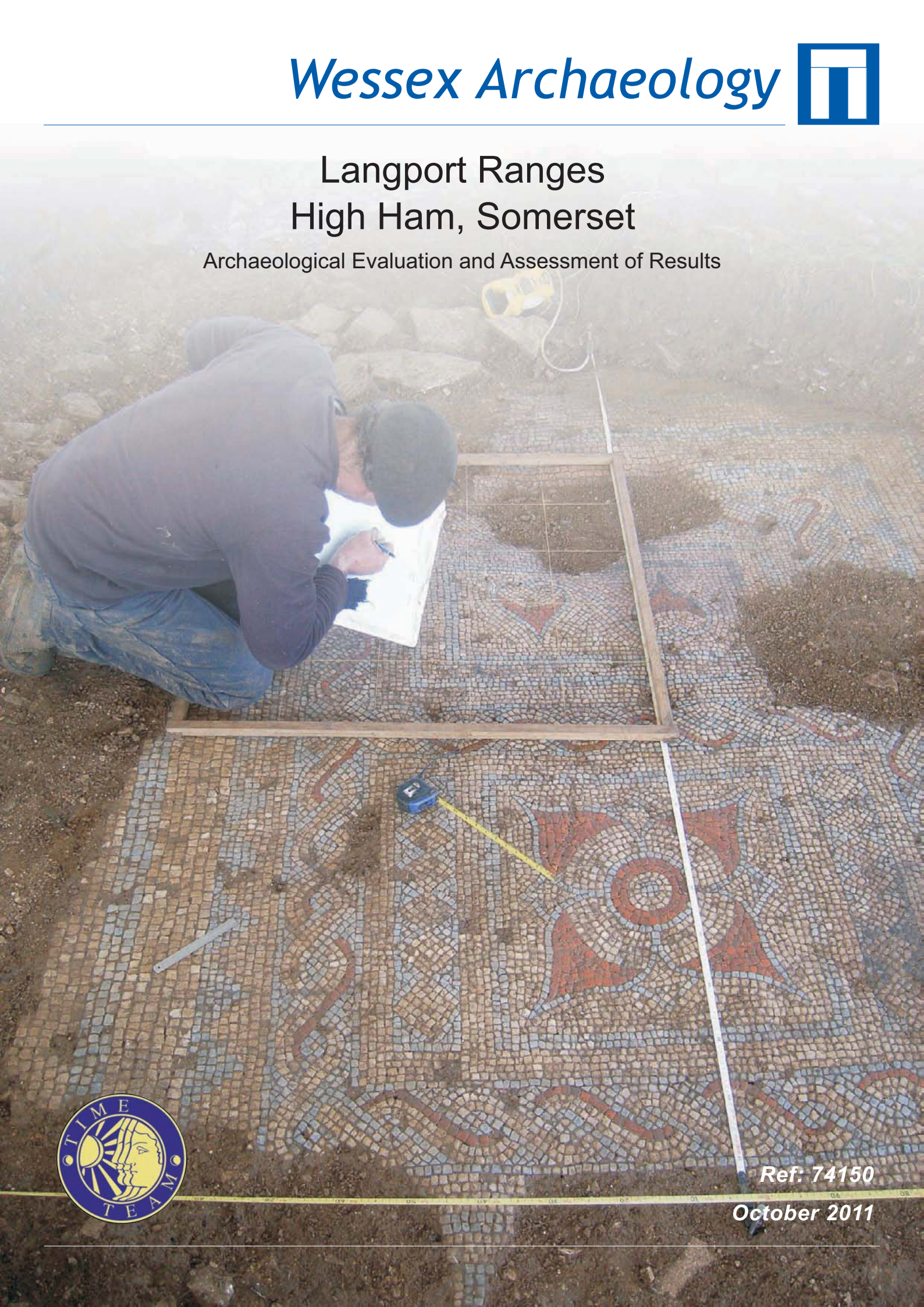
Wessex Archaeology

Langport Ranges
High Ham, Somerset

Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Results



Ref: 74150

October 2011

LANGPORT RANGES, HIGH HAM, SOMERSET

Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Results

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Report reference: 74150.01
Path: Projectserver\PROJECTS\74150\Post EX\Report
Monument Number 193634
HER PRN 28343

October 2011

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QUALITY ASSURANCE

SITE CODE	74150	ACCESSION CODE		CLIENT CODE	
PLANNING APPLICATION REF.		NGR	342287 129500		

VERSION	STATUS*	PREPARED BY	APPROVED BY	APPROVER'S SIGNATURE	DATE	FILE
1	F	SDT	LNM			\\PROJECTSERVER\PROJECTS\74150\POST EX\REPORT\74150_HIGH_HAM_REPORT(EDLNM)

* I= Internal Draft E= External Draft F= Final

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Summary

In March and April 2010 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Channel 4's 'Time Team' at the Langport Ranges, High Ham Somerset (NGR 342287 129500) to investigate the site of the High Ham Roman Villa. The site had been excavated in 1861 by W.W. Munckton and C. Fry, who left relatively detailed plans of their discoveries, including a number of detailed paintings of the exposed mosaics, although their results were never published.

No subsequent investigations of the Site were undertaken until a limited fieldwalking exercise in the 1990s. Then in 2008 a geophysical survey revealed the layout of the villa complex, and Time Team's programme of works aimed to investigate a number of the resulting geophysical anomalies while clarifying the details and chronology of the villa.

The evaluation was successful in its stated aims in providing a detailed geophysical plan of the wider area around the villa, identifying that it was a much larger complex than initially thought, and by identifying at least two phases of villa construction. The earliest phase is potentially dated on artefactual evidence to the late 2nd to early 3rd centuries AD, but remains slightly ambiguous as only a few short stretches of walling were assigned to the phase (and therefore no coherent overall plan), and no direct dating for these was obtained.

The major phase of construction and occupation appeared to belong to the later Romano-British period, and comprised two wings. The finds assemblage was not large, but coin and pottery evidence spanned the later 3rd to 4th centuries AD. This also corresponds with the dating of the exposed mosaics on stylistic grounds.

The evaluation was able to confirm that the lack of major agricultural activity on the site due to its use as an MOD firing range had resulted in the excellent preservation of the underlying archaeological remains, despite the very shallow depth pf the overburden.

The results of the evaluation, although of some local interest, do not warrant detailed publication. A summary has been submitted to the *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society*, for inclusion in the annual round-up of archaeology in the county.

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Acknowledgements

This programme of post-excavation and assessment work was commissioned and funded by Videotext Communications Ltd, and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank the staff at Videotext, and in particular Michael Douglas (Series Editor), Jane Hammond (Production Manager), Ben Knappett (Assistant Producer) Alex Rowson (Researcher), Kerry Ely (Locations Manager) and Ainsley Allen (Production Coordinator) for their considerable help during the recording and post-excavation work.

The geophysical survey, field and topographical survey was undertaken by John Gater, Jimmy Adcock, Emma Wood and Graeme Attwood of GSB Prospection and landscape survey and map regression was undertaken by Stewart Ainsworth of English Heritage. The excavation strategy was devised by Mick Aston. The on-site recording was co-ordinated by Steve Thompson, and on-site finds processing was carried out by Sue Nelson, both of Wessex Archaeology.

The excavations were undertaken by Time Team's retained archaeologists, Phil Harding (Wessex Archaeology), Tracey Smith, Matt Williams, Ian Powlesland, Raksha Dave and Faye Simpson assisted by Matt Law, Nick Corcos, James Brigers, Richard Broomhead, Keith Faxon and Alan Graham. The metal detector survey was carried out by Brian Read and Val MacRae. On-site pottery and small finds identification was undertaken by Mark Corney and Philippa Walton respectively.

The archive was collated and all post-excavation assessment and analysis undertaken by Wessex Archaeology. This report was compiled by Steve Thompson with initial historical research by Ben Knappett and Alex Rowson of Videotext Communications, and further specialist reports prepared by GSB Prospection (geophysics), Lorraine Mepham (finds), Nicholas Cook (coins), Lorrain Higbee (animal bone), and Sarah F. Wyles (palaeoenvironmental). Stone identifications are by Dr Kevin Hayward. The illustrations were prepared by Kenneth Lymer. The post-excavation project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Lorraine Mepham.

The work and successful completion of the project benefited from discussions on Site with Phil Harding, Mick Aston, Helen Geake, Martin Brown (Archaeological Advisor Defence Estates), Neil Holbrook (Cotswold Archaeology) and Bob Croft (Somerset County Archaeologist). Thanks are also due to Steve Cosh (mosaic specialist) for his comments on the mosaics, and special thanks are due to Tracey Smith and Alan Graham for their meticulous on-site recording of the mosaics.

Finally thanks are extended to the Defence Estates and tenant framer Phil Board for allowing access to the Site for geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation.

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Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Results

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Videotext Communications Ltd to undertake a programme of archaeological recording and post-excavation work on an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Channel 4's 'Time Team' at the Langport Ranges, High Ham, Somerset, hereafter the 'Site', to investigate a Roman villa first identified in the 19th century (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 This report documents the results of archaeological survey and evaluation undertaken by Time Team, and presents an assessment of the results of these works which can be used to advise on the future management and preservation of the Site.

1.2 The Site, location and geology

1.2.1 The Site consists of an area of arable land centred on NGR 342287 129500, and is currently a Danger Area zone of the Langport Rifle Ranges under the ownership of the Defence Estates. The Site is located 8 miles north-west of Ilchester and 6 miles south-west of Glastonbury, in the parish of High Ham, in the county of Somerset.

1.2.2 The Site is located at a height of approximately 70m above Ordnance Datum aOD with underlying geology consisting of white lias with calcareous grassland overlying clayey soils (BGS 296).

1.3 Archaeological Background

Introduction

1.3.1 The following sections are taken from the initial project design for the Site (Videotext Communications 2010).

1.3.2 The Site lies within an area of significant Roman-British activity, with the town of Ilchester (founded *c*. AD 90) located some eight miles to the south-east and the mid 1st century AD Fosse Way, a major road of the *cursus publicus*, a few miles to the east. To the south of Ilchester is another major road linking Exeter, Dorchester and London and thus providing good trade links for the area. The High Ham villa is one of a number in a concentration around Ilchester, and indeed one of a large corpus of such sites within the county. The *floruit* of the villas across south-west England is clearly in the later Roman period, but many have earlier origins, some possibly pre-Roman.

1.4 Previous Archaeological Work

1861 Excavation

1.4.1 The Site was excavated in 1861 by W.W. Munckton and C. Fry. Although no excavation report was ever published, several plans and paintings survive revealing what was found. Several rooms were excavated, including two with mosaic floors divided by a semi-circular structure interpreted as a fireplace, and a corridor measuring some 15m. Paintings of the mosaics survive in Taunton Museum as well as a number of finds from the excavation, including late Roman pottery and 11 coins including those of Allectus (Roman usurper-emperor in Britain and northern Gaul from AD 293 to 296), Constantius I ('Chlorus'; AD 293-306) and Constantine (306-337). The two paintings in Taunton Museum have been recorded by Cosh and Neal (2005, 211, mosaics 199.1, 199.2).

1.4.2 Mosaic 199.1 was described thus: *'The scheme consists of a row of three adjacent upright rectangles drawn in simple guilloche outlined in blue-grey with strands shaded alternatively red and white. The central rectangle holds a blue-grey linear square containing a four-petalled flower, each petal being white with a red tip, and having a light blue grey and white excrescences between. This square is flanked by bands of white poised squares on a blue grey ground, the other two rectangles each have two blue grey linear rectangles arranged concentrically enclosing a pair of opposing and linked heart shaped leaves. The complete panel is surrounded by a row of inward pointing tangent isosceles triangles on a white ground (not shown as stepped although this may be an error by the original artist), two parallel bands of blue-grey on a white ground and a plain white outer border.'*

1.4.3 Mosaic 199.2 was *'executed entirely in blue grey and white tesserae and consists of an all-over spaced swastika meander with double returns enclosing a quincunx arrangement of small squares. Each of these squares features four poised squares on a blue-grey ground. The panel is enclosed by narrow rectangular panels of ashlar drawn in blue grey on white. The whole design is surrounded by a broad white border interrupted by a band of blue grey.'*

1.4.4 The two mosaics are dated as late 4th century AD on stylistic grounds, and due to similarities with other mosaics from in and around Ilchester are considered to be the products of a mosaicist from that town (*ibid.*, 211).

1994 Fieldwalking

1.4.5 In April 1994 the site was ploughed for the first time in ten years prior to planting a maize crop, and a very limited fieldwalking exercise (surface artefact collection) was undertaken over the suspected area of the villa. A grid of 50m x 50m was laid out and divided into 5m squares and all finds plotted out on a distribution plan. The frequency and nature of the finds confirmed the Roman date of the Site, but there were no significant patterns in the data. In addition, 74 prehistoric flints were collected, including seven microliths. Flint does not naturally occur in the area.

1.4.6 The most common finds were Roman roof tiles, both ceramic and stone. The pottery consisted of two sherds of Black Burnished ware, one sherd of samian type ware and about 30 sherds of medieval fine sandy glazed wares.

2008 Geophysical Survey

1.4.7 A detailed magnetic survey was undertaken in early March 2008 by Stratascan Ltd (unpublished data). The nature of the responses in the northern part of the field identifies the presence of cut features, earthworks and structural remains consistent with that of a Roman villa. The extent and orientation of the features also suggests surviving walls and a possible wing. The building identified by the responses is approximately 65m by 55m in size.

1.4.8 Some strong linear features were identified, thought to be contemporary with the villa and interpreted as possible boundary ditches. A thermo-remnant feature was detected to the south of the structure which is almost certainly evidence of burning. This could be related to a kiln or a possible location for a hypocaust. Several curvilinear features were also detected in the area.

1.4.9 To the east of the villa two positive circular features were identified and are likely to represent a cut feature possibly pre-dating the villa, as indicated by differing boundary orientations. Throughout the field a number of pit-like features of possible archaeological significance were detected.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1.1 A project design for the work was compiled (Videotext Communications 2010), providing full details of the research aims and methods. A brief summary is provided here.

2.1.2 The aim of the project was to characterise the nature and date of the Site and place it within its historical, geographical and archaeological context.

2.1.3 Three specific research aims were identified:

2.1.4 Research Aim 1:

- To characterise the extent, condition, form and spatial relationships between possible Roman features of the proposed ‘villa’, and to clarify chronological relationships and functional aspects.

2.1.5 Research Aim 2:

- To characterise the extent, condition, form and spatial relationships between possible pre-Roman features, and to clarify chronological relationships and functional aspects.

2.1.6 Research Aim 3:

- To determine whether any archaeological features are contained within Area 2 to the north of the villa, where geophysical survey results

suggested that features may continue (**Figure 1**), and to clarify any chronological relationships and functional aspects within this area.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Geophysical Survey

3.1.1 Prior to the excavation of evaluation trenches, a geophysical survey was carried out across the Site using a combination of resistance and magnetic survey. The survey grid was tied in to the Ordnance Survey grid using a Trimble real time differential GPS system.

3.2 Evaluation Trenches

3.2.1 Four trenches of varying sizes were excavated in Area 1 (**Figure 1**), their locations determined in order to investigate and to clarify geophysical anomalies and address specific research objectives **Figure 1**.

3.2.2 The trenches were excavated using a 360º tracked excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket and were excavated under constant archaeological supervision and ceased at the identification of significant archaeological remains, or at natural geology if this was encountered first. When machine excavation had ceased all trenches were cleaned by hand and archaeological deposits investigated.

3.2.3 At various stages during excavation the deposits were scanned by a metal detector and signals marked in order to facilitate investigation. The excavated up-cast was scanned by metal detector.

3.2.4 All archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets with a unique numbering system for individual contexts. Trenches were located using a Trimble Real Time Differential GPS survey system. All archaeological features and deposits were planned at a scale of 1:20 with sections drawn at 1:10. All principal strata and features were related to the Ordnance Survey datum.

3.2.5 A full photographic record of the investigations and individual features was maintained, utilising digital images. The photographic record illustrated both the detail and general context of the archaeology revealed and the Site as a whole.

3.2.6 At the completion of the work, all trenches were reinstated using the excavated soil.

3.2.7 Prior to the commencement of works, Somerset County Council Historical Environment Office allocated the Museum Accession Number **TTNCM:33/2010** and HER PRN **28343**. The work was carried out on the 29th March to 1st April 2010. The archive and all artefacts were subsequently transported to the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury where they were processed and assessed for this report.

3.3 Copyright

3.3.1 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright, or the

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Details of individual excavated contexts and features, and the full geophysical report (GSB 2010), are retained in the archive. Summaries of the excavated sequences can be found in **Appendix 1**.

4.2 Geophysical Results

Introduction and Summary

4.2.1 Geophysical survey was carried out over Areas 1 and 2 covering a total area of 2.08 hectares using a combination of magnetic, resistance and ground penetrating radar (GPR) (**Figures 1 and 2**).

4.2.2 The results from all three datasets confirmed the layout of the known villa and clearly show internal wall foundations, floor surfaces and associated features. In addition, the probable location of a previously discovered well was re-identified by the GPR survey. The magnetic data from the field to the north of the main villa building revealed an annexe to the complex.

4.3 Magnetic Survey (Figure 1)

Area 1

4.3.1 The main focus of the magnetic survey was to re-establish the position of the villa, which was successfully achieved. The data clearly show the villa building, as a northern range aligned north-west – south-east, with a west range aligned north-east – south-west. The wall foundations of individual rooms (A) are clear, as well as areas of probable burning (B) and large ditches (C), which appear to border the villa.

4.3.2 The results are broadly similar to the earlier geophysical survey carried out in 2008, with the minor exception that a 'ring ditch' (D) to the east of the villa building was shown to have a slightly more complete circuit.

Area 2

4.3.3 A number of linear and curvilinear (E) ditches can be seen within this area and follow the same alignment as the villa building to the south. It is feasible that these ditches are part of an annexe associated with the villa and may have had an agricultural or horticultural function.

4.3.4 Running approximately east – west, two bands of magnetic disturbance (F) are visible; it is likely that these reflect natural outcropping in the bedrock.

4.3.5 Smaller scale ferrous anomalies ('iron spikes') are present throughout the survey areas. These responses are characteristic of small pieces of ferrous debris in the topsoil and are commonly assigned a modern origin.

4.4 Ground Penetrating Radar GPR (Figure 2)

4.4.1 GPR was only undertaken in Area 1. A striking facet of the dataset is how shallow the deposits are and also the limited depth extent they exhibit (see **Figure 3, Plate 2**); material from the villa starts showing within the top 30cm and there appears to be little of archaeological origin below 75cm. There is little detail to be had within the first 30cm but it seems likely that the amorphous zones of anomalies (A) represent the shallowest archaeological deposits.

4.4.2 Two wings have been identified; the strongest responses are from over the north-east wing, with reflections associated with the western block seemingly limited to the major wall lines. This may be an indication that the whole of the north wing had more substantial flooring - mosaics were uncovered in the trenches crossing this half of the structure. The back of this wing also seems to have had a room extending northwards, as the north wall is stepped out (B).

4.4.3 The origin of the quiet zone (C) is unclear. Excavation in this location (Trench 1) revealed a red clay layer and fragments of lias, which would suggest this was either a store for material used during the mosaic installation or the site of a robbed-out floor. There is some suggestion of linear features running around it, but the radargrams show a distinct break in the reflectors; perhaps favouring the interpretation that material was robbed from here in antiquity. The possibility remains that the clay is simply attenuating the GPR signal.

4.4.4 The main outline of the west wing is relatively clear but there are also a number of ephemeral trends in and around it which may be related to internal divisions and ancillary structures. Strong magnetic responses were recorded coinciding with high amplitude anomalies (D and E); structural remains were uncovered at E (**Trench 4**) whilst time constraints have left D undisturbed.

4.4.5 The natural geology is at its shallowest in the north-east of the survey area and can be seen as broad strong reflectors (F). Ditch cuts into this natural material are also clearly defined in this area. Across the rest of the grid, the natural material is defined by more sporadic reflections owing to the overlying archaeology.

4.4.6 A well, recorded during the antiquarian investigations, was also searched for during the evaluation. Three zones of increased magnetic response looked to be possible candidates for the feature based on a schematic drawing of its position. A single GPR traverse was collected to cover all three positions. The results show that two of the magnetic anomalies returned identical GPR response patterns – a break in the natural reflector, suggesting a cut feature, with no obvious material overlying it – whilst the third was markedly different. The latter position seems to show a cut in the natural, but with disturbance immediately above it. This would fit with the description of the well having been filled with rubbish, and surrounded by collapsed stone from its wall.

4.5 Resistance (Figure 1)

4.5.1 A small resistance survey was conducted in Area 1 over the north-western corner of the villa, and the results are broadly comparable to both the magnetic and GPR surveys; however, heavy rain and the closeness of both the archaeology and the bedrock to the ground surface have limited the effectiveness of the technique. No further survey was attempted at this time due to these issues.

4.6 Conclusions

4.6.1 Survey with all three geophysical techniques successfully confirmed the position of the known villa. GPR survey further identified the probable location of a previously excavated well. New information has also been added to this site from the magnetic results; to the north of the villa building an annexe has been detected, though the full extent of the associated archaeological remains may not have been established.

4.7 Evaluation Trenches

Introduction

4.7.1 The size and shape of the trenches varied to account for the varying potential targets to be investigated. Any substantial archaeological remains were left *in situ*.

Site-wide stratigraphy and natural geology

4.7.2 The trenches saw the removal of *c*. 0.20m of overlying ploughsoil and a further *c*. 0.15m of subsoil or the very base of the ploughsoil, in order to expose the archaeological deposits below. Where encountered, the natural geology was a cornbrash type material - a combination of clay with limestone fragments and solid pitched limestone slabs.

Trench 1 (Figures 3 & 4)

4.7.3 Trench 1 was positioned in the north-west corner of the villa to try and locate Munckton and Fry's trench of 1861. The cut of their trench was identified (**116**, backfilled with **108**). It was clear that there had been a number of phases of activity within Trench 1.

4.7.4 The earliest stratified deposit was reworked/trampled natural layer **119**/**126**/**129** which sealed the natural bedrock **120**. Sealing this were structures of the first construction phase: truncated wall **118** and metalled surface **117**. Wall **118**, truncated by later structures, was constructed of flat limestone blocks as opposed to the pitched herringbone style of later walls. Wall **118** and surface **117** were potentially contemporaneous with walls **205** in Trench 2 and **403** and **408** in Trench 4, on the similarity of construction.

4.7.5 The second phase of construction began with the demolition of wall **118** and its sealing with a demolition/levelling layer (**105**/**110**/**121**), subsequently cut through by the construction trench for wall **104**. Walls **123** and **132** were also built, bounding the rooms in which mosaics **124** and **131** were located.

4.7.6 Mosaics **124** and **131** (**Figure 3, Plate 1; Figure 4, Plates 3 and 4**) are clearly the same mosaics as those exposed by Munckton and Fry in 1861, and are in remarkable condition considering that they lie only 0.30m below

the current ground surface (**Figure 3, Plate 2**). Mosaic **124** was set into a bedding layer (**144**) over a red clay levelling layer (**130**), whereas mosaic **131** was set directly into a lime mortar layer (**133**). These different bedding layers, and the slightly different shades of blue lias stone used as tesserae indicate that they were probably laid at different times, but most likely by the same craftsman (S. Cosh pers. comm.). Mosaic 131 is composed of bichrome geometric motifs, while mosaic 124 features more complex, polychrome designs.

4.7.7 Initially the mosaics were thought to lie within a bipartite room, a common feature of 3rd to 4th century villas, but the two rooms were separated by a wall and not an intermediate mosaic panel as was the standard form of bipartite rooms (S. Cosh pers. comm.). The separating wall (later robbed out by trench **134**) was butted by structure **136**. This semi-circular stone structure was initially interpreted by Munckton and Fry as a fireplace but is now known to be the base of an engaged half column or the pedestal for a statue, with doors either side, and with a 0.20m step up from floor **124** to **131**.

4.7.8 No occupation deposits were observed which could be associated with the life of the villa - Munckton and Fry's trench had removed any such evidence - and the third phase of activity identified relates to the abandonment and potential post-Roman use of the Site.

4.7.9 Within the building, three possible postholes (**137**, **139** and **141**) cut through the mosaics, possibly evidence of post-Roman occupation. Otherwise, the villa was abandoned and useable building material robbed out, for example by cut **134**, and possible further robbing was noted in the northern part of the trench. A number of deposits were observed there, including possible rubble collapse layers **114** and **115** and clay layer **125** (equivalent to mosaic bedding layer **130**). The nature and function of these deposits is unclear, although they do appear to have been located within a room, as indicated by the geophysical results.

Trench 2 (Figure 5 and 6)

4.7.10 Trench 2 was positioned across the northern range of the villa, to investigate the buildings and the surrounding ditch as shown on the geophysical survey. The archaeology here had been highly disturbed by ploughing and robbing of the structures.

4.7.11 A single phase of villa building was observed, comprising wall **205** (**Figure 5, Plates 6 and 7**). The line of a parallel wall was noted to the south of **205** though this had been robbed out by trench **212**. These two walls were interpreted as the outer walls of the northern range of the villa; no internal dividing walls were observed. A single area of heavily disturbed mosaic (**209**) was recorded adjacent to robber cut **212**. The mosaic was set on bedding layers **214**, **215** and **225**, and appears to have had a similar if not identical decorative scheme to mosaic **131** in Trench 1; bedding layer **225** was also similar to layers **125** and **130**.

4.7.12 To the north of the villa range was a large, steep-sided ditch (**203**), coinciding with the possible boundary ditch identified by the geophysical survey, which was not fully excavated (**Figure 6**). The fills contained

numerous smashed lias stone roofing tiles, suggesting that the ditch was backfilled when the villa collapsed or was demolished. At the southern end of Trench 2, layer **210** may seal an inner courtyard, but this was not investigated.

4.7.13 As for Trench 1, possible evidence of post-Roman activity was revealed in the form of posthole **218** which cut through mosaic bedding layer **214**, and may also originally have cut through the mosaic itself.

Trench 3 (Figure 7)

4.7.14 Trench 3 was targeted on two ditch-like anomalies recorded in the geophysical survey, and revealed a curving ring ditch (**306**) and a north-south post-medieval ditch (**304**). Due to time constraints these features were only partially excavated. Pottery recovered from the upper fill of **306** included Dressel 20 amphora (1st to 3rd century AD) and south-east Dorset Black Burnished ware (later 3rd to 4th century AD).

Trench 4 (Figure 8)

4.7.15 Trench 4 was positioned to the south of Trench 1 to investigate the western range of the villa. Most of the archaeology revealed was only exposed in plan. A single sondage was excavated to assess the depth of the archaeology.

4.7.16 Potentially the earliest archaeological feature within the trench (and possibly pre-dating the villa construction altogether) was posthole (**413**), which cut the natural geology. This feature was revealed following the removal of a trampled natural deposit (**415**). It produced a high quantity of charred plant remains (see **6.2**), but no dating evidence. Sealing **415** was a charcoal-rich layer (**416**), possible evidence of occupation.

4.7.17 Two walls (**403** and **408**) may have been contemporaneous with the first phase of villa construction as observed in Trenches 1 and 2, on similarity of construction. These walls were sealed by demolition/levelling layers which appear to have been derived from these structures and which were subsequently cut through by the foundation trench for the second phase wall (**404**).

5 FINDS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Finds were recovered from all four of the trenches excavated. The assemblage is almost entirely of Romano-British date, with a few items of prehistoric and post-medieval date.

5.1.2 All finds have been quantified by material type within each context, and totals by material type and by trench are presented in **Table 1**. Following quantification, all finds have been at least visually scanned, in order to ascertain their nature, probable date range, and condition. Spot dates have been recorded for datable material (pottery; coins, metalwork). This information provides the basis for an assessment of the potential of the finds assemblage to contribute to an understanding of the Site, with particular reference to the construction and use of the villa.

5.2 Pottery

5.2.1 With the exception of one prehistoric sherd, and a few post-medieval sherds, the assemblage is entirely of Romano-British date. The condition ranges from fair to good, with moderate levels of surface and edge abrasion. The assemblage has been quantified by ware type within each context; totals are given in **Table 2**.

Prehistoric

5.2.2 A single sherd was dated as prehistoric (lower fill of ditch **203**). This is a small, abraded body sherd in a coarse, calcite-tempered fabric. This is undiagnostic, but is dated on fabric grounds as Iron Age.

Romano-British

5.2.3 Imports are limited to a few sherds of samian and one sherd of Spanish Dressel 20 amphora (upper fill of ditch **306**). Identifiable samian forms include one form 31 platter (demolition deposit **105**), and a very worn form 38 flanged bowl (demolition deposit **115**).

5.2.4 Other finewares comprise sherds of Oxfordshire and New Forest colour coated wares. The Oxfordshire production centre was supplying mortaria (in both whiteware and oxidised colour coated ware) and colour coated bowls, while the New Forest was supplying beakers.

5.2.5 As at most sites in the south-west (apart from Cornwall), coarsewares are overwhelmingly dominated by Black Burnished ware, in this case all of south-east Dorset type. There is a limited range of vessel forms: everted rim jars (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, types 2 and 3, although most examples are indeterminate 2/3), straight-sided 'dog dishes' (type 20), and dropped flange bowls (type 25). This suggests a focus on the later Roman period (later 3rd and 4th centuries AD), and this is supported by the presence of 'late' firing techniques (oxidisation), surface treatments (white-slipping) and decorative motifs (obtuse burnished lattice).

5.2.6 Other coarsewares include greywares, almost certainly representing the products of more than one source, and coarse oxidised wares. These apparently occur only in jar forms. Two more specific types could be identified, both amongst the greywares, and both representing the products of a series of inter-related industries producing coarsewares for local markets in Somerset and east Devon. Coarse, micaceous wares with variable amounts of quartz and rock fragments (often fine-grained, silvery-grey or pink) and a rather 'lumpy' texture have been defined as falling within the south-western greyware tradition, present in some quantity for example at Exeter, and probably corresponding to Norton Fitzwarren ware (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 171, 175; Timby 1989, fabrics 1 and 2). Slightly less coarse wares, but still containing visible rock and/or quartz inclusions, are defined here as 'gritty greywares', which are also present at Exeter (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 171). Both types were produced from the 2nd to the 4th centuries AD.

Post-medieval

5.2.7 The remaining nine sherds are post-medieval, and comprise six of coarse redware (two with slip decoration), one of Staffordshire-type slipware, and

two of modern refined whiteware. Sherds came mainly from Trench 1 (ploughsoil, ?garden soil **103**, backfill of 1861 trench), with one sherd from ploughsoil in Trench 2.

5.3 Ceramic Building Material (CBM) and Fired Clay

5.3.1 The CBM is notable by its absence – stone building materials, abundantly available locally, were used in preference (see below). The small quantity of CBM that was recovered comprises three pieces dated as Romano-British (two from *imbrex* roof tiles and one flat fragment), from the base of the ploughsoil in Trench 2; and two post-medieval brick/tile fragments (base of ploughsoil in Trenches 2 and 4).

5.3.2 The fired clay could also be of structural origin, although the few fragments recovered are too small and abraded to be in any way diagnostic of function or date.

5.4 Opus Signinum and Wall Plaster

5.4.1 Other Romano-British building materials comprise a single fragment of *opus signinum* (a concrete-like material used for floors and for lining water tanks) from Trench 2; and a few fragments of wall plaster (all monochrome red) from Trenches 1 and 2.

5.5 Stone

5.5.1 The stone consists entirely of building materials, primarily tesserae in blue lias (dark grey) and white lias (pale grey-white). Apart from a few rectangular pieces, the tesserae are rectangular (few are precisely square) and occur in two sizes: 15-20mm length/width; and 25-30mm length/width. The smaller size is by far the most common. The underlying geology of the Site is white lias, and it also outcrops at Langport, while the blue lias outcrops just to the south of Taunton, as well as elsewhere in Somerset (BGS sheet 311).

5.5.2 A number of fragments of stone roof tiles were encountered on the site, but only a small number (seven) of the larger pieces were collected, as representative samples. These are all roughly kite-shaped, with single nail holes at the top, and are also in both blue and white lias.

5.5.3 The remaining four fragments are apparently unworked, although they could have been used as building materials. These are also in blue and white Lias.

5.6 Metalwork

Coins

5.6.1 Nineteen Roman coins were recovered from the Site (**Table 3**). Eighteen are small copper alloy issues of the late 3rd and 4th centuries AD, whilst the nineteenth is a silver *denarius* of the early 3rd century AD. In general, the condition of the coins is good, with very few showing signs of post-depositional corrosion. Indeed a number of these coins are in excellent condition, suggesting that the site has not seen significant use of modern agricultural fertilizers and chemicals, which can significantly affect the condition of buried coin assemblages. As a result of this, 16 of the 19 coins could be identified to period, whilst the remaining three coins could be assigned broad date ranges on the basis of their size and shape (**Figure 9**).

5.6.2 None of the coins were found in well stratified contexts: 12 came from topsoil (all in Trench 1), five from the base of the ploughsoil (Trenches 1, 2 and 4), one from the backfill of the 1861 trench, and one from an ambiguous layer (possibly relating to Munckton's excavation) within a void in mosaic (**124**).

5.6.3 The earliest coin recovered from the site was a silver *denarius* of Elagabalus, minted in AD 221. By the time this coin was minted, the *denarius* had undergone numerous devaluations, each lowering the silver content, and it contained only a proportion of the silver used in the manufacture of its 1st century AD counterpart. As a result of these devaluations, bronze coinage was issued less regularly than previously, with the state largely relying on bronze coinage already in circulation to provide lower denomination coinage. The presence of this denarius in the assemblage on site, strongly suggests that there was activity and coin use on the site early in the 3rd century AD - such a coin is unlikely to have remained in circulation after the major devaluations of the second half of the 3rd century AD which led to the adoption of the radiate *antoninianus* in place of the *denarius*.

5.6.4 The remaining coins from the site all date to the late 3rd and 4th centuries AD, and represent a typical late Roman assemblage, dominated by copper alloy *antoniniani* and *nummi*. The earliest of these coins were two irregular radiate *antoniniani*, probably struck between AD 275 and 296 (period 14 in **Figure 9**). These contemporary copies of 'official' coinage, also known as 'Barbarous Radiates', were probably struck to compensate for gaps in supply of coinage to Britain, supplying sufficient small change for the province's needs. It is unclear whether these copies were officially sanctioned, if at all, but they are common site finds, and seem to have circulated in the same fashion as officially struck coins.

5.6.5 The pattern of coin loss during the 4th century is typical, with only a single coin recovered from periods 15 and 16, followed by a significant peak of period 17 coins – coins issued by the House of Constantine. This in turn was followed by a drop in coins during period 18, followed by a second peak of coin loss of Valentinianic coinage (period 19). Period 20 and 21 coins are usually under represented in comparison with the peaks of periods 17 and 19, and once again this pattern is reflected here. The latest coin recovered from the site is a *nummus* of the emperor Honorius, belongs to one of the last official issues of coinage delivered to Britain prior to Honorius' edict of AD 410 effectively brought Roman rule in Britain to an end.

5.6.6 The assemblage recovered from the site suggests that there was activity and coin use on the site from the early 3rd century AD onwards, continuing perhaps into the early 5th century AD. The assemblage recovered is typical of a small rural site in the Late Roman period, with peaks of coin loss corresponding closely to peaks of supply from the late 3rd century onwards.

Copper alloy

5.6.7 Copper alloy objects apart from coins were rare finds on the Site. They include a minimum of four, and perhaps six objects dated as Romano-British. Two of these are spoons, both from the base of the ploughsoil in Trench 1, and both of the same type and possibly from a 'set'. Both spoons

are lacking their bowls, both have notched decoration on the tapering handle just above the junction with the bowl, and both have traces of white metal plating. They are not, however, identical, differing slightly in the style of the decoration, thickness of handle, and form of handle/bowl junction.

5.6.8 A small, acorn-shaped object (demolition layer **115**) may be an item of horse equipment. A round-sectioned moulting peg emerges from the top (the base of the acorn's cup), and a thinner shank projects from the opposite end (the apex of the seed). An almost identical but slightly larger example was found at Wanborough, Wiltshire, which was suggested to be from the top of a harness pendant, possibly of military origin (Hooley 2001, 96, fig. 37, 116).

5.6.9 A brooch from rubble layer **113** is a large, sturdy, hinged T-shaped type with a headloop. Most T-shaped brooches appear to have been made in the West Country; the earlier variants date to the second half of the 1st century AD, but these lack headloops, a feature seen on the slightly later trumpet-headed and headstud brooches, which might push this example into the 2nd century (Bayley and Butcher 2004, 158-68).

5.6.10 Other objects comprise a plain finger ring (Trench 1 topsoil), part of a small ring or possibly ferrule (Trench 1 topsoil), both probably of Romano-British date.

Lead

5.6.11 One disc-shaped weight (55g) was recovered (base of ploughsoil in Trench 2). The other lead consists of small waste scraps. None of these objects are datable.

Iron

5.6.12 The ironwork consists largely of nails of varying sizes (81, possibly 82 examples). Other identifiable objects include a tanged knife (upper fill of ditch **306**), and the blade from a small set of shears (demolition deposit **107**), both Romano-British. The knife is of Manning's type 21, with a short, wide, symmetrical blade, with straight back and blade curving to tip; Manning gives no date range except to comment that "it is not an early form" (Manning 1985, 117, fig. 29). The original length of the shears is unknown, as the single blade does not extend as far as the U-shaped spring, but on blade length (80mm) it falls on the boundary between Manning's categories of 'medium shears' (suitable for shearing sheep or cutting cloth) and 'small shears' (for domestic or personal use) (Manning 1985, 34)..

5.6.13 There is also a boot cleat (Trench 1 topsoil); and a possible tool, perhaps a small chisel (Trench 1 topsoil). Other objects are unidentifiable at this stage.

5.7 Worked Bone

5.7.1 A single object of worked bone was found – the shank from a Romano-British pin (or possibly a needle), from demolition deposit (**115**).

5.8 Animal Bone

Introduction

5.8.1 The assemblage comprises 211 fragments of hand-recovered animal bone, once conjoins are taken into account this figure falls to 200. Bone fragments

were recovered from several post-medieval layers and the backfill of an earlier excavation trench, and Roman layers and cut features associated with a villa. In addition, a small quantity of fish bone was observed in the palaeoenvironmental sample from layer **103** (see below, **section 6.5**); these are not included in the quantitifications given in this section.

Methods

5.8.2 The following information was recorded where applicable: species, skeletal element, preservation condition, fusion data, tooth ageing data, butchery marks, metrical data, gnawing, burning, surface condition, pathology and non-metric traits. This information was directly recorded into a relational database (in MS Access) and cross-referenced with relevant contextual information.

Results

Preservation condition

5.8.3 Bone preservation is quite variable within individual contexts; the presence of fragments in different states of decay suggests that some bones might have been partially exposed for a period or that the poorly preserved fragments are residual, having been reworked from earlier deposits. Closer inspection of the spatial distribution of poorly preserved fragments indicates that most are from topsoil layers, therefore partial exposure seems more likely.

5.8.4 Bones displaying gnawing marks are rare (*c*. 4%) in the assemblage and this suggests that bone waste was rapidly buried or that scavenging carnivores were unable to access it. No burnt bones are present.

Species represented

5.8.5 Thirty-six percent of fragments are identifiable to species and element. The following species were identified and are listed in terms of their relative abundance: sheep/goat (55%), cattle (23%), pig (6%), horse (6%), dog (5%), domestic fowl and crow/rook. The fish bone from layer **103** (noted in the environmental sample but not quantified) may also be noted.

5.8.6 The Roman assemblage includes 101 bone fragments (*c*. 51% of the total), the majority (80%) of which are from layers. Of note is the pelvis of a small, but fairly robust dog from a demolition deposit (**208**), a leg bone (tibiotarsus) from a juvenile crow/rook from a rubble layer (**113**) and a bone pin from a demolition deposit (**115**).

5.8.7 The post-medieval assemblage includes 82 bone fragments (*c*. 41% of the total), the majority of which is from overburden layers located in Trench 1. Most of the identified bones belong to sheep/goat.

5.8.8 The remaining bone fragments are all from the fill of an undated posthole (**413**). Identified fragments include two loose lower incisor teeth from a dog.

5.9 Marine Shell

5.9.1 This category includes examples of limpet (2) and oyster (7). The oyster includes both right hand and left hand valves, i.e. both preparation and consumption waste.

5.10 Potential and recommendations

5.10.1 The evaluation recovered a relatively small finds assemblage, in which only pottery, stone building material and animal bone is represented in any significant quantity. The size of the assemblage is insufficient to warrant further analysis.

5.10.2 Dating evidence has been provided by the pottery and coins, and further analysis of these categories is unlikely to be repaid by any significant refinement of that dating. Structural evidence (stone building material, and minimal quantities of CBM, *opus signinum* and wall plaster), functional evidence (bone and iron tools), economic evidence (animal bone), and evidence for lifestyle (copper alloy jewellery) are all extremely limited. All finds have been recorded at least to a minimum archive level, and no further analysis is proposed.

6 PALAEO-ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMARY

6.1 Introduction

Introduction

6.1.1 Three bulk samples were taken, one from a possible garden soil or occupation layer or collapse/demolition/robbing layer (**103**) in Trench 1 and two from Trench 4, from a posthole (**413**) and possible occupation layer (**416)**. These were processed for the recovery and assessment of charred plant remains and charcoals.

6.1.2 Bulk samples were processed by standard flotation methods; the flot retained on a 0.5 mm mesh, residues fractionated into 5.6mm, 2mm and 1mm fractions and dried. The coarse fractions (>5.6mm) were sorted, weighed and discarded. Flots were scanned under a x10 – x40 stereo-binocular microscope and the presence of charred remains quantified (**Table 4**) to record the preservation and nature of the charred plant and wood charcoal remains. Preliminary identifications of dominant or important taxa are noted below, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997).

6.1.3 The flots were generally large with moderate to high numbers of roots and modern seeds that are indicative of stratigraphic movement and the possibility of contamination by later intrusive elements. Coal fragments were also observed in the two samples from layers. Charred material comprised varying degrees of preservation.

6.2 Charred Plant Remains

6.2.1 High numbers of charred plant remains were recovered from all three samples, in particular from posthole **413**. The cereal remains were dominated by those of hulled wheat, emmer or spelt (*Triticum diccocum/spelta*), including grain, glume and spikelet fork fragments. There were also barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) grain fragments.

6.2.2 The charred weed seeds observed included those of oat/brome grass (*Avena/Bromus* spp.), vetch/wild peas (*Vicia/Lathyrus* spp.), corn gromwell (*Lithospermum arvense*), meadow grass (Poaceae), rye-grass/fescue (Lolium/Festuca spp.) and brassicas (Brassicaceae).

6.2.3 These assemblages are typical of those from arable and field margin habitats. These are comparable with other charred plant remain assemblages of settlement waste of Iron Age / Romano-British date and are generally comparable with those from other Romano-British sites in the area, such as Ilchester (Murphy 1982; Stevens 1999) and Catsgore (Hillman 1981). However, no germinated grain was noted.

6.3 Wood Charcoal

6.3.1 Wood charcoal was noted from the flots of the bulk samples and is recorded in **Table 4**. Wood charcoal fragments of > 4 mm were only retrieved in small quantities.

6.4 Land snails

6.4.1 Land snails were noted in the bulk samples and were recorded (**Table 4**). The presence of these shells may aid in broadly characterising the nature of the wider landscape. Nomenclature is according to Kerney (1999).

6.4.2 The mollusc assemblage observed from layer **103** in Trench 1 included the shade-loving species *Discus rotundatus* and *Clausilia bidentata,* the intermediate species *Cepaea* sp. and *Trichia hispida* and the open-country species *Helicella itala*, *Vallonia* spp. and *Pupilla muscorum*.

6.4.3 The molluscs recorded in posthole **413** in Trench 4 included the shade-loving species *Aegopinella nitidula*, *Oxychilus cellarius, Vitrea* spp. and *Carychium tridentatum*, the intermediate species *Trichia hispida* and *Punctum pygmaeum* and the open-country species *Helicella itala, Vallonia* spp and Introduced Helicellids.

6.4.4 Layer **416** in Trench 4 produced a mollusc assemblage which included *Discus rotundatus, Trichia hispida, Punctum pygmaeum, Helicella itala, Vallonia* spp. and Introduced Helicellids.

6.4.5 These mollusc assemblages are indicative of a broadly open environment with some localised microhabitats, such as areas of longer grass.

6.5 Small animal and fish bones

6.5.1 The sample from layer **103** produced a few fish bones, including scales, as well as other small animal bones.

7 POTENTIAL AND FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1.1 The analysis of the charred plant remains has the potential to provide information on the local crop processing techniques, species range and agricultural practices. It is not certain however that these remains, in particular those from the richest sample from posthole **413**, are associated with activities related to the villa. Further analysis on the plant remains is not proposed at this stage. If the date of the material from posthole **413** is firmly

established, further analysis of the charred plant assemblage could be considered.

7.1.2 There is no potential for the analysis of the wood charcoal to provide detailed information on the management and exploitation of the local woodland resource due to the paucity of the remains. There is likewise no potential for the analysis of these mollusc assemblages to provide a more detailed picture of the local environment and land-use. No further work is proposed for either of these categories of material.

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 Pre-Romano-British

8.1.1 The geophysical survey by GSB Prospection further expanded on the earlier work by Stratascan in providing a more detailed picture of the possible pre-Roman ring ditch feature to the east of the villa. On partial excavation of ditch **306** only Roman pottery was recovered, but as only the upper fill was investigated, it remains possible that this represents final infilling in the Roman period and that the feature was originally prehistoric in date.

8.1.2 The single posthole **413** observed in Trench 4 may also be prehistoric in date as it pre-dates the first phase of villa construction, although no firm dating evidence was recovered.

8.1.3 A single sherd of late prehistoric pottery was a residual find from ditch **203** enclosing the villa, showing very limited evidence of pre-Roman activity in the area.

8.2 Romano-British

8.2.1 Refining the chronology of the villa proved difficult due to the lack of dateable material from stratified deposits and finds from construction-related layers. Munckton and Fry's trenches had removed any occupation layers which may have existed over the mosaic floors.

8.2.2 Two distinct phases of construction were defined, but no clear alignment or discernible layout of rooms could be distinguished by the exposure of the first phase walls **118**, **403** and **408**. The manner in which the villa developed, is therefore unclear, as earlier walls were masked for the most part by later structures, and the geophysical survey was unable to identify structures on a different alignment to the later phase walls. Finds of samian ware pottery and a copper alloy brooch confirm activity here in the later 1st or early 2nd century AD, but could not be directly associated with any of the structural evidence. The earliest coin from the Site was minted in AD 221, and the bulk of the datable finds belong to the later Roman period (3rd or 4th century AD). The mosaics, too, are late Roman (late 4th century) in date, and these provide a good date for the second phase of villa building observed in Trenches 1, 2 and 3. Villa building in Somerset, initially thought to focus on the late 3rd century and later with winged corridor houses, is now considered to have its origins in the 1st or 2nd century AD, with very few later villas definitely having no earlier predecessors (Leech and Leach 1982, 66; Holbrook 2008, 152). The High Ham villa certainly seems to fit the latter picture.

8.2.3 Cosh and Neal suggest that the mosaics at High Ham can be attributed to the *Lindinis officina* or Ilchester school of mosaicists due to the similar schemes and motifs from villas around Ilchester. The similar border, rectangular design and stylized flowers on mosaic **124** are comparable to mosaic 215.1 from Spaxton, some 12 miles to the west, while the '*swastika-meander enclosing white poised squares on a blue grey ground'* match the central panel of mosaic 200.1 at Hurcot, some 5 miles to the east. Interestingly, the ashlar motif of mosaic **131** does not appear in other mosaics around Ilchester except for Hurcot. It is, however, known from sites in Cirencester and Gloucester which date to the 2nd century AD, and it seems that the ashlar motif is a revival of an earlier tradition (Cosh and Neal 2005, 211).

8.2.4 The geophysical survey identified the continuation of archaeological features to the north in Area 2. The large rectangular enclosure with internal features is potentially evidence of formal gardens associated with the villa or were perhaps agricultural in nature.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1.1 The results of the evaluation, although of some local interest, do not warrant detailed publication. A summary has been submitted to the *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society*, for inclusion in the annual round-up of archaeology in the county.

10 ARCHIVE

10.1.1 The project archive, which includes drawn plans and sections, photographs, written records, artefacts and ecofacts, and digital data, is currently held at the Wessex Archaeology offices under the project code 74150. It is intended that the archive should ultimately be deposited with Somerset County Council Museums Service, under the Accession Number **TTNCM:33/2010**.

10.1.2 A rigorous collection policy was adopted on site towards the stone building material encountered on the Site, and only a small quantity of representative pieces was retained. No other finds categories occurred in large quantities, and none are sufficiently repetitive, or lacking in archaeological significance, to warrant consideration for targeted discard.

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Table 1: Finds totals by material type and by trench

Material	Tr 1	Tr 2	Tr 3	Tr 4	TOTAL
Pottery	506/5452	28/312	3/135	3/40	540/5939
Prehistoric	-	*1/4*	-	-	*1/4*
Romano-British	*498/5416*	*26/301*	*3/135*	*3/40*	*530/5892*
Post-Medieval	*8/36*	*1/7*	-	-	*9/43*
Ceramic Building Material	3/44	1/6	-	1/20	5/70
Fired Clay	18/81	1/11	-	-	19/92
Opus Signinum	-	1/13	-	-	1/13
Wall Plaster	3/19	11/89	-	-	14/108
Clay Pipe	1/1	-	-	-	1/1
Stone	60/17729	304/5873	-	-	364/23,602
Glass	2/29	-	-	-	2/29
Slag	35/729	-	-	1/35	36/764
Metalwork	92	29	1	3	125
Coins	*17*	*1*	-	*1*	*19*
Copper Alloy	*6*	-	-	-	*24*
Lead	*3*	*3*	-	-	*6*
Iron	*66*	*25*	*1*	*2*	*94*
Worked Bone	1/1	-	-	-	1/1
Animal Bone	127/902	67/638	-	17/13	211/1553
Marine Shell	9/124	-	-	-	9/124

Table 2: Pottery totals by ware type

Date Range	Ware type	No. sherds	Weight (g)
PREHISTORIC	Calcite-tempered ware	1	4
ROMAN	Amphora	1	44
	Samian	7	114
	New Forest colour coat	5	11
	Oxon colour coat	15	56
	Oxon whiteware	2	34
	Black Burnished ware	383	3769
	Misc. greywares	67	708
	SW greyware	20	473
	Gritty greyware	24	575
	Oxidised ware	6	108
	sub-total Romano-British	*530*	*5892*
POST-MEDIEVAL	Redware	6	34
	Staffs-type slipware	1	6
	Refined whiteware	2	3
	sub-total post-medieval	*9*	*43*
	OVERALL TOTAL	**540**	**5939**

Table 3: Coins from High Ham

Obj	*Context*	*Denom*	*Issuer*	*Decription*	*Issue Date*	*References*	*Reece Period*
1	101	Cu Alloy Antoninianus	Radiate Copy	Radiate copy, reverse depicting female fig with cornucopia	AD 270 - 296		14 - AD 275 - 296
2	102	Cu Alloy Nummus	Constantine I	2 soldiers, 2 standards. Gloria Exercitus issue. Minted in Trier	AD 331	LRBC I, 53	17 - AD 330 - 348
3	101	Cu Alloy Nummus	House of Constantine	Urbs Roma/Wolf and Twins. Minted in Trier	AD 333	LRBC I, 200	17 - AD 330 - 348
4	102	Cu Alloy Nummus	House of Constantine	Urbs Roma/Wolf and Twins. Minted in Lyons	AD 331	LRBC I, 58	17 - AD 330 - 348
5	101	Cu Alloy Nummus	Unknown	C4 copy. Could be a fallen horseman, but not enough detail to be certain.	C4		
8	102	Cu Alloy Antoninianus /Nummus	Radiate Copy	Stylised radiate antoninianus copy, reverse from Pax. Struck on irregular oval flan	AD 270 - 296		14 - AD 275 - 296
9	101	Cu Alloy Nummus	Unknown	Illegible C4 coin, dated by size alone.	C4		
10	101	Cu Alloy Nummus	Constantius II	Soldier spearing a fallen horseman. Fel Temp Reparatio issue. Minted in Lyons	AD 346 - 350	LRBC II, 206	18 - AD 348 - 364
11	101	Cu Alloy Nummus	Gratian	Winged victory l with wreath. Securitas Reipubicae type	AD 367 - 378	As LRBC II, 98	19 - AD 364 - 378
14	101	Cu Alloy Antoninianus	Unknown	Illegible C4 coin, dated by size alone.	C3 - C4		
15	101	Cu Alloy Nummus	Valentinian I	Emperor r with standard, dragging captive .Gloria Romanorum type. Minted in Lyons	AD 364 - 375	? Copy as LRBC 279	19 - AD 364 - 378
18	202	Cu Alloy Nummus	Unknown	Illegible C4 coin, dated by size alone.	C4		
26	101	Cu Alloy Nummus	House of Constantine	Urbs Roma/Wolf and Twins. Minted in Arles	AD 333	LRBC I, 376	17 - AD 330 - 348
27	101	Cu Alloy Nummus	House of	Constantinopolis/Winged victory on	AD 334	LRBC I, 655	17 - AD 330 - 348

			Constantine	prow. Minted in Aquiliea			
28	101	Cu Alloy Nummus	Constantine II	2 soldiers, 2 standards. Gloria Exercitus issue. Minted in Siscia	AD 335	LRBC I, 743	17 - AD 330 - 348
33	122	Cu Alloy Nummus	Honorius	Winged victory I. Victoria Auggg issue	AD 393 - 402	As LRBC II, 174	21 - AD 388 - 402
34	101	Cu Alloy Nummus	Constantine I	Sol standing left, holding globe and whip, star to right. COMITI AVGG NN issue. Minted in London.	AD 310 - 312	RIC VI, 153	15 - AD 296 - 317
36	402	Silver Denarius	Elagabalus	Iovi Consevatori issue. Jupiter standing left, holding thunderbolt and reversed spear, at his feet to the left, an eagle, and behind him on the right, a Legionary standard. Minted in Rome	AD 221	RIC IV,Part ii, Elagabalus, 91	10 - AD 193 - 222
37	108	Cu Alloy Nummus	House of Constantine	Urbs Roma/Wolf and Twins. Minted in Siscia	AD 330 - 335	LRBC I, 750	17 - AD 330 - 348

Key: LRBC – Late Roman Bronze Coinage, Vols I and II
RIC – Roman Imperial Coinage Vols I – X

Table 4: Assessment of the charred plant remains and charcoal

Samples				Flot								
Feature	Context	Sample	Vol. Ltrs	Flot (ml)	% roots	Charred Plant Remains				Charcoal >4/2mm	Other	Analysis
						Grain	Chaff	Other	Comments			
Trench 1												
?Garden soil or Occupation layer or Collapse/demolition/robbing layer												
	103	1	15	150	70	A	A	B	Hulled wheat and barley grain frags, glume frags, *Avena/Bromus, Vicia/Lathyrus, Lithospermum*	3/5 ml	Moll-t (A), Sab/f (A), coal	
Trench 4												
Posthole												
413	414	2	6	150	35	A**	A*	A	Hulled wheat and barley grain frags, glume frags, spikelet forks, *Vicia/Lathyrus*, Poaceae, *Avena/Bromus, Lolium/Festuca*, Brassicaceae	1/10 ml	Moll-t (A*), Sab (A)	?P
?Occupation layer												
	416	3	11	50	65	A	B	A	Hulled wheat and barley grain frags, glume frags, *Avena/Bromus, Vicia/Lathyrus, Lolium/Festuca,* Poaceae	2/1 ml	Moll-t (A), coal	

Key:
A*** = exceptional, A** = 100+, A* = 30-99, A = >10, B = 9-5, C = <5; Sab/f = small animal/fish bones, Moll-t = terrestrial molluscs. Analysis: P = plant

APPENDIX 1: TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

bgl = below ground level

Trench 1			**Co ordinates**	342247.52,129540.66 342259.14, 129524.43 342263.52, 129534.39
Dimensions: 20m x 11m max	**Max Depth:** 0.24m		**Ground Surface**	71.70m aOD
Context	**Description**			**Depth bgl**
101	Topsoil	Current topsoil and turf of pasture field. Mid to dark reddish-brown silty clay with common small lias limestone fragments.		0-0.23m
102	Layer	Light yellow-brown silty clay with common small lias limestone fragments and stones, including very small pea grit-sized stones. This layer represents the very base of the ploughsoil which has disturbed the top of the archaeology. 102 seals the *in situ* archaeology.		0.23-0.28m
103	Layer	Dark grey-brown black silty clay with common lias limestone inclusions. Very dark, organic, charcoal-rich deposit, sealed by 111; seals 110/105. Deposit not fully investigated; possibly garden soil deposit although geophysical results place it within the footprint of the villa building.		0.10m thick
104	Wall	NE-SW aligned wall, 1.90m long by 0.60m wide and 0.44m high; built of roughly hewn lias limestone blocks in herringbone construction, bonded with mid yellow-brown silty clay with small gravels. Second phase construction and potentially contemporary with walls 132, 123, 205 and 404. 104 sits on earlier external metalled surface 117 which is probably associated with first phase wall 118.		0.44m high
105	Layer	Light yellow silty clay with common small gravels, mortar rich. Equivalent to 110 and 121; seals first phase wall 118, therefore interpreted as material derived from demolition of 118. 105/110/121 is cut through by 127, construction cut for wall 104.		0.16m thick.
106	Layer	Light yellow-brown silty clay, mortar-rich deposit, very similar to 105/110 but located on SE side of wall 104. Interpreted as material derived from the cleaning off of mortar during the recycling of stone from 104. 106 seals 107 which butts 104 over 117. Demolition deposit.		0.10m thick
107	Layer	Mid to light brown silty clay with abundant flat slabs of local blue lias limestone. Deposit contains areas of light yellow gravel-rich mortar, deposit derived from demolition of wall 104. Stratigraphically sealed by 106 and cut through by 116, the edge of WW Munckton's 1861 trench.		0.30m thick
108	Fill	Light yellow-brown silty clay, mortar-rich, deliberate backfill of Munckton's 1861 trench 116.		0.13m thick
109	Layer	Loose mid-brown silty clay with occasional small lias slabs and rare large lias slabs. Post-demolition accumulation of material against wall 104. Butts 104 and sealed by 102.		0.12m thick.
110	Layer	Demolition material; equivalent to 105 and 121.		-
111	Layer	Dark brown silty clay with common lias stone rubble. Demolition/collapse deposit of smashed wall and roofing stone. Seals 103 and sealed by 113.		0.20m thick
112	Layer	Light yellow, mortar-rich, silty clay spread, appears to overlie 113. Not excavated.		-
113	Layer	Dark brown silty clay with common small lias fragments.		0.18m thick

		Rubble collapse very similar to 111, which it overlies. Sealed by 112.	
114	Layer	Light yellow-brown silty clay with abundant lias limestone. Initially thought to be the top of the natural geology, but this was not confirmed as deposit not fully investigated. Appears to be sealed by 115. Ccould be collapsed building material.	-
115	Layer	Light yellow silty clay with occasional small to medium lias slabs and fragments. Spread of demolition material; not fully investigated. Sealed by 103 and seals 125 and 114.	-
116	**Cut**	**Cut of the edge of WW Munckton's 1861 trench which initially revealed the mosaics 124 and 131. Cuts 107 and filled with 108.**	**-**
117	Surface	External metalled surface formed of slabs of local lias set into reworked natural 129. Overlain by 104; interpreted as first phase and associated with wall 118. This has also been disturbed by Munckton's trench 116.	-
118	Wall	NW-SE aligned wall; 1.16m long by 0.35m wide and 0.20m high, constructed of large limestone blocks with a light to mid-yellow clay bedding. Foundation of wall, differs in construction to the second phase walls, constructed of blocks of limestone as opposed to pitched herringbone slabs. Similar to walls 403 and 408 in Trench 4. Sealed by 105/110 demolition material from the dismantling of 117. Associated with surface 117. Physically cut through by 127 construction cut for wall 104. Overlies 119.	0.20m high
119	Reworked Natural	Mid yellow-brown silty clay with common small gravels and rare lias slabs. Interpreted as reworked/trampled natural upper geology which overlies solid bedrock 120. Probably revealed and trampled during the initial construction of the first phase of the villa. Equivalent to 126/129.	0.289m thick
120	Natural Bedrock	Light to very light yellow-white lias limestone bedrock. Sealed by 119/126.	-
121	Layer	Equivalent to 105 and 110 but slightly darker, due to being sealed by 103.	-
122	Layer	Dark grey-brown silty clay material within void in mosaic 124, not investigated. Unclear if pre-dates Munckton's investigation.	-
123	Wall	NW-SE aligned wall foundation forming southern wall for room containing mosaic 124. Exposed by Munckton in 1861 and badly damaged by his excavation when compared to the surviving walls. Built within construction cut 128 which cuts 129.	-
124	Mosaic	Mosaic floor, recorded as mosaic 199.1 by Cosh and Neal (2005, 211; see above, **section 1.4** for description). Individual tessarae set into bedding layer 144 over red clay levelling 130. Late 4th century AD in date. Floor is 0.20m lower than the room to the north containing mosaic 131.	
125	Layer	Dark red-brown clay. Layer of imported non-local clay material located at the NW end of Trench 1. Same material as 130, the levelling/bedding layer for mosaic 124. Possibly a dump of material set aside to be used for the laying of more mosaics, or perhaps dumping of material from a robbed mosaic, or the base of a room which once held a mosaic. Not fully investigated.	-
126	Reworked natural	Equivalent to 119/129. Mid yellow-brown silty clay with common small gravels. Reworked by trample activity during first phase of building. Sealed by 125. Seals bedrock 120.	

127	**Cut**	**Construction cut for wall 104, which appears to cut through 105/110. Wall constructed within slot, no backfill visible.**	**-**
128	**Cut**	**Construction cut for wall 123, cutting 129 but probably cut from higher; unclear due to the 1861 excavation.**	**-**
129	Reworked natural	Reworked or trampled upper geology, equivalent to 119/126, sealed by 117 (first phase) and by 130 (second phase).	-
130	Layer	Dark red-brown clay, deliberately laid non-local clay acting as levelling layer beneath mosaic 124. Sealed by bedding layer 144 on which 124 was laid. Same material as 125	0.03m thick
131	Mosaic	Mosaic floor, recorded as 199.2 by Cosh and Neal (2005, 211; see above, **section 1.4** for description. Individual tesserae set into lime mortar layer 133 over reworked natural 129. Mosaic associated with structure 136, separated from mosaic 124 by wall robbed by 134. Floor is 0.20m higher than 124.	-
132	Wall	NE-SW aligned wall which borders the eastern side of mosaic 131; 4.20mlong by 0.60m wide and 0.30m high. Constructed of pitched herringbone style lias slabs in a yellow-brown silty clay mortar; two courses with a stepped footing. Very similar to 104 and 404; interpreted as second construction phase.	0.30m high
133	Layer	Light grey-white crushed limestone, creating lime mortar bedding layer for mosaic 131 and structure 136. Overlies 129.	-
134	**Cut**	**Cut of robber trench for the removal of the wall which separated the mosaic rooms. 3.40m long by 1.02m wide and 0.25m deep. The wall would have been associated with structure 136.**	**0.25m deep**
135	Fill	Mid-brown silty clay fill of robber trench **134**.	0.25m thick
136	Structure	Elongated semi-circular stone structure which would have butted the wall separating the mosaic rooms. Constructed of limestone lias slabs and blocks, 0.80m long by 0.50m wide and 0.10m high. Structure would have formed the base of either an engaged half column or the pedestal for statue, with a door on either side leading from 124 to 131.	0.10m high
137	**Cut**	**Cut of possible posthole into mosaic floor 131, roughly sub-circular in shape with shallow concave sides and an irregular base; not very convincing. 0.25m long by 0.30m wide and 0.08m deep.**	**0.08m deep**
138	Fill	Mid to dark grey-brown silty clay fill of possible posthole **137**.	0.08m thick
139	**Cut**	**Cut of possible feature into 131 similar to 137, irregular in shape, 1.20m long by 0.36m wide and 0.17m deep.**	**0.17m deep**
140	Fill	Mid brown silty clay fill of **139**.	0.17m thick
141	**Cut**	**Cut of semi-circular shallow feature, 0.50m long by 0.45m wide and 0.10m deep. Does not appear to result from ploughing; a very unconvincing posthole.**	**0.10m deep**
142	Fill	Mid to dark grey-brown silty clay fill of 141.	0.10m thick
143	Natural	Disturbed natural bedrock, observed below 129.	-
144	Layer	Light yellow-brown clay bedding layer on to which mosaic 124 set. Seals 130.	0.02m thick

Trench 2			**Co ordinates**	342287.06, 129530.69 342275.68, 129514.53
Dimensions: 20m x 2m		**Max Depth:** 0.38m	**Ground Surface**	71.75m aOD

Context	**Description**		**Depth bgl**
201	Topsoil	Current topsoil and turf of pasture field. Mid to dark reddish-brown silty clay with common small lias limestone fragments.	0-0.21m
202	Layer	Light yellow-brown silty clay with common small lias limestone fragments and stones including very small pea grit-sized stones. This layer represents the very base of the plough soil which has disturbed the top of the archaeology. 202 seals the *in situ* archaeology.	0.23-0.38m
203	**Cut**	**Cut of NW-SE aligned ditch which forms the northern boundary to the villa buildings. Only partially excavated, 1.90m long by 2.40m wide and 0.79m+ deep. Very steep, stepped eastern side, western side not observed, nor the base. Contained 3 fills (223, 222 and 204). Ditch can be traced in the geophysical results bordering the villa buildings.**	**0.79m+ deep.**
204	Fill	Mixed and mottled light yellow and mid-brown silty clay with common fragments of smashed lias limestone roofing tiles. Upper fill of ditch **203**, appears to be derived from natural erosion material mixed with possibly plough broken stone tiles. 204 overlies 222.	0.28m thick
205	Wall	NW-SE aligned wall revealed in plan as forming the rear wall to the villa building. 1.90m long by 0.82m wide and 0.10m+ high. Built from pitched limestone lias slabs in a mid yellow-brown silty clay bonding material. Single course recorded.	0.10m high.
206	VOID	VOID	VOID
207	Layer	Mixed and mottled mid grey-brown and light grey silty clay with common lias limestone slabs. Large scale rubble demolition/collapse material layer derived from building collapse. Sealed by 202 and overlies 216.	0.14m thick
208	Layer	Equivalent to 207.	-
209	Mosaic	Heavily disturbed and damaged mosaic. *In situ* but very damaged blue and white lias tessarae forming mosaic with similar if not identical scheme to 131. Cut by 212 and seals 214.	-
210	Layer	Mid grey silty clay with common lias fragments. Rubble layer at the south end of Trench 2, possibly overlying internal courtyard but not investigated.	-
211	Natural	Mid yellow silty clay with abundant lias slabs, truncated upper natural.	-
212	**Cut**	**Cut of robber trench for removal of parallel wall to 205, which would have formed the southern wall of the northern range of villa buildings and probably a continuation of wall 123 in Trench 1. Robber trench cuts mosaic 209. 1.90m long by 0.80m wide and 0.38m deep.**	**0.38m deep**
213	Fill	Mixed and mottled mid to light yellow-grey-brown silty clay with common small lias slabs. Deliberate backfill of robber trench **212**.	0.38m thick
214	Layer	Light yellow-brown silty clay bedding layer for mosaic 209. Seals earlier bedding layer 215 and physically cut through by later posthole 218, following removal of 209.	-
215	Layer	Mixed mid yellow-brown with red tinge and light yellow silty clay, bedding layer below 214 for mosaic 209. Seals 225.	-

216	Layer	Mid reddish-brown silty clay. Recorded in section below 207, very similar to 225 and so may be redeposited from 225 following the disruption of the site.	0.06m thick
217	Layer	Spread of light yellow-brown, mortar-rich silty clay with common lias inclusions. Spread of demolition material below 202 and sealing 208. Not excavated and only seen in plan.	-
218	**Cut**	**Cut of probable posthole, cuts 214 and filled with 219; appears to be post-demolition occupation, as cut bedding layer for mosaic. 0.50m in diameter and 0.14m deep.**	**0.14m deep**
219	Fill	Fill of **218**, mixed mid-brown and light yellow silty clay.	0.14m thick
220	Layer	Dark brown-black silty clay. A series of isolated dumps of charcoal-rich material overlying 214.	0.03m thick
221	Layer	Equivalent to 220.	-
222	Fill	Middle fill of ditch 203. Mid-grey silty clay with rare small lias inclusions, seals 223 and sealed by 204. Homogenous fill suggestive of slow natural silting over time.	0.30m thick
223	Fill	Mid to light grey-brown with yellow mottling silty clay with abundant smashed lias stone roofing tiles. Earliest recorded fill of ditch 203 but not fully excavated. Deliberate dump of smashed roofing material into the ditch.	0.30m+
224	**Cut**	**Construction cut for wall 205, cuts 211.**	**-**
225	Layer	Red silty clay levelling material below 215 associated with mosaic 209. Material very similar if not identical to 125 and 130 in Trench 1. Deliberate deposition of non-local clay.	-
226	Natural	Reworked, trampled natural which overlies bedrock 211, sealed by 225.	-

Trench 3			**Co ordinates**	342372.58, 129469.99 342367.89, 129463.52
Dimensions: 7.8m x 6m		**Max Depth:** 0.39m	**Ground Surface**	69.24m aOD
Context	**Description**			**Depth bgl**
301	Topsoil	Current topsoil and turf of pasture field. Mid to dark yellow-brown silty clay with common small blue lias limestone fragments.		0-0.24m
302	Subsoil	Light yellow-brown silty clay with common sub-angular medium lias stones.		0.24-0.33
303	Natural	Light yellow-brown clay with common lias blocks, very brashy natural.		0.33m+
304	**Cut**	**Cut of partially excavated post-medieval ditch, aligned north-south.**		**-**
305	Fill	Dark yellow-brown silty clay fill of **304**, contained post-medieval and modern glass.		-
306	**Cut**	**Cut of curving ditch, part of ring ditch observed in geophysical results. Not excavated.**		**-**
307	Fill	Upper fill of **306**. Dark yellow-brown silty clay		-

Trench 4			**Co ordinates**	342234.53, 129515.90 342239.73, 129511.82 342235.00, 129504.94
Dimensions: 9m x1.9m by 8m x 1.9m		**Max Depth:**	**Ground Surface**	71.68m aOD
Context	**Description**			**Depth bgl**
401	Topsoil	Current topsoil and turf of pasture field. Mid to dark yellow-brown silty clay with common small blue lias limestone		0-0.15m

		fragments.	
402	Layer	Light yellow-brown silty clay with common small blue lias fragments and stones including very small pea grit-sized stones. This layer represents the very base of the plough soil which has disturbed the top of the archaeology. 402 seals the *in situ* archaeology.	0.15-0.20m
403	Wall	NW-SE aligned wall, 1.90m long by 0.50m wide and 0.10m high. Constructed of lias blocks in gravel-rich silty clay. Only single course observed. Not excavated and only exposed in plan. Possibly belongs to villa's first construction phase as very similar in construction to 118 in Trench 1. Overlain by 405 and 406.	0.10m+
404	Wall	NW-SE aligned wall, 1.90m long and 0.61m wide and 0.10m high. Constructed of pitched lias slabs in a light to mid yellow-brown silty clay. Pitched stone construction same as second phase walls 104 and 132 in Trench 1. Visible through rubble layers 407, 410 and 407 and was possibly within 418 after their deposition.	-
405	Layer	Dark brown clay loam with common small lias fragments. Only revealed in plan, deposit seals wall 403, either demolition or post-demolition accumulation sealing first phase wall.	-
406	Layer	Dark grey clay loam with abundant lias slabs. Only recorded in plan, post-demolition accumulation or demolition material which seals 403.	-
407	Layer	Mid brown, gravel-rich silty loam. Very similar to bonding material of the first phase wall 403. As 407 is cut through by **418** (the construction trench for second phase wall 404), it is evidence of the cleaning off of useable stone work from the first phase of villa construction.	-
408	Wall	NW-SE aligned wall, 1.90m long by 0.65m wide and 0.17m high. Constructed of two lower courses of lias blocks with an upper course of vertical pitched slabs. Different construction to all of the other walls on site, but the use of blocks for foundation is similar to first phase structures. Sealed by 409 which is cut by **418** for second phase wall 404.	0.17m high
409	Layer	Mid to light yellow silty clay with common small to medium lias fragments. Demolition deposit which seals wall 408 and is cut by **418** for second phase wall 404. Demolition material derived from first phase wall.	-
410	Layer	Mid to light yellow-brown silty clay with rare limestone slabs. Deposit not fully investigated. Accumulation of material against wall 408.	-
411	Layer	Light grey-brown silty clay loam with common small limestone inclusions. Collapse/demolition material.	-
412	Natural	Light yellow-brown lias rich silty clay, probably disturbed trampled upper natural.	-
413	**Cut**	**Cut of sub-circular, vertical sided feature, 0.54m long and 0.30m wide and 0.15m deep, cut bedrock and not observed until 415 was removed. Possibly the earliest archaeology in the trench. Possible posthole.**	**0.15m+**
414	Fill	Dark grey-brown fill of **413**, only partially observed, and contains a large single squared off block of lias, possible packing in **413**.	0.15m thick
415	Layer	Mid yellow-brown silty clay with reddish tinge, trampled natural geology removed to reveal natural bedrock and cut **413**.	0.11m thick
416	Layer	Dark brown-black silty clay loam, lens of charcoal rich material sealing 415. Possible occupation activity.	0.03m thick

417	Layer	Mid grey-brown silty clay rubble-rich demolition material, sealed by 411 and overlying 416.	-
418	**Cut**	**Construction cut for wall 404 which cuts 407.**	**-**

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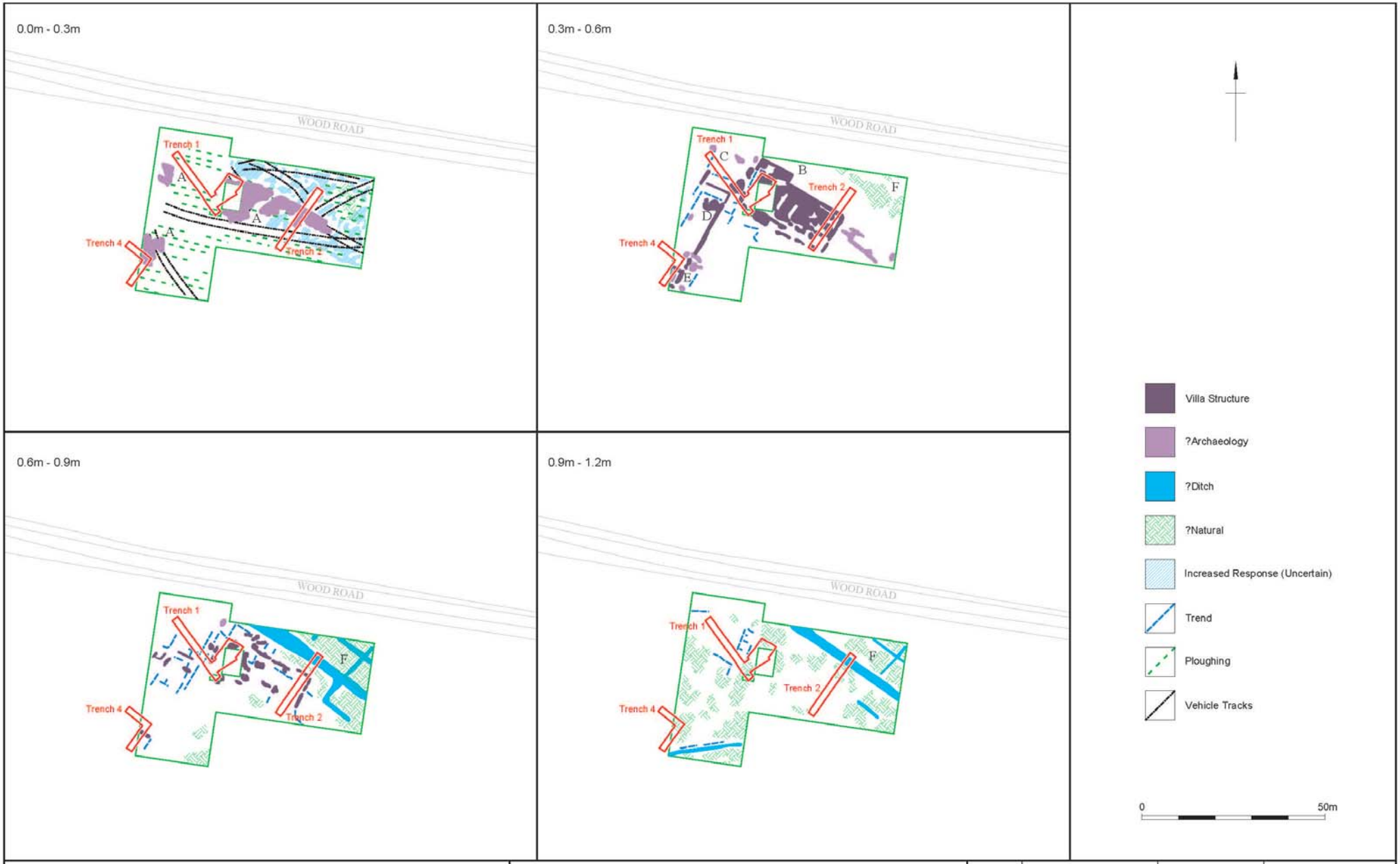
Site and trench location, and geophysical results

Figure 1



Wessex Archaeology

Evaluation trench
GPR survey area

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GPR interpretation

Figure 2

342250

342260

Plate 1: Trench 1, view from north-east, showing mosaic 131

129540

Trench 1

Pl 1

Pl 3

Pl 4

Mosaic 131

Mosaic 124

Wall 104

Wall 118

Wall 123

Wall 132

edge of Munckton and Fry's trench (1861)

129530

Plate 2: South-east facing section of Trench 1, indicating shallow depth of archaeology

0 4m

129520

Evaluation trench

Direction of plate

Wessex Archaeology

Date:	18/10/11	Revision Number:	0
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Trench 1: plan and photographs

Figure 3

Plate 3: Mosaic 131 (199.2 in Cosh and Neal 2005)

Plate 4: Mosaic 124 (199.1 in Cosh and Neal 2005)

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Wessex Archaeology

Trench 1: mosaic photographs

Figure 4

Plate 5: Pre-excavation plan of Trench 2, view from south-west

342280

129530

129520

Ditch 203

211

223

204

Pl 8

Ditch 203

211

Wall 205

Pl 7

Pl 6

217

208

Trench 2

219

214

215

218

208

220

214

Mosaic 209

213

212

210

Pl 5

0

2.5m

Plate 6: Wall 205, view from south-east

Plate 7: Wall 205, view from east

Evaluation trench

Direction of plate

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Date:	18/10/11	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	Plan 1:50 @ A3	Illustrator:	KL
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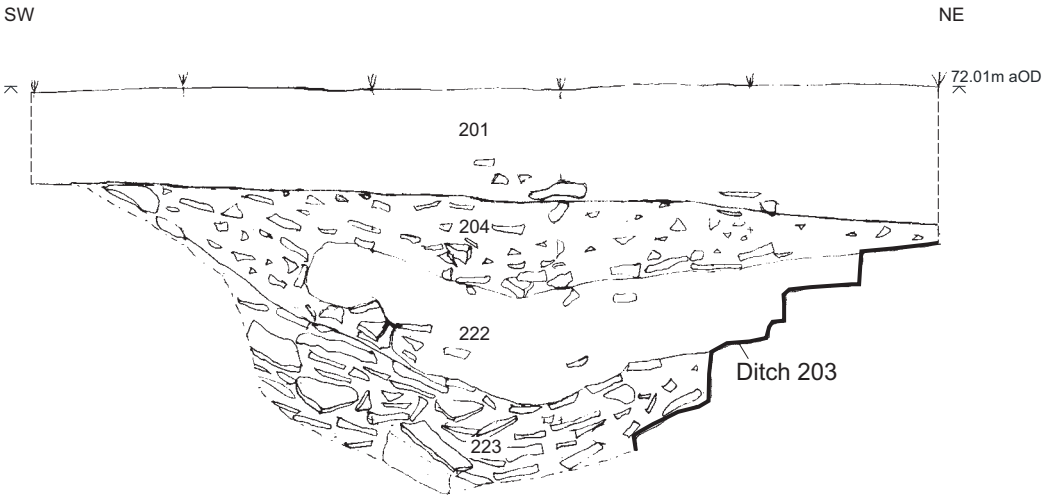
Trench 2: plan and photographs

Figure 5



Ditch 203, south-east facing section

0 50cm

Plate 8: South-east facing section of ditch 203

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Trench 3: ditch 203 section and photograph

Figure 6

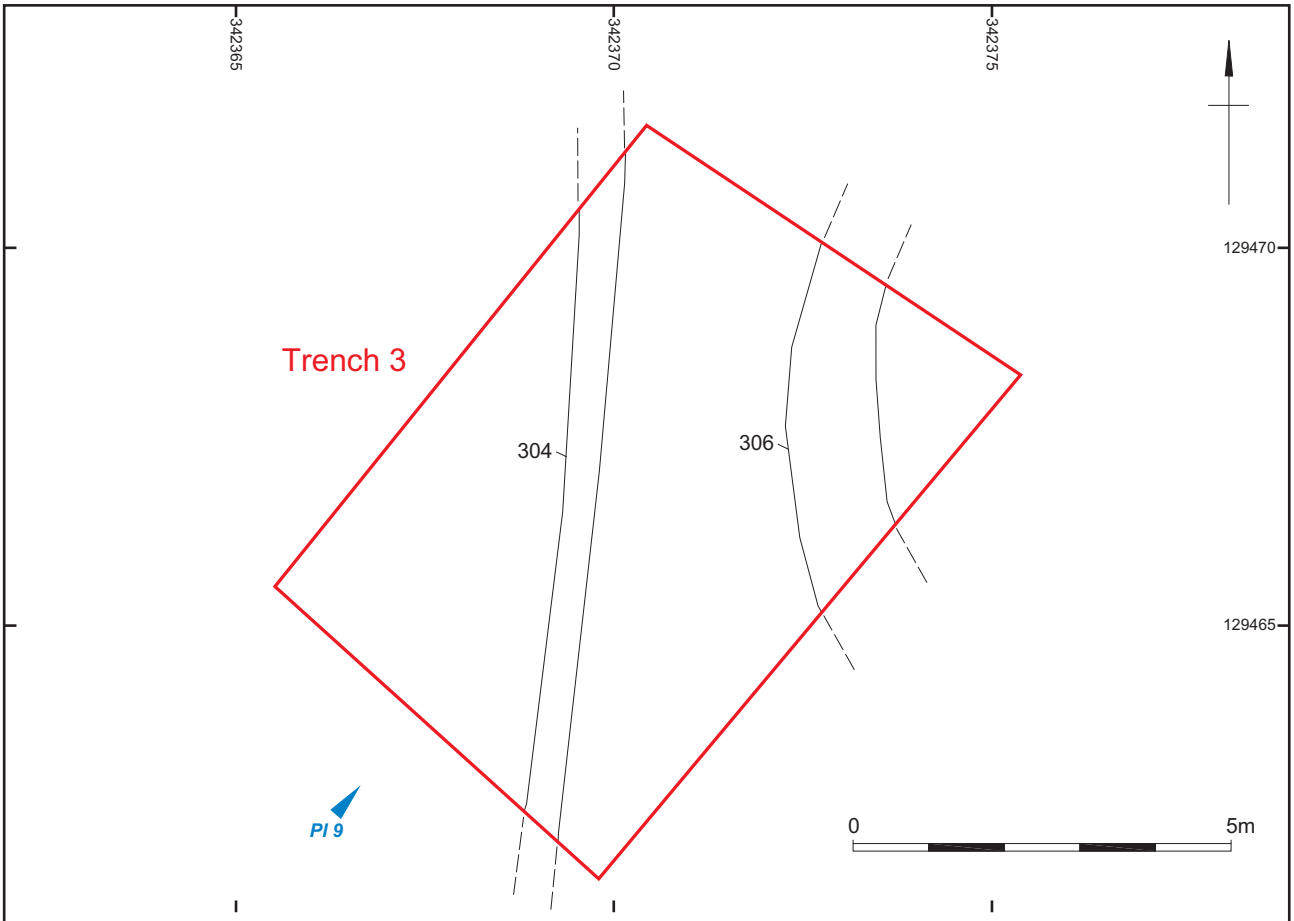

Plate 9: Trench 3, view from south-west

Evaluation trench

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Trench 3: plan and photograph

Figure 7

Plate 10: Trench 3, view from north-east

342240

129510

Trench 4

Pl 9

412

411

Posthole 413

409

Wall 408

410

Wall 404

407

406

Wall 403

405

0 2m

Evaluation trench

Direction of plate

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Date:	18/10/11	Revision Number:	0
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Trench 4: plan and photograph

Figure 8

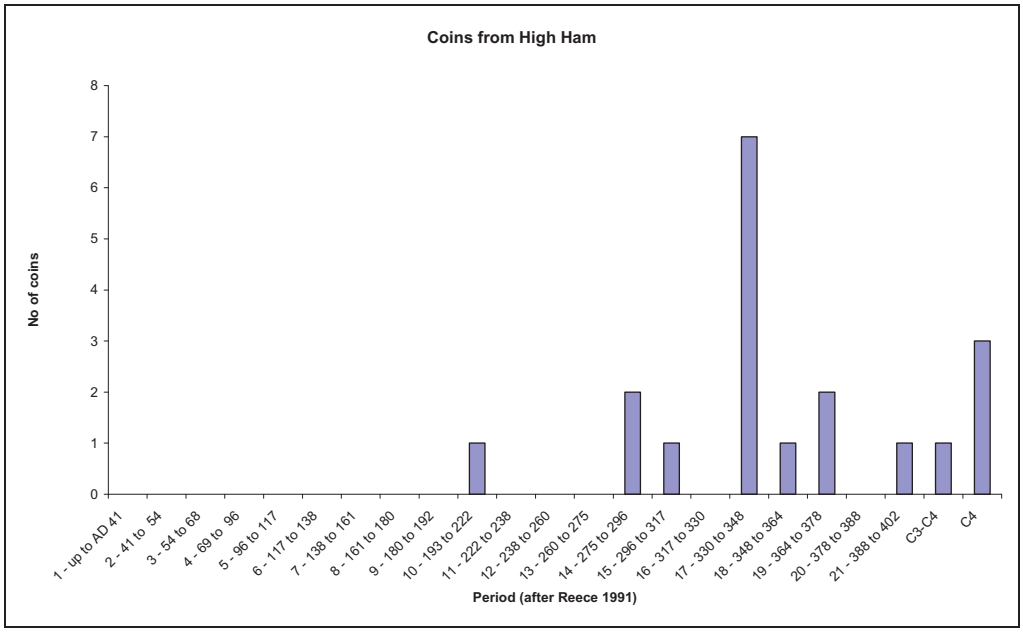
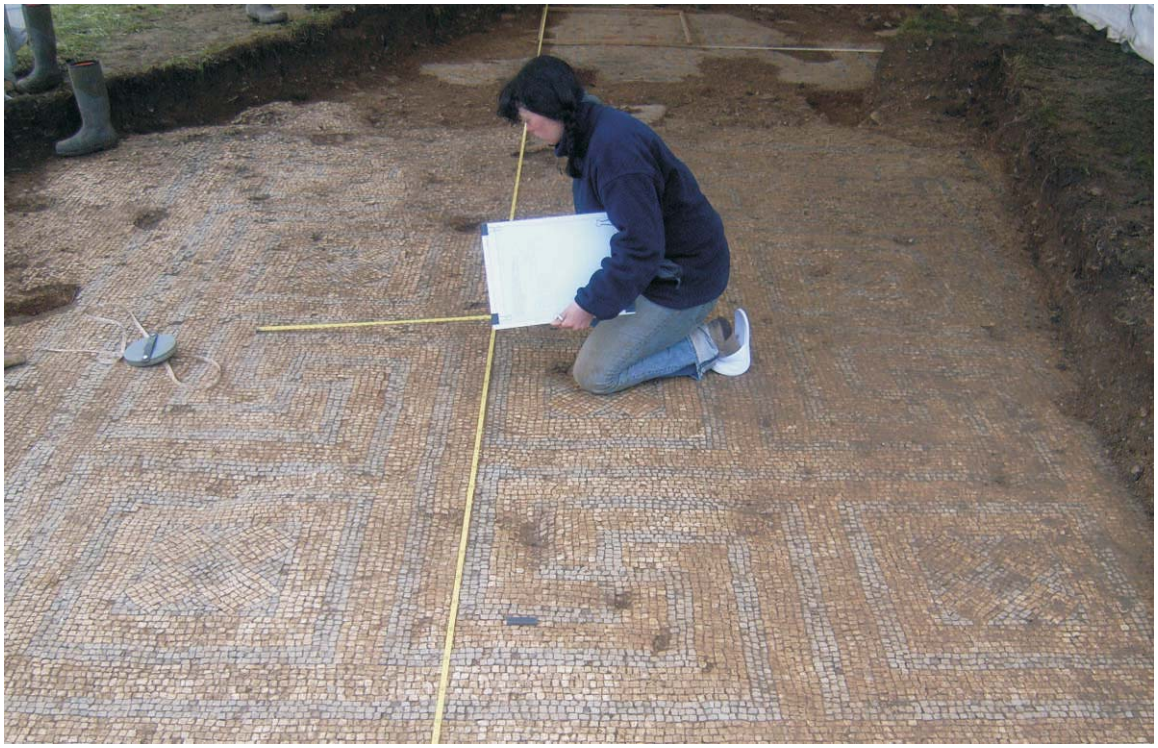


Figure 9: Coins from High Ham



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