

ORIGINS, DEVELOPMENT AND ABANDONMENT OF AN IRON AGE VILLAGE

FURTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL
INVESTIGATIONS FOR THE DAVENTRY
INTERNATIONAL RAIL FREIGHT TERMINAL,
CRICK & KILSBY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

1993-2013

(DIRFT VOLUME II)

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Cover: Reconstructed detailed view of the Iron Age settlement looking south-east by Mark Gridley
(view from just north-west of the Long Dole)

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Summary

Archaeological investigations for Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT I and II) took place across 178 hectares of farmland around a stream valley of the Northamptonshire Uplands between 1993 and 2013. This report comprises the second volume of the series, following analysis of an impressive zone of Iron Age settlement characterised by around one hundred distinct ring-gully defined circular buildings at ‘Crick Covert Farm’ (CCF) in Volume I (Hughes and Woodward 2015). The present volume describes a further four Iron Age settlements, including c.140 more ring-gullies. Highly successful geophysical surveys, proofed by trial trenching, culminated in excavations at the ‘Long Dole’ (LD) and ‘The Lodge’ (TL) by Northamptonshire Archaeology (now MOLA Northampton) in 1994-5; at ‘Crick Hotel’ (CH) by Foundations Archaeology in 1998; and ‘Nortoft Lane, Kilsby’ (NLK) by Cotswold Archaeology in 2006 and 2010. Further areas of landscape investigation were undertaken by 2013. Together with CCF these provide a virtually unparalleled investigation of related Iron Age ‘aggregated settlements’ within their Midlands landscape setting, illustrative of the extent, complexity and longevity of a significant village-like community. It is suggested that around half of the overall c.240 ring-gullies represent residential roundhouses with the remainder used as storehouses, stock huts/pens etc. The settlements appear to have been set around the perimeter of common grazing land centred on a stream valley and at least partially bounded by a landscape-scale enclosure. Cattle were consistently the most important species represented across the sites and throughout the periods, with sheep a secondary concern. Modest quantities of charred cereals, predominantly spelt wheat, along with 20 (saddle and rotary) querns, confirm the arable economic component. Following around 400 years of growth and stability, incorporating the Middle Iron Age, a breakdown in traditional grazing rights associated with agricultural intensification, may have led to the eventual decline of the aggregated settlements in the Late Iron Age.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Robert Masefield (unless stated)

SETTING THE SCENE ROBERT MASEFIELD WITH A CONTRIBUTION BY CHARLES LEQUESNE

Archaeological fieldwork has been carried out over a 178ha area of the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT) between 1993 and 2013 (Fig. 1.1). The work was undertaken by six different archaeological contractors for a number of different commercial clients. A common factor has been the management of all phases of the work by archaeological consultants from RPS. These investigations go back to the early days of regulated developer-funded archaeology in the UK, established following the introduction of the PPG16 in 1990 and as such represent an interesting case study of the effectiveness of policy guidance. The fact it has been possible to recover a detailed record of intensive Iron Age settlement over such a wide area, on a site which was completely unknown previously, is itself a considerable achievement. Challenges included the very number of archaeological organisations involved as a result of commercial factors and investigation to varying levels of detail as the result of planning and funding issues. In 2013 the final archaeological fieldwork associated with the completion of the development of DIRFT II, Zone 3 (a hub warehouse and distribution centre developed by Prologis for Sainsbury's supermarkets) was completed. This represented the final stage of primary development of the core DIRFT zone. While it is important to recognise that some of the known archaeological remains still survive under and between the developed areas of the site, this moment seemed the appropriate point to produce a final synthesis and publication of the results of the built-out zone.

Productive discussions with Prologis on the significance of the archaeology at DIRFT early in 2013 lead to a publication proposal. Prologis' generous agreement of the funding was based on an ambitious programme beginning in November 2013 and resulting in the publication of the two Archaeopress monographs (of which this is Volume II). Volume I (Hughes and Woodward 2015) represents the full analysis of the former Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) excavations of the 'Crick, Covert Farm' (CCF) Iron Age settlement aggregation, including c.100 circular buildings or roundhouses within 18 'clusters' over an area of 12.58ha. This second volume draws together all of the other DIRFT archaeological works undertaken over 20 years between 1993 and 2013 which have included identification and recording of a further c.140 IA ring-gully defined buildings in five separate areas of the landscape within adjacent areas of the Northamptonshire parishes of Crick and Kilsby. The project has been cited as a classic example of the effective use of geophysical survey for the identification of M/LIA settlements on claylands (Kidd 1999).

REPORT STRUCTURE

This chapter provides an introduction to the geological, topographical and geographical setting, a brief overview of landscape development, including history of archaeological exploration at DIRFT, and the terminology and chronology applied for the analysis process. The following Chapters 2 -5 provide the site-specific descriptions, phasing, finds and environmental reports and phasing for The Lodge (TL), Crick Hotel (CH), The Long Dole (LD) and Nortoft Lane, Kilsby (NLK) respectively. The LD (Chapter 2) is followed by CH (Chapter 3). These sites 'bookend' Crick Covert Farm (CCF) thus forming an extensive settlement block. The reader is referred to Volume I for detailed description and analysis of the central CCF site. Chapter 4 describes a geographically separated aggregated settlement with a shifted Romano-British phase at TL. Chapter 5 describes the extensive linear NLK settlement zone.

An in-combination synthesis of evidence from the various investigations, including CCF (where appropriate) is provided in Chapter 6. It begins with a summary of the 2014 absolute dating programme followed by the ceramic basis for site chronology. Next is an overview by period, including a regional background and a degree of synthesis with the CCF results. Analysis of the economic basis of the settlement through time includes a review of craft, industry and exchange, with reference to farming regimes, including an apparent emphasis on pastoralism. This element of the discussion is augmented by an assessment of Iron Age grain storage including comparison of the subject sites with potential grain surplus producing 'pit-cluster' sites. An overview of animal husbandry includes evidence for a landscape-scale enclosure around common pasture and a comparison with 'ranch boundaries' elsewhere in central and southern England. The organisation of domestic space is considered with respect to ambiguity between enclosed and unenclosed settlement forms, whilst aspects of the form and symbolism of roundhouses/circular buildings are discussed thematically. Structured depositions and possible shrines at the LD, CCF and potentially NLK, are discussed. There follow estimates of individual settlement populations by site/period and of the overall 'Crick/Kilsby community'.

The final discussion section is concerned with social aspects including settlement dynamics based on multiples of the basic extended-family unit (exemplified by 'clusters' of roundhouses/buildings and enclosures) and evidence for hierarchy or social differentiation. The possibility of seasonal settlement, or some herders from the community leaving the home settlement for the summer months, is considered. A review of recent characterisation of similar so-called 'aggregated settlements' within the Central and

ORIGINS, DEVELOPMENT AND ABANDONMENT OF AN IRON AGE VILLAGE

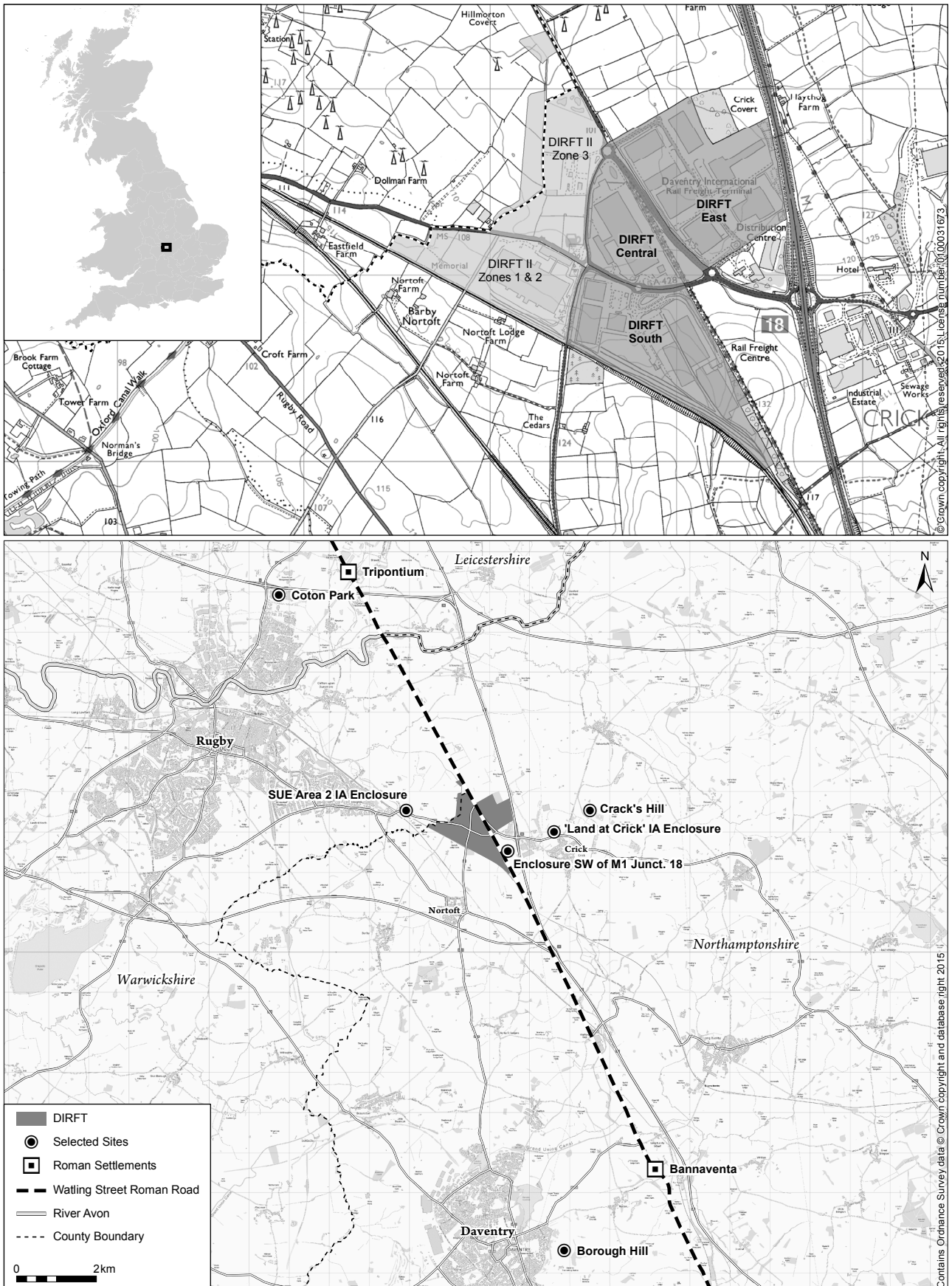


FIG. 1.1 LOCATION IN CENTRAL BRITAIN SHOWING COURSE OF THE WARWICKSHIRE AVON, COUNTY BOUNDARIES AND WATLING STREET

Eastern Midlands and the organised concentration of such sites at DIRFT is equated with a poly-focal village. The possible status of the community within the wider region is assessed in comparison with single farms, aggregated settlements, pit-cluster sites and hillforts. Finally the potential drivers of settlement expansion and eventual decline are addressed.

Chapter 7 provides the main conclusions including the significance of the findings at a regional and national level.

GEOLOGICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

ROBERT MASEFIELD WITH CHARLES LEQUESNE

Crick is a parish of around 1,340 hectares bordered on its west side by Watling Street and Kilsby parish. It comprises predominantly Lower Lias Clay of the Jurassic commensurate with undulating topography between 100m and 160m aOD. Kilsby parish comprises 1,100 hectares bordered on its east side by Watling Street and Crick parish, whilst streams form the western and southern boundaries. Its topography is slightly higher, rising to between 120m and 150m aOD. The Crick Iron Age settlement of CH was at c.110m aOD on a hill-slope to the south-east of and overlooking the larger, low-lying CCF/LD complex at c.101.5m aOD. TL, within Kilsby, occupied the elevated

slope of a north-facing Lias ridge between 121m and 128m aOD, also overlooking the Clifton Brook valley. The other large Iron Age aggregation at NLK utilised an elevated ridge flanking the west side of the valley, adjacent to the detached hamlet of Barby within Kilsby Parish. More specifically NLK overlay the contact between Lias Clay, silt, mudstone and limestone and the overlying ridge formed by superficial deposits of glacial sand and gravel rising to c.115m aOD within the site, and upon which the vast majority of ring-gullies were located (Fig. 1.2; BGS Sheet 185, Northampton). Ground levels within NLK fell northwards to c.110m aOD.

As shown on Figure 1.2 DIRFT's Iron Age settlement was effectively distributed around a natural amphitheatre formed by the shallow central valley with flanking hills/slopes to the east, south-east and south, and with the aforementioned ridge to the south-west. The valley opens out onto lower floodplain to the north. It is drained by the Clifton Brook - a tributary stream at the headwaters of the Warwickshire Avon, which flows north-west through the floodplain before joining the river north of Rugby. The wider area is also drained by the Oxford Canal and Raing Brook. Alluvium is mapped in the base of the Clifton Brook valley above intractable Lias Clay, with further patches of sand and gravel on higher ground to the south.

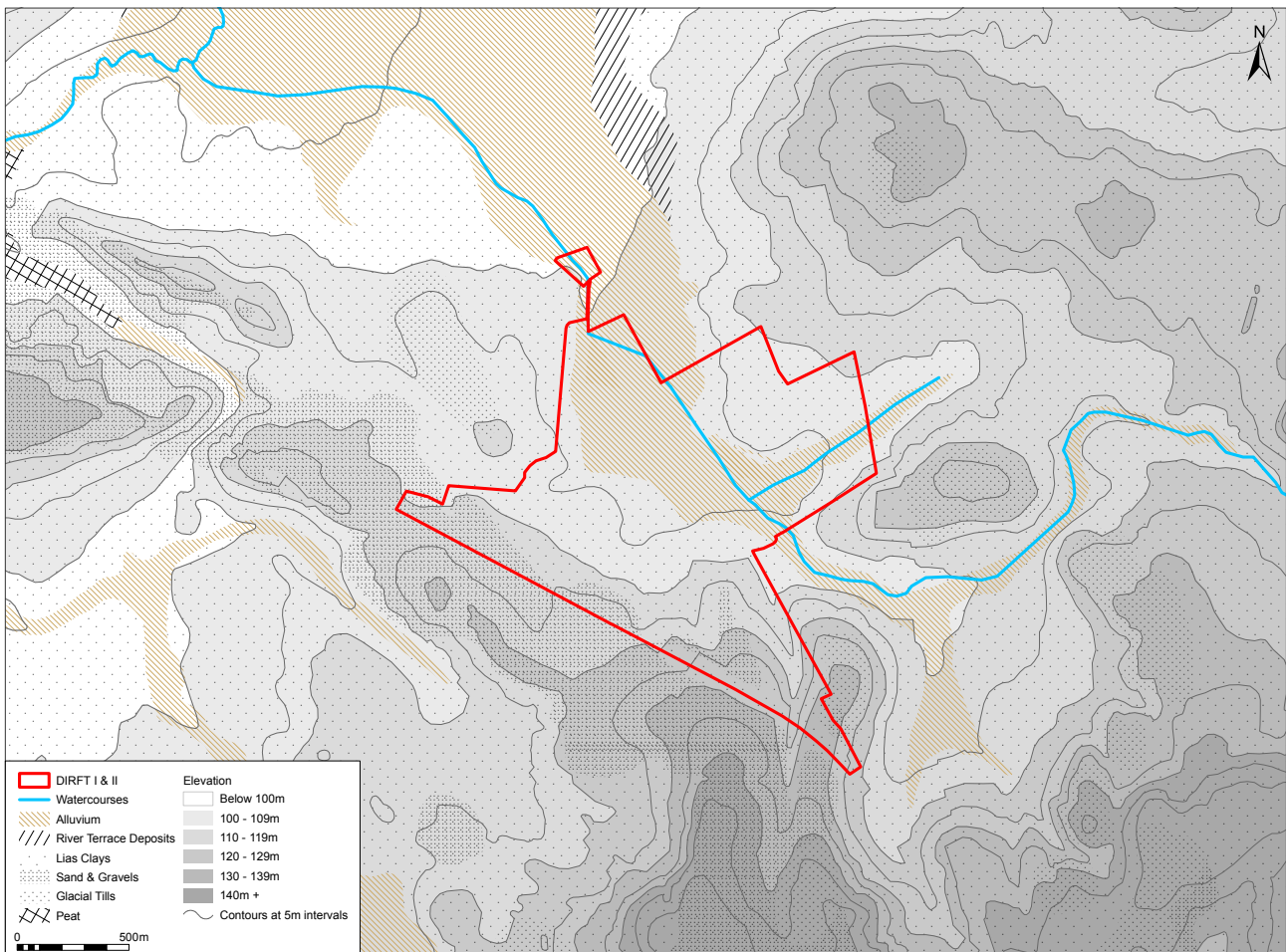


FIGURE 1.2 – GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

At CCF coarse Pleistocene gravel of the valley floor was overlain by a 50-100m wide corridor of Holocene overbank flood deposits adjacent to the Clifton Brook. Former palaeochannels were associated with the wider western area of floodplain, with alluvium narrowing to the south-east of a confluence with another tributary stream joining from the north-east. Much of the alluvium was found to comprise an upper level (up to 0.5m thick) widening out well beyond the channels to conceal many of the Iron Age features. The floodplain widens to the north-west and it is notable that the 2012/13 investigations north of LD similarly found Late Iron Age/Roman-British landscape ditches sealed by upper alluvium but cutting a lower level (Cotswold Archaeology 2013b). Significantly, in terms of landscape utilisation, a much greater expanse of low-lying alluvium opens up within an extensive flood plain further downstream, to the north of DIRFT II.

A wider region around DIRFT comprises ‘the main watershed of Middle England’ (Natural England 2013). The Warwickshire Avon drains to the west, the Welland and Upper Nene to the east coast and the Cherwell/Ouse flows south to the Thames. In terms of landscape character DIRFT lies within the ‘Northamptonshire Uplands’ zone (*ibid*, NCA 95). The National Character Area includes the elevated claylands of north-west Northamptonshire, the south-east extent of Leicestershire and eastern Warwickshire; it is a landscape characterised by undulating hills, worn smooth by a long process of denudation with long, low ridge lines promoting wide views (*ibid*, 164). Three ‘upland’ tiers comprise land at 600 to 800’, at 400 to 600’ and at 400 to 200’. DIRFT itself lies predominately within the lower zone at c.300-360’ (c.100-120m aOD). The extensive NCA is summarised as follows:

‘This long range of clay hills extends from the Cotswolds and Cherwell Valley in the south-west to the low ground of the Leicestershire Vales and Market Harborough. In the west it abuts the low ground of Feldon and on the east side subsides towards the Nene valley within the Northamptonshire Vales. It is part of the Wolds landscape that includes the dip slope of the Cotswolds and extend to High Leicestershire and the Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds...In the central section...although there are some settlements predominantly situated on hilltops, most lie within the small, sheltered valleys and this, together with the infrequency of the isolated farms and cottages, gives the area a remote and rather empty quality’ (ibid 162-4).

The County boundary of Warwickshire and Northamptonshire bisects DIRFT, while Leicestershire lies only 4km to the north. Long-lived County boundaries are of potential interest for archaeological narratives. The relevant stretch coincides with the Raing Brook north-west of Barby Nortoft but diverges to follow a dog-leg of field-boundaries, broadly respected by the north-west edge of DIRFT II, before utilising Roman Watling Street. It may not be coincidental that the region lay within the probable border-land zone of three major Late Iron Age

tribal territories, coinage broadly defining the territory of the Corieltauvi to the north, the Dobunni to the south-west and the powerful Catuvellauni to the south-east (Cunliffe 1995, 72; 2013). Throughout subsequent history the area has been a transport hub, from the construction of Roman Watling Street, through the industrial development of the canals and railways, the M1 motorway - DIRFT is situated immediately north of Watford Gap, ‘gateway to southern England’ - to the development of the modern rail freight terminal. When the watershed is also considered this East Midlands area has a strong claim to be at the heart of England.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT AT CRICK AND KILSBY

This volume does not attempt an update of the wider regional distribution mapping in Volume I, based on the upper reaches of the Warwickshire Avon and Nene valleys (Hughes and Woodward 2015, Figs 12, 23, 37, 70 & 82). However, some additional local sites are compared with the DIRFT data within the Chapters and Discussion.

The Northamptonshire Uplands have been described as typical of a ‘Wolds’ heavy clay landscape, usually cleared later in prehistory and which attracted little early cultivation (Natural England 2013, 174). The large river valleys, such as those of the Nene and Warwickshire Avon, provided lighter, well drained soils and it is those regions that attracted most of the Neolithic/Early Bronze Age activity and co-axial field divisions of the Middle-Late Bronze Age. The claylands are less straightforward. Conventional wisdom has held that ‘*the area was an upland grazing and woodland resource for the surrounding settlements and was largely ignored by the Romans*’ (*ibid*). This hypothesis is overstated, since as will be shown, cereal cultivation was practiced as early as the Middle Bronze Age in micro-regions of clay uplands, where soils were favourable, whilst the Iron Age settlement at DIRFT and adjacent areas of Crick and Kilsby was both highly successful and almost certainly permanent. Nevertheless, the wider area of Crick and Kilsby has produced only very slight evidence for activity in the earlier prehistoric periods, with little evidence for barrow ring-ditches.

The Domesday survey records the village of Crick as ‘Crec’ (Goodger 2009). It may derive its name from the Celtic word for hill (‘Cruc’) or rock/cliff (‘Kreik’ which became Old Welsh ‘Creic’) (*ibid*; Wikipedia). If the former, the hill in question was probably ‘Crack’s Hill’ (Fig. 1.2 & 6.3) a mile north-east of the village and adjacent to the canal (SP 595736) from where it dominates surrounding views, including that of DIRFT. However, Goodger, who suggested the name derives from the Early or Middle Iron Age, considers it to recall the edge of the Middle Lias ‘Northamptonshire Plateau’ upon which the village itself is located (*ibid*). Interestingly Crack’s Hill is depicted surmounted by a ring-work on Stevens’ map of 1813. However, the apparent earthwork is no longer extant, probably due to late ridge and furrow (steam

plough?) cultivation which covers the entire summit. The ring-work was almost certainly erroneously labelled as a 'Roman Station' although this confirms it was considered ancient. It is not unreasonable to speculate that such a hill-top enclosing earthwork might represent an Iron Age ring-work, in keeping with the Celtic place-name. However, in the absence of archaeological verification of form, scale and date such an interpretation remains unconfirmed.

Wider Iron Age activity on Lias beyond DIRFT at Crick includes a probable settlement at the 135m contour, south-west of the village, just east of the M1. Occupation was suggested on the basis of an area of charcoal-rich ploughsoil associated with Iron Age pottery and burnt stone (CBA Group 9 Newsletter 7, 1977, 29). More conclusively Cotswold Archaeology undertook an excavation north-west of the village on similarly elevated ground at around 125m aOD (Cotswold Archaeology 2013a; Mudd *et al* forthcoming). The site examined a deep-ditched square Middle Iron Age enclosure containing a 9m diameter roundhouse and six other circular structures. To the north and north-west of DIRFT I and II aerial photographic rectification (Cox 2009) and subsequent geophysical survey and trenching for the Sustainable Urban Extension proposal site (Rugby 'SUE') have to date detected only fragmentary Iron Age evidence, including a Middle Iron Age enclosure at 'Area 2', c.650m north-west of and occupying the same ridge as the contemporary NLK site (Oxford Archaeology 2010; Cotswold Archaeology 2013c). This c.80x75m square deep-ditched Middle Iron Age enclosure contained at least one c.12m diameter ring-ditch and a cluster of storage pits. A 1996/7 magnetometer geophysical survey and trial trenching evaluation south-west of M1 Junction 18 and 500m north-east of TL located yet another enclosure site (John Samuels 1997). This comprised a 70m square enclosed farmstead of Late Iron Age to early Roman date.

Roman Watling Street traverses DIRFT and cuts through part of the former Iron Age settlement area, where overlain by the modern A5. The Romano-British occupation of Crick beyond DIRFT includes a settlement situated on glacial gravel at 130m OD, north-west of the church (SP 587725) (CBA 1977, 29). Another possible Romano-British settlement is suspected, also on glacial gravel, at the 120m OD contour east of the M1 and west of Crick village (NHER 451; SP 577733). Roman pottery along with building stone was found by fieldwalking immediately adjacent to the motorway cutting (see Fig. 1.3) suggesting a potentially truncated settlement (*ibid*). Another farm on gravel subsoil is suspected, based on surface finds, c.0.5km to the east-north-east (SP 581734) at 120m OD (CBA 1977, 29; *ibid*), whilst the Rugby SUE investigations just north-west of NLK ('Area 5') identified late 1st to 2nd century Romano-British enclosure/paddock and boundary ditches (Oxford Archaeology 2010; Cotswold Archaeology 2013c).

The early Saxon occupation of the Northamptonshire Uplands is characteristically found along the river-

valleys, although villages with 'ton' place names suggest colonisation of the slopes above the valleys by the Middle Saxon period. Regional place-names with 'by' suffixes, such as Barby, indicate Scandinavian influences (NE 2013, 174). A 'Saxon' female burial adjacent to a pit containing a skull and dog skeleton were found cut into the Watling Street when a section was cut in 1947 (SP 569732; NHER 6446; Rugby School Magazine 1948, 34-7; & see Fig. 1.3 for location). Another early Saxon burial was found in 1977 just to the north-east on the east side of Watling Street (SP5680 7340; NHER 444; CBA 1977, 29).

The occupation in the late Saxon period is likely to have been of a higher density than the preceding period and was almost certainly concentrated at and around the medieval villages. Medieval and post-medieval influences within the Northamptonshire Uplands are characterised as sparse settlement with nucleated villages on hilltops or at valley heads, as at Crick, with mixed farming and extensive ridge and furrow (NE 2013, 174; Stearne 1974). By the 14th century much of the woodland of the Northamptonshire Uplands was cleared with ridge and furrow cultivation dominating the landscape. Population shrank following the Black Death, with the result that much of arable was turned to less intensively managed pasture. The medieval and post-medieval background for Crick and Kilsby are beyond the scope of the present publication but it is notable in passing that much of the medieval area of Crick, north-east and east of the church, was abandoned. Aerial photographs trace the extensive ridge and furrow relating to the medieval parishes, with the original pattern of interlocked furlongs largely recoverable. Much of these systems remain extant and buried furrows were a feature of the present excavations above the stream floodplain.

The common fields of Crick, Kilsby and Barby Nortoft were enclosed by Acts of Parliament of 1776 and 1778 respectively (NRO, Enclosure Map 1778). Although little is known of the history of Barby Nortoft it was apparently a detached part of Barby Parish and is first referred to in 1247 (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=126467>)

HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION AT DIRFT

The junction area of the M1 and A428 was first identified in the late 1970s as a motorway orientated growth point. The Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT) was constructed as a regional node of road-rail intermodal facility, providing rail connected terminals and warehouses associated with rail freight flows to and from the Port of Felixstowe and the Channel Tunnel. The 1990's archaeological projects were financed by DIRFT co. (part of Severn Trent plc) and were completed in 1997. These comprised investigation of over 124ha comprising DIRFT East (53ha), DIRFT Central (16ha) and DIRFT South (55ha) which together comprise 'DIRFT I'. This area includes rail-road intermodal freight terminals and associated warehouses with a rail connection from the Northampton loop of the West Coast Main Line (via DIRFT

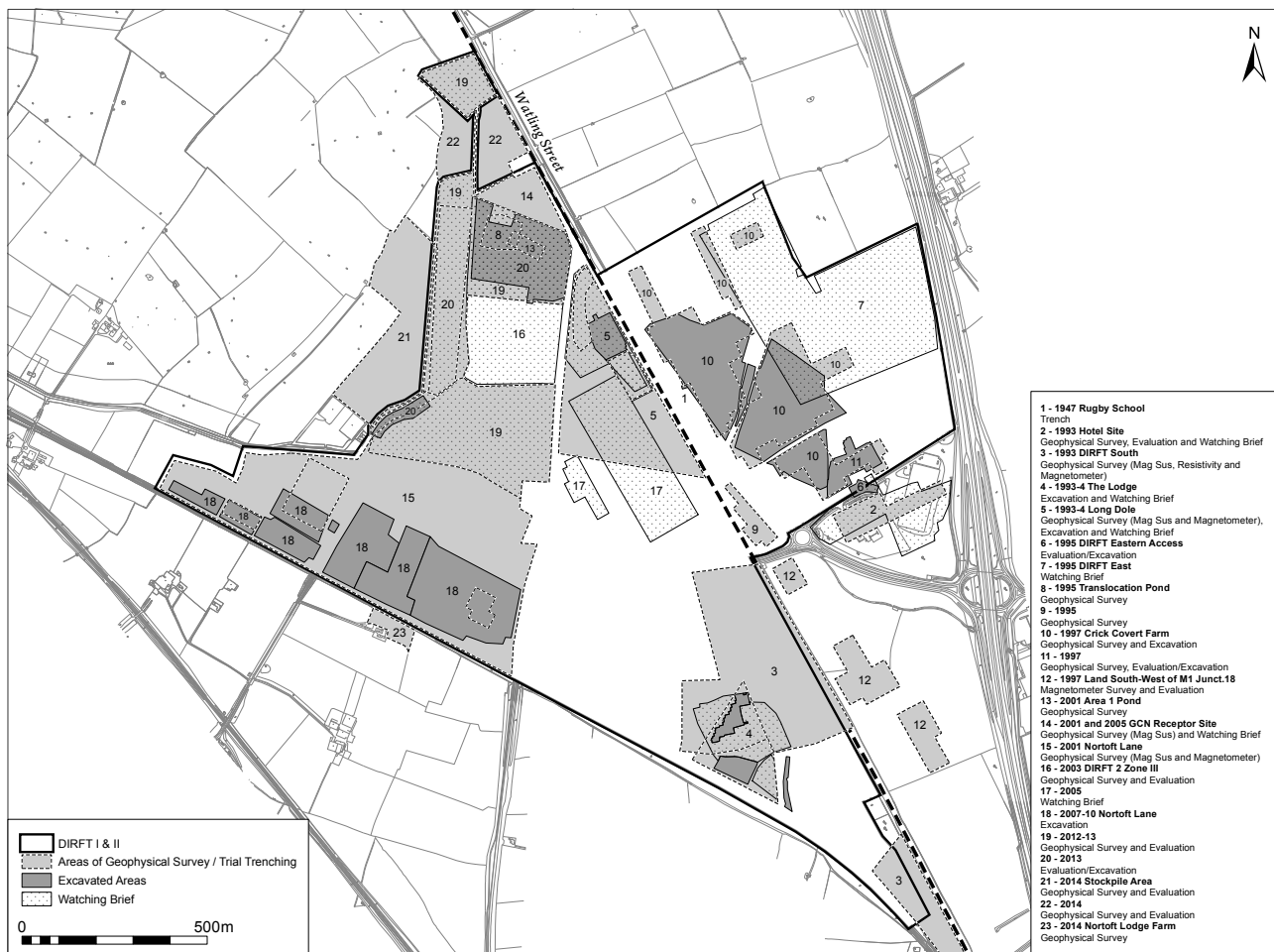


FIG. 1.3 HISTORY OF INVESTIGATION

South – ‘DIRFT Railport’). The remaining 54ha of area of the landscape study reported here comprises ‘DIRFT II’ (otherwise referred to as DIRFT West). The Severn Trent plc sold the site to Prologis in 2006. DIRFT II is currently under construction following planning permission in 2005 and includes associated rail connections. The further extension of ‘DIRFT III’ and the Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) to the west of the DIRFT II site, are to be progressed for further warehousing and HGV parking and residential development respectively. These areas are beyond the scope of this archaeological reporting stage.

Table 1.1 lists all surveys and grey-literature reports for DIRFT I & II. The earliest phases of developer-funded field-work commenced with geophysical surveys across DIRFT Central and South by Stratascan in 1993 (Stratascan 1993a-d) leading to the first discoveries of archaeology on the site. The two sites recognised at that time were LD – that turned out to be the north-westernmost extent of the CCF IA settlement – and two sites, one Iron Age and the other Romano-British, on higher ground at TL to the south of the A428. RPS trial trenching (Bennell 1994) led to excavation of the core of these sites by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 1994 (Chapman 1994), and was followed by watching briefs of their outlying portions continuing into 1995-6. Each site produced evidence for around 30 Iron Age ring-gullies with associated enclosures.

The next phase of work came with the development of the area between Watling Street and the M1, commencing with another series of geophysical surveys by Stratascan in 1996 and 1997 at CCF (the subject of the companion Archaeopress publication by Hughes & Woodward 2015). These spectacularly revealed the presence and spatial layout of a major aggregated IA settlement to the east of the Roman Road, extending south-eastwards from LD (Fig. 1.4). This site was then trial trenched by RPS (Connell 1997a) with seven trenches providing detailed information about the form and preservation of the identified ring-gully complexes and the longevity of their occupation through the Iron Age. The evaluation also indicated that part of the settlement (7 hectares) was preserved beneath alluvium while other areas (6 hectares) had been truncated by later ploughing.

The greater part of the main DIRFT East complex (CCF) was excavated by the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) in 1997 (Fig. 1.5). This site was, to some extent, the ‘jewel in the crown’ of the wider DIRFT project reported here. The importance of CCF was due in part to the systematic investigation and innovative post-excavation strategy - made possible by a staggering dataset including over 100 distinct ring-gullies, other enclosure ditches and discrete features comprising almost 5,000 contexts.

Site Name	Date	Organisation	Type of Work	Bibliography (Reports)	Notes
Watling Street	Feb. 1995	RPS	Evaluation	Connell. M. 1995a	-
Watling Street	August 1995	RPS	Conditions Survey	Connell. M. 1995b	-
DIRFT East					
DIRFT East	August 1996	RPS/ Stratascan	Geophysics	RPS/Stratascan	Mag sus of CCF
DIRFT East and Central	1997	Stratascan	Geophysics	<i>DIRFT East</i> – figures only	Wider report
Crick Covert Farm	Feb 1997	RPS	TT	Connell, M. 1997a	Main eval. rpt
Covert Covert Farm	1998	BUFAU	Excavation	Hughes 1998; Woodward <i>et al</i> 1998; Woodward, A. & Hughes, G. 2007 Hughes, A. and Woodward, A. 2015	Interim, Assessment, 2007 interim publication, Final Publication
DIRFT East Topsoil Stripping	1997	RPS	WB	Connell, M. 1997b.	
DIRFT East Access Road	July 1997	RPS	WB	Masefield, R. 1997b	Single roundhouse
Crick Hotel	July 1997	RPS	TT	Masefield, R. 1997a	Evaluation
Crick Hotel	1999	Foundations Archaeology	Excavation	King, R. & Napthan, M. 1999	RG cluster
DIRFT East	2000	BUFAU	WB	Watt, S. 2000	1997-8 WB around Ex.
DIRFT Central and South					
'The Triangle'/Long Dole	1993	Stratascan	Geophysics (mag sus and mag)	Stratascan, July/Aug 1993a Stratascan, Sept 1993c Stratascan, Dec 1993d	DIRFT East Mag sus and Magnetometer of LD Triangle
'The Lodge'	1993	Stratascan	Geophysics (mag)	Stratascan, Aug 1993b	Magnetometer survey
Long Dole/ The Lodge	1994	RPS	Evaluation	Bennell, M. 1994	Evaluations
Long Dole	1994	Northants Archaeology	Excavation	Chapman, A. 1994	Excavation
Long Dole /The Lodge	1995	Northants Archaeology	Excavations	Chapman, A. 1995	Initial Publication
Area between A428 and A5	1995	Geophysical Surveys of Bradford	Geophysics (mag)	GSB	Magnetometer for John Samuels
Area between A428 and M1	1995?	Stratascan	Geophysics	Plot only	Magnetometer for John Samuels
DIRFT Central	2002	RPS	ES Chapter 14	DIRFT Central Cultural Heritage - Chapter 14	ES
Long Dole	May 1994	Northants Archaeology	WB.	Leigh, D. 1995	Shallow strip N of Long Dole - no arch.
DIRFT West					
Zone 3	1995	Stratascan	Geophysics		
Translocation Pond	June 1995	RPS	WB	Masefield, R. 1995	Negative WB
DIRFT II, Zone 3	July 1995	RPS	WB	RPS 1995. DIRFT West Archaeology: Geotechnical Trial Pit Observations	Geotechnical test pits – no archaeology observed
DIRFT II	July-August 2001	Stratascan	Geophysics (mag sus and mag)	Stratascan, Sept 2001a	Warwicks survey
DIRFT West	Sept 2001	Stratascan	Geophysics	Stratascan, 2001b	
DIRFT II, Zone 2	2001	RPS	TT	Connell, M. 2001	DIRFT West
DIRFT II, Zone 3	2005	RPS	WB	RPS, 2005	Newt pond WB

DIRFT II, Zone 2	2006	Cotswold Archaeology	Excavation	CA, 2007	NLK W. post-ex. assessment
DIRFT II, Zone 2	2010	Cotswold Archaeology	Excavation	CA, July 2011	NLK E. post-ex. assessment
DIRFT II, Zone 3	2012	Cotswold Archaeology	TT	CA, 2012	Evaluation of Areas A-E
DIRFT II, Zone 3	2013	RPS	WSI	LeQuesne, C. Feb 2013.	WSI
DIRFT II, Zone 3	2013	Cotswold Archaeology	Excavation	CA, Nov 2013.	SMS Areas B and C
Nortoft Lodge Farm	2014	Stratsacan	Geophysical survey	Stratascan, June 2014.	Gradiometer survey (0.6ha)
DIRFT II, Zone 3 Stockpile	2014	Cotswold Archaeology	TT	Carlyle, S. Feb 2014	Evaluation (negative)
DIRFT III Railway Embankment	2014	Cotswold Archaeology	TT	James, P. & Coyne, P. 2014	Evaluation (negative)

TABLE 1.1 THE DIRFT INVESTIGATIONS

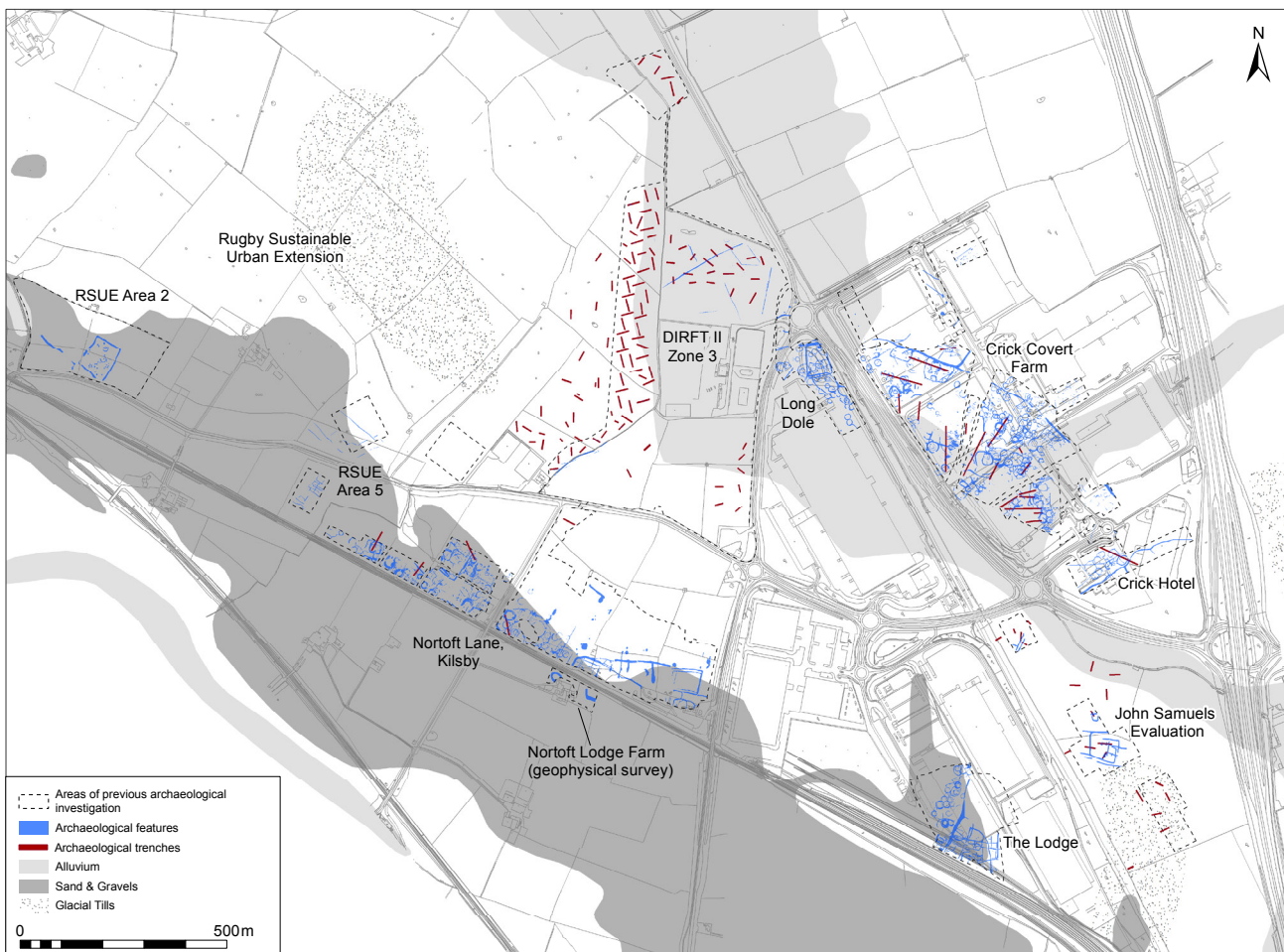


FIG. 1.4 - THE SITES AS EXCAVATED

The excavation was split into three areas reflecting modern fields, with the sole linking archaeological feature comprising a major curving east-west ditch bounding the entire settlement. The eastern field (Field 1) was 1.48ha in extent spanning both sides of a palaeochannel of the Clifton Brook. Occupation was present on both banks ('Clusters 16 and 17' to the east and a small Cluster 18 to the west) whilst the whole area had been sealed beneath the upper level

of post Iron Age alluvium. Within this low-lying fluvial area underlying glacial gravel deposits thinned upslope. Cluster 17 was notable for the presence of four-posters in addition to ring-gullies. Although the density of Iron Age ring-gullies and enclosures decreased as the gravel petered out, a separate sparser group ('Cluster 18') was located upslope upon the Lias Clay to the east. Artefacts from Field 1, though not found in large quantities, included

mainly Early-Middle Iron Age ceramics, along with ‘*some animal bone, burnt daub, slag, rare iron objects, including two smelted cakes/ingots, saddle quern fragments and hearth or boiling stones*’ whilst the environmental samples included some evidence for cereals.

Central ‘Field 2’ comprised a 5.14ha area of investigation. Further concentrations of ring-gullies, including ‘Cluster 7’, were found to have been recut on multiple occasions reflecting longevity of use. The main south-east/north-west aligned palaeo-channel zone in the low-lying southern area was up to 50m wide (in all its phases). A tributary east-west channel in central area was some 20m wide and several ring-gully clusters were investigated beside and between these streams. Artefactual evidence was present in moderate quantities, sufficient (with the aid of scientific dating – see below) to indicate occupation from the Early/Middle to Late Iron Age. Subsequent studies have indicated concentration of artefacts in gully terminals with patterning suggestive of favoured depositional practices (Woodward and Hughes 2007).

Western ‘Field 3’ comprised 5.27ha and was once again dominated by the main paleochannel and its tributary. The earliest stratified material was recovered from a pit cutting the edge of primary channel deposits and comprised fragments of very early Beaker Period vessels, thus providing a useful indication of the date of the earlier phase of alluviation associated with the stream. Several more clusters of ring-gullies were investigated, along with several larger enclosures. These included a large concentric-ring elliptical enclosure (‘Cluster 13’) whose southern side was eroded by the channel. The landscape boundary ditch that enclosed the northern area of the Iron Age activity also formed the northern side of two further enclosures and associated Clusters in Field 3. ‘Cluster 10’ was defined by a D-shaped enclosure, with sub-divisions and internal ring-gullies, whilst ‘Cluster 12’ was defined by a rectangular enclosure (Cluster 12) cut through an earlier system of ditches. Most of the ceramics from Field 3 were of Early to Middle Iron Age date but later Iron Age sherds were also recovered from the D-shaped enclosure (Cluster 10). The latest phase of occupation was found within the northern area of the field and included pits and ditches of a modest Romano-British farmstead including a drainage-gully defined building plot.

CH comprised a topographically elevated cluster of ring-gullies and enclosures above and south of the broadly contemporary CCF. It was subject to separate evaluation and watching brief by RPS Clouston (Masefield 1997a and b), followed by excavation of the core area in 1998 (King & Napthan 1999). Watching brief to the north of the main settlement produced two overlapping ring-gullies cut by a rectangular Iron Age paddock. The main CH occupation comprised ten ring-gullies and several associated enclosures (Chapter 3).

Geophysical survey was undertaken in advance of the development of DIRFT West in 2001 (Stratascan 2001a

& b) and provided evidence of another extensive ring-gully settlement complex. The site occupied a sand and gravel ridge to the north of the railway line adjacent to Nortoft Lane, and north-west of the Iron Age/Romano-British settlement excavated at TL. Its Iron Age date was confirmed by trial trenching conducted by RPS (Connell 2001). The development of DIRFT West was delayed until 2006, at which time RPS, now employed by Prologis, tasked Cotswold Archaeology with investigation of the western two thirds of the settlement. However, due to various factors, the process was restricted to a strip, map and sample exercise with targeted excavation of particular aspects (Cotswold Archaeology 2007; Chapter 5). The remaining eastern portion of the Iron Age settlement was fully excavated in 2010 ahead of the development of a supermarket distribution centre (Cotswold Archaeology 2011). In combination these two areas have produced approximately 70 ring-gullies of circular structures, together with several larger enclosures of both sub-oval and rectangular form. Discrete features included Bronze Age cremations, a relative concentration of pits (compared with the other DIRFT sites) and waterholes. This fieldwork also revealed evidence for several phases of Romano-British stock enclosures extending to the south-east of the earlier settlement.

The final development phase of the core area of DIRFT was commenced in spring 2013 with groundworks around the former Eddie Stobart compound (‘Site C’) to the north of the 2010 site. This area is the lowest, and therefore wettest, part of the DIRFT sites. No traces of settlement were recovered but several boundary ditches and an enclosure of Roman date, along with a partial ring-gully, were identified (CA 2013). The County Boundary with Warwickshire was also targeted with excavation at this time (‘Site B’) (*ibid*; Chapter 5).

TERMINOLOGY AND CHRONOLOGY

DIRFT East, Central, South (that comprise DIRFT I) and DIRFT West (DIRFT II) have been used when referring to the current landuse (Fig. 1.1). The individual ‘occupation sites’ and are abbreviated as follows;

Crick, Covert Farm - ‘CCF’

The Long Dole - ‘LD’

The Lodge - ‘TL’

Crick Hotel - ‘CH’

Nortoft Lane, Kilsby - ‘NLK’ (East & West)

Within the report distinct ring-ditches or ring-gullies are individually termed a ‘ring-gully’ (abbreviated to RG1 etc) irrespective of ditch/gully scale, which is referred to in the description. Recuts of ring-gullies are numbered RG1.1, RG1.2 etc, with individual recuts attributable to sub-phases within a ‘Period’. Although the term ‘roundhouse’ has been

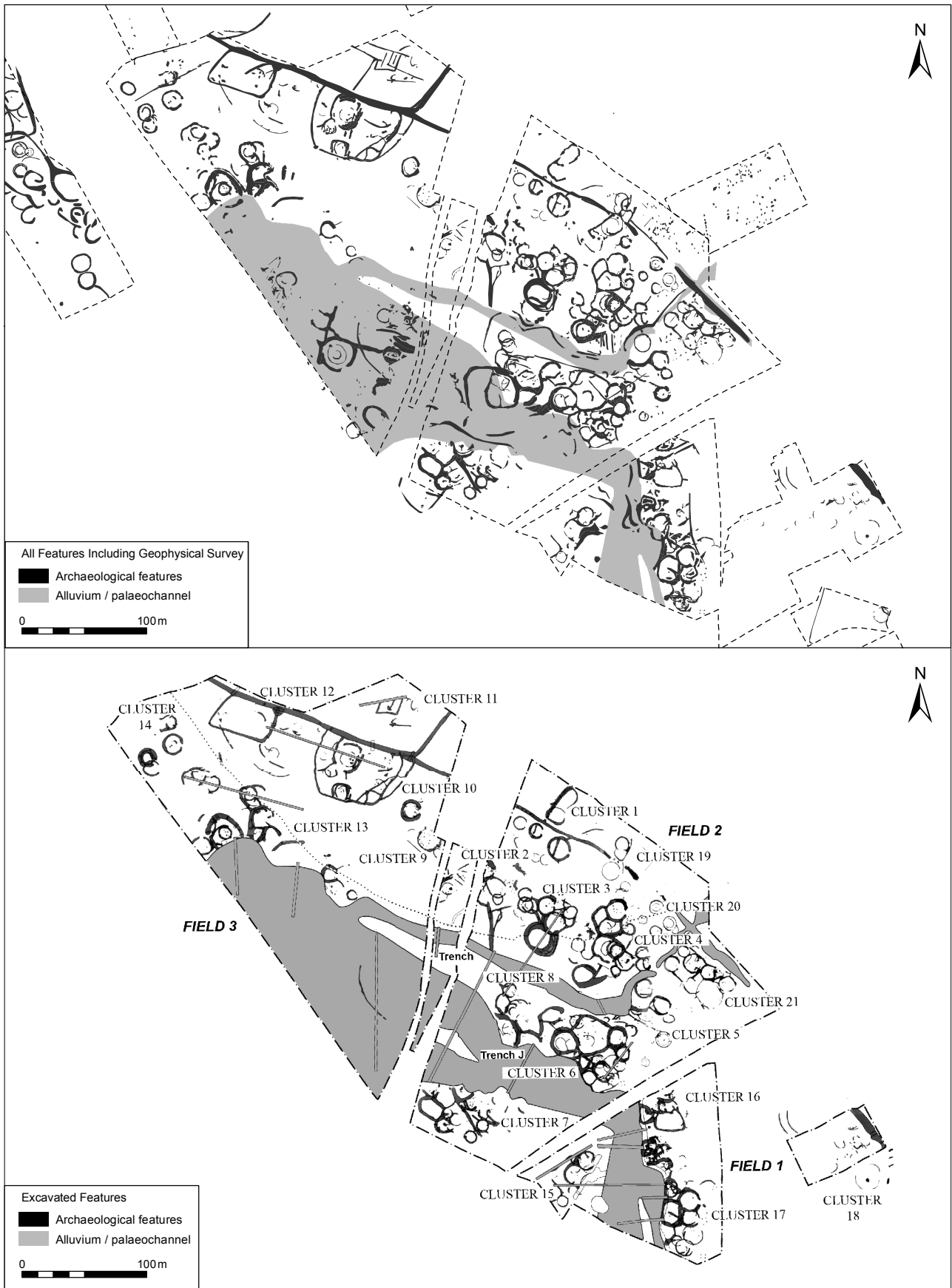


FIG. 1.5 – CRICK COVERT FARM – ALL PHASES

applied within the discussion where appropriate, ‘circular structure’ is preferred where function is uncertain. The terms ‘living structure’ and ‘ancillary structure’ are used where there is sufficient archaeological evidence to guide the interpretation. Where finds patterns are ambiguous the orientation of entrances is analysed in order to potentially differentiate non-domestic functions. The project has encountered several examples of ring-gullies around ‘four-posters’ in addition to the ubiquitous simple form. ‘Groups’ are used for pit clusters, single enclosures etc, whilst ‘cluster’ (rather than ‘module’) is used to describe discrete groups of ring-gullies, enclosures and four-posters that may represent extended family groups.

‘Boundary ditch’ has been used for ditches flanking but not enclosing individual occupation sites. In the discussion the wider terms ‘landscape ditch’ (LD) and ‘ranch boundary’ have been used to reflect recognition of landscape-level use. As usual ‘enclosure’ has been used where a particular ditch encloses a restricted activity area (E1, E2 etc for CH, LD & TL). Whilst recognising that function may have changed over time, attempts have been made to differentiate enclosure uses such as residential enclosures (i.e. containing residential roundhouses) stock or ritual enclosures.

‘Pit’ functions are characterised based their profiles and fills (ecofacts and artefacts) particularly where deposits are primary. ‘Storage’ is considered a valid interpretation for cylindrical form pits, with a working assumption that the majority of such forms were used as seed-grain stores. The term ‘ritual pit’ is generally avoided in favour of pits containing placed or structured deposits, as it is clear that many Iron Age pits with ritual offerings or symbolic/structured depositions represent secondary re-use of pits with other functions. The report recognises that post-holes and small cylindrical pits are not always possible to differentiate, whilst, as with pits, there is clear evidence nationally for re-use of structural post-holes for placed-depositions.

The term ‘aggregated’ site (rather than agglomerated) is used for a distinct concentration of settlement clusters of the ‘East Midlands style’. Each geographically distinct settlement area is therefore classed as an aggregated settlement. The population represented by the combined zones of Iron Age occupation sites is referred to as ‘the Crick/Kilsby community’. Archaeological periods are henceforth abbreviated; Bronze Age to ‘BA’, Iron Age to ‘IA’, Roman-British to ‘RB’, with prefixes applied for Early and Late (e.g. EBA, LIA etc).

For site chronology broad phases are referred to as Periods 1, 2 etc, with sub-periods applied where dating evidence allows (e.g. 3.1 and 3.2 of the earlier Middle Iron Age). The following Period boundaries apply in both DIRFT monographs, and are broadly in accordance with most national schemes and with the Updated East Midlands Research Agenda and Strategy (Knight, Vyner & Allen 2012) as follows:

Period 1.1 – Early-Middle Neolithic - c.4000 – 2900 BC)

Period 1.2 – Late Neolithic - c.2900 – 2500 BC

Period 1.3 – Early Bronze Age (EBA) - c.2500 – 1500 BC

Period 1.4 – Middle Bronze Age (MBA) - c.1500 – 1150 BC

Period 2.1 – Late Bronze Age (LBA) - c.1150 – 800 BC (plain ware)

Period 2.2 – Earliest Iron Age (earliest IA) - c.800BC - 600BC (decorated ware)

Period 2.3 – Early Iron Age (EIA) - c.600 BC – 400 BC

Period 3.1 – Earlier Middle Iron Age (earlier MIA) c.400 – 300/250 BC

Period 3.2 – Earlier MIA - c.250/300 – 200 BC

Period 4.1 – Later Middle Iron Age (later MIA) - c.200 – 150 BC

Period 4.2 – Later MIA (c.150 – 100 BC)

Period 5.1 – Late Iron Age (LIA) - c.100BC – AD 0/43

Period 5.2 – Late Iron Age/early Romano-British (LIA/early RB) (c.AD 0/43 – 70)

Period 6.1 – Early Romano-British (early RB) (c.AD 70 – 200)

Period 6.2 – Mid Roman (mid RB) (c.AD 200 – 300)

Period 6.3 – Late Roman (late RB) (c.AD 300 – 410)

Period 7.1 – Early Saxon (c.AD410 – 600)

Period 7.2 – Middle Saxon (c.AD600 – c.AD 850)

Period 7.3 – Late Saxon (c.AD 850 – 1066)

Period 8 – Medieval (c.AD 1066 – 1530)

Period 9 – Post-medieval (c. AD 1530 – 1800)

The Iron Age ceramic basis is broadly in accordance with Cunliffe (2005, 97) but there is some ambiguity due to currency of overlapping styles, such that he preferred a diffuse 400/300 BC for the beginning of the MIA whilst c.450 BC is preferred in the updated Research Agenda for the East Midlands (Knight *et al* 2012). For DIRFT the conventional 400BC date is used, although the absurdity of artificial and arbitrary breaks in cultural flow is acknowledged.

Kidd (1999, 3-4) discussed the basic ceramic distinctions for IA Northamptonshire. In short Post Deverel-Rimbury

(PDR) plainwares were replaced by LBA/EIA styles, which remained conservative until the 5th/4th century BC, when earlier La Tène (LT) styles appear. From the mid 1st century BC to the mid 1st century AD curvilinear decorated LT styles are present. Because shell-temper appears throughout and forms are long-lived with few diagnostic types, there remain difficulties distinguishing between certain Periods, including the LBA and EIA and EIA and MIA, *‘whilst further problems derive from radiocarbon calibration platform in the EIA (c.800-400 cal BC). Thus far the main contribution radiocarbon dating has been to provide some measure, however imprecise, of an absolute chronology as well as dating specific features...’*

Refinement of the broad LBA to IA date of certain DIRFT pottery assemblages was a key objective of the 2014 radiocarbon-dating programme but the degree this might assist with the chronology of IA ceramics in the East Midlands generally remains less tangible. The integration of the site chronology, using stratigraphy (where available) and absolute dating, to test pottery sequence has been of particular importance. BUFAU attempted to circumnavigate the problems associated with the radiocarbon calibration curve by use of luminescence dating. However, the margin of error for these dates, if anything, was broader and less reliable than C14. For this reason a programme of radiocarbon dating was conducted, using suitable material collected from all the DIRFT sites, to improve the accuracy of the overall site chronology. Suitable samples were identified during a data review process in 2013 and 2014 with two tranches submitted to allow for a feedback process. These were selected from the most secure contexts, including grain depositions and organic residues on pottery, to target key issues. Key phases, most notably the beginning and/or end of structural ring-gully sequences, were chosen to:

Date the possible BA activity on the NLK sites, including cremations and the ‘burnt stone related’ activity;

Establish the date of the earliest IA settlement, targeting contexts containing confirmed EIA pottery and the early phases of ring-gullies at each site;

Establish the terminal date of the ‘LIA’ activity.

PROJECT AIMS

The various DIRFT sites reported are important examples of ‘aggregated settlements’ in their own right but this volume also aims, in combination with CCF, to provide an overall interpretation of social, economic, political and spiritual aspects of the overall ‘Crick/ Kilsby community’ throughout the IA. This report therefore builds upon the important work at CCF, where the sheer numbers of circular buildings allow population estimates well above the norm for other British IA rural sites. A key question is whether clustering of settlements is genuinely unusual or is a product of restricted area investigation elsewhere. If the site is unusual why did it emerge, what level of social, economic and political organisation does it represent and what mechanisms led to its demise?

The aims of Volume 1 are reprised with amendments to consider the wider community as a whole as follows:

1. Chronology: to assist in the dating of the origin of large settlements in the East Midlands; to date the site’s abandonment; to calibrate, through C14, the IA pottery sequence.
2. Settlement: to examine settlement development, zonation, building and enclosure functions, economy, population and the dynamics of decline.
3. Society: to examine cultural associations, social units within the site and non-domestic activities.
4. Economy: to examine the nature and scale of cereal storage facilities; the extent and intensity of arable cultivation, the evidence for charred/waterlogged plant remains; the identification of stock control features; the evidence for husbandry and animal butchery; the evidence for specific craft activities and trading links.

More broadly an aim was to contribute thematic information to key aspects raised in the Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the East Midlands (Knight *et al* 2012).