

# **FARMSTEADS AND FUNERARY SITES**

**THE M1 JUNCTION 12 IMPROVEMENTS  
AND THE A5–M1 LINK ROAD  
CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS  
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# CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .....	xiii
LIST OF TABLES .....	xix
CONTRIBUTORS .....	xxi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	xxiii

## Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION.....	1
LOCATION AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE FIELDWORK.....	1
M1 JUNCTION 12 IMPROVEMENTS .....	2
A5-M1 LINK ROAD .....	3
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY .....	8
TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY AT M1 JUNCTION 12 .....	10
TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY ALONG THE VALLEY OF THE OUZEL BROOK .....	10
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE FIELDWORK .....	12
M1 JUNCTION 12 IMPROVEMENTS .....	13
A5-M1 LINK ROAD .....	14
RESEARCH THEMES AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RESULTS .....	14
PALAEOLOGIC, MESOLITHIC AND NEOLITHIC .....	14
BRONZE AGE .....	14
IRON AGE AND ROMAN .....	14
MIDDLE SAXON .....	15
LATE SAXON AND MEDIEVAL .....	16
POST-MEDIEVAL AND MODERN .....	17
ORGANISATION OF THIS REPORT.....	17
SUMMARY OF CHRONOLOGY WITHIN THIS REPORT.....	18
TEXTUAL AND GRAPHICAL CONVENTIONS.....	18
ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ARCHIVES .....	20
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC DISSEMINATION.....	21

## Chapter 2

MIDDLE-LATE BRONZE AGE PITS AND UNDATED PIT ALIGNMENTS.....	22
MIDDLE-LATE BRONZE AGE PITS IN THE UPPER VALLEY .....	23
SUMMARY.....	23
MIDDLE-LATE BRONZE AGE PITS AT SITE H.....	23
THE FORM AND CHARACTER OF THE POSTHOLES .....	24
POSSIBLE STRUCTURES .....	25
POSSIBLE FENCE LINES .....	26
LARGE PITS AND PITS PACKED WITH BURNT STONE, HP1.....	28
DISPERSED ISOLATED PITS .....	28
DISTRIBUTION OF POTTERY .....	29
MIDDLE-LATE BRONZE AGE PITS IN THE LOWER VALLEY .....	29
SUMMARY .....	29
SITE Q.....	29
SITES D AND G .....	29
SITE M .....	30
MIDDLE-LATE BRONZE AGE PITS AT SITES D, G, M AND Q.....	30
LATE BRONZE AGE/EARLY IRON AGE PITS AT SITE C .....	32
THE BRONZE AGE PIT ALIGNMENT, SOUTH OF SITE M.....	33
THE FORM AND CHARACTER OF THE PITS .....	33
GROUPS WITHIN THE ALIGNMENT .....	35
GROUP MPL1 .....	35
GROUP MPL2 .....	35

GROUP MPL3 .....	35
GROUP MPL4 .....	35
<b>PIT ALIGNMENTS AND OTHER FEATURES AT SITE P .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>THE FORM AND CHARACTER OF THE PITS .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>THE MAIN PIT ALIGNMENT, PPL1 .....</b>	<b>38</b>
THE NORTHERN PITS AND BREAK IN ALIGNMENT .....	39
THE SOUTHERN ROW OF PITS .....	39
<b>OTHER ALIGNED PITS, PPL2 .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>NON-ALIGNED PITS AND POSTHOLES, PPG1 .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>A LATER BOUNDARY AND PITS GROUP PPG2 .....</b>	<b>40</b>
DITCH, P[198] .....	40
CURVING GULLY, P[330] .....	41
PIT GROUP, PPG2 .....	41
<b>SPECIALIST STUDIES .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>MIDDLE-LATE BRONZE AGE POTTERY .....</b>	<b>41</b>
BY ANDY CHAPMAN	
POTTERY FROM SITE H .....	42
POTTERY FROM SITE C.....	43
POTTERY FROM SITE G .....	43
POTTERY FROM SITE M.....	44
RESIDUAL POTTERY .....	44
CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED POTTERY (FIGS 2.26 AND 2.27) .....	44
DISCUSSION .....	45
<b>CHARCOAL .....</b>	<b>45</b>
BY DANA CHALLINOR	
<b>CHARRED PLANT MACROFOSSILS AND OTHER REMAINS .....</b>	<b>46</b>
BY VAL FRYER	
SAMPLES FROM PIT ALIGNMENTS.....	47
<b>FAUNAL REMAINS .....</b>	<b>47</b>
BY REBECCA GORDON	
<b>MOLLUSCS .....</b>	<b>47</b>
BY VAL FRYER	
<b>RADIOCARBON DETERMINATIONS.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>REGIONAL LANDSCAPE CONTEXT AND DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS AND ASSOCIATED SITES .....</b>	<b>49</b>
FLINT SCATTERS.....	50
OTHER SITES AND MONUMENTS .....	50
<b>POST STRUCTURES AND ASSOCIATED POSTHOLES .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>ISOLATED AND SCATTERED PITS.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>PIT ALIGNMENTS .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>REVIEW OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES.....</b>	<b>57</b>

### Chapter 3

<b>IRON AGE FARMING BESIDE THE OUZEL BROOK .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>IRON AGE SETTLEMENT EVIDENCE AT SITES D, G AND M .....</b>	<b>60</b>
SUMMARY.....	60
<b>EARLY IRON AGE FEATURES AT SITE D.....</b>	<b>60</b>
PIT CLUSTER DPC1 .....	62
PIT CLUSTER DPC2 AND PIT D[1195] .....	64
PIT CLUSTER DPC3 .....	67
PIT CLUSTER DPC4.....	69
CURVILINEAR DITCH, DED1.....	69
INDIVIDUAL PITS AND POSTHOLES AT SITE D.....	69
PIT CLUSTER GPC1 .....	70
<b>EARLY IRON AGE PITS AT SITE G.....</b>	<b>70</b>
PIT CLUSTER GPC2 .....	70
ISOLATED PITS AT SITE G.....	72
<b>DISARTICULATED HUMAN CHARNEL FROM SITES D AND G.....</b>	<b>73</b>



<b>EARLIER-MIDDLE IRON AGE DISPERSED SETTLEMENT AT SITES D AND G</b> .....	73
RING DITCH GRD1 .....	73
RING DITCH GRD2 .....	74
RING DITCH GRD3 .....	75
ENCLOSURE GENC1 .....	75
PITS CLOSE TO RING DITCHES GRD1 AND GRD3 .....	75
PITS TO THE NORTH-EAST OF THE SETTLEMENT .....	75
ENCLOSURE DENC2 AND PIT D[1227] .....	76
<b>LATER-MIDDLE IRON AGE ENCLOSED SETTLEMENT AT SITE G</b> .....	76
THE SOUTH-EASTERN SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY, GBD1 .....	76
THE SOUTH-WESTERN SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY, GBD2.....	80
RING DITCHES GRD4-8 .....	80
ENCLOSURES GENC2-3 .....	82
ENCLOSURE GENC4 .....	83
DITCH GD4 .....	84
A POSSIBLE CESSPIT OUTSIDE THE SETTLEMENT .....	85
<b>LATER-MIDDLE IRON AGE PERIPHERAL ACTIVITY AT SITE D</b> .....	86
ENCLOSURE DENC3 .....	86
BOUNDARY DITCHES AT SITE D .....	87
<b>MIDDLE IRON AGE SETTLEMENT AND ACTIVITY AT SITES K AND N</b> .....	88
<b>EARLIER-MIDDLE IRON AGE STORAGE PITS AND PIT CLUSTER</b> .....	88
STORAGE PITS .....	88
PIT CLUSTER KPC.....	90
<b>LATER-MIDDLE OR LATE IRON AGE BOUNDARY DITCHES</b> .....	90
DITCHES WITHIN SCHEME CORRIDOR AT SITE K .....	90
DITCHES WITHIN THE FARM ACCESS ROAD AT SITE K.....	91
<b>UNDATED PITS AND POSTHOLES</b> .....	92
<b>LATE IRON AGE SETTLEMENT, 1ST CENTURY BC, AT SITE G, D AND M</b> .....	93
<b>SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES</b> .....	93
THE SOUTH-EASTERN BOUNDARY, GBD1 .....	93
THE SOUTH-WESTERN BOUNDARY, GBD2 .....	95
THE NORTH-WESTERN BOUNDARY, GBD3 .....	95
THE NORTH-EASTERN BOUNDARY, GBD4 .....	95
BOUNDARY GBD5.....	95
<b>RING DITCHES</b> .....	95
RING DITCH GRD9 AND NEARBY PITS.....	95
RING DITCH GRD10 .....	96
DITCH GD11.....	96
<b>INTERNAL SETTLEMENT ENCLOSURES</b> .....	97
ENCLOSURE GENC5 .....	97
ENCLOSURE GENC6 .....	97
ENCLOSURE GENC7 .....	98
ENCLOSURE GENC8 .....	99
DITCH GD10.....	99
<b>POST STRUCTURES WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT</b> .....	99
<b>PITS WITHIN THE SOUTHERN EXTENT OF SETTLEMENT</b> .....	100
<b>PITS AND POSTHOLES OUTSIDE THE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY</b> .....	100
<b>AN IRON AGE ROUNDHOUSE AT THORN OVERBRIDGE, SITE G</b> .....	100
<b>LATE IRON AGE BOUNDARIES, 1ST CENTURY BC, AT SITE D</b> .....	101
<b>BOUNDARY DITCH DBD6</b> .....	101
<b>BOUNDARY DITCH DBD7</b> .....	101
<b>IRON AGE DITCHES SOUTH OF SITE M</b> .....	103
<b>THE ALLUVIAL SEQUENCE BESIDE THE OUZEL BROOK AT SITE M</b> .....	104
<b>SPECIALIST STUDIES</b> .....	104
<b>FIRED CLAY AND DAUB</b> .....	104
BY PAT CHAPMAN .....	
SITE G .....	104
SITE D .....	105

SITE K .....	105
<b>EARLY IRON AGE POTTERY</b> .....	105
BY ANDY CHAPMAN	
THE EARLY IRON AGE POTTERY OF THE SOUTH MIDLANDS .....	105
EARLY IRON AGE PITS AND PIT CLUSTERS AT SITE D .....	106
EARLY IRON AGE PITS AND PIT CLUSTERS AT SITE G .....	108
<b>EARLIER-MIDDLE AND LATER-MIDDLE TO LATE IRON AGE POTTERY</b> .....	111
BY ANDY CHAPMAN	
THE EVOLUTION OF THE IRON AGE POTTERY CHRONOLOGY IN THE SOUTH MIDLANDS .....	111
THE IRON AGE POTTERY SEQUENCE AND CHRONOLOGY FOR THE SOUTH MIDLANDS .....	112
EARLIER-MIDDLE IRON AGE PITS AND A PIT CLUSTER, AND LATER BOUNDARIES AT SITE K .....	114
LATER-MIDDLE TO LATE IRON AGE SETTLEMENT AT SITES D AND G .....	115
LATER-MIDDLE AND LATE IRON AGE LINEAR DITCH SYSTEMS AND ENCLOSURE AT SITE D .....	119
<b>IRON AGE POTTERY FROM OTHER SITES</b> .....	119
BY ANDY CHAPMAN	
THE MIDDLE TO LATE IRON AGE ASSEMBLAGES AND DOMESTIC USE .....	119
<b>REGISTERED IRON AGE FINDS</b> .....	120
BY TORA HYLTON AND IAN RIDDLER	
PERSONAL POSSESSIONS .....	120
GENERAL IRONWORK .....	122
TOOLS .....	122
MISCELLANEA .....	125
<b>METALWORKING DEBRIS</b> .....	125
BY ANDY CHAPMAN	
<b>WOOD CHARCOAL</b> .....	125
BY IMOGEN VAN BERGEN-POOLE	
RESULTS .....	125
<b>CHARRED PLANT MACROFOSSILS AND OTHER REMAINS</b> .....	126
BY VAL FRYER	
<b>FAUNAL REMAINS</b> .....	130
BY REBECCA GORDON	
SITE G .....	130
SITE D .....	136
ANIMAL BONE FROM OTHER IRON AGE SITES .....	137
<b>MOLLUSCS</b> .....	138
BY VAL FRYER	
<b>RADIOCARBON DETERMINATIONS</b> .....	138
EARLY IRON AGE DATES .....	138
EARLIER-MIDDLE IRON AGE DATES .....	140
LATER-MIDDLE IRON AGE DATES .....	141
<b>REGIONAL LANDSCAPE CONTEXT AND DISCUSSION</b> .....	141
<b>PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS AND ASSOCIATED SITES</b> .....	141
<b>LATEST BRONZE AGE TO EARLY IRON AGE ACTIVITY/OCCUPATION (c.800–400BC)</b> .....	142
START DATE OF THE EARLY IRON AGE SETTLEMENT AT SITES D AND G .....	143
LAYOUT OF FEATURES AT SITES D AND G .....	143
EARLY IRON AGE PIT CLUSTERS AT SITES D, G AND AN EARLIER-MIDDLE PIT CLUSTER AT K .....	143
ISOLATED PITS AND POSTHOLES AT SITES D AND G .....	146
OTHER EARLY IRON AGE SETTLEMENTS .....	147
<b>EARLIER-MIDDLE IRON AGE (c.400–300/250BC)</b> .....	148
LOCATION OF THE EARLIER-MIDDLE IRON AGE SETTLEMENT .....	148
COMPARISONS BETWEEN OPEN SETTLEMENTS .....	148
UNDERSTANDING POPULATION .....	149
INTERNAL ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT .....	149
ECONOMY OF THE SETTLEMENTS AT SITES G AND K .....	150
<b>LATER-MIDDLE IRON AGE (c.300/250–100BC)</b> .....	151
INTERNAL DOMESTIC OCCUPATION AND PASTORAL FARMING ACTIVITIES .....	151
FIELD SYSTEMS AT SITE D .....	153
ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY .....	153

<b>LATE IRON AGE (c.100BC–AD0)</b> .....	153
LATE IRON AGE SETTLEMENT AT SITE G .....	153
SUB-RECTANGULAR ENCLOSURE AT SITE G.....	154
INTERNAL LAYOUT OF SETTLEMENT AT SITE G.....	155
LATE IRON AGE BOUNDARIES AND FIELD SYSTEMS .....	155
<b>ARTEFACTS FROM THE IRON AGE SETTLEMENT AT SITES D AND G</b> .....	155
CRAFT ACTIVITIES FROM SITES D, G AND K.....	156
<b>REVIEW OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES</b> .....	156

## Chapter 4

### A LATE IRON AGE/ROMAN CREMATION CEMETERY AND SETTLEMENT FEATURES AT HARLINGTON ROAD, TODDINGTON .....158

<b>THE IRON AGE/ROMAN FUNERARY REMAINS AND NEARBY BOUNDARIES</b> .....	158
SUMMARY.....	158
<b>CREMATION CEMETERY AT SITE M1A</b> .....	160
<b>CREMATION CEMETERY AT SITE M1A</b> .....	162
<b>PHASE 1: PRE-ROMAN LATE IRON AGE, 1ST CENTURIES BC TO AD</b> .....	162
THE CREMATION BURIALS .....	166
NON-FUNERARY FEATURES .....	180
<b>PHASE 2: LATE IRON AGE/ROMAN, EARLY TO MID 1ST CENTURY AD</b> .....	180
THE CREMATION BURIALS .....	183
CREMATION BURIAL M1A[4234].....	210
RELATIONSHIP TO THE NEARBY BOUNDARY DITCHES .....	212
<b>PHASE 3: ROMAN, LATE 1ST TO EARLY 2ND CENTURIES AD</b> .....	212
THE CREMATION BURIALS .....	214
FEATURES OUTSIDE THE CEMETERY .....	230
<b>PHASE 4: ROMAN, EARLY TO MID 2ND CENTURY AD</b> .....	230
THE CREMATION BURIALS .....	232
FURTHER REDEFINITION OF NEARBY BOUNDARIES.....	241
AN UNDATED INHUMATION BURIAL .....	242
<b>THE PYRE SITE AND POSSIBLE CAIRN AT SITE M1B</b> .....	243
<b>ROMAN BOUNDARIES AT TWB3, SITE M1C AND SITE M1B</b> .....	245
ROMAN BOUNDARIES, PITS AND GULLIES AT TWB3 .....	245
<b>PHASE 3: DITCHES, LATE 1ST CENTURY AD</b> .....	245
<b>PHASE 4: SETTLEMENT FEATURES, EARLY TO MID 2ND CENTURY AD</b> .....	246
PITS AND GULLIES .....	246
<b>PHASE 5: A LATE ROMAN BOUNDARY DITCH</b> .....	247
<b>SPECIALIST STUDIES</b> .....	247
<b>QUERNS</b> .....	247
BY ANDY CHAPMAN	
<b>TILE</b> .....	247
BY PAT CHAPMAN	
<b>FIRE CLAY</b> .....	247
BY PAT CHAPMAN	
<b>ROMAN POTTERY</b> .....	247
BY JANE TIMBY	
POTTERY CHRONOLOGY .....	251
MODIFICATIONS TO VESSELS .....	252
REGIONAL PARALLELS.....	252
POTTERY FROM NON-FUNERARY FEATURES NEAR THE CEMETERY.....	252
POTTERY FROM DITCHES AND PITS ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE VALLEY.....	253
CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED POTTERY FROM NON-FUNERARY CONTEXTS (FIG 4.57) .....	254
<b>REGISTERED LATE IRON AGE/ROMAN FINDS</b> .....	254
BY TORA HYLTON	
AN IRON DISC.....	254
BROOCHES .....	255
A POLISHED BRONZE MIRROR.....	255
A CERAMIC ROUNDEL OR GAMING COUNTER .....	255

NAILS .....	255
COINS .....	255
BY IAN MEADOWS	
<b>METALWORKING DEBRIS</b> .....	256
BY ANDY CHAPMAN	
<b>CHARCOAL</b> .....	256
BY DANA CHALLINOR	
SAMPLES FROM CREMATION BURIALS AND RELATED DEPOSITS .....	257
SAMPLES FROM CONTEMPORARY NON-FUNERARY FEATURES NEAR THE CEMETERY .....	259
CONCLUSION .....	260
<b>CHARRED PLANT MACROFOSSILS AND OTHER REMAINS</b> .....	261
BY VAL FRYER	
SAMPLE COMPOSITION .....	261
SAMPLES FROM CREMATION BURIALS AND RELATED DEPOSITS .....	261
SAMPLES FROM CONTEMPORARY NON-FUNERARY FEATURES NEAR THE CEMETERY .....	261
CONCLUSION .....	261
<b>FAUNAL REMAINS</b> .....	262
BY LASZLO LICHTENSTEIN	
ANIMAL BONE FROM THE CREMATION CEMETERY AT SITE M1A .....	262
ANIMAL BONE FROM ROMAN BOUNDARIES, PITS AND GULLIES AT TWB3 .....	262
<b>CREMATED HUMAN REMAINS</b> .....	263
BY SARAH INSKIP	
PRESERVATION, FRAGMENTATION AND COMPLETENESS .....	263
SKELETAL ELEMENT REPRESENTATION .....	263
COLOUR .....	263
DEMOGRAPHY .....	264
PATHOLOGY .....	264
CONCLUSION .....	264
<b>AN INHUMATION BURIAL, M1A[4250]</b> .....	265
BY SARAH INSKIP	
<b>RADIOCARBON DETERMINATIONS</b> .....	265
<b>REGIONAL LANDSCAPE CONTEXT AND DISCUSSION</b> .....	265
<b>PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS AND ASSOCIATED SITES</b> .....	265
CONTEMPORARY ACTIVITY .....	265
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE .....	266
<b>THE LATE IRON AGE AND ROMAN FUNERARY EVIDENCE</b> .....	267
<b>OTHER LATE IRON AGE AND ROMAN FEATURES</b> .....	269

## Chapter 5

<b>IRON AGE/ROMAN FUNERARY SITES IN THE VALLEY OF THE OUZEL BROOK</b> .....	271
SUMMARY OF THE FUNERARY CHRONOLOGY .....	271
A MIDDLE-LATE IRON AGE INHUMATION FROM SITE Q .....	275
A LATE IRON AGE/EARLY ROMAN URNED CREMATION BURIAL CEMETERY AT SITE F .....	276
A LATE IRON AGE/EARLY ROMAN PYRE SITE AND URNED CREMATIONS AT SITE H .....	294
EARLY ROMAN CREMATION BURIALS AND INHUMATIONS AT SITE Q .....	318
A CHARNEL BURIAL PIT OF THE LATE 4TH TO 5TH CENTURIES AD AT SITE F .....	324
<b>SPECIALIST STUDIES</b> .....	326
LATE IRON AGE/EARLY ROMAN POTTERY FROM CREMATION BURIALS .....	326
BY PHIL MILLS	
THE POTTERY FROM THE SITE F CREMATION CEMETERY .....	327
<b>IRON DISCS</b> .....	329
BY TORA HYLTON	
<b>CHARCOAL</b> .....	330
BY DANA CHALLINOR	
CHARACTER AND COMPOSITION .....	330
URNED BURIALS FROM SITE F .....	330
URNED BURIALS AND BUSTA FROM SITE H .....	331

<b>CHARRED PLANT MACROFOSSILS AND OTHER REMAINS .....</b>	<b>333</b>
BY VAL FRYER	
CREMATION BURIAL DEPOSITS FROM SITE F .....	333
CREMATION BURIAL DEPOSITS FROM SITE H.....	333
BURIAL DEPOSITS FROM SITE Q .....	333
<b>FAUNAL REMAINS .....</b>	<b>333</b>
BY REBECCA GORDON	
FAUNAL DEPOSITS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FUNERARY REMAINS AT SITE F .....	333
FAUNAL DEPOSITS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CREMATED REMAINS AT SITE H.....	334
<b>HUMAN REMAINS .....</b>	<b>334</b>
BY CHRIS CHINNOCK	
NATURE OF THE SAMPLE.....	334
PRESERVATION AND COMPLETENESS OF INHUMATIONS .....	335
DISARTICULATED EARLY IRON AGE REMAINS.....	335
LATE IRON AGE/EARLY ROMAN INHUMATIONS .....	335
DISARTICULATED LATE 4TH- TO 5TH-CENTURY REMAINS.....	338
DISCUSSION .....	339
<b>RADIOCARBON DETERMINATIONS.....</b>	<b>340</b>
<b>REGIONAL LANDSCAPE CONTEXT AND DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>343</b>
<b>PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS AND ASSOCIATED SITES .....</b>	<b>343</b>
FUNERARY SITES NEARBY .....	344
<b>DISARTICULATED REMAINS IN IRON AGE CONTEXTS .....</b>	<b>345</b>
<b>MIDDLE-LATE IRON AGE INHUMATION .....</b>	<b>346</b>
<b>LATE IRON AGE/EARLY ROMAN HUMAN REMAINS .....</b>	<b>346</b>
THE AYLESFORD-SWARLING CULTURE AND THE CATUVELLAUNI .....	346
ANALYSING THE BURIAL SITES .....	348
CHRONOLOGY OF BURIALS.....	349
LAYOUT OF IRON AGE/EARLY ROMAN BURIALS WITHIN THE EXCAVATED AREAS .....	350
COMPARISON SITES FOR BURIAL LAYOUT .....	350
TYPES OF BURIALS ENCOUNTERED .....	351
TREATMENT OF CREMATED BONE AND PYRE DEBRIS .....	353
POTTERY WITHIN GRAVES .....	353
RITUAL MODIFICATION OF VESSELS .....	354
OTHER GRAVE GOODS .....	355
FAUNAL REMAINS IN ASSOCIATION WITH FUNERARY DEPOSITS .....	356
<b>REVIEW OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES.....</b>	<b>357</b>
<b>Chapter 6</b>	
<b>LATE IRON AGE/ROMAN TRACKWAYS, BOUNDARIES AND ENCLOSURES .....</b>	<b>358</b>
<b>SUMMARY OF THE LATE IRON AGE/ROMAN CHRONOLOGY.....</b>	<b>359</b>
<b>FEATURE SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>359</b>
1ST CENTURY BC TO MID 1ST CENTURY AD (PRE-ROMAN).....	359
LATE 1ST CENTURY AD UNTIL C.AD120 (ROMAN) .....	359
<b>TRACKWAYS AND ENCLOSURES AT SITE H .....</b>	<b>359</b>
<b>THE DITCHED BOUNDARIES AND FUNERARY LANDSCAPE AT SITE H .....</b>	<b>359</b>
<b>PRE-CONQUEST PERIOD, LATE IRON AGE BOUNDARY DITCHES.....</b>	<b>360</b>
THE TRACKWAY FROM THE EAST AND FLANKING ENCLOSURES.....	360
THE TRACKWAY FROM THE NORTH-EAST .....	362
OTHER BOUNDARIES .....	362
POSSIBLE WATERHOLE .....	362
SMALL ENCLOSURES TO THE NORTH.....	362
FEATURES IN THE VICINITY OF THE NORTHERN ENCLOSURES.....	363
A HORSE BURIAL .....	365
<b>PRE-CONQUEST PERIOD, LATE IRON AGE FUNERARY ENCLOSURE.....</b>	<b>365</b>
<b>POST-CONQUEST PERIOD, EARLY ROMAN REORGANISATION .....</b>	<b>366</b>
AN ENCLOSURE DITCH WITH AN INTERNAL BANK.....	366
WELLS WITHIN THE ENCLOSURE .....	368

PITS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ENCLOSURE .....	369
CONTEMPORARY BOUNDARIES .....	369
<b>BOUNDARIES AND ENCLOSURES AT SITE Q</b> .....	<b>370</b>
<b>LATE IRON AGE SETTLEMENT</b> .....	<b>371</b>
A PROBABLE SUB-RECTANGULAR ENCLOSURE .....	372
SCATTERED FEATURES IN THE VICINITY OF THE ENCLOSURE .....	373
OTHER BOUNDARY DITCHES .....	373
AN ISOLATED ROUNDHOUSE .....	374
A PROBABLE LATE IRON AGE ENCLOSURE AND LINEAR BOUNDARY .....	374
<b>AN ENCLOSURE, MID 1ST-CENTURY AD</b> .....	<b>377</b>
THE ENTRANCE .....	377
<b>FURTHER ENCLOSURE BOUNDARIES EXTENDING TO THE SOUTH</b> .....	<b>379</b>
<b>A BOUNDARY, LATE 1ST TO EARLY 2ND CENTURIES AD</b> .....	<b>379</b>
<b>FOUR-POST STRUCTURES AT SITE F</b> .....	<b>379</b>
<b>BOUNDARY DITCHES AT SITE P</b> .....	<b>380</b>
<b>FEATURES EITHER SIDE OF A FIELD ENTRANCE</b> .....	<b>382</b>
<b>OTHER UNDATED DITCHES NEARBY</b> .....	<b>382</b>
<b>BOUNDARY DITCHES AND PITS AT SITE J</b> .....	<b>382</b>
<b>SPECIALIST STUDIES</b> .....	<b>384</b>
<b>QUERNS</b> .....	<b>384</b>
BY ANDY CHAPMAN	
SITE H .....	386
SITE Q .....	386
<b>ROMAN FLOOR TILE/BRICK</b> .....	<b>387</b>
BY PAT CHAPMAN	
<b>FIRED CLAY</b> .....	<b>388</b>
BY PAT CHAPMAN	
<b>LATE IRON AGE POTTERY FROM SITE Q</b> .....	<b>388</b>
BY ANDY CHAPMAN AND PHIL MILLS	
SITE CHRONOLOGY.....	388
DIAGNOSTIC FEATURE GROUPS .....	390
CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED LATE IRON AGE POTTERY (FIG 6.26).....	391
<b>TRANSITIONAL WARES AND EARLY ROMAN POTTERY</b> .....	<b>391</b>
BY PHIL MILLS	
SITE H .....	391
SITE Q .....	398
LAND TO THE NORTH OF OUZEL BROOK, SITE J .....	402
POTTERY SUPPLY IN THE VALLEY OF THE OUZEL BROOK .....	402
POTTERY CLASSIFICATIONS .....	404
FUNCTION AND FINWARE .....	418
BURNING .....	418
CROSS-JOINING SHERDS.....	419
CATALOGUE OF NOTABLE FORMS WITH PUBLISHED PARALLELS .....	420
CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED POTTERY (FIGS 6.37 - 6.43) .....	423
<b>REGISTERED LATE IRON AGE/ROMAN FINDS</b> .....	<b>425</b>
BY TORA HYLTON	
PERSONAL POSSESSIONS.....	425
HOUSEHOLD ITEMS .....	425
NAILS .....	425
<b>METALWORKING DEBRIS</b> .....	<b>426</b>
BY ANDY CHAPMAN	
<b>CHARRED PLANT MACROFOSSILS AND OTHER REMAINS</b> .....	<b>426</b>
BY VAL FRYER	
<b>FAUNAL REMAINS</b> .....	<b>429</b>
BY REBECCA GORDON	
THE ANIMAL BONE FROM SITE H .....	429
THE ANIMAL BONE FROM SITE Q .....	430

<b>OYSTER SHELLS</b> .....	431
BY JIM BROWN	
<b>MOLLUSCS</b> .....	432
BY VAL FRYER	
<b>RADIOCARBON DETERMINATIONS</b> .....	432
<b>REGIONAL LANDSCAPE CONTEXT AND DISCUSSION</b> .....	432
<b>PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS AND ASSOCIATED SITES</b> .....	432
<b>AREAS OF PROBABLE SETTLEMENT</b> .....	434
<b>OTHER SITES AND MONUMENTS</b> .....	435
<b>LATE IRON AGE TO MIDDLE ROMAN (C.AD 0–2ND CENTURY AD)</b> .....	436
<b>LOCATION OF THE LATE IRON AGE/EARLY ROMAN SETTLEMENTS</b> .....	436
<b>THE NATURE OF SETTLEMENT</b> .....	437
<b>TRACKWAYS</b> .....	437
<b>BUILDINGS</b> .....	438
<b>ECONOMY</b> .....	439
<b>FARMING</b> .....	440
<b>CRAFT/INDUSTRY</b> .....	440
<b>ANIMAL BURIALS AND RITUAL DEPOSITS</b> .....	441
<b>REVIEW OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES</b> .....	441

## Chapter 7

<b>SAXON FUNERARY REMAINS, PITS, CULTIVATION SOILS AND MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT</b> .....	443
<b>SUMMARY OF SAXON AND MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT AND FUNERARY REMAINS</b> .....	443
<b>SAXON INHUMATION CEMETERY AT SITE H</b> .....	444
<b>BURIAL CATALOGUE</b> .....	445
<b>HUMAN REMAINS</b> .....	462
BY CHRIS CHINNOCK	
<b>NON-METRIC TRAITS</b> .....	462
<b>PALAEOPATHOLOGY</b> .....	462
<b>OSTEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION</b> .....	463
<b>SAXON GRAVE GOODS FROM INHUMATION BURIALS</b> .....	464
BY TORA HYLTON	
<b>SPEARHEAD</b> .....	464
<b>KNIVES</b> .....	464
<b>BUCKLES/PLATES</b> .....	465
<b>WORKBOX</b> .....	466
<b>MINERALISED FABRIC ANALYSIS</b> .....	468
BY SUE HARRINGTON	
<b>BROOCHES WITH MINERALISED FABRIC</b> .....	468
<b>ANALYSIS</b> .....	468
<b>DISCUSSION</b> .....	469
<b>CHARRED PLANT MACROFOSSILS AND OTHER REMAINS</b> .....	469
BY VAL FRYER	
<b>DISCUSSION</b> .....	469
<b>MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT AT SITE Q</b> .....	472
<b>SAXO-NORMAN BOUNDARY DITCHES</b> .....	472
<b>AN ENTRANCE INTO A SMALL ENCLOSURE</b> .....	473
<b>PITS AND POSTHOLES</b> .....	473
<b>EARLY 12TH-CENTURY DEVELOPMENT</b> .....	474
<b>A TIMBER-FRAMED BUILDING</b> .....	475
<b>FEATURES SOUTH OF THE BUILDING</b> .....	479
<b>FEATURES NORTH-EAST OF THE BUILDING</b> .....	479
<b>THE WESTERN BOUNDARY DITCH</b> .....	480
<b>A TRIANGULAR PLOT</b> .....	481
<b>PLOT BOUNDARIES TO THE SOUTH-EAST</b> .....	481
<b>FEATURES WITHIN THE PLOTS</b> .....	483
<b>THE MID 12TH CENTURY ONWARDS</b> .....	483
<b>POST-MEDIEVAL BOUNDARIES</b> .....	484



<b>MEDIEVAL ACTIVITY AT SITE G</b> .....	485
<b>DITCHES AND PITS AT SITE G</b> .....	485
<b>MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT AT SITE F</b> .....	487
<b>SAXON BOUNDARIES AND PITS</b> .....	489
PITS CONTAINING SOLELY EARLY/MIDDLE SAXON POTTERY .....	489
POSSIBLE SAXON TO EARLY MEDIEVAL CULTIVATION SOILS .....	490
FEATURES CONTAINING SOLELY LATE SAXON FINDS.....	490
<b>SAXO-NORMAN BOUNDARIES AND POSSIBLE STRUCTURES</b> .....	490
INITIAL SAXO-NORMAN BOUNDARIES .....	490
POSSIBLE SAXO-NORMAN STRUCTURES .....	491
SAXO-NORMAN PITS AND POSTHOLES, AND UNDATED FEATURES IN CLOSE PROXIMITY .....	493
<b>MEDIEVAL OCCUPATION, STRUCTURES AND ENCLOSURES</b> .....	494
ENCLOSURES AND POSSIBLE STRUCTURES OF THE EARLY 12TH CENTURY .....	495
BOUNDARY ALTERATIONS AND ACTIVITY AFTER THE MID 12TH CENTURY .....	506
LATE MEDIEVAL CLEARANCE AND LEVELLING .....	509
POST-MEDIEVAL FEATURES .....	511
A NATURAL SINKHOLE .....	511
<b>SPECIALIST STUDIES</b> .....	512
<b>QUERNS</b> .....	512
BY ANDY CHAPMAN	
<b>ROOF TILE</b> .....	512
BY PAT CHAPMAN	
SITE Q.....	512
SITE F.....	512
<b>FLOOR TILE</b> .....	514
BY PAT CHAPMAN	
<b>DAUB</b> .....	514
BY PAT CHAPMAN	
<b>CHALK MORTAR</b> .....	515
BY PAT CHAPMAN	
<b>SAXON, MEDIEVAL AND LATER POTTERY</b> .....	515
BY PAUL BLINKHORN	
SITE Q.....	515
SITE G .....	519
SITE F.....	519
CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED SAXON AND MEDIEVAL POTTERY (FIGS 7.55-57, 7.60 AND 7.62) .....	526
<b>REGISTERED SAXON FINDS</b> .....	527
BY TORA HYLTON AND IAN RIDDLE	
CHALTON HANDLED COMB .....	527
TEXTILE WORKING TOOLS .....	529
<b>REGISTERED EARLY MEDIEVAL FINDS</b> .....	529
BY TORA HYLTON	
SITE Q.....	529
SITE G .....	530
SITE F.....	530
<b>METALWORKING DEBRIS</b> .....	534
BY ANDY CHAPMAN	
<b>CHARRED PLANT MACROFOSSILS AND OTHER REMAINS</b> .....	534
BY VAL FRYER	
SITE Q.....	534
SITE F.....	536
<b>FAUNAL REMAINS</b> .....	538
BY REBECCA GORDON	
SITE Q.....	538
SITE F.....	540
<b>OYSTER SHELLS</b> .....	543
BY JIM BROWN	



<b>MOLLUSCS</b> .....	543
BY VAL FRYER	
<b>RADIOCARBON DETERMINATIONS</b> .....	543
<b>REGIONAL LANDSCAPE CONTEXT AND DISCUSSION</b> .....	544
<b>PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS AND ASSOCIATED SITES</b> .....	544
FROM POST-ROMAN TO SAXON .....	545
LOCALISED CHANGES IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD .....	547
EVIDENCE FROM MAPS AND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS.....	549
<b>THE MEDIEVAL OPEN FIELDS</b> .....	550
<b>THE 12TH-CENTURY BUILDINGS</b> .....	551
<b>REVIEW OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES</b> .....	552
MIDDLE SAXON .....	552
LATE SAXON AND MEDIEVAL .....	552
POST-MEDIEVAL AND MODERN .....	553

## Chapter 8

### A LATE MEDIEVAL POTTERS' WASTE DUMP NEAR NUPPINGS GREEN, NORTH OF TODDINGTON ...554

<b>SUMMARY OF THE MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL CHRONOLOGY</b> .....	554
<b>VARIATIONS IN METHODOLOGY</b> .....	555
<b>MEDIEVAL POTTERS' WORKING AREA AT SITE M1C</b> .....	555
<b>A POTTERS' WATER CISTERN</b> .....	555
<b>A POT BANK</b> .....	556
<b>MEDIEVAL DITCHES AT SITE M1B</b> .....	558
<b>POST-MEDIEVAL BUILDINGS AND A COB WALL AT SITE M1C</b> .....	558
<b>BUILDING 1, 15TH-17TH CENTURIES</b> .....	558
<b>COB WALL, 15TH-19TH CENTURIES</b> .....	558
<b>BUILDING 2, 18TH-19TH CENTURIES</b> .....	559
<b>AGRICULTURAL EVIDENCE</b> .....	559
<b>SPECIALIST STUDIES</b> .....	560
<b>ROOF TILE</b> .....	560
BY PAT CHAPMAN	
<b>BRICK</b> .....	560
BY PAT CHAPMAN	
<b>FIRED CLAY</b> .....	560
BY PAT CHAPMAN	
<b>MEDIEVAL POTTERY</b> .....	560
BY PAUL BLINKHORN	
<b>NON-KILN MATERIAL</b> .....	560
<b>KILN WASTE</b> .....	560
<b>CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY</b> .....	561
<b>TYPOLGY</b> .....	562
<b>THE ASSEMBLAGE IN ITS REGIONAL CONTEXT</b> .....	568
<b>CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED HERTFORDSHIRE-TYPE GREYWARE FROM SITE M1C (FIGS 8.10, 8.14-8.16)</b> .....	569
<b>REGISTERED MEDIEVAL FINDS</b> .....	569
BY TORA HYLTON	
<b>CHARRED PLANT MACROFOSSILS AND OTHER REMAINS</b> .....	569
BY VAL FRYER	
<b>FAUNAL REMAINS</b> .....	570
BY LASZLO LICHTENSTEIN	
<b>REGIONAL LANDSCAPE CONTEXT AND DISCUSSION</b> .....	571
<b>PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS AND ASSOCIATED SITES</b> .....	571
<b>THE DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE</b> .....	572
<b>HISTORIC MAPS</b> .....	572
<b>AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS</b> .....	572
<b>DISCUSSION OF THE EXCAVATED REMAINS</b> .....	574
<b>THE MEDIEVAL POTTERS' WORKING AREA</b> .....	574
<b>POST-MEDIEVAL BUILDINGS</b> .....	574
<b>REVIEW OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES</b> .....	575

<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>576</b>
<b>MANUSCRIPT SOURCES AND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>594</b>
<i>BEDFORDSHIRE ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE .....</i>	<i>594</i>
<i>NATIONAL MONUMENT RECORD, SWINDON.....</i>	<i>594</i>
<i>ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS .....</i>	<i>594</i>
<b>DIGITAL DATA PACKAGE.....</b>	<b><a href="https://tinyurl.com/9781789692600-DigitalData">https://tinyurl.com/9781789692600-DigitalData</a></b>
<b>A5-M1 LINK ROAD</b>	
<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORTS</b>	
<b>DETAILED DESIGN</b>	
<i>SPECIFIC DETAILED DESIGNS</i>	
<b>METHODOLOGIES</b>	
<b>SPECIALIST ANALYSIS</b>	
ANIMAL BONE	
CBM, FIRED CLAY & DAUB	
CHARCOAL	
CONTEXT DATA	
FLINT	
FLOTS	
HUMAN REMAINS	
LIA & ROMAN POTTERY	
MEDIIEVAL POTTERY	
MISCELLANEOUS FINDS (SLAG, QUERNS ETC)	
OYSTER SHELL	
PREHISTORIC POTTERY	
RADIOCARBON DATING	
REGISTERED FINDS	
<b>M1 JUNCTION 12</b>	
<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORTS</b>	
<b>DETAILED DESIGN</b>	
<b>METHODOLOGIES</b>	
<b>SPECIALIST ANALYSIS</b>	
MITIGATION	
ANIMAL BONE	
CHARCOAL	
CHARRED PLANT MACROFOSSILS	
CREMATION GAZETTEER	
HUMAN REMAINS	
LIA & ROMAN POTTERY	
MEDIIEVAL POTTERY	
OTHER FINDS	
RADIOCARBON DATING	
REGISTERED FINDS	
TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION	
ANIMAL BONE	
CHARRED PLANT MACROFOSSILS	
COLUMN SAMPLES	
FIRED CLAY	
PREHISTORIC POTTERY	
ROMAN AND MEDIIEVAL POTTERY	
WORKED FLINT	

## LIST OF FIGURES

Fig 1.1: Location of the M1 Junction 12 improvements and the A5–M1 link road .....	1
Fig 1.2: Fieldwork locations, M1 Junction 12 .....	2
Fig 1.3: Fieldwork locations, M1 Junction 11a for the A5–M1 link road.....	4
Fig 1.4: Fieldwork locations along the western extent of the A5–M1 link road .....	5
Fig 1.5: Aerial view taken from above M1 Junction 11a, looking west along the road corridor .....	7
Fig 1.6: Aerial view taken from above A5 Watling Street, looking east along the road corridor.....	8
Fig 1.7: Topography of the landscape between Toddington and Houghton Regis.....	9
Fig 1.8: View looking north-west from Leighton Road, Toddington, towards Milton Bryan .....	9
Fig 1.9: View looking south-east from Chalgrave All Saints Church towards Chalton and Houghton Regis.....	10
Fig 1.10: View looking south from Lord’s Hill, Wingfield, towards Dunstable.....	10
Fig 1.11: View looking north-west from Harlington Road, Toddington, before development .....	11
Fig 1.12: View looking north-west from Harlington Road, Toddington, during excavation.....	11
Fig 1.13: View looking north-west from Harlington Road, Toddington, after completion .....	11
Fig 1.14: Aerial view taken from above Wingfield, looking east toward M1 Junction 11a.....	12
Fig 1.15: Cremation burials required detailed excavation, Site M1A.....	13
Fig 1.16: Hand-excavated trench providing a cross-section through Site E .....	13
Fig 1.17: The Chalton overbridge before demolition, Site R, looking south-east .....	13
Fig 1.18: Cremation urn being wrapped and lifted whole before transport to laboratory for excavation .....	15
Fig 1.19: Detailed archaeological excavation of the medieval settlement, Site F .....	16
Fig 1.20: Archaeologists excavating medieval pot bank deposits with the M1 behind, Site M1C.....	16
Fig 1.21: Graphical conventions used in this report.....	21
Fig 2.1: Locations of middle–late Bronze Age sites and undated pit alignments.....	22
Fig 2.2: Main distribution of middle–late Bronze Age pits and postholes, Site H.....	24
Fig 2.3: Postholes in four-post groups, HS1 and HS2.....	25
Fig 2.4: Six-post group, HS3, looking south-east.....	26
Fig 2.5: Postholes in six-post group, HS3.....	26
Fig 2.6: Smaller middle–late Bronze Age posthole groups, Site H.....	27
Fig 2.7: Postholes in four-post group, HS4 .....	27
Fig 2.8: Postholes in six-post group, HS5.....	27
Fig 2.9: Selected postholes rows, HF3 and HF5.....	28
Fig 2.10: Locations of dispersed middle–late Bronze Age pits, Site H.....	29
Fig 2.11: Pit alignment, Site M, looking north-west .....	30
Fig 2.12: Location of isolated middle–late Bronze Age pits, Sites D, G, M, Q .....	31
Fig 2.13: Isolated middle Bronze Age pit, Q[1114] .....	31
Fig 2.14: Isolated middle–late Bronze Age pit, M[44] .....	32
Fig 2.15: Isolated late Bronze Age pit, D[1028] .....	32
Fig 2.16: Isolated late Bronze Age pit, G[1298] .....	32
Fig 2.17: Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pit group, Site C .....	32
Fig 2.18: The Bronze Age pit alignment, south of Site M.....	34
Fig 2.19: Selected pits from pit lines MPL1–4 .....	36
Fig 2.20: The undated pit alignment, Site P .....	37
Fig 2.21: Pit alignment and other features, Site P, looking south .....	38
Fig 2.22: Pits in alignment PPL1 .....	39
Fig 2.23: Pits in alignment PPL2.....	40
Fig 2.24: Section profiles in pit group, PPG1 .....	40
Fig 2.25: Section profiles in pit group, PPG2.....	41
Fig 2.26: Middle–late Bronze Age pottery, Site H, 1–5 .....	43
Fig 2.27: Middle–late Bronze Age pottery, Sites C (6) and G (7).....	44
Fig 2.28: Charcoal composition from Bronze Age pits, 142 fragments.....	45
Fig 2.29: Radiocarbon determinations for the Bronze Age .....	49
Fig 2.30: HER data for Neolithic and Bronze Age sites .....	51
Fig 3.1: Location of Iron Age sites.....	59
Fig 3.2: Iron Age settlement, Site G, looking east.....	60
Fig 3.3: Extent of Iron Age settlement, Sites D, G and M.....	61
Fig 3.4: Geophysical survey results by magnetometer, Site G .....	62
Fig 3.5: Geophysical survey compared against excavated features, Site G.....	63
Fig 3.6: Distribution of Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age and earlier–middle Iron Age features, Sites D and G .....	64
Fig 3.7: Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age features, Site D.....	65
Fig 3.8: Pit cluster DPC1, Site D .....	66
Fig 3.9: Pit cluster DPC2, Site D .....	67
Fig 3.10: Pit cluster DPC3, Site D .....	68
Fig 3.11: Pit cluster DPC4, Site D .....	69
Fig 3.12: Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age features, Site G.....	70
Fig 3.13: Pit cluster GPC2, Site G .....	71
Fig 3.14: Early Iron Age pit G[1874], Site G.....	72

Fig 3.15: Plan of earlier-middle Iron Age features, Site G.....	73
Fig 3.16: Earlier-middle Iron Age feature profiles, Site G.....	74
Fig 3.17: Earlier-middle Iron Age enclosure ditch of DENC2, Site D.....	76
Fig 3.18: Layout of the later-middle Iron Age settlement, Site G.....	77
Fig 3.19: Boundary GBD1 and its recuts, looking north-east, Site G.....	78
Fig 3.20: Selected cross sections of Boundaries GBD1 and GBD2, Site G.....	79
Fig 3.21: Ring ditches GRD5-6, Site G.....	81
Fig 3.22: Ring ditch GRD6, looking south-west, Site G.....	82
Fig 3.23: Ring ditches GRD7 and GRD8, Site G.....	83
Fig 3.24: Enclosure ditch GENC2, Site G.....	84
Fig 3.25: The south-west side of enclosure GENC3, looking east, Site G.....	85
Fig 3.26: Selected ditch profiles, enclosures GENC2-4, Site G.....	85
Fig 3.27: Ditch GD4, Site G.....	86
Fig 3.28: Mixed and varied lower fills within pit G[1766].....	86
Fig 3.29: Later-middle Iron Age features, peripheral to settlement, Site D.....	87
Fig 3.30: Later-middle Iron Age ditches, Site D.....	88
Fig 3.31: Layout of Iron Age features, Sites K and N.....	89
Fig 3.32: Iron Age features to the north of the enclosure site, Site K.....	89
Fig 3.33: Earlier-middle Iron Age storage pits, Site K.....	90
Fig 3.34: Earlier-middle Iron Age pit cluster KPC.....	91
Fig 3.35: Iron Age features to the south of the enclosure site, Site K.....	92
Fig 3.36: Layout of late Iron Age settlement, 1st century BC, Site G.....	93
Fig 3.37: Selected profiles through late Iron Age boundary ditches, Site G.....	94
Fig 3.38: Ring ditch GRD10 under investigation, looking south, Site G.....	96
Fig 3.39: Ring ditch sections, GRD9-10, Site G.....	97
Fig 3.40: Ditch sections of enclosures GENC5-7 and GD10, Site G.....	98
Fig 3.41: An isolated roundhouse at Thorn overbridge, Site G.....	101
Fig 3.42: Late Iron Age boundaries, 1st century BC, Site D.....	102
Fig 3.43: Selected profiles through late Iron Age boundary ditches, Site D.....	102
Fig 3.44: Layout of Iron Age boundary ditches, Site M.....	103
Fig 3.45: Selected profiles of boundary ditches, Site M.....	104
Fig 3.46: Distinctive early Iron Age decorated vessels, Site D.....	107
Fig 3.47: Distinctive early Iron Age pottery, Site G.....	110
Fig 3.48: Earlier-middle Iron Age pottery, Site K.....	115
Fig 3.49: Late Iron Age pottery, Site G.....	116
Fig 3.50: Illustrated registered Iron Age finds.....	121
Fig 3.51: NISP and MNI % of the main domesticates for the earlier-middle Iron Age, Site G.....	131
Fig 3.52: Earlier-middle Iron Age; tooth wear data for sheep/goat mandibles and loose teeth, Site G (n=8).....	132
Fig 3.53: %NISP and MNI of the main domesticates for the later-middle Iron Age, Site G.....	132
Fig 3.54: Percentage body part representation for the later-middle Iron Age, Site G.....	133
Fig 3.55: Later-middle Iron Age; tooth wear data for cattle mandibles and loose teeth, Site G (n=13).....	133
Fig 3.56: Later-middle Iron Age; tooth wear data for sheep/goat mandibles and loose teeth, Site G (n=18).....	133
Fig 3.57: NISP and MNI % of the main domesticates for the late Iron Age, Site G.....	134
Fig 3.58: Percentage body part representation for the late Iron Age, Site G.....	134
Fig 3.59: Epiphyseal fusion data for cattle and sheep/goat from the late Iron Age, Site G.....	135
Fig 3.60: Late Iron Age; tooth wear data for cattle mandibles and loose teeth, Site G (n=18).....	135
Fig 3.61: Late Iron Age; tooth wear data for sheep/goat mandibles and loose teeth, Site G (n=18).....	135
Fig 3.62: Infectious arthritis on a cattle femur: caudal view (top), medial view (bottom).....	136
Fig 3.63: NISP and MNI % of the main domesticates, Site D.....	137
Fig 3.64: Radiocarbon determinations for the Iron Age.....	140
Fig 3.65: HER data for probable early and middle Iron Age sites.....	142
Fig 3.66: Comparison of pit clusters.....	144
Fig 3.67: Comparisons of contemporary sites.....	152
Fig 4.1: Location of late Iron Age/Roman sites near M1 Junction 12.....	159
Fig 4.2: Plan of the cremation cemetery, Site M1A.....	160
Fig 4.3: Plan of burials of the late Iron Age in cremation cemetery, Site M1A.....	162
Fig 4.4: Cremation burial M1A[4120].....	166
Fig 4.5: Cremation burial M1A[4140].....	167
Fig 4.6: Cremation burial M1A[4146].....	169
Fig 4.7: Cremation burial M1A[4151].....	170
Fig 4.8: Cremation burial M1A[4153].....	171
Fig 4.9: Cremation burial M1A[4155].....	173
Fig 4.10: Cremation burial M1A[4171].....	175
Fig 4.11: Cremation burial M1A[4178].....	177
Fig 4.12: Cremation burial M1A[4188].....	178
Fig 4.13: Cremation burial M1A[4208].....	179
Fig 4.14: Plan of burials in cremation cemetery, mid 1st century AD, Site M1A.....	181
Fig 4.15: Cremation burial M1A[4067].....	183
Fig 4.16: Cremation burial M1A[4069].....	185

Fig 4.17: Cremation burial M1A[4073].....	187
Fig 4.18: Cremation burial M1A[4090].....	188
Fig 4.19: Cremation burial M1A[4132].....	189
Fig 4.20: Cremation burial M1A[4136].....	191
Fig 4.21: Cremation burial M1A[4142].....	192
Fig 4.22: Cremation burial M1A[4158].....	193
Fig 4.23: Cremation burial M1A[4144].....	195
Fig 4.24: Cremation burial M1A[4160].....	196
Fig 4.25: Cremation burial M1A[4199].....	197
Fig 4.26: Cremation burial M1A[4174].....	199
Fig 4.27: Cremation burial M1A[4180].....	201
Fig 4.28: Cremation burial M1A[4190].....	203
Fig 4.29: Cremation burial M1A[4210].....	204
Fig 4.30: Cremation burial M1A[4214].....	205
Fig 4.31: Cremation burial M1A[4221].....	207
Fig 4.32: Cremation burial M1A[4224].....	208
Fig 4.33: Cremation burial M1A[4247].....	209
Fig 4.34: Cremation burial M1A[4234].....	211
Fig 4.35: Plan of burials in cremation cemetery, late 1st to early 2nd century AD, Site M1A .....	213
Fig 4.36: Cremation burial M1A[4088].....	215
Fig 4.37: Cremation burial M1A[4092].....	217
Fig 4.38: Cremation burial M1A[4099].....	218
Fig 4.39: Cremation burial M1A[4094].....	219
Fig 4.40: Cremation burial M1A[4106].....	221
Fig 4.41: Cremation burial M1A[4116].....	223
Fig 4.42: Cremation burial M1A[4122].....	224
Fig 4.43: Cremation burial M1A[4129].....	225
Fig 4.44: Cremation burial M1A[4134].....	226
Fig 4.45: Cremation burial M1A[4193].....	227
Fig 4.46: Cremation burial M1A[4195].....	228
Fig 4.47: Cremation burial M1A[4219].....	229
Fig 4.48: Plan of burials in cremation cemetery, early to mid 2nd-century AD, Site M1A.....	231
Fig 4.49: Cremation burial M1A[4104].....	233
Fig 4.50: Cremation burial M1A[4108].....	235
Fig 4.51: Cremation burial M1A[4125].....	237
Fig 4.52: Cremation burial M1A[4138].....	239
Fig 4.53: Cremation burial M1A[4165].....	240
Fig 4.54: Inhumation burial M1A[4250] .....	242
Fig 4.55: Plan of remains associated with a pyre site and possible cairn, Site M1B .....	243
Fig 4.56: Boundary ditches across the slope of the valley, TWB3, Sites M1C and M1B.....	245
Fig 4.57: Roman pottery from non-funerary contexts, M1 Junction 12 .....	253
Fig 4.58: Taxonomic composition of charcoal from cremation burials, 450 fragments .....	258
Fig 4.59: Taxonomic diversity of charcoal assemblages by feature type .....	258
Fig 4.60: Cropmarks on aerial photographs (OS/73060, April 1973, 363) .....	266
Fig 5.1: Location of sites where human remains were recovered .....	272
Fig 5.2: Inhumation burial Q[45] .....	275
Fig 5.3: The cremation burial cemetery distribution, Site F .....	276
Fig 5.4: Cremation burial F[221].....	277
Fig 5.5: Cremation burial F[225/229].....	279
Fig 5.6: Cremation burial F[233].....	281
Fig 5.7: Cremation burial F[237].....	283
Fig 5.8: Cremation burial F[245].....	284
Fig 5.9: Cremation burial F[249].....	285
Fig 5.10: Cremation burial F[253].....	286
Fig 5.11: Cremation burial F[271].....	287
Fig 5.12: Cremation burial F[320].....	289
Fig 5.13: Cremation burial F[348].....	291
Fig 5.14: Cremation burial F[348] Accessory and cremation vessels .....	292
Fig 5.15: Cremation burial F[348] Metal finds.....	293
Fig 5.16: Locations of funerary features at Site H .....	294
Fig 5.17: Cremation burial H[81].....	295
Fig 5.18: Cremation burial H[83].....	296
Fig 5.19: Cremation burial H[475].....	297
Fig 5.20: Cremation burial H[477].....	298
Fig 5.21: Cremation burial H[502].....	299
Fig 5.22: Cremation burial H[516].....	300
Fig 5.23: Cremation burial H[518].....	301
Fig 5.24: Cremation burial H[604].....	302
Fig 5.25: Cremation burial H[606].....	303

Fig 5.26: Cremation burial H[608].....	304
Fig 5.27: Cremation burial H[610].....	305
Fig 5.28: Cremation burial H[612].....	306
Fig 5.29: Cremation burial H[614].....	307
Fig 5.30: Cremation burial H[616].....	308
Fig 5.31: Cremation burial H[632].....	309
Fig 5.32: Cremation burial H[634].....	311
Fig 5.33: Cremation burial H[642].....	312
Fig 5.34: Cremation burial H[644].....	313
Fig 5.35: Cremation burial H[646].....	314
Fig 5.36: Cremation burial H[708].....	315
Fig 5.37: Cremation burial H[3015].....	317
Fig 5.38: Location of funerary features at Site Q.....	318
Fig 5.39: Cremation burial Q[11].....	319
Fig 5.40: Cremation burial Q[15].....	320
Fig 5.41: Cremation burial Q[60].....	321
Fig 5.42: Inhumation burial Q[1008].....	323
Fig 5.43: Charnel burial pit F[906].....	324
Fig 5.44: Recording human remains from charnel pit [F[906] before exhumation.....	325
Fig 5.45: Date distribution for vessels from the Site F cremation cemetery.....	327
Fig 5.46: Composition of charcoal from unurned burials, excluding <i>busta</i> , based upon fragment count (N=313), Site H.....	332
Fig 5.47: Comparison of charcoal from funerary contexts, based upon fragment count (N=572), Site H.....	332
Fig 5.48: Total weight (g) of cremated bone by context.....	336
Fig 5.49: Average estimated fragment size (mm).....	338
Fig 5.50: Distribution of identifiable fragments by context type.....	338
Fig 5.51: Radiocarbon determinations from contexts containing human bone.....	342
Fig 5.52: HER data for funerary monuments and burials.....	344
Fig 6.1: Location of late Iron Age/Roman sites.....	358
Fig 6.2: Geology of the funerary enclosure, Site H, looking south-east.....	360
Fig 6.3: Pre-Conquest late Iron Age trackways and enclosures, Site H.....	361
Fig 6.4: Sections of trackway and enclosures ditches to the east.....	362
Fig 6.5: Smaller enclosures at the northern edge of the plateau, Site H.....	363
Fig 6.6: Section through northern enclosure ditch H[152].....	363
Fig 6.7: Sections of features in the vicinity of the northern enclosures.....	364
Fig 6.8: A late Iron Age/early Roman horse burial.....	365
Fig 6.9: Post-Conquest settlement, trackway and enclosure, Site H.....	367
Fig 6.10: The main post-Conquest enclosure ditch.....	368
Fig 6.11: The Roman wells inside the main post-Conquest enclosure.....	369
Fig 6.12: Pit H[302] at the centre of the main post-Conquest enclosure.....	370
Fig 6.13: Sections of the contemporary post-Conquest enclosure ditches.....	370
Fig 6.14: Late Iron Age boundaries and enclosures, Site Q.....	371
Fig 6.15: Sections of the late Iron Age enclosure ditches and later stratigraphy.....	372
Fig 6.16: An isolated late Iron Age roundhouse, Site Q.....	375
Fig 6.17: A probable late Iron Age enclosure and linear boundary, Site Q.....	376
Fig 6.18: An enclosure entrance of the 1st century AD, Site Q.....	377
Fig 6.19: The enclosure ditches, 1st century AD.....	378
Fig 6.20: Four-post structures, Site F, undated, late Iron Age/Roman.....	380
Fig 6.21: Boundary ditches, Site P, undated, possibly late Iron Age/Roman.....	381
Fig 6.22: A long sinuous boundary of the late Iron Age, Site J, 1st century BC.....	383
Fig 6.23: Boundary ditches and pits, Site J.....	384
Fig 6.24: A late Iron Age boundary and pits, north of Ouzel Brook.....	385
Fig 6.25: Querns from late Iron Age/Roman sites.....	386
Fig 6.26: Late Iron Age pottery, Site Q.....	391
Fig 6.27: Overall date distribution for vessels with a restricted date range by RE, Site H. Rim equivalents expressed as percentage of complete rim circumference (i.e. 100 RE = 1 complete rim circumference).....	392
Fig 6.28: Date distribution for vessels from initial trackways and enclosures, Site H. Rim equivalents expressed as percentage of complete rim circumference (i.e. 100 RE = 1 complete rim circumference).....	392
Fig 6.29: Date distribution for vessels from the funerary period of activity, Site H. Rim equivalents expressed as percentage of complete rim circumference (i.e. 100 RE = 1 complete rim circumference).....	393
Fig 6.30: Date distribution for vessels from later trackways and enclosures, Site H. Rim equivalents expressed as percentage of complete rim circumference (i.e. 100 RE = 1 complete rim circumference).....	393
Fig 6.31: Date distribution for vessels comparing the north and south of Site H. Rim equivalents expressed as percentage of complete rim circumference (i.e. 100 RE = 1 complete rim circumference).....	394
Fig 6.32: Date distribution for vessels from wells, Site H. Rim equivalents expressed as percentage of complete rim circumference (i.e. 100 RE = 1 complete rim circumference).....	394
Fig 6.33: Overall date distribution for vessels with a restricted date range by RE, Site Q. Rim equivalents expressed as percentage of complete rim circumference (i.e. 100 RE = 1 complete rim circumference).....	399
Fig 6.34: Date distribution for vessels from ditches and pits pre-dating the enclosure, Site Q. Rim equivalents expressed as percentage of complete rim circumference (i.e. 100 RE = 1 complete rim circumference).....	399



Fig 6.35: Date distribution for vessels from the initial arrangement of the enclosure, Site Q. Rim equivalents expressed as percentage of complete rim circumference (i.e. 100 RE = 1 complete rim circumference).....	400
Fig 6.36: Date distribution for vessels from the final disuse of the enclosure, Site Q. Rim equivalents expressed as percentage of complete rim circumference (i.e. 100 RE = 1 complete rim circumference) .....	400
Fig 6.37: Transitional late Iron Age/Roman pottery, shell tempered wares .....	405
Fig 6.38: Transitional late Iron Age/Roman pottery, Aylesford–Swarling wares.....	410
Fig 6.39: Transitional late Iron Age/Roman pottery, further Aylesford–Swarling wares.....	411
Fig 6.40: Transitional late Iron Age/Roman pottery, oxidised and white slip wares.....	412
Fig 6.41: Transitional late Iron Age/Roman pottery, reduced wares .....	414
Fig 6.42: Transitional late Iron Age/Roman pottery, reduced wares and a whiteware flagon .....	415
Fig 6.43: Samian stamps and decorated samian pottery.....	417
Fig 6.44: NISP and MN1% of the main domesticates from post-Conquest deposits, Site H .....	430
Fig 6.45: NISP and MN1% of the main domesticates from 1st-century AD deposits, Site Q.....	431
Fig 6.46: HER data for the late Iron Age and Roman transitional period .....	434
Fig 7.1: Location of Saxon and medieval sites .....	443
Fig 7.2: The Saxon cemetery, Site H .....	444
Fig 7.3: Inhumation burial H[3002].....	445
Fig 7.4: Inhumation burial H[3005].....	447
Fig 7.5: Inhumation burial H[3010].....	449
Fig 7.6: Inhumation burial H[3017].....	451
Fig 7.7: Inhumation burial H[3020].....	453
Fig 7.8: Inhumation burial H[3026].....	455
Fig 7.9: Inhumation burial H[3031].....	457
Fig 7.10: Inhumation burial H[3034].....	459
Fig 7.11: Inhumation burial H[3035].....	461
Fig 7.12: Superior view of the skull, anterior is at the bottom, H[3017] .....	462
Fig 7.13: left: superior view of the left femoral head, right: superior margin of the left acetabulum, H[3031] .....	463
Fig 7.14: Copper-alloy workbox <Cu59> from burial H[3034].....	466
Fig 7.15: Plan of Saxo-Norman, medieval and post-medieval features, Site Q.....	473
Fig 7.16: Saxo-Norman boundary ditches, Site Q.....	474
Fig 7.17: Early/middle 12th-century settlement features, Site Q.....	475
Fig 7.18: Posthole arrangement for a 12th-century timber-framed building, Site Q.....	476
Fig 7.19: Timber-framed building, section profiles, Site Q.....	477
Fig 7.20: The timber-framed building, looking north, Site Q.....	478
Fig 7.21: Dog burial 391 and pit Q[389], looking north-east .....	479
Fig 7.22: Ditch profiles along the early 12th-century western boundary, Q[746] .....	480
Fig 7.23: Minor 12th-century boundary ditches and associated features, Site Q .....	481
Fig 7.24: The mid/late 12th-century western boundary, ditch Q[531].....	482
Fig 7.25: Ditch profiles along the mid/late 12th-century western boundary, Q[531].....	483
Fig 7.26: Ordnance Survey 6" map, Bedfordshire XXIX.SW, 1886 .....	484
Fig 7.27: Plan of medieval features found at Site G.....	485
Fig 7.28: Profiles of medieval features, Site G.....	486
Fig 7.29: Medieval curvilinear ditches, Site G.....	487
Fig 7.30: Plan of Saxon, Norman and medieval features, Site F .....	488
Fig 7.31: Activity of the 5th-10th centuries, Site F.....	489
Fig 7.32: Layout of the Saxo-Norman enclosure, Site F.....	491
Fig 7.33: Saxo-Norman boundary features, Site F.....	492
Fig 7.34: Features associated with possible Saxo-Norman Structure FS1.....	493
Fig 7.35: Features forming possible Saxo-Norman Structure, FS2 .....	493
Fig 7.36: Saxo-Norman pit F[1020], looking south .....	495
Fig 7.37: Layout of features from the early 12th century, Site F .....	496
Fig 7.38: Boundary features of the early 12th century, Site F.....	497
Fig 7.39: Layout of early 12th-century features within the central enclosure, Site F.....	500
Fig 7.40: Cobbled yard surface within the central enclosure, looking west, Site F .....	501
Fig 7.41: Features associated with building FS5, Site F .....	501
Fig 7.42: Distribution of medieval roof tile, Site F .....	502
Fig 7.43: Detailed plan of the medieval building FS6.....	503
Fig 7.44: Medieval building FS6, looking east, Site F .....	504
Fig 7.45: Entrance threshold, building FS6, looking south, Site F .....	504
Fig 7.46: Stone-lined pit, building FS6, looking south, Site F .....	504
Fig 7.47: Layout of features after the mid 12th century, Site F.....	507
Fig 7.48: Longitudinal transect across the pond, Site F .....	508
Fig 7.49: Ditches connected to the late 12th-century pond, Site F.....	508
Fig 7.50: Late medieval and post-medieval features, Site F .....	510
Fig 7.51: Post-medieval pit F[289].....	511
Fig 7.52: A natural sinkhole, Site F .....	511
Fig 7.53: Plain peg tile from layer F[312], scale 20mm .....	512
Fig 7.54: Wattle-impressed daub, posthole F[261], scale 20mm .....	514
Fig 7.55: Saxo-Norman pottery, Site Q.....	517

Fig 7.56: Early to mid 12th-century pottery from Site Q .....	518
Fig 7.57: Early/middle Saxon pottery, Site F .....	522
Fig 7.58: Early to mid 12th-century pottery, Site F.....	523
Fig 7.59: Jar rim diameters, fabrics of the early/mid 12th-century by EVE, Site F .....	523
Fig 7.60: Pottery of the mid 12th to mid 14th centuries, Site F .....	524
Fig 7.61: Jar rim diameters, fabrics of the mid 12th to mid 14th centuries by EVE, Site F .....	525
Fig 7.62: Strap handle with thumb impressions and stabbed decoration, Site F .....	526
Fig 7.63: Saxon double-sided bone handled comb, 9th century, display side .....	527
Fig 7.64: NISP and MNI % of hand-collected cattle, sheep/goats and pigs for the Saxo-Norman period, Site Q .....	539
Fig 7.65: NISP and MNI % of hand-collected cattle, sheep/goats and pigs for the early 12th century, Site Q.....	539
Fig 7.66: Radiocarbon determinations producing late Saxon and medieval dates.....	544
Fig 7.67: HER data for the Saxon and medieval periods.....	546
Fig 7.68: The pre-enclosure map of Toddington, dated 1797 (BRO MA1/1-2).....	549
Fig 7.69: The pre-enclosure map of Thorn, dated 1796 (BRO B553).....	549
Fig 8.1: Locations of medieval sites and HER records, M1 Junction 12.....	554
Fig 8.2: Plan of the medieval and post-medieval features, Site M1C .....	555
Fig 8.3: Excavation of the flattened midden deposits, Site M1C.....	556
Fig 8.4: Excavation of the cistern, pit M1C[7161].....	556
Fig 8.5: Extent and thickness of medieval pottery bank, Site M1C .....	557
Fig 8.6: Medieval feature layout to either side of the M1 motorway, Sites M1B-C .....	557
Fig 8.7: Sectional view of Building 1, at east edge of excavation, Site M1C .....	558
Fig 8.8: Cob wall foundation cutting across the flattened midden, Site M1C .....	559
Fig 8.9: The foundation of an back-to-back fireplace, Building 2, Site M1C .....	559
Fig 8.10: Key medieval sherds from the pot bank, Site M1C .....	562
Fig 8.11: Jar rim diameter occurrence, in 20mm diameter groups, by EVE.....	563
Fig 8.12: Bowl diameter occurrence, in 20mm diameter groups, by EVE .....	564
Fig 8.13: Jug diameter occurrence, jug rims, in 20mm diameter groups, by EVE.....	564
Fig 8.14a: The range of medieval jug handles from the pot bank, Site M1C.....	565
Fig 8.14b: The range of medieval jug handles from the pot bank, Site M1C .....	566
Fig 8.15: The medieval pottery from possible bunghole cisterns, Site M1C .....	567
Fig 8.16: Large, near complete jar, M1C[7160].....	568
Fig 8.17: Historic map evidence for Nuppings Green .....	573



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Site codes and common names used for post-excavation, reporting, publication and accession of the archive.....	6
Table 1.2: Summary of archaeological discoveries in chronological order.....	19
Table 2.1: Quantification of middle/late Bronze Age pottery, all sites .....	41
Table 2.2: Quantification of middle/late Bronze Age pottery, Site H.....	42
Table 2.4: Quantification of the environmental flots, pit Q[1114] .....	46
Table 2.5: Bronze Age radiocarbon determinations .....	48
Table 2.6: HER data for the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods.....	50
Table 3.1: Chronology of settlement, Sites D, G and M .....	60
Table 3.2: Quantification of early Iron Age pottery, Site D .....	106
Table 3.3: Quantification of in-situ early Iron Age pottery, Site G.....	109
Table 3.4: Quantification of early-middle Iron Age pottery, Site K.....	114
Table 3.5: Quantification of later-middle to late Iron Age pottery, Site G.....	116
Table 3.6: Quantification of the later-middle to late Iron Age pottery, Site D.....	119
Table 3.7: Quantification of registered Iron Age finds by functional category, Sites D, G and K.....	120
Table 3.8: Quantification of early-middle Iron Age wood charcoal, Site K.....	125
Table 3.9: Comparison of the anatomical characters similar to <i>Buxus</i> .....	126
Table 3.10: Quantification of significant Iron Age flots, Sites G and K .....	127
Table 3.11: Hand collected identifiable late Bronze/early Iron Age specimens, Site G.....	131
Table 3.12: Hand collected and sieved early-middle Iron Age specimens, Site G .....	131
Table 3.13: Hand collected and sieved later-middle Iron Age specimens, Site G .....	132
Table 3.14: Hand collected and sieved late Iron Age specimens, Site G .....	134
Table 3.15: Hand collected and sieved Iron Age specimens, Site D.....	137
Table 3.16: Radiocarbon determinations from Iron Age contexts .....	139
Table 3.17: HER data for probable early and middle Iron Age sites.....	142
Table 3.18: Comparison of pit clusters, Sites D, G and K, with Chatteris and Newport .....	145
Table 3.19: Artefacts indicating craft activities, Sites D, G and K.....	156
Table 4.1: Late Iron Age/Roman chronology, M1 Junction 12.....	158
Table 4.2: Cremation burials by type, including sites from both schemes and comparison sites .....	161
Table 4.3: Inventory of late Iron Age/Roman cremation burials, M1 Junction 12 .....	163
Table 4.4: Cremation burials of the mid-1st century AD divided by pottery fabric.....	182
Table 4.5: Quantification of later Iron Age to early Roman pottery fabrics .....	248
Table 4.6: Quantification of vessels present from each burial.....	249
Table 4.7: Summary of vessel forms from each burial by type and date .....	250
Table 4.8: Finds associated with cremation burials by period.....	254
Table 4.9: Charcoal taxa identified from the cremation cemetery, Site M1A .....	256
Table 4.10: Charcoal analysis for cremation-related features .....	257
Table 4.11: Taxonomic dominance in charcoal assemblages from cremation burials with pyre debris .....	258
Table 4.12: Charcoal analysis for non-funerary features close to the cemetery .....	259
Table 4.13: Summary count of Roman features containing plant macrofossil remains.....	260
Table 4.14: Species identified from animal bone, by fragment count, Site M1A .....	261
Table 4.15: Species identified from animal bone, by fragment count, TWB3.....	262
Table 4.16: Ageing data for cattle teeth, TWB3 .....	262
Table 4.17: Radiocarbon determinations from funerary remains, M1 Junction 12.....	265
Table 5.1: Inventory of late Iron Age/early Roman cremation burials.....	273
Table 5.2: Inventory of vessels by form and date. All figures as Minimum Numbers of Vessels (MNV) .....	326
Table 5.3: Pottery occurrence by context type, Site F .....	327
Table 5.4: Pottery supply by fabric, Site F.....	328
Table 5.5: Functional analysis for A5-M1 cemetery sites and nearby comparison sites .....	328
Table 5.6: Charcoal from urned cremation burials, Site F.....	330
Table 5.7: Charcoal from unurned cremation burials and <i>busta</i> , Site H.....	331
Table 5.8: Taxa and elements associated with the Roman cremation burials, Site F.....	334
Table 5.9: Weights (g) of cremation deposits by site.....	336
Table 5.10: Pits containing multiple deposits of cremated human bone.....	336
Table 5.11: Colour of the burnt bone .....	337
Table 5.12: Radiocarbon determinations from contexts containing human bone.....	341
Table 5.13: HER data for funerary monuments and burials.....	344
Table 5.14: Comparable late Iron Age/early Roman cremation sites in Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes (after Atkins <i>et al</i> 2014, table 4.25) .....	347
Table 6.1: Quantification of floor tile/brick, Site H .....	387
Table 6.2: Quantification of fired clay, Site H.....	389
Table 6.3: Quantification of fired clay, Site Q .....	389
Table 6.4: Quantification of late Iron Age pottery, Site Q.....	390
Table 6.5: Pottery by period, Site H.....	391
Table 6.6: Pottery occurrence by context type, Site H.....	395

Table 6.7: Pottery occurrence by context type and area, Site H .....	395
Table 6.8: Pottery occurrence by context type for initial trackways and enclosures, Site H .....	396
Table 6.9: Pottery occurrence by context type for the funerary enclosure and associated features, Site H .....	396
Table 6.10: Pottery occurrence by context type for later reorganisation of the trackways and enclosures, Site H .....	396
Table 6.11: Pottery recovered from wells, Site H .....	397
Table 6.12: Pottery by period, Site Q .....	398
Table 6.13: Pottery occurrence by context type, Site Q .....	401
Table 6.14: Pottery occurrence by context type from pre-enclosure features, Site Q .....	401
Table 6.15: Pottery occurrence by context type from the initial arrangement of the enclosure, Site Q .....	401
Table 6.16: Pottery occurrence by context type from the final disuse of the enclosure, Site Q .....	402
Table 6.17: Roman pottery classifications .....	402
Table 6.18: Pottery supply by fabric, Site H .....	402
Table 6.19: Pottery supply by fabric, Site H, comparison of the north and south areas .....	403
Table 6.20: Pottery supply by fabric, Site H, by period .....	403
Table 6.21: Pottery supply by fabric, Site Q .....	403
Table 6.22: Pottery supply by fabric, Site Q, by period .....	403
Table 6.23: Aylesford-Swarling fabrics by principle inclusions and production method .....	406
Table 6.24: Vessel forms for grog tempered handmade fabric E211 .....	407
Table 6.25: Vessel forms for sand and grog tempered handmade fabric E141 .....	408
Table 6.26: Vessel forms for sand tempered wheelmade fabric E13 .....	408
Table 6.27: Vessel forms for sand tempered wheelmade fabric E14 .....	409
Table 6.28: Vessel forms for reduced ware fabric R01 .....	413
Table 6.29: Samian vessels, Site H, post-reorganisation .....	416
Table 6.30: Functional breakdown of vessel forms overall by site .....	418
Table 6.31: Comparison of vessel forms, Site H .....	419
Table 6.32: Comparison of vessel forms, Site Q .....	420
Table 6.33: Proportions of pottery showing evidence of soot and burning .....	420
Table 6.34: Cross-joining sherds, Site H .....	421
Table 6.35: Quantification of registered finds by functional category .....	425
Table 6.36: Quantification of significant flots, Site H .....	427
Table 6.37: Hand collected identifiable specimens from pre-Conquest deposits, Site H .....	429
Table 6.38: Hand collected identifiable specimens from post-Conquest deposits, Site H .....	429
Table 6.39: Hand collected identifiable specimens from 1st-century AD deposits, Site Q .....	430
Table 6.40: Summary of oyster shells, Site H .....	431
Table 6.41: Radiocarbon determinations for a horse burial, Site H .....	432
Table 6.42: HER data for the late Iron Age and Roman transitional period .....	433
Table 7.1: Demographic profile of Saxon inhumations by sex and age .....	462
Table 7.2: Inventory of Saxon grave goods, Site H .....	465
Table 7.3: Quantification of medieval ceramic roof tile, Site F .....	513
Table 7.4: Quantification of medieval floor tile, Site F .....	514
Table 7.5: Ceramic chronology, occurrence and defining wares, Site Q .....	516
Table 7.6: Pottery occurrence by fabric type as a percentage of weight by period, Site Q .....	516
Table 7.7: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type, Site G .....	519
Table 7.8: Ceramic chronology, occurrence and defining wares, Site F .....	521
Table 7.9: Pottery occurrence by fabric type as a percentage of weight by period, Site F .....	521
Table 7.10: Percentage vessel consumption in EVE by period, Site F .....	522
Table 7.11: Quantification of early medieval finds by functional category, Site Q .....	529
Table 7.12: Quantification of early medieval finds by functional category, Site F .....	531
Table 7.13: Quantification of significant medieval flots from the western boundary, Site Q .....	534
Table 7.14: Quantification of significant 12th-century flots, Site F .....	536
Table 7.15: Number of hand-collected identifiable specimens present (NISP) for the Saxo-Norman period, Site Q .....	539
Table 7.16: Hand-collected species by feature type for the early 12th century, Site Q .....	540
Table 7.17: Hand-collected and sieved specimens from the early/middle Saxon pits, Site F .....	541
Table 7.18: Hand-collected and sieved specimens from late Saxon cultivation soils, Site F .....	541
Table 7.19: Hand-collected and sieved specimens from Saxo-Norman contexts, Site F .....	541
Table 7.20: Hand-collected and sieved specimens from the early/mid 12th century, Site F .....	542
Table 7.21: Hand-collected and sieved specimens from the mid/late 12th century, Site F .....	542
Table 7.22: Animal bone from late medieval clearance and levelling, Site F .....	542
Table 7.23: Radiocarbon determinations producing late Saxon and medieval dates .....	544
Table 7.24: HER data for the Saxon and medieval periods .....	545
Table 8.1: Pottery fabrics present in the non-kiln assemblage, Site M1C .....	561
Table 8.2: Charred plant remains from medieval deposits, Site M1C .....	570
Table 8.3: HER data for the medieval and post-medieval periods, M1 Junction 12 .....	571

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Project files and data sets that may be of interest to researchers are contained upon the accompanying digital data package, accessible by QR matrix barcode. Grey literature reports are available through the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) website. A paper copy

of all the research notes and data sets are contained within the archive held by Luton Culture.

This publication is dedicated to Anne Foard, who passed away in November 2017 after many years with Northamptonshire Archaeology, and later MOLA Northampton. Her hard-work and dedication during several stages of this project helped this publication come to completion.

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

This publication presents the results of archaeological fieldwork conducted on two separate highway schemes in close geographical proximity and with strong archaeological relevance to each other. Both projects were conducted in advance of construction, commissioned by Costain–Carillion Joint Venture (CCJV) for Highways England, monitored and managed by the designer’s archaeologists, AECOM (formerly URS, formerly Scott Wilson), in consultation with Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC).

### LOCATION AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE FIELDWORK

The M1 Junction 12 improvements and the A5–M1 link road both lie in south Central Bedfordshire, immediately to the north of Luton and Dunstable (Fig 1.1). The two schemes are 4.5km apart. The M1 Junction 12 lies on a spur along the north side of the Flit Valley near Toddington and was improved in 2011. The next valley to the south of this belongs to the Ouzel Brook, a tributary of the River Ouzel. The A5–M1 link road,

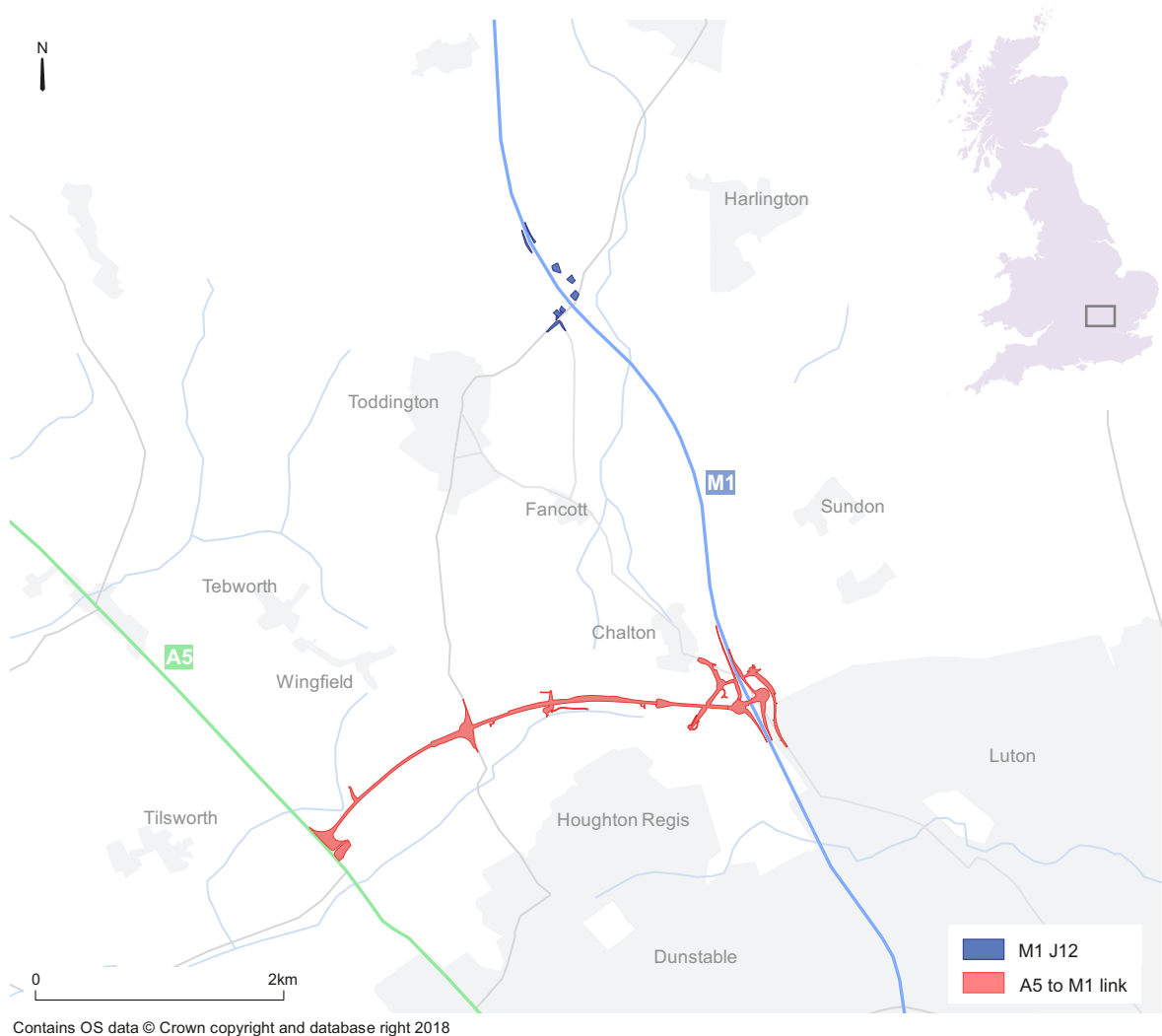


Fig 1.1 Location of the M1 Junction 12 improvements and the A5–M1 link road

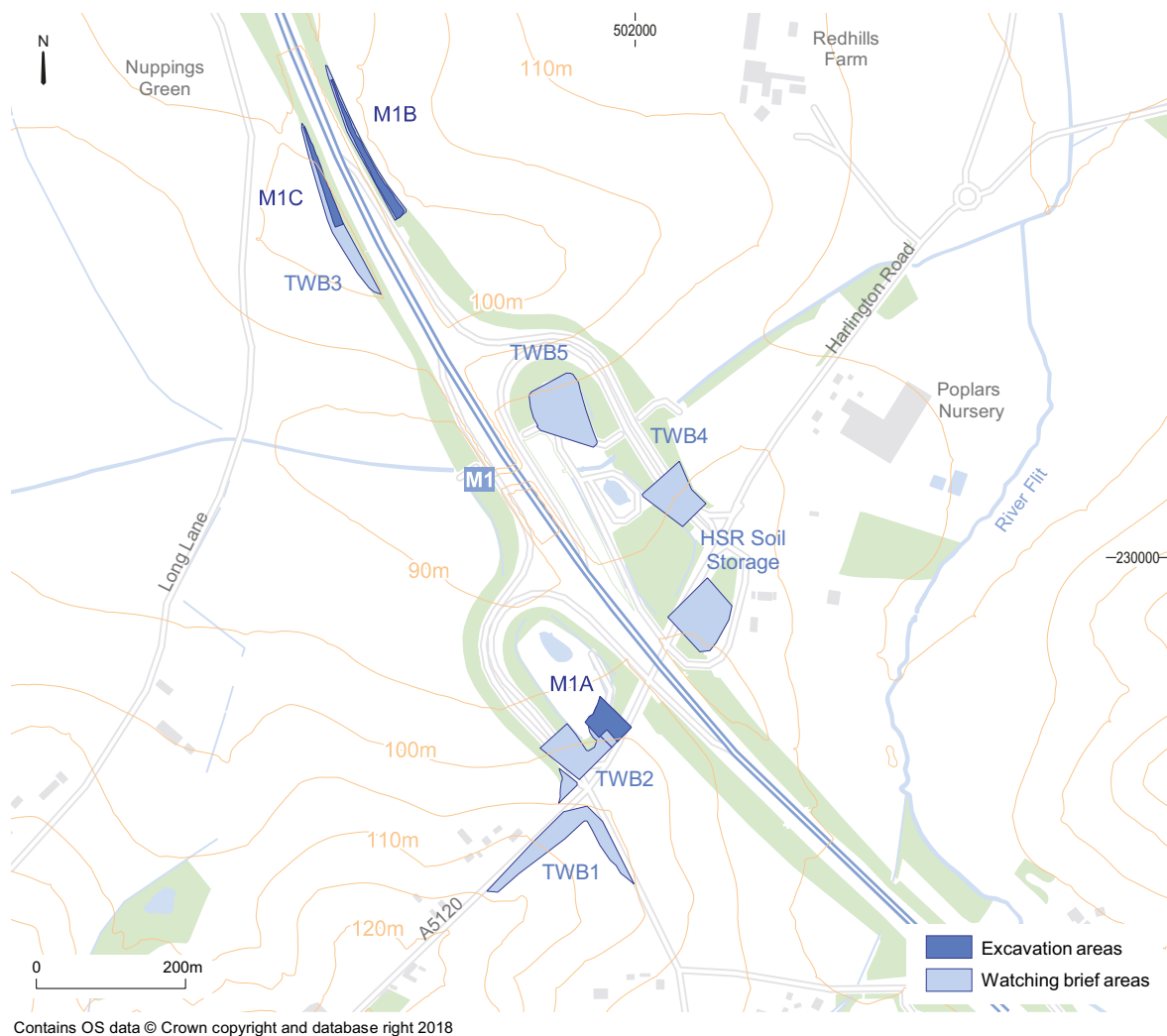


Fig 1.2 Fieldwork locations, M1 Junction 12

which was built in 2015–16, follows a route along this tributary valley and its junction with the M1 (Junction 11a) lies at the crest of the watershed with the Flit Valley at its east end. Both schemes are geographically interrelated and produced evidence that comes from parts of the same archaeological landscape.

**M1 JUNCTION 12 IMPROVEMENTS**

Between February and April 2011, Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA), now Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA), carried out a series of archaeological excavations in the vicinity of M1 Junction 12, near Toddington, Central Bedfordshire (Fig 1.2; NGR TL 01947 29821 and TL 01699 30297).

A series of works, including an Environmental Impact Assessment, has been undertaken since 1992. Initially, fieldwalking was undertaken in advance of the Environmental Statement for the preferred route of the M1 widening, Junctions 10–15 (Acer 1994; BCAS 1992; 1993; 1995). This was followed by a desk-based study and detailed walkover in support of Stage 2 Assessment for

a modified preferred route. NA conducted fieldwalking and geophysical surveys in 2006 for the Stage 3 Detailed Assessment (Mudd 2006a-b; HA 2007b). Stage 3 reviewed all documentary and desk-based study evidence and the archaeological analysis of LiDAR data (HA 2007d). The work was subsequently updated with the results of additional fieldwalking and geophysical surveys by NA (Burrow 2008a; Butler 2008).

Following these preliminary investigations URS determined that a further programme of archaeological evaluation would be undertaken prior to development to comply with the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (HA 2001). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) outlined the requirements of the programme (HA 2010), and trial trench evaluation was then undertaken by NA (Walker 2010), according to industry guidance and standards and the Northampton Archaeology fieldwork manual (NA 2006).

The evaluation confirmed the presence of important archaeological remains and it became apparent that further investigations would be required. An updated



WSI outlined an archaeological mitigation design (HA 2011), with specific provision for detailed archaeological excavation of significant archaeological sites, targeted watching briefs (TWB), historic hedgerow recording and building recording of the 1960s motorway overbridge. Method statements were prepared by NA in advance of the fieldwork (Brown 2011; Walsh 2011). The Accession code, LUTNM:2010.67, was assigned by Luton Culture in agreement for the receipt of the archive in accordance with their deposition requirements (BM 2010).

Detailed archaeological excavation was required for a late Iron Age/Roman cremation cemetery and adjacent ditches at Site M1A, a pyre site and nearby ditches at Site M1B, and medieval to post-medieval occupation at Site M1C, the latter including a pot bank of pottery wasters (Fig 1.2, 1.20). Five targeted controlled archaeological watching brief areas (TWBs) were defined and monitored for indications of further significant archaeology where sparse or dispersed archaeological remains had been identified (Fig 1.2). Following the discovery of the medieval potters' waste and associated post-medieval building deposits at Site M1C, an updated site-specific excavation strategy was implemented (URS 2011; Figs 1.19 and 1.20).

In addition, a section of historic hedgerow, identified in the Cultural Heritage chapter of the Environmental Statement, was recorded before its removal (HA 2009a), and building recording was conducted to English Heritage Level 2 standard on the M1 motorway overbridge prior to dismantling (EH 2006b; Upson-Smith 2012). A small-scale general watching brief with negative results was conducted at TL 05196 23488, near Leagrave, Luton (Brown 2012a).

After completion of the fieldwork, a Stage 1 assessment report and updated project design was compiled to address key themes for local and regional research and to outline further work (Clarke 2012). This work led on to a Stage 2 analysis report that formed a synthesis of the further work (Brown 2015c), and is the basis for Chapters 4 and 8 within this volume.

#### **A5-M1 LINK ROAD**

This scheme comprised a 4.5km long dual carriageway link from the A5, on the north side of Dunstable, to the M1 motorway on the south-west side of Chalton where Junction 11a was built (Fig 1.1; between NGR SP 99602 24460 and TL 0383 2587; Figs 1.5 and 1.6).

Initial archaeological surveys were undertaken in 2006–7 to assess the cultural heritage impact of the scheme and to inform an Environmental Statement (HA 2009b). Desk-based assessment of a Baptist burial ground at Thorn was undertaken by Scott Wilson (HA 2006c). The

report concluded that the extent of the burial ground would not be affected by a proposed overbridge that would be constructed nearby.

Selected geotechnical trial pits were monitored during excavation (HA 2007c) and geophysical survey was conducted along available sections of the route (Burrow 2008a). An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken to assess the results of the geophysical survey, where accessible, and to investigate the archaeological potential near Thorn Farm (Simmonds and Fisher 2008, NA 2006). A total of 29 trenches of various sizes were excavated, which produced evidence of archaeological activity dating from the Bronze Age to the post-medieval period, complementing the geophysical surveys.

Further work commenced in May 2014 to expand the evaluation into areas that were previously inaccessible; the scheme of work was outlined in a WSI prepared by AECOM (HA 2014a-b). A further 43 trial trenches and 27 hand excavated test pits were investigated as part of this phase (Brown 2014a; 2015a-b). These later stages of work were undertaken according to the MOLA fieldwork manual (MOLA 2014b). The product of these evaluations, both in 2007–8 and 2014–15, was a broader overall understanding of the distribution, date and extent of archaeology across the whole scheme, allowing a mitigation strategy to be formulated.

The requirements of the mitigation strategy are described in the *Archaeological Strategy Report* (HA 2014a). A WSI was prepared by AECOM that established a detailed design for the archaeological mitigation (HA 2015a). *Further Archaeological Design Documents* (FADDs) were issued to provide greater technical clarification on the scope and extent of mitigation for specific areas, using the initial WSI as the baseline for the project aims, objectives and methodology (Table 1.1; HA 2015b-h). Areas of archaeological mitigation were spread throughout the catchment of the scheme (Figs 1.3–1.4). These works commenced in February 2015 and the majority of fieldwork was completed by the end of June, with final monitoring of general watching briefs in minor areas extending until July 2016.

A single combined archive of records and artefacts was compiled for the evaluation and mitigation work as a whole. The paper archive comprises the initial *Strategy Report* (HA 2014a), *Detailed Design* (HA 2015a), each subsequent FADD (Table 1.1), all pertinent background information, method statements (MOLA 2014a; 2015), permatrace site plans, section drawings, field record sheets, registers, photographs (both digital images and 35mm monochrome contact prints), previous archaeological reports (Simmonds and Fisher 2008; Burrow 2008b; Brown 2014a-b; 2015a-b, d), the *Stage 1 Assessment and Updated Project Design* (Brown 2016), a

FARMSTEADS AND FUNERARY SITES

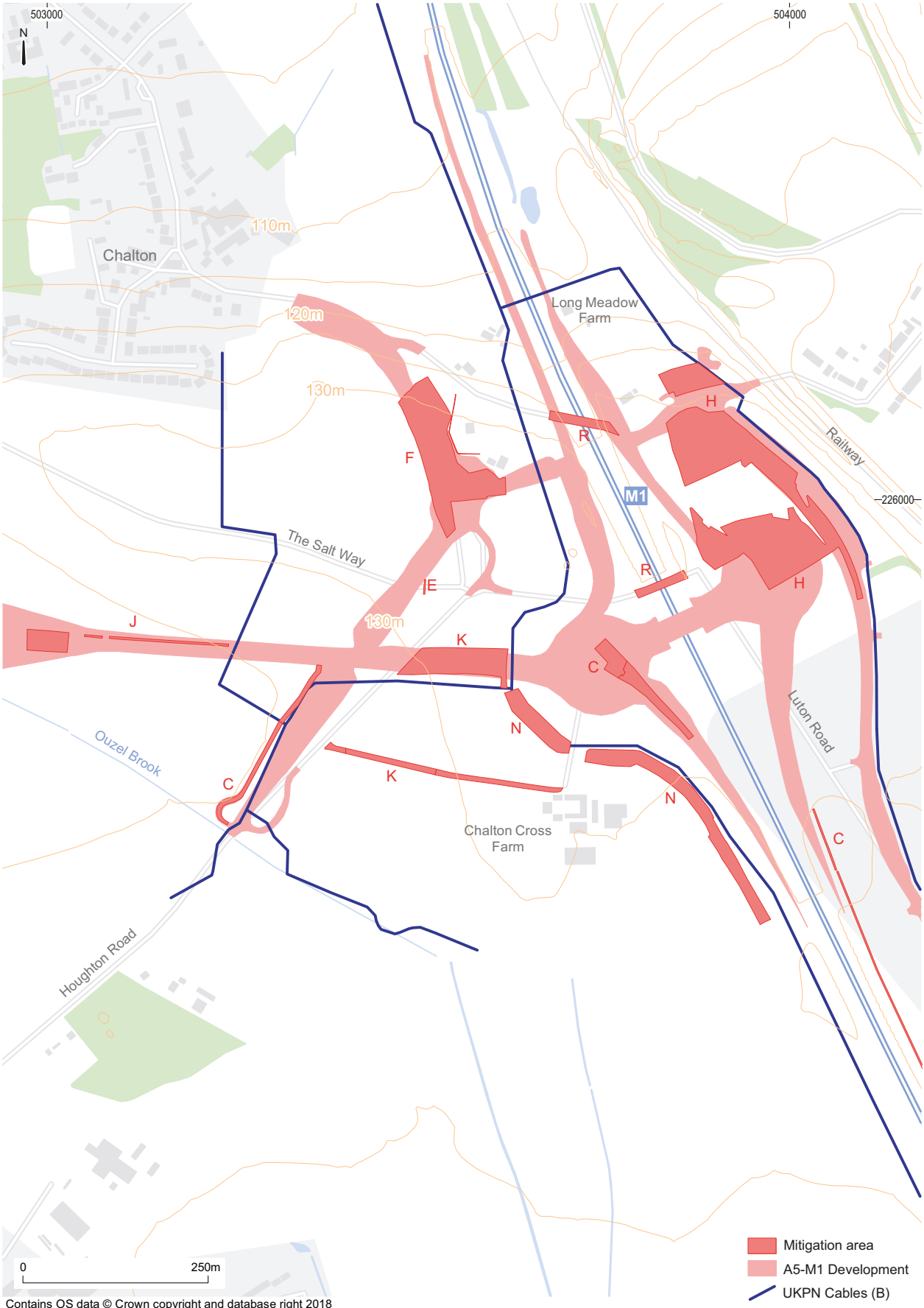


Fig 1.3 Fieldwork locations, M1 Junction 11a for the A5-M1 link road

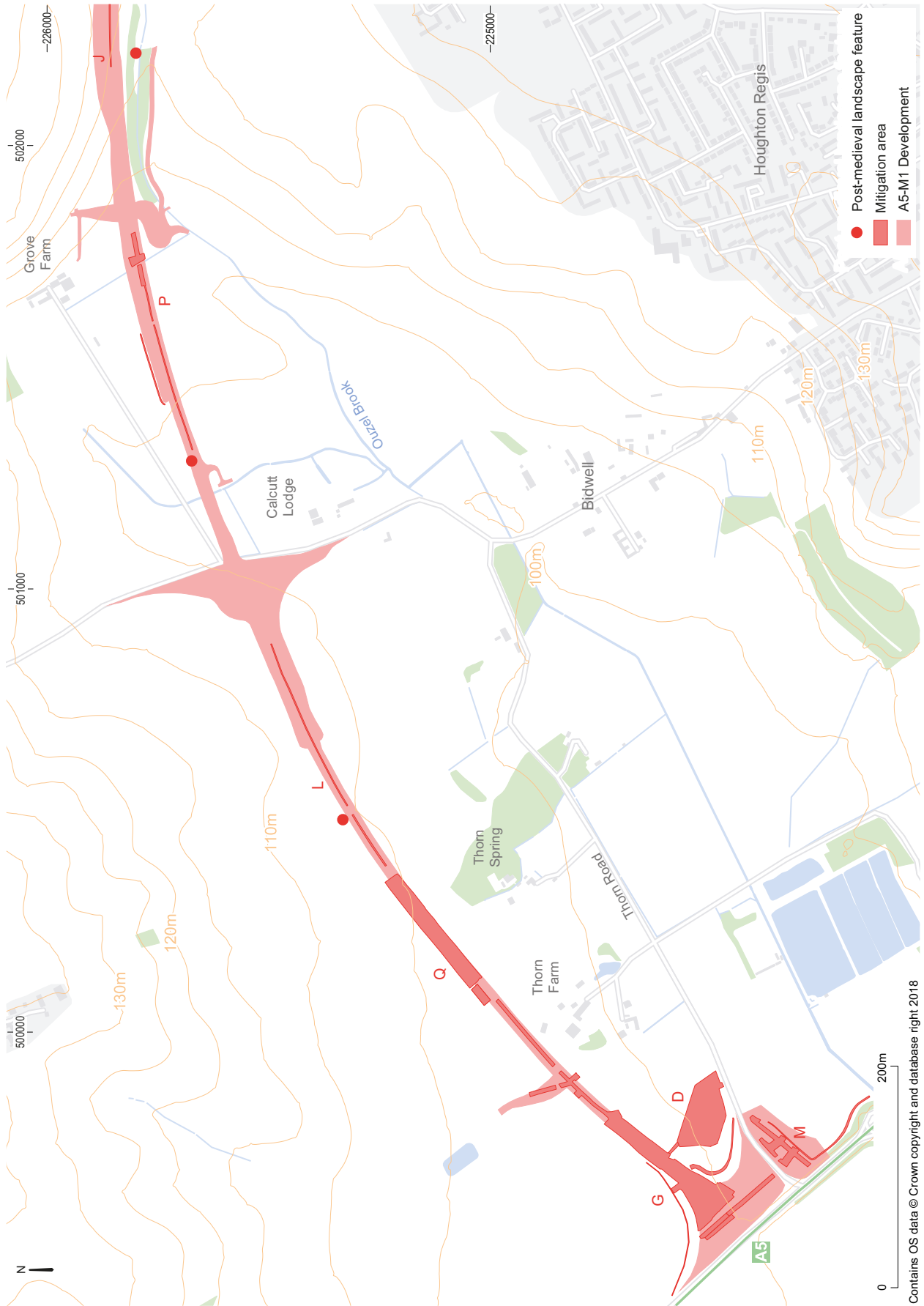


Fig 1.4 Fieldwork locations along the western extent of the A5-M1 link road

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FARMSTEADS AND FUNERARY SITES

Table 1.1: Site codes and common names used for post-excavation, reporting, publication and accession of the archive

Archive code	Environmental Statement	Specification for work carried out	Location	Description of archaeology found
A	Sites 5-9	Archaeological trial trench and hand-dug test pit excavations (HA 2014b), following on from earlier evaluation surveys (Simmonds and Fisher 2008; Burrow 2008b)	Scheme-wide	various suspected features confirmed and an absence of features demonstrated in other locations
B	Sites 8-9	General watching brief for UKPN on cable trenches (HA 2014c)	Long Meadow Farm NGR TL 04077 25957	undated, probably prehistoric, pit
C	Site 8	General watching brief for CCJV at M1 Junction 11a (HA 2015d)	Chalton Cross Farm NGR TL 03786 25714	late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pits undated, probably middle Iron Age boundaries
D	Site 1	Detailed archaeological excavations of the Thorn Road site compound (HA 2015b)	Thorn Road NGR SP 99743 24516	early Iron Age pit clusters and middle Iron Age field systems
E	Sites 10	Topographic survey and hand excavated mitigation trenches (HA 2014d)	Salt Way ( <i>Thiodweg</i> ) NGR TL 03482 25886	no evidence of ancient trackway undated spread overlain by post-medieval bank
F	not identified	Detailed archaeological excavations and targeted watching brief at Luton Road, Chalton (HA 2015c)	Luton Road NGR TL 03553 26042	late Iron Age/Roman cremation cemetery and charnel pit early/middle Saxon pottery and loomweights medieval settlement; buildings, enclosures and pits
G	Site 1, Area 2	Detailed archaeological excavations and targeted watching brief between Thorn Farm and A5 Watling Street (HA 2015d-e)	Thorn Road NGR SP 99590 24540	early-middle to late Iron Age settlement widely distributed field boundaries isolated roundhouse, north-east of main settlement
H	Site 9	Detailed archaeological excavations and targeted watching brief at Long Meadow Farm, east of the M1 Junction 11a (HA 2015f)	Long Meadow Farm NGR TL 03904 26071	late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pits late Iron Age/Roman trackways and enclosures late Iron Age/Roman pyres and cremation cemetery late-middle Saxon inhumation burials
I	archive code not used		-	-
J	Site 7	General and targeted watching brief for Ch3100-4150 (HA 2015d)	Land north of the Ouzel Brook NGR TL 02999 25815	late Iron Age ditches and pits late Iron Age marsh
K	east of Site 8	Detailed archaeological excavations and targeted watching brief at Chalton Cross Farm (HA 2015g)	Chalton Cross Farm NGR TL 03566 25767	undated, probably middle Iron Age, boundary ditches early-middle Iron Age storage pits and pit cluster
L	Site 11	Topographic survey and hand excavated mitigation trenches (HA 2014d)	Historic hedgerow NGR TL 00500 25320	no evidence of historic boundary modern drainage ditch
L	not identified	General watching brief for Ch1180-1750 (HA 2015d)	Fields west of the A5120 NGR TL 00558 25329	undated palaeochannel Iron Age colluvial/alluvial layers
M	Site 1, Area 1	Detailed archaeological excavation of the Thorn Road balancing pond and general watching brief on the nearby drainage ditch (HA 2015e)	Thorn Road balancing pond NGR SP 99732 24320	largely undated pit alignment, possibly Bronze Age later undated boundary ditches, probably Iron Age
N	east of Site 8	General watching brief for the National Grid gas pipeline (HA 2015d)	Chalton Cross Farm NGR TL 03790 25651	undated, probably middle Iron Age, boundary ditches
O	archive code not used		-	-
P	Site 12	Topographic survey and hand excavated mitigation trenches (HA 2014d)	Historic hedgerow NGR TL 01300 25660	undated, probably post-medieval, bank and ditch
P	Site 6	General and targeted watching brief at Grove Farm (HA 2015d)	Grove Farm NGR TL 01724 25815	undated, probably Iron Age, pit alignments undated, probably Iron Age, boundary ditches



Archive code	Environmental Statement	Specification for work carried out	Location	Description of archaeology found
Q	Site 3	Detailed archaeological excavations at Thorn Farm, north of Thorn Spring (HA 2015h)	Thorn Farm NGR TL 00241 25125	middle Bronze Age enclosure late Iron Age boundary ditches and enclosures late Iron Age/Roman enclosure ditches late Iron Age/Roman burials medieval timber building and boundary ditches post-medieval boundary ditches
R	2017 & 2018	Houghton Regis Overbridge, 2017, and Chalton Overbridge, 2018, Bridge recording at M1 Junction 11a (HA 2014e)	M1 motorway NGR TL 03721 26108 NGR TL 03822 25892	1958-9 motorway overbridges
S	not identified	Archaeological topographic recording and trench mitigation at Ouzel Brook (HE 2015)	Ouzel Brook crossing NGR TL 02212 25788	post-medieval embankment for stream crossing
T	not identified	General watching brief at M1 motorway, Pond 6 (HA 2015d)	M1 balancing pond 6 NGR TL 04420 24530	undated gullies

copy of this Stage 2 analysis report, and supplementary material used during the post-excavation process. The paper archive is accompanied by the material archive, prepared for Luton Culture under LTNMG:1093 (BM 2010).

For the purpose of keeping an orderly archive, a letter was appended to the entry code as a suffix (Table 1.1). These site codes were used to identify archaeological

sites and to separate archival stages of work; they do not relate to area codes in the *Detailed Design* (HA 2015a), many of which became redundant following the evaluation surveys.

The Stage 1 Assessment and UPD, produced after the fieldwork (Brown 2016), laid out the research principles for post-excavation analysis and informed this Stage 2 analysis report.



Fig 1.5 Aerial view taken from above M1 Junction 11a, looking west along the road corridor





Fig 1.6 Aerial view taken from above A5 Watling Street, looking east along the road corridor

**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY**

The two schemes lay in close proximity in an area of landscape that changes subtly in character between Toddington and Houghton Regis (Fig 1.7). The *Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment* (CBC 2016) describes the relationship between these areas, both of which have been severely impacted by the intensification of transport and communication routes since the 19th century, further compounded by urban growth. Generally, the landscape changes from clay hills to rolling chalk farmland (*ibid*, types 8 and 10).

Toddington is situated within undulating clay hills that fall away from the Greensand Ridge to the north. Nearby settlements tend to lie upon elevated ground with views across the adjacent vales, similar to the known distribution of Iron Age and later settlements. There is little modern woodland and the countryside is characterised by a patchwork of fields bordered by hedgerows (Fig 1.8). Farmsteads, similarly, are scattered across the clay hills, acting as landmarks. Distant views occur from most major hilltops, giving a sense of landscape and place. Small areas of post-medieval parkland bring together modern arable and older pastoral land introducing livestock to the scene.

South-west of Toddington there survives a medieval pattern of nucleated settlements immediately surrounded by irregular older enclosures, within which earthworks representing shrunken settlement can often be found. Moated sites with fishponds are common to many of these historic sites. Tebworth and Wingfield each have a planned layout based around greens and instances of multiple townships within each parish are not uncommon to the region. To the east of Toddington the historic parish boundaries of Tingrith, Harlington and Westoning had a complicated arrangement, perhaps because a large woodland once lay beyond the open fields of Toddington, and was later cleared for agriculture (CBC 2016). Ridge and furrow, which is otherwise infrequent across the county, is found in many of the pasture fields. The open fields were largely enclosed by Act of Parliament in the late 18th century.

Further south, towards Houghton Regis, the prominent clay hills give way to gently rolling chalkland dominated by arable fields (Fig 1.9). Most derive from parliamentary enclosure with some smaller, perhaps older, enclosures around the edges of villages often associated with earthworks. Hedgerows, wooded coppices and dispersed farmsteads break up the open countryside and sometimes inhibit views. Medium to

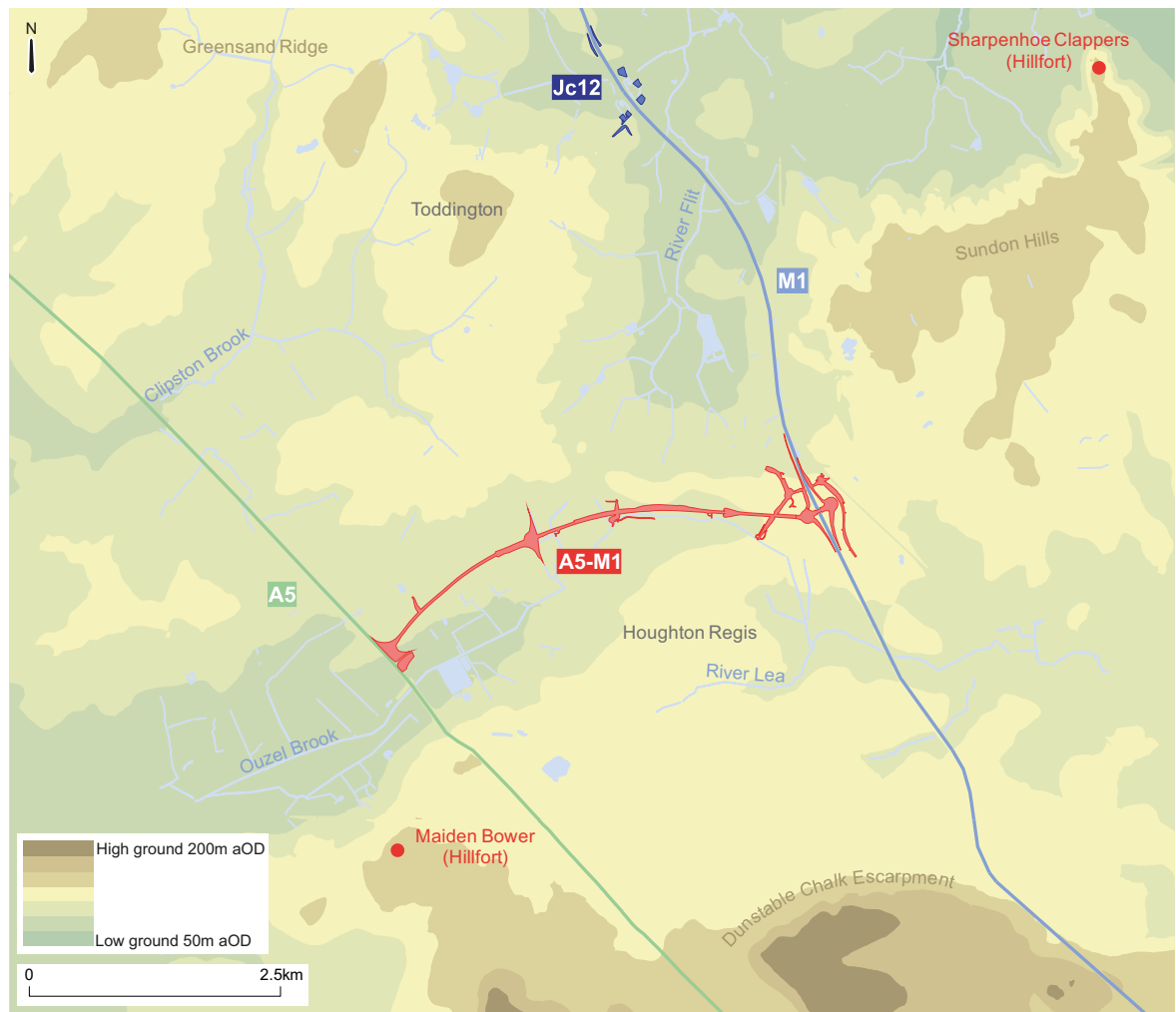


Fig 1.7 Topography of the landscape between Toddington and Houghton Regis



Fig 1.8 View looking north-west from Leighton Road, Toddington, towards Milton Bryan

long range views extend across the flatter land within the valley of the Ouzel Brook. These views are impinged upon by Houghton Regis to the south, creating an invasive urban character that permeates the otherwise rural surroundings. There are distant views towards the South Dunstable Chalk Escarpment that give an

impression of how the terrain appeared before the urban growth, and which provide a distant natural landmark (Fig 1.10). Landmarks, natural or otherwise, are largely absent. Few of the churches, for instance, stand prominently in the landscape, and their bell towers rarely rise above the surrounding settlements.





Fig 1.9 View looking south-east from Chalgrave All Saints Church towards Chalton and Houghton Regis



Fig 1.10 View looking south from Lord's Hill, Wingfield, towards Dunstable

#### **TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY AT M1 JUNCTION 12**

The sites lay between Toddington and Harlington, mainly on the west side of the M1 Junction 12. Prior to construction the site comprised arable fields on either side of the motorway. The ground level rose gently to the north and south of a small tributary valley, c.90–100m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The various archaeological sites and targeted watching brief areas were located on the slopes, ridges and in the base of this valley (Fig 1.2). The late Iron Age/Roman cemetery site at Site M1A was located on the lower spur of the valley ridge with a tributary confluence to the north-east. Remnants of a pyre site and ploughed-out stone cairn at Site M1B, and the medieval potters' waste at Site M1C, were located on the upper slope and ridge on the opposite side of the valley to the north-west. The whole area is now an active and busy motorway junction compared to its former rural character (Figs 1.11–1.13).

The bedrock geology is mudstone, sandstone and limestone of the Gault and Upper Greensand Formations and the superficial geology is composed of

diamicton (Anglian till) deposits (BGS 1996; 2001; 2018). The soils are mainly of Ashley association, which are characterised by chalky till and comprise fine loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoil and slight seasonal waterlogging (LAT 1983, 572q).

#### **TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY ALONG THE VALLEY OF THE OUZEL BROOK**

The A5–M1 link road follows the Ouzel Brook Valley from the high ground in the east and descends westwards towards the A5. The M1 Junction 11a lies upon a low natural plateau between the valley of the River Flit to the north, the headwaters for the River Lee to the south-east, and the Ouzel Brook to the south-west (Fig 1.3). The fields around the junction are fairly level and slope very gradually into the valley from c.130m aOD. As the road corridor proceeds west it drops gradually along the north side of the Ouzel Brook onto the upper flood plain at c.105m aOD where it crosses the A5120 (Fig 1.5). The land is then fairly flat with a very gentle downward slope towards the A5 at c.100m aOD (Fig 1.6). The land through which the road passes is mainly arable, with a small amount of pasture in the





Fig 1.11 View looking north-west from Harlington Road, Toddington, before development



Fig 1.12 View looking north-west from Harlington Road, Toddington, during excavation



Fig 1.13 View looking north-west from Harlington Road, Toddington, after completion





Fig 1.14 Aerial view taken from above Wingfield, looking east toward M1 Junction 11a

vicinity of Grove Farm (Fig 1.14). Land boundaries are defined by modern drainage ditches and hedgerows, usually without an apparent bank.

The solid geology comprises units of the Upper Cretaceous (BGS 2001; 2018). The topsoil and subsoil is underlain by both the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation (Chalk Marl) and Zig Zag Chalk Formation (Grey Chalk), separated with a thin band of Doolittle Limestone. Glacial till was shown to overlie the chalk upon the ridges around M1 Junction 11a.

The soils of the plateau at M1 Junction 11a are of Swaffham Prior association, comprising well drained calcareous coarse and fine loamy soils over chalk (LAT 1983, 511e). The slopes into the valley are covered by soils of Wantage 1 association, which are similar but siltier, and which follow the Ouzel Brook (*ibid*, 342c). The western extent of the route, from the fields west of Grove Farm to the A5, has soils of Block association, which are permeable calcareous loamy soils over chalky gravel (*ibid*, 512e). These soils only form over Cretaceous chalk.

#### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE FIELDWORK

The present work is based upon the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* and follows the premise that ‘remains should be archaeologically recorded in order

to ‘preserve [them] by record’ (HA 2001, vol 10-6, pt 1, 2/1). This has been undertaken in accordance with an established documented procedure, using approved methods and in consultation with the local authority.

The directive of the archaeological mitigation was to ensure that the resources channelled into the fieldwork targeted tangible research objectives that would produce outcomes capable of making a contribution to archaeological knowledge, proportional to the significance of the remains that were found. Key research themes were drawn from national and regional research frameworks established by Historic England (EH 1997), and archaeologists in the Eastern Counties (Brown and Glazebrook 2000; Medlycott and Brown 2008; Medlycott 2011), and in Bedfordshire (Oake *et al.* 2007).

The archaeological strategy report for the A5–M1 link road (HA 2014a, 2.3) identified overarching themes that were relevant to the region, but which were in themselves too broad for the scope of this project. These topics were translated into site specific objectives following the Stage 1 assessments (Clarke 2012; Brown 2016a).

The approach to both road schemes was essentially the same. The methods of providing mitigation to achieve these objectives were determined by the archaeological

potential as demonstrated by evaluations, targeted stripping and the likely impact of construction. The methods used were detailed archaeological excavation (HA 2015a), targeted watching brief, general watching brief, Level 3 topographic survey (Historic England 2015b) and Level 2 building recording (Historic England 2015a).

### **M1 JUNCTION 12 IMPROVEMENTS**

Detailed archaeological excavation of Site M1A was required to investigate possible industrial/craft waste identified during evaluation and to understand production processes, sources of raw material, products and the economy of the site. Subsequent investigation led to the discovery of the Harlington Road cemetery.

For medieval rural occupation (Site M1B) there was a directive to investigate the type, form and date of surviving structural or building remains associated with cobbled surfaces and burnt timber identified during evaluation. Two medieval ditches were found at the site, but there was no evidence for a medieval building or surfaces, and the remains were instead found to be associated with a late Iron Age *bustum* burial and pyre site (Fig 1.15).

Chance discovery of medieval potters' waste and post-medieval buildings at Site M1C during the targeted watching brief allowed these objectives to be appropriated for a different site. In addition, the work sought to confirm the relationship with the adjacent historic settlement at Nuppings Green, and to seek to understand its economy, agricultural regimes and cereal crop processing. This was possible from the perspective of the potters' economic activities, although bulk soil samples produced insufficient plant macrofossils to inform upon agricultural activities.

Specific aims of the targeted watching briefs were directed toward obtaining dating material in order to place archaeological features of otherwise unknown date within a chronological framework. This was successful where archaeological features were identified (Site M1C) and detailed hand excavation was undertaken to recover artefacts and other datable evidence.

The specific objective of the historic hedgerow recording was to record the presence/absence and date of any surviving buried soil horizons sealed beneath the hedge bank. In actual fact no buried soil horizons were found. Topographic survey and hand excavated mitigation trenches examined some additional earthworks and historic trackways to



Fig 1.15 Cremation burials required detailed excavation, Site M1A



Fig 1.16 Hand-excavated trench providing a cross-section through Site E



Fig 1.17 The Chalton overbridge before demolition, Site R, looking south-east

examine and record a cross-section of such features before removal (Fig 1.16).

The objective of the building recording survey of the overbridge (Fig 1.17) was to provide a permanent record of the structure to Historic England Level 2 standards.



### **A5–M1 LINK ROAD**

The objectives set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (HA 2015a, 8) remained fairly general because of the rapid onset of construction immediately following on from the final stages of evaluation. The WSI included research themes from the archaeological strategy report (HA 2014a), which are incorporated into the following section. Although reconnaissance surveys and evaluations had been undertaken from 2006–7, the scheme had sat in abeyance until a Principal Contractor was confirmed in 2014. This meant that completion of the evaluation in many areas had awaited full land access. With little time between evaluation and the start of construction, the ability to establish site-specific objectives was limited and so these evolved as a product of ongoing discoveries, which were subsequently outlined by the Stage 1 assessment report (Brown 2016).

### **RESEARCH THEMES AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RESULTS**

The archaeological strategy report for the A5–M1 link road identified specific research themes that were in themselves too broad for the scope of the project (HA 2014a, 2.3). The topics were refined and were incorporated into the research themes below, closely identified with individual site specific evidence and in order to support future synthetic studies in the region.

#### **PALAEOLITHIC, MESOLITHIC AND NEOLITHIC**

The sole requirement for these periods was to provide a permanent archival record of worked flint artefacts and stone tools. There were no research objectives immediately relevant for any sub-divisions of the Stone Age. An assessment of residual Neolithic worked flint and a polished stone axe is contained upon the accompanying digital content package.

#### **BRONZE AGE**

The requirement for this period was to:

- provide a permanent archival record of archaeological features and artefacts where they were encountered; and to,
- include such evidence within the broader scope of understanding the process, development and character of occupation (HA 2014a).

Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement evidence in Bedfordshire was characterised mainly by association with barrows along the river valleys (Dawson 2007, 59). Field systems remain extremely rare. Disbursed small scale activity was noted across the county, mainly as either enclosed or unenclosed groups of structures and pits, but typically lacking firm corroborative evidence

for settlement. Site H presents another example within a small county-wide data set. With little current overall background context, the impetus of work was on data collection and recording.

#### **IRON AGE AND ROMAN**

The key research themes for these periods were to:

- Advance the development of a chronologically dated middle Iron Age ceramic type series through the application of radiocarbon analysis;
- Seek to understand the morphological development and change of the middle Iron Age settlement discovered at Sites D and G;
- Securely date the pit alignment at Site M and place it within the context of other Iron Age evidence nearby;
- Characterise the nature of the Roman settlements at Site H and Site Q;
- Examine the evidence for crop processing within the context of features found on each archaeological site;
- Compare the results from faunal assemblages with those from contemporary sites within the region;
- Compare Roman cremation burial, pyre traditions and funerary practices within Bedfordshire;
- Produce a chronological sequence for deposition within the cremation cemeteries;
- Securely date pyre debris using radiocarbon analysis and place this in the context of contemporary funerary practices; and to,
- Compare the Roman evidence with other contemporary sites nearby to address the relevance of historically recorded events in the 1st century AD.

A firm chronological framework was lacking for the 1st millennium BC where ceramics, decorated metalwork and scientific dating can be cross compared (Oake *et al.* 2007, 10–11). Typically spot dates and site phase chronologies were based exclusively on the ceramic work of Slowikowski (2005), and there was significant potential to advance this through the application of radiocarbon analysis against any early ceramic groups where diagnostic sherds could be identified that contributed to a wider typology.

Little previous work has been undertaken to advance the understanding of how settlement nucleation and dispersal occurred over this period (Oake *et al.* 2007, 11). Sites excavated close to Watling Street and on the hilltop between the Ouzel Brook and Flit valleys had the potential to contribute to this work both in Bedfordshire and the wider region (Medlycott 2011). They presented an example of agricultural settlement that helped to elucidate the character of an increasingly organised, farming economy. A

particular opportunity was provided to examine the relationship between settlement enclosure and more widely distributed surrounding field systems (Sites J, K and H; Site D, M and G), and also the relationship with the preceding pit alignments (Sites M and P). Any demonstrable relationships between pit alignments and later boundaries were of significance, as few have been securely dated and investigated in detail (Dawson 2007, 64).

The variety of settlement forms increased in the late Iron Age and it was therefore important to characterise the nature of the Roman occupation settlement at Site H and Site Q (*ibid*, 68). There was a need for greater synthesis of evidence to provide an understanding of how Roman rural communities interacted and functioned (Oake *et al.* 2007, 10–2, 73–4; Medlycott 2011, 31–7).

Plant macrofossil analysis for crop processing and the study of faunal assemblages fed into the study of each settlement site, and there are likely to be specific elements that will provide useful examples for comparison with future work in Bedfordshire (Murphy 2007a, 70–71). Pit clusters, if significant to crop processing, are unrecognised in the county for that purpose (Sites D, G and K). The possibility of a placed horse burial at Longmeadow Farm (Site H) added to a similar example noted at Stagsden (Roberts 2000).

In terms of funerary analysis most of the published work to date has focused upon human bone analysis (Oake *et al.* 2007, 12), providing a good range of comparable data (Murphy 2007b, 80–81). The cremation cemetery from Site F and the burials at Site Q both provided an opportunity to take this further in terms of comparing burial traditions and practices across the region. Examples from the work at M1 Junction 12 (Brown 2015c), Harlington (Dawson 2001), Court Drive, Dunstable (Edwards 2010) and Puddlehill (Matthews 1976) were likely to assist locally in this regard, with others drawn from the wider region (Dawson 2007, 76). Work beyond this project is required to focus on ritual elements such as decapitation, burial position, cremation urn fabrics/forms and grave goods where possible and may feed into the topic of sites intended for ritual functions (Dawson 2007, 69).

The relationship between the unurned cremations and the Iron Age and Roman enclosures and trackways at Site H was confirmed using the process of radiocarbon dating, which also was used to date the associated pyre deposits (Fig 1.18). The results of the analysis enabled incorporation of the funerary site into a broader synthesis and understanding of Roman funerary practices at both Site F and Site H. Differences between the sites posed significant questions for the basis of two contemporary burial traditions, differing in the



Fig 1.18 Cremation urn being wrapped and lifted whole before transport to laboratory for excavation

manner of interment that feeds into topics concerning social identity (Oake *et al.* 2007, 13).

With the Roman road, Watling Street, in such close proximity to the Scheme, it was appropriate to consider comparison of the Roman settlement at Site H, Site F and Site Q with Puddlehill (Matthews and Warren 1992) and other contemporary sites nearby. At Puddlehill it was suggested that the excavated evidence supported clearance either in the aftermath of the Roman conquest, AD43, or around AD61 during the Boudican revolt when *Verulamium* (St Albans) was sacked (*ibid*, 38–39).

#### MIDDLE SAXON

The key research themes of this period were to:

- Publish the inhumation cemetery at Site H as a recently excavated example of possible early Christian burial practices; and to,
- Provide comparison with examples excavated previously in support of future research as further middle Saxon funerary sites come to light in the region.

Archaeology of this period is of a character particular to the county, rather than the wider Eastern region, and few recent examples were available (Oake *et al.* 2007, 12). There are few examples of middle Saxon cemeteries in Bedfordshire with which to compare the inhumations from Longmeadow Farm (Site H), with the most recent burials published by Dawson (2004) likely to be pre-Christian. Earlier sites studied in the county include those published by Hagen (1971), Eagles and Evison (1970), Hyslop (1963), Matthews (1962a–b) and Morris (1962a–b). All of these emphasise finds at the expense of contextual detail or spatial recording and rarely provided sufficient information to make detailed





Fig 1.19 Detailed archaeological excavation of the medieval settlement, Site F

observations about the populations or communities they represented (Edgeworth 2007a, 90). Where they were excavated as part of settlements at Harrold (Eagles and Evison 1970) and Puddlehill (Matthews 1962a), they were not published as integrated elements of those sites. The distribution of known cemeteries has been mapped (Wingfield 1995; Bilikowska 1980), but the resultant picture must be a severe underrepresentation of the county’s potential for such sites in this important part of south-central Mercia.

**LATE SAXON AND MEDIEVAL**

The key research themes for the late Saxon and medieval periods were to:

- Publish the non-nucleated settlement found at Site F to redress the balance of studies and corpus of information available on similar type sites (Fig 1.19);
- Publish the timber-framed building and associated medieval features at Site Q as an example of finds in close proximity to a moated site;
- Map the extent and orientation of ridge and furrow cultivation, where found, in support of county-wide and regional research;
- Provide analysis of historic maps and aerial photographs at Nuppings Green (Site M1C) to elucidate the extent and character of the settlement; and to,
- Publish specialist analysis of the pottery wasters recovered from the pot bank at Nuppings Green (Site M1C).

Settlement studies in Bedfordshire remain limited in number, but recent years have seen an increase in the quantity of those conducted around the historic core of rural villages and on the edges of existing historic settlements (Oake *et al.* 2007, 14). Most of these studies



Fig 1.20 Archaeologists excavating medieval pot bank deposits with the M1 behind, Site M1C

follow nucleated settlement patterns, although there is a diverse variety of settlement morphology in the county. Isolated village ends, smallholdings and other non-nucleated settlement, such as the occupation at Site F, and moated settlements or sites close to them (i.e. Site Q) were underrepresented and therefore a priority for study. Smaller dispersed settlements, such as the occupation at Nuppings Green (Site M1C; Fig 1:20), were also rarely examined in detail, especially any with an associated craft activity (*ibid*, 106-7; Medlycott 2011, 67-8).

The transition between late Saxon to Norman England is generally accepted to be one of continuity; however, at site level, it is often hard to date closely. St. Neots ware pottery production took place over a long period between 10th–13th centuries and so any work that assists in refining site dating in the county is beneficial (Edgeworth 2007a, 98). Dating in the post-Conquest period is greatly aided by the diversity of local pottery manufactories in the surrounding counties.

Human remains are generally few and rural burials of medieval date, if corroborated by scientific dating techniques, would be a valuable addition to the dearth of information (Murphy 2007c, 112).

The open fields around the medieval villages, comprising ridge and furrow cultivation, survive poorly across the county but at one time characterised the nature of local farming practices in keeping with Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire. Their origins and development are poorly understood and so mapping the locations and orientation of cultivation evidence is of value at a county-wide and regional scale (Oake *et al.* 2007, 14).

#### POST-MEDIEVAL AND MODERN

The sole requirement for this period was to:

- Provide a permanent archival record of post-medieval and modern landscape features, contained within the accompanying digital content package.

Topics of research for both Bedfordshire and the East of England focus on fortifications, parks and gardens, and industrialisation (Oake *et al.* 2007; Medlycott 2011). The rural landscape receives little priority where it is not associated with one of these key themes, or where it is not part of a continuity of landscape from the medieval period (Edgeworth 2007b, 119). In this vein there were no priorities for historic hedgerows, field systems created through Parliamentary Acts of Enclosure, post-medieval trackways, agricultural landscape features (Sites E and S), or for modern architectural structures such as motorway bridges, beyond their recognition and permanent archival record.

#### ORGANISATION OF THIS REPORT

Chapters 2 to 8 of this report present the excavated evidence for sites both on the M1 Junction 12 Improvement Scheme and the A5–M1 link road. Each chapter is ordered chronologically, so that contemporary evidence is presented together by site. The chronology loosely follows conventionally recognised eras within British archaeology. The phasing of these is based on a combination of spot dates from artefact assessment using pottery and registered finds, radiocarbon determinations and stratigraphic relationships where they were relevant.

Each individual chapter contains a narrative of the excavated evidence, specialist studies on finds and environmental material and an end of chapter discussion that includes a summary of the relevant background historical data. General site interpretations are presented in the discussion and contain the observations of site archaeologists and

specialists, distilled separately from the narrative of archaeological features and finds reports. Each chapter ends with a concluding statement addressing the contribution towards published research themes with recommendations for the future. It was the intention to present a collection of short essays, wherein more thematic discussions could draw in a wider synthesis of regional evidence, but this lies beyond the scope and time constraints of this report.

Evidence collected from M1 Junction 12 and from the A5–M1 link road is presented within individual chapters within the broader chronology. For the A5–M1 sites certain work areas with different site codes are amalgamated where they are deemed to be part of the same archaeological site (i.e. Sites D and G). Sites of contemporary or topical relevance are presented independently, but within the same chapter, such as the funerary evidence and sites within the valley of the Ouzel Brook that are relevant to middle Iron Age farming practices. Medieval sites at Chalton and Thorn are presented together based on their broadly contemporary occupation, but evidence at Nuppings Green is kept separate in order to maintain the distinction between projects.

The letter codes attached to the archive are retained for reference purposes; the use of common place names has been avoided where possible to prevent confusion. All previous site reference names and numbers have been dropped to maintain consistency. In the case of the M1 Junction 12, the sites which were formerly referred to as Sites A–C are prefixed with M1. This is so that Site M1A will not be confused with the trial trench evaluation stage of the A5–M1 link road, Site M1B will not be confused with the general watching brief on the UKPN cable replacement, and Site M1C will not be confused with the A5–M1 link road general watching brief on drainage ditches and slip roads. The common name of Nuppings Green is only used in a medieval or post-medieval context.

Following on from the present introductory chapter there are a further seven chapters that describe the archaeological evidence. Chapter 2 presents evidence from the middle–late Bronze Age. This same chapter also addresses the largely undated pit alignments on the flood plain.

Chapter 3 presents the study of the landscape and looks at the evidence for the emergence of farming within the valley of the Ouzel Brook, covering a broad period between the 5th–2nd centuries BC. The chapter begins with early Iron Age pit clusters before advancing to the middle Iron Age settlement up until its abandonment in the late Iron Age. The chapter also incorporates the earlier-middle Iron Age pit cluster and storage pits at Site K.



The cremation cemetery and boundary ditches that began in the late Iron Age from M1 Junction 12 are presented in chapter 4. The larger portion of this chapter focuses upon the Roman cemetery evidence from Site M1A. A smaller section within the chapter includes a brief presentation of the non-funerary evidence, restricted mainly to the changing boundaries over the period of cemetery use. The theme of cremation burial then leads towards chapter 5, wherein the funerary evidence is presented from the A5–M1 link road in its detail.

After the detailed burial information is provided the dialogue of chapter 6 returns to the study of the contemporary landscape in the late Iron Age/Roman transitional period, which looks at trackways and enclosures nearby. The crossover enables the sites where there is a distinct continuity in occupation from the late Iron Age into the early Roman period to be separated from those sites that are exclusively pre-Roman.

Chapter 7 advances the chronological framework with an initial presentation of Saxon inhumations and then pursues the origins of settlement at Site F, starting with the scattered evidence for early/middle Saxon activity and leading into the medieval settlement evidence. Contemporary with 12th-century occupation at Site F, but geographically removed, was the medieval occupation at Site Q, which is presented in the same chapter. The last of the medieval site narratives is from the M1 Junction 12 improvements, in chapter 8, and presents the late medieval potter's waste dump at Nuppings Green and the subsequent post-medieval occupation of the site.

Since each individual chapter contains within it the specialist studies associated with the archaeology of specific sites, some of the detail has been distilled into the accompanying digital content, such as methodologies. All specialist datasets from both the Stage 1 assessment and Stage 2 analysis are also held upon the accompanying digital content package, together with smaller reports that found no home within the main narrative of archaeological sites. This is particularly the case for Neolithic flints, a polished stone axe, the topographic surveys of post-medieval features such as hedgerows and bridle paths, and the building recording of the 1959 motorway overbridges. Copies of all relevant reports are included, together with the background documentation supporting the project. An inventory of the data sets and reports held upon the accompanying digital content package is contained within this volume.

## SUMMARY OF CHRONOLOGY WITHIN THIS REPORT

Table 1.2 summarises the evidence by grouping the sites into a chronology. The periods represented are commonly accepted eras known within British archaeology. The positioning of date ranges is accorded by the specialist contributions through spot dating pottery and other finds from these sites, fitted into broadly published conventions. The main significant archaeological features and sites are presented within the relevant chapters, whilst minor sites and finds of low significance are not included, but their assessment is held upon the accompanying digital content package.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAPHICAL CONVENTIONS

The basic unit of reference throughout the archive that supports this report is the context number. This is a unique number given to each archaeological event on site whether it was a layer, a pit cut, fill material, a wall, a surface, a recut or any other archaeological feature or deposit. Modern intrusions and natural features were generally excluded. Context numbers in the text are shown thus: Q[100], denoting Site Q, context [100]. The site code prefix is included where ambiguity may exist with the reader. This may occur where, for the purposes of compiling an orderly site archive without confusion in the field, the use of site codes permitted each site to run on an independent set of registers. This means that each site has its own context index attached to a letter, overriding the occurrence of duplicate numbers.

This report employs the use of group numbers for features or land-use entities where evidence has a direct physical, spatial and/or chronological association. Terms that may employ group numbers and are considered land-use entities include, and are not limited to; buildings, structures, wells, enclosures, pit clusters, trackways, funerary groups and similar themed complex site features. Whilst the components of these will be referred to by context number, usually the cut, or perhaps specifically a fill or layer, the group numbers will employ the site code letter followed by a number for the site feature. This number will not appear in brackets. These numbers have been generated to support the dissemination of information within this report, they are generally sequential within their respective chapters and do not relate to any previous documentation.

Numbers given to individual registered finds within the site archive are most commonly objects sent for X-ray and artefacts with special conservation considerations

Table 1.2: Summary of archaeological discoveries in chronological order

Periods	Relevant evidence	Relevant sites
late Neolithic, Bronze Age and early Iron Age (c.4000-450BC)	prehistoric worked flint polished stone axe (Site G) finds prehistoric pits  pit alignments  palaeochannel pit clusters	residual on various sites Site G Site C Site H Site M Site P Site L Sites D and G Site K
middle Iron Age (c.450-100BC)	farming settlement field systems dispersed roundhouses and pits storage pits and nearby boundaries	Site G Sites D, G, M Sites G Sites K and N
late Iron Age (100BC-AD43)	ditches draining into a marshland trackways and enclosures boundary ditches and enclosures isolated cremation burials Period 1 of cremation cemetery stone cairn and funerary pyre trackways and enclosures urned cremation cemetery (initial) funerary enclosure unurned cremation cemetery and pyres	Site G Site J Site H Site Q Site Q Site M1A Site M1B Site H Site F Site H Site H
Roman (AD43-300)	boundary ditches  enclosure, boundary ditches and burials funerary enclosure unurned cremation cemetery and pyres urned cremation cemetery (main) Periods 2-4 of cremation cemetery trackways and enclosures	Site P M1 Junction 12 (all sites) Site Q Site H Site H Site F Site M1A Site H
late Roman (AD300-450)	charnel pit and scattered human bone	Site F
Anglo-Saxon (AD450-850)	inhumation cemetery isolated pits and pottery sherds	Site H Site F
late Saxon (AD850-1066)	isolated pit pottery sherds, comb and loomweights residual pottery	Site F Site F Site Q
Saxo-Norman (AD1066-1150)	enclosure, pits and possible buildings boundary ditch and residual pottery	Site F Site Q
medieval (AD1150-1540)	buildings and enclosures timber frame building and boundaries pottery waster midden boundary ditch	Site F Site Q Site M1C Site M1B
post-medieval and industrial (AD1540-1900)	building remains bridle path historic hedgerow historic hedgerow historic hedgerow embankment field boundary ditches material dumped beside a trackway	Site M1C Site E NGR TL 00500 25320 NGR TL 01300 25660 NGR TL 01883 29738 Site S Sites G and Q Site F

or that are of a delicate nature with intrinsic artefactual interest. Such finds have been given catalogue numbers with a prefix denoting their category. The number refers to the catalogue, derived from the field register with additions following Stage 2 analysis and reporting. Note that this means that where there are two apparent

duplicates, they are from different sites. The prefix is by material type, and may have a letter outside of the bracket for the site code, if this is not obvious through context. For these reasons the numeric series does not run sequentially through the report. Registered finds are presented thus:

- <A1> antler or worked bone artefact no. 1;
- <C1> ceramic artefact no. 1 (spindle whorls, loomweights etc.)
- <CN1> coin no.1;
- <Cu1> copper-alloy artefact no. 1 (excluding coins);
- <DS1> decorated samian artefact no. 1;
- <Fe1> iron artefact no. 1;
- <G1> glass artefact no. 1;
- <P1> pottery artefact no. 1 (specific sherds, vessels and funerary urns);
- <Pb1> lead artefact no. 1;
- <S1> stone artefact no. 1;
- <SS1> samian stamp no. 1.

An important distinction is drawn between early/middle or middle and late, and earlier-middle or later-middle. The former is intended to mean either/and/or, whilst the latter is a sub-division of the period in question. This approach is used throughout but particularly where the work breaks down the existing knowledge of middle Iron Age pottery into forms and decoration of distinctly earlier or later date within the middle Iron Age.

This publication employs recognised fabric codes for prehistoric pottery, developed by specialists working in the Bedfordshire region (Wells 2008b).

Roman fabrics from the A5–M1 link road follow the Warwick and Oxford system (Booth 2000) and fabric series in Evans *et al.* (2017). Roman fabrics at M1 Junction 12 draw on published references for Bedfordshire (Slowikowski 2001; 2004; 2005), and are coded following the National Roman fabric reference collection (Tomber and Dore 1998).

All of the medieval pottery wares are recorded using the conventions of the Bedfordshire County Type Series (Baker and Hassall 1979). Associated with these are alphanumeric codes prefixed “F” that relate to the medieval pottery database and tables. An explanation of these codes is provided early in the text of the relevant finds report.

Ceramic building materials are described and classified by type rather than being allotted to a fabric type series, as no such published coding system exists for Bedfordshire.

The following abbreviations are used within the text and in tables or catalogue entries: aOD (above Ordnance Datum); BE (base equivalent); CBC (Central Bedfordshire Council); CCJV (Costain–Carillion Joint Venture); CP (ceramic phase); EMS (early to middle

Saxon); EVE (estimated vessel equivalent); FADD (further archaeological design document); HER (Historic Environment Record); LS (late Saxon); MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology); MNI (minimum number of individuals); MNR (minimum number of rims); MNV (minimum number of vessels); MSW (mean sherd weight); MPR (mean percentage of rims); NA (Northamptonshire Archaeology); NGR (national grid reference); OS (Ordnance Survey); RE (rim equivalent); Sh (sherd count); SN (Saxo-Norman); sqm (square metres); UKPN (United Kingdom Power Network); UPD (updated project design); WSI (written scheme of investigation); Wt (Weight, usually given in grams).

The graphical conventions used in the site plans and illustration for this report are shown in Fig 1.21.

#### ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ARCHIVES

The archives for each of the projects have been offered to Luton Culture, upon completion of the publication (Accession no. LTNMG 2010.67 for M1 Junction 12, and Entry no. LTNMG 1093 for the A5–M1 link road).

The archives will be retained at the MOLA offices in Northampton while the museum is closed for refurbishment. OASIS forms were completed for the project upon the issue of each grey literature report as part of standard company procedure and each report will be submitted to the Archaeological Data Service (ADS). There is no requirement for the archive to be digitised and the National Archaeological Record is no longer receiving microfilm copies of site records. The archive will be prepared according to professional standards and guidelines, together with the specific requirements for Luton Culture (Walker 1990; MGC 1992; SMA 1993; Watkinson and Neal 2001; Duncan 2011; Cifa 2014e–f; LC 2013).

The archive comprises all written, drawn and photographic records, and all material finds and processed sample residues recovered from the excavation. The site archive is accompanied by the research archive, which comprises the text, tabulated data, the original drawings and all other records generated in the analysis of the site archive. The archive is fully catalogued and prepared for deposition. Copies of the project background information: WSIs, FADDs, evaluation reports, watching brief reports, building recording reports, topographic surveys, assessments and UPDs are included, along with a copy of the present publication. Any material requiring special curation was handled under the recognised guidelines prior to deposition (Watkinson and Neal 2001).

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC DISSEMINATION

The archaeological remains discovered during construction of both the M1 Junction 12 and the A5–M1 link road were reviewed, assessed, analysed and reported upon following the relevant archaeological guidance provided in the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (HA 2001). Dissemination of the information was conducted for both schemes together, where possible. MOLA produced 500 copies of a popular brochure for distribution including 120 copies that were lodged with the local authority. A public lecture presented the findings of the excavations along the road scheme to the Council for British Archaeology South Midlands conference in 2017 where attendees received a copy of

the brochure. Subsequent requests by local societies for talks and presentations were honoured by MOLA. The present volume represents the Stage 2 report upon the post-excavation analysis and has been compiled to meet a more academic audience, in keeping with other comparable road schemes delivered by Highways England. This volume is accompanied by a bank of digital content, hosted by Archaeopress, and accessed by QR matrix barcode. This digital content package comprises project documentation and archaeological data, together with minor elements of the archaeological recording that were excluded from this publication (i.e. detailed specialist data sets, unstratified finds reports, topographic surveys of post-medieval features, building recording of motorway overbridges etc.).

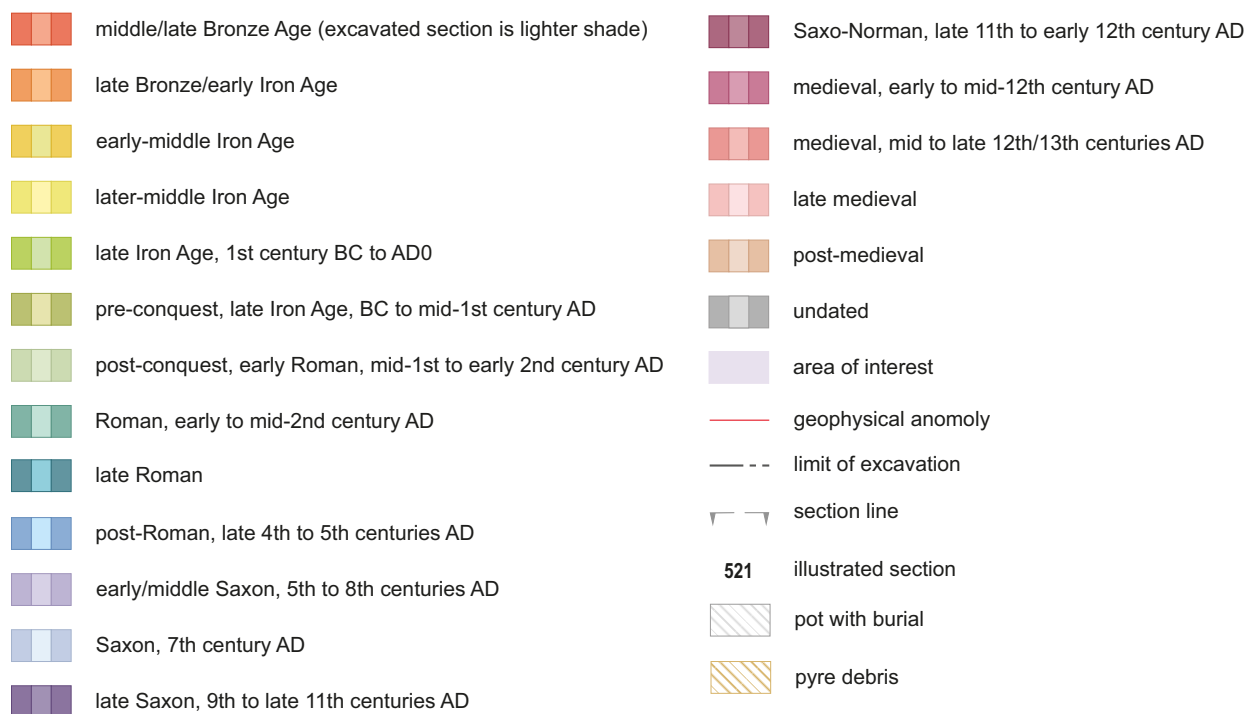


Fig 1.21 Graphical conventions used in this report