thought to represent the rampart, east gate exit road and some natural deposits.

Post medieval landscaping activity has removed much of the Roman road in the centre of the investigation area, as suggested by the geophysical survey and demonstrated by Test Pits 4, 5, 8 and Trench 3. Therefore, its alignment south or east from the remains exposed in Trench 7 and part of Test Pit 4 is not known. However, the angle of the western edge of the road in Trenches 1 and 7 suggest it is running south-eastwards from the former east gate. At the very end of the excavation in October two Test Pits, 19 and 20, located stones surfaces which could potentially be related to the road. But they were remarkably contrasting, with Test Pit 19 exhibiting a very smooth finely-meshed grit stone surface whereas Test Pit 20 had a loose stone spread. Either of these could as easily be of post-medieval date and associated with the adjacent Husteds Cottage, so further investigation is required here to define the extent of the stone surfaces and determine their depth and character. Given that test pitting in 2013 south of Dirty Lane found no evidence for the main highway, it is possible that Dirty Lane itself and also part of the former Drycroft Lane could be on the same alignment as the Roman road. It is desirable therefore to extend Trenches 10 and 12 southwards across Drycroft Lane to examine this potential, although it is recognised that 20th century drains may have caused considerably disturbance. There was not time to investigate the area east of Trench 3 which lies in front (west) of Husteds Farm site and where the compound was located for the GMAU dig in the 1980s. The geophysics shows anomalies here but these are probably caused by the hardcore put down for parking in the 1980s; nonetheless Roman remains could survive under this and these could potentially include the fort road exiting the east gate.

Trenches 1 and 2 exposed remains of the fortlet phase loop road exiting the east gate at a fairly sharp angle, pretty much mirroring the arrangement outside the fort's west gate. Bruton identifies this road on his plan and GMAU's early 1990s investigation and the dig of 2014 confirmed the existence and course of the road running behind the fortlet and through the former gateways of the earlier, Agricolan, fort. Trench 6 in 2014 showed a marked difference between the high-quality metalling of the fort road of AD 78 compared with the much cruder (and more damaged/weathered?) fortlet loop road of c AD 120. Test Pit 4 showed the southernmost survival of the fortlet road whilst Trench 7 exposed its full width at 5 metres. It was thinly laid and disturbed in places, probably by Bruton trenches. Given that this was meant to be a diversion of the main highway around the back (north side) of the fortlet to allow buildings outside the south gate, it was poor metalling; but it must be borne in mind that weathering, recycling of the stones at a later date and ploughing have all taken their toll. It is interesting that Bruton's plan shows the road exiting the east gate at a shallower angle than that suggested by the 2021 investigation. This is possibly due to two road alignments being represented here with his trenching following the fort road which ran at a shallower angle to re-join the main highway, whereas the fortlet loop road was on a different, steeper, angled alignment as identified in the recent excavation.



Plan showing the course of the loop road established c AD 120, based on the early 1990s GMAU excavations, the 2014 dig and Bruton's plan.

In Trench 1 the road appeared to cut through an earlier stone surface which is interpreted as being the mirror of the stone platform found right at the end of the excavation in July 4014 in Trench 6 against the rampart on the north side of the east gateway. This stone spread could have provided pedestrian access to the side of the gate or be related to the gatehouse structure. In the 2014 excavation the stone platform was defined by a well-laid clear kerbstone edge and comprised regular-sized grit stones. The Trench 1 stone spread was somewhat different being much more irregular, but it should be noted that the trench covered only part of the potential stone platform as it was not lined up squarely with the remains found on the opposite side of the gateway in 2014. Furthermore, it had been disturbed by the later fortlet-phase loop road. Trench 1 did reveal a possible eastern edge for the stone spread and it would clearly be advantageous to conduct further investigations in this area to better define this feature.

Trench 2 continued the 2014 Trench 6 excavation area eastwards to follow the possible fort road alignment. This was seen in 2014 to be breaking up towards the east edge of the trench and the 2021 excavations confirmed that the stone metalling was patchy and had more of the appearance of a pathway than a road. At the east end of Trench 2 this stone surface was found to overlie a mixed clay deposit which had the appearance of a trample layer. It was at its thickest underneath the stones and thinned out away from them. The clay deposit in turn overlay a series of post holes. There was also a stone filled short linear cut feature, a pit and a shallow trench possibly for a timber beam. Whilst there were no Roman finds within the fills of these post holes, the fact they were sealed beneath the clay deposit and pathway and were clearly the earliest features being cut into natural, strongly implies a Roman origin. It is suggested that they belong to timber buildings set out in the fort annexe. Trench 2 was aligned so that the east end lay just north of the possible Roman fort road alignment projected by Bruton, so the timber structures could have lined the roadside. It will be interesting to establish the relationship of the newly discovered timber buildings with the one found in 2019 and the possible one identified in 2014 in Trench 6. Two of the post holes provided evidence of two phases of use which suggests re-ordering or refurbishment of the timber structure/s. Interestingly, the 1980s excavations by GMAU found evidence of two phases of fort timber

buildings, so are we seeing this pattern repeated outside the fort within the annexe? The extent and form of these structures is not yet defined, and it seems highly probable that further features extend beyond the confines of the east end of Trench 2. It is a future priority to extend this area of investigation.

The discovery of the post holes sealed under what was initially thought to be the fort road throws up question marks on the function and date of the stone metalled surface revealed in Trench 2. It suggests that it is of the later, fortlet, phase or even the post medieval period being associated with re-cycling of the Roman road materials to form a pathway.

1996 oblique aerial photo showing the fort and the Roman highway ascending the valley side. Blue arrows mark the line of the main highway, but its location and that of the fort and fortlet roads exiting in the east gate (where 'FORT' is written) are still uncertain and require further investigation.

Conclusion

The archaeological research strategy for Castleshaw Roman Forts is set out in 'An Excavation Strategy for Castleshaw Roman Forts' (Redhead 2013). Relevant to the 2021 evaluation are the following:

Research Objective 8: Understanding how the fort functioned
Research Objective 9: Understanding the road network
Research Objective 10. Understanding the immediate hinterland.

The ovens and timber buildings so far identified in the 2006, 2018/9 and 2021 investigations all lie in the northern half of the newly identified defended annexe. Are we looking at the annexe being divided into different functions? The north half may have been used for additional accommodation and food production whereas the southern half might have been used to coral livestock given the limited evidence for Roman

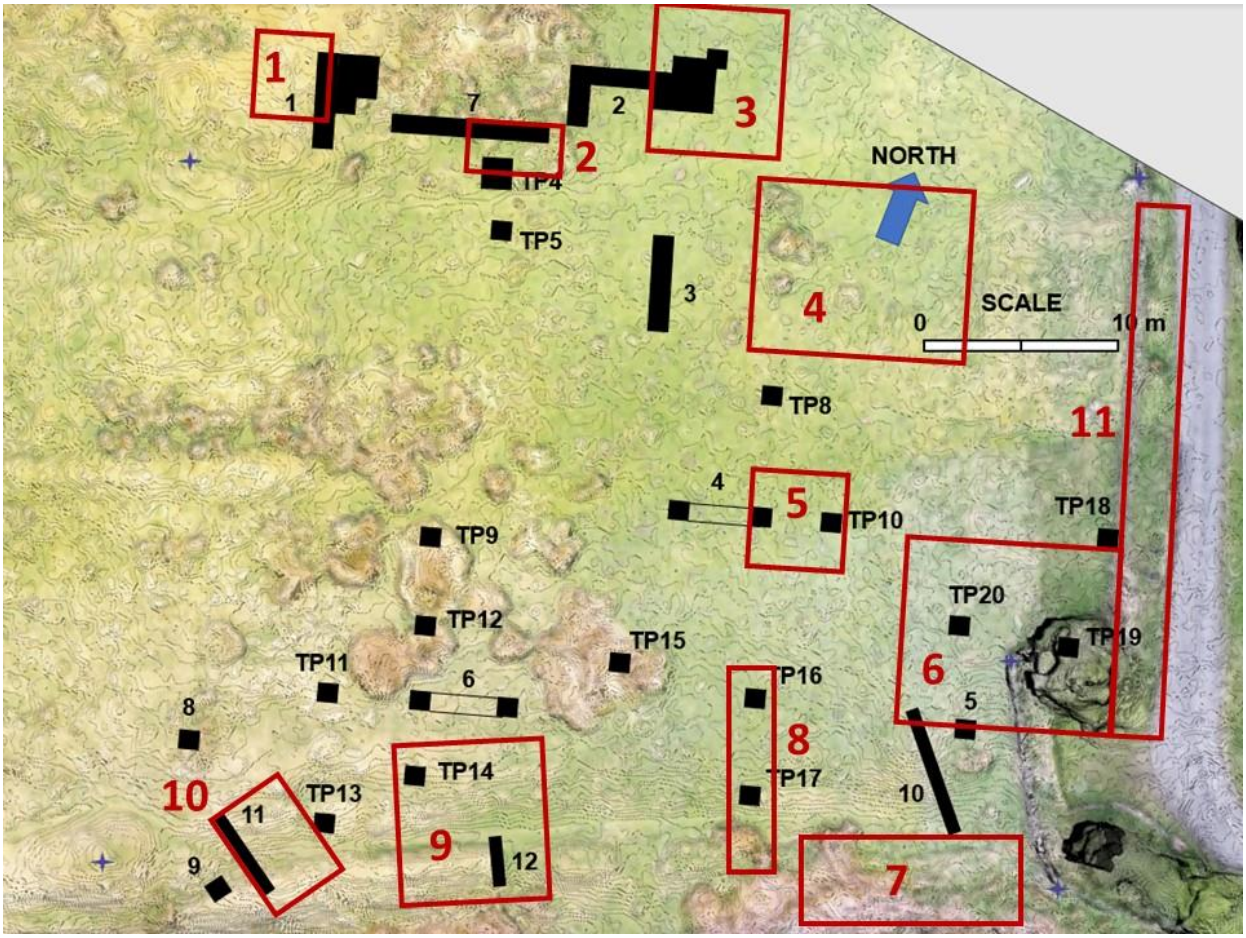
remains. However, this interpretation for the southern half must be tempered with the knowledge that much of this area has been truncated by landscaping.

Completion of the Friends volunteers' first stage of evaluation (in 2018,2019 and 2021) on the land adjacent to the fort's east defences has significantly increased our understanding of this area from being pretty much a 'blank' canvas. Evidence has emerged for a bank and ditch defended military annexe being attached to the east side of the fort. Whilst this might explain the absence of a ditch next to the east fort rampart, it is still an extremely unusual and rare phenomenon. There is tantalising evidence for zonal use within the annexe but, to date, no sign of a bath house. The evaluation exercise has been very successful in allowing us now to target further investigations to answer specific questions to refine the knowledge gained so far.

In relation to the research questions, there has been significant progress with Objectives 8 and 9 with the discovery of a probable military annexe on the east side of the fort. This of course needs further definition but 2021 has seen a major step forward. However, the question of a possible 1st century *vicus* remains an important issue. Currently there is only evidence of a settlement associated with the 2nd century fortlet and, as yet, no sign of a 1st century precursor. This is quite unusual given that most auxiliary forts did have associated civilian communities, drawn by the attraction of a permanent garrison of troops keen to spend their pay. Perhaps the fort was not in use long enough to establish a *vicus* or perhaps it was in an area not yet investigated or disturbed by later settlement, for example Lower Castleshaw hamlet. The general lack of Roman remains and domestic finds beyond the fort and annexe defences are frustrating but, based on the results so far, suggest there was not a *vicus*. Objective 10 is still a work in progress, with the roads exiting the eastern gate and the location of the main highway as it approaches the fort from the east requiring further investigation.

Recommendations

The 2021 investigations have highlighted several key areas for further work on the east side of the fort. These areas are depicted on the plan below.



1 – Extend Trench westwards to define the extent and character of the possible stone platform/surface beside the gateway and the relationship/character of the fort and fortlet roads.

2 – The eastern edge of the road in Trench 7 was not clearly defined so this area would extend the area of investigation linking with Test Pit 4 to allow a better understanding.

3 – Examine the extent of the post holes and pits revealed in the eastern part of Trench 2 and further define their character and function.

4 – Investigate an area of high resistivity readings immediately to the west of the former Husteds Farm. These probably represent the hard standing put down outside the 1980s excavation compound; but are there Roman remains concealed underneath?

5 –Define the boundaries and character of the cut feature identified at the east end of Trench 4 and the west side of Test Pit 10.

6 – Investigate the extent and character of the stone surfaces/spreads revealed in Test Pits 19 and 20, determine if the Roman road exists here, and look for evidence for the continuation and potential corner of the annex rampart/ditch.

7 – Examine the site of Drycroft Lane to see if there is evidence for an underlying Roman road here, exploring further the possible stone spread at the southern edge of Trench 10.

8 – Excavate a north to south trench to show the full extent/profile of the ditch and rampart suggest in Test Pits 16 and 17.

9 – Better define and explore the ditch feature revealed in Trench 12 and understand how it relates to the rampart material exposed in Test Pit 14 and extend the trench southwards across the former Drycroft Lane to see if has a Roman road precursor.

10 – Determine the location and character of the fort ditch corner terminus and look for its junction with the annex ditch.

11 – Examine the roadside verge through test pitting to check for annexe defence remains.

These research aims should be combined with those set out in the 2019 excavation report (Redhead 2020) to inform Scheduled Monument Consent for any future investigations.

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