

THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF RENNY LODGE: ROMANO-BRITISH FARMSTEAD, WORKHOUSE, HOSPITAL, HOUSES

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with contributions from

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Archaeological investigation on the site of the former Renny Lodge Hospital, Newport Pagnell, identified at least three phases of Romano-British activity, focused on a small roadside settlement, as well as a handful of poorly-dated post-Roman features probably relating to the agricultural use of the area. It also identified the probable routes of two suspected roads, one of Roman date, the other possibly of medieval origin. The only evidence for prehistoric activity comprised a small assemblage of worked flint recovered from later deposits. In the mid 1830s the Newport Pagnell Union Workhouse, later Renny Lodge Hospital, was constructed on the site. Although demolished to ground level in 1994, a coherent structural sequence has been established from the survey of the building's footprint coupled with cartographic and documentary evidence. The site has subsequently been developed to provide affordable housing.

INTRODUCTION

Project background

In 2005 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by English Partnerships, through their archaeological consultant Archaeology & Planning Solutions, to carry out a programme of archaeological investigations at the site of the former Renny Lodge Hospital, Newport Pagnell, in advance of the construction of a housing estate (WA 2005 a-d).

The 1.5ha site lies at the junction of North Crawley Road and London Road (NGR 488670 243250), within the Tickford suburb on the south-east margin of Newport Pagnell (Fig. 1). The drift geology consists of Valley Gravel overlying Oxford Clay (BGS 1900, sheet 203). Although not mapped by the British Geological Survey, recent alluvial deposits associated with the present River Ouzel (formerly known as the Lovat, a name still used for the section closest to Newport Pagnell) occur approximately 0.1km to the south-west. The site occupies relatively level ground at just over 60m

above Ordnance Datum, on a very slight west-facing promontory overlooking the River Ouzel.

The archaeological programme included a survey of the footings, floor surfaces and other elements of the Renny Lodge Hospital building that survived the 1994 demolition. Trial trenches were excavated to evaluate the archaeological potential of the area (WA 2005a-d), the results leading to a targeted excavation covering c. 1,650m². The route of the housing estate access road was also stripped of soil and fully excavated (Fig. 1).

Archaeological background

Prehistoric

Previous archaeological work in the area has been relatively sparse, but modern gravel extraction and the study of aerial photographs has shown that the Great Ouse and Ouzel valleys were occupied from as early as 2,000 BC. At least fourteen Bronze Age barrow sites, scattered around the outskirts of Newport Pagnell, have been identified from aerial

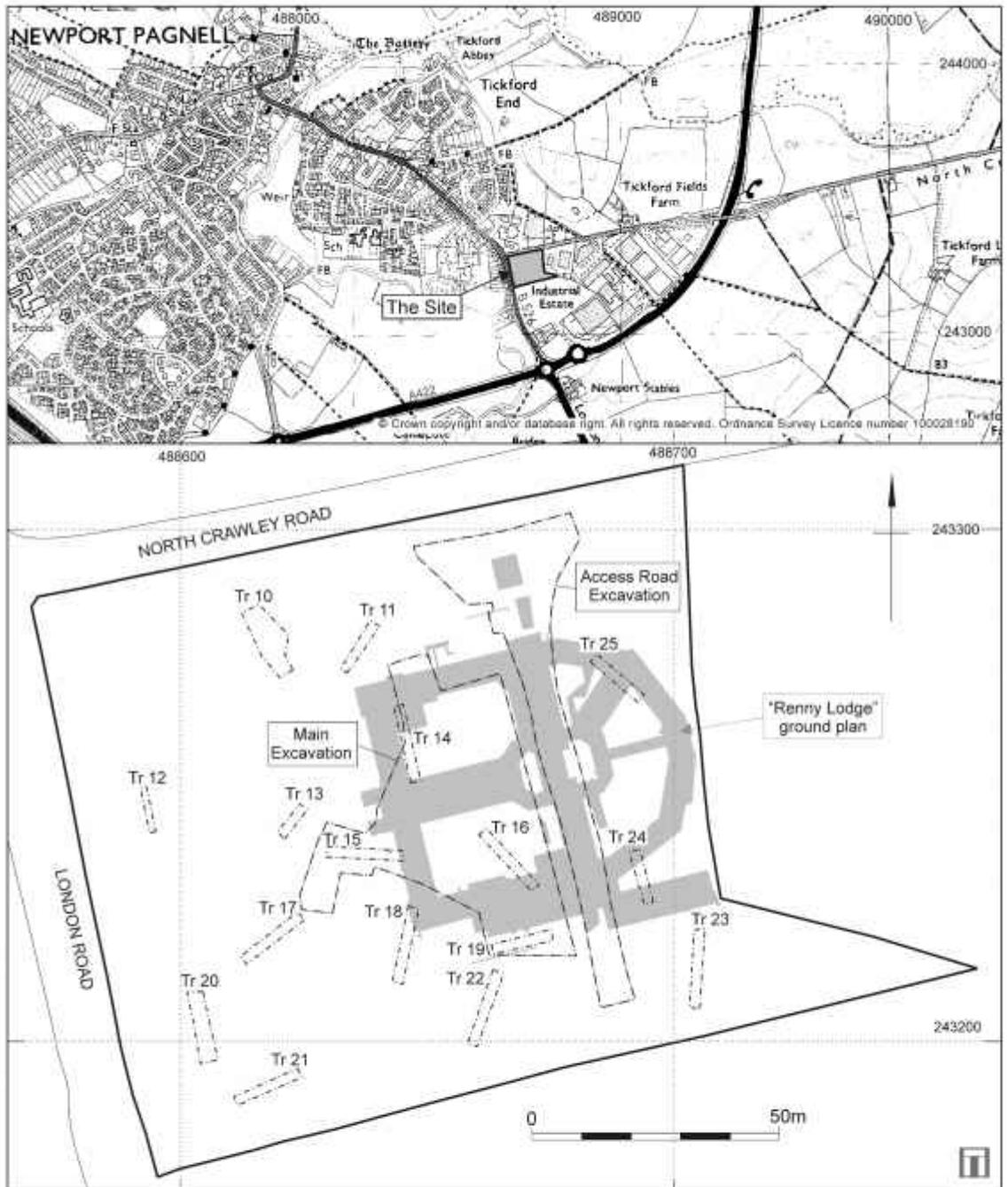


FIGURE 1 Renny Lodge: Site location plan.

photographs (Robinson 1975, 2). Fragments of a Bronze Age burial urn were recovered from a burial mound on the Bury Field, located alongside Lake Lane in the north-west of the town (Mynard and Hunt 1995, ix) and a Bronze Age collared urn was found near to Sherington Road, approximately half a mile north-east of Newport Pagnell (APS 2005).

Iron Age

Late Iron Age (1st century BC) farmsteads have also been recorded on Sherington Road, and to the east of the site, at Tickford Lodge Farm (Mynard and Hunt 1995, ix).

Romano-British

Evidence for Romano-British activity in the vicinity is relatively limited (Fig.2) but a minor settlement, dating from the 2nd to 4th centuries AD, was revealed during excavations in the gardens of Tickford Abbey (Mynard and Hunt 1995, ix). Coins and other stray finds from Kickles Farm Caldecote Hill, Willen and Tickford Fields Farm, may indicate additional settlements, although no excavations have been undertaken in these locations (Robinson 1975, 2). Slightly further afield to the south-west, excavated settlement evidence includes a small farmstead at Wood Corner, and villa at Stantonbury (Zeepvat 1993, 11).

More significantly, a Roman road connecting the settlement and fort of *Magiovinium* (Fenny Stratford) with Ircchester is considered to pass through the site (The Viatores 1964, 332–35, road 175; Fig. 2). From Ircchester, the road heads south, probably crossing the Great Ouse at the extensive Roman settlement at Ashfurlong, near Olney, 9km north of Newport Pagnell. The route from there is uncertain, though a raised agger observed in low-lying ground to the east of Tickford Abbey may indicate the continuation of this route, which then passes through Renny Lodge, crosses the Ouzel valley and heads southwards towards *Magiovinium*. It was probably less robust than some of the major routes, and designed primarily to carry local traffic (Zeepvat 1991, 18).

Saxon

The excavated site lies to the south-east of the Saxon market-town (*port*) and borough (*burgh*) of Newport Pagnell, which was probably established in the 8th or 9th century AD, with origins perhaps as early as the 6th century (Baines 1986, 128; Beamish

and Parkhouse 1991, 145–6; Robinson 1975, 5–9). The town was effectively on the English frontier, an ideal point of trade between London and Northampton, and strategically important in the AD 914–17 campaigns against the Danes of Anglia and Mercia. Before 1066, Ulf, a *thegn* of Edward the Confessor, held the manors of Tickford, Caldecot and Newport (Pagnell), the probable site of his manor house. Evidence suggests that this estate was given special privileges i.e. exemption from certain taxes, probably linked to the Danelaw boundary fixing treaty of 886 (*ibid*, 131–2).

Based on the layout of the later, medieval burgrave plots and streets, together with limited place-name evidence, Robinson (1975, 7, Fig. 2) has suggested that the original Newport burgh was on the promontory formed by the confluence of the Great Ouse and Ouzel, focused on the area of the modern High Street. Limited investigations at Bury Lawn, between Mill Street and Union Street, have revealed a few Late Saxon features, including ditches, probably representing extra mural activity (Beamish and Parkhouse 1991, 146) while pits, postholes and ditches, many containing 9th century pottery, found during gravel extraction in the area between Chicheley Street and the river (Robinson 1975, 6), to the north-east of the site, may indicate further settlement in the vicinity.

Saxon cemeteries are known outside the town. In the 1840s one was found in the vicinity of Kickles Farm to the north-west (Mynard and Hunt 1995, x). In 1900, excavations on the North Crawley Road, immediately east of the present site, revealed a second cemetery containing around 50 graves (Mynard and Hunt 1995, ix; APS 2005) and the location of this and another, smaller group of burials, on the north side of North Crawley Road, is shown on the OS map of 1925 (Fig. 7C; SMR ref 1373). Furnished Saxon burials were also found during gravel digging in the 1920s to the east of Tickford Abbey (Mynard and Hunt 1995, x). The cemeteries may indicate the existence of additional, as yet undiscovered, Saxon settlements nearby.

Medieval

By the time of the Domesday survey in 1086, the manors of Newport, Tickford and part of Caldecot were held by William, son of Ansculf de Picquigny. The three were listed separately. Newport was one of only two boroughs in Buckinghamshire; the

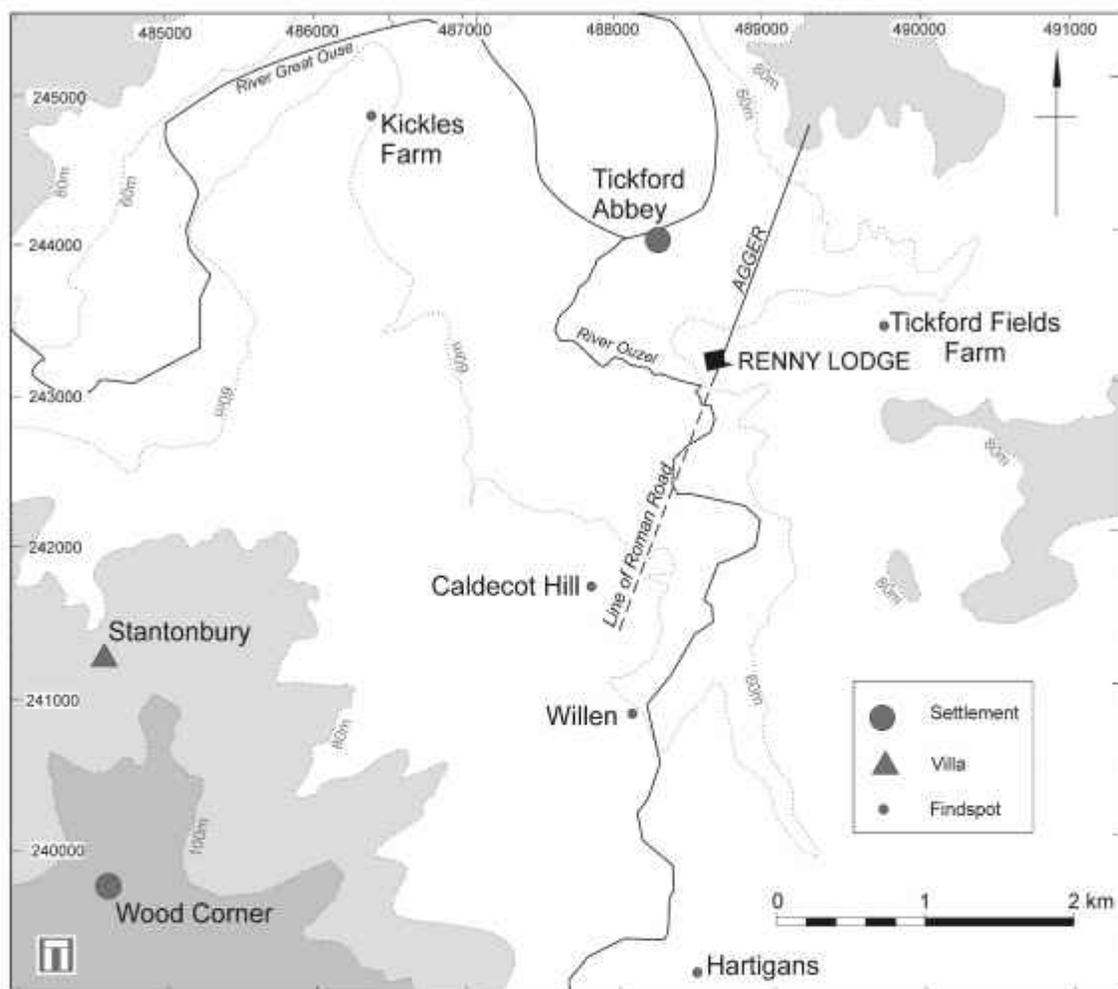


FIGURE 2 Romano-British sites in the area.

other was Buckingham, the county town (Baines 1986, 129). Nevertheless, both Newport and Tickford had the same low tax assessment (5 hides), probably because the lord of the manor's own farmland was not taxed (Baines 1986, 132; Mynard and Hunt 1995, xiv-xv). Although the estate as a whole included common fields, arable land and extensive woodland, the Tickford manor seems to have been relatively open, with woodland sufficient to feed only 50 pigs, compared with 300 in Newport (Mynard and Hunt 1995, xiii).

Throughout the medieval period, Newport was a thriving market town. In the early 12th century, Fulk Paynel (origin of 'Pagnell'), gave part of his

manor at Tickford to the Cluniac abbey of Marmoutier, Tours, France, granting it lands, tenements and meadows (*VCH* 1927, 360). His grandson, Gervase Pagnell, confirmed the gift in 1187, and gave the monks of Tickford Abbey the right to buy and sell goods at the Newport market free of tolls. Over the subsequent centuries, the abbey had a chequered history, with poor rule, fires and occasional violence (Mynard and Hunt 1995, xiii-xiv). At Tickford End, south of the Abbey, there is archaeological evidence for a substantial early medieval (11th to 12th century) settlement, perhaps abandoned partly as a response to the foundation of the abbey (Robinson 1975, 11, Fig. 3).

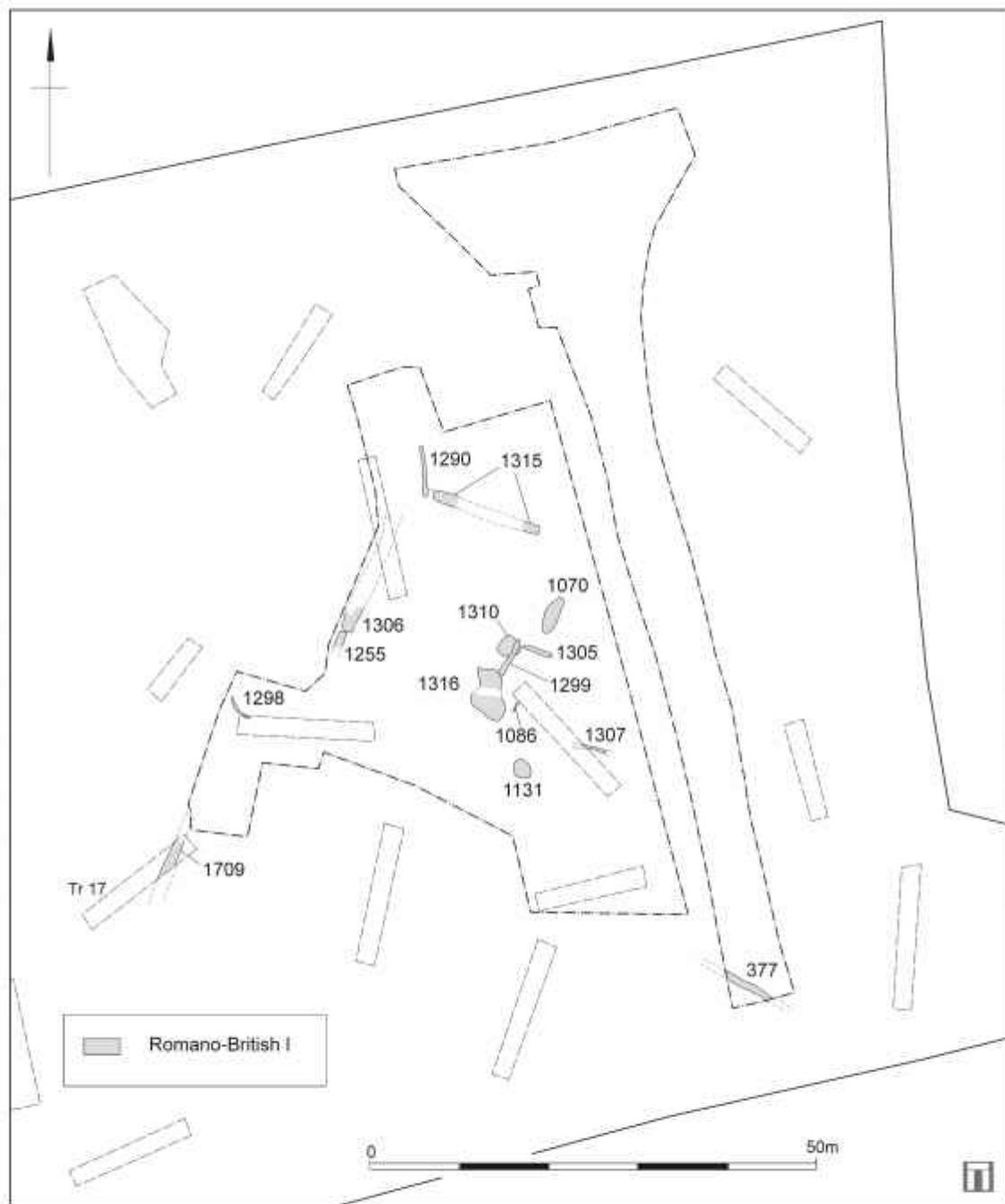


FIGURE 3 Romano-British Phase I remains.

The three common fields of Tickford survived throughout the medieval period, and it was not until 1807 that an Act of Parliament appointed commissioners to enclose them (Mynard and Hunt 1995, xiv). Aerial photographs taken in the 1940s show traces of ridge and furrow indicative of arable cultivation in the medieval and later periods (Robinson 1975). It is also possible that an 'open road', shown on Thomas Jefferys' map of the county published in 1770 (BAS 2000), is of medieval origin. It passed north-west to south-east in the region of the site, from the present junction of London Road and North Crawley Road to beyond the south-east corner (Fig. 7A).

Post medieval to modern

Tickford Abbey was dissolved in 1524 and annexed to Walsey's Cardinal College, Oxford (later Christ Church). Its closure may have resulted in the social and economic decline of Tickford, perhaps even Newport Pagnell itself (Robinson 1975, 13). The abbey lands later came into the possession of Henry VIII and remained with the Crown until purchased from Elizabeth I by Henry Adkins, one of the royal physicians, in 1600. The estate subsequently changed hands many times until the Abbey site was sold separately as Abbey Farm in 1757 (VCH 1927, 409–22).

Newport Pagnell enjoyed great strategic importance during the Civil war, commanding the crossing points over the Great Ouse and Ouzel, on the principal supply route between London and the north. Although initially in royalist hands, the royalists inexplicably abandoned the town in 1643, and the parliamentary forces moved in, holding it as a major garrison until 1645 (Mynard and Hunt 1995, xvi). During the 17th century, Newport became known from the quality of its coaching inns, reflecting its importance in the network of stagecoach routes between London, the east Midlands and the north (Mynard and Hunt 1995, xxii–xxiii). Although the town remained a thriving market centre for local agricultural produce, by the 18th century its main industries were lace and parchment production. In 1795, an Act of Parliament permitted the enclosure of land to the west of the town (1795 Inclosure map and apportionment – Port Field), and as noted above, the common fields of Tickford were enclosed in 1807. The area of the site excavated was divided between Sarah Atterbury, George Renny MD and Robert Murry Fraser

Esq (1808 Map of Tickford Field in the Parish of Newport Pagnell). The adjacent North Crawley Road was laid out at this time, permitting access to the new enclosures to the east (Mynard and Hunt 1995, xiv). In the 1830s the site was developed to provide a workhouse for the town.

THE ROMANO-BRITISH ROADSIDE SETTLEMENT (AD 43–410)

Phase I (late 1st – early 2nd century) Fig. 3

The first phase of Romano-British activity comprised a series of ditches, apparently forming the remains of a field system and/or sub-square enclosure. A shallow curvilinear ditch (1298) to the south-west, and a central area of cobbling (1316) provided the main structural evidence; the latter possibly associated with three short gully/ditch segments (1086, 1299 and 1305). These may represent the ephemeral remains of either an adjacent structure or a small, sub-rectangular enclosure. Although no evidence for the existence of the Roman road was encountered, it is possible that the route was in use.

The field system ditch 1306 is the main feature attributed to this phase. Re-cutting throughout the Romano-British period had removed any evidence of its full extent, but it is possible that it originally extended north beyond the area excavated. Ditch fragments 1255, 1290 and 1315 were probably components of this field system although truncation by later features has again removed any evidence of their extent. Three of the ditches (1255/1306 and 1315) appear to form two sides of an area approximately 19m (east to west) by 20m long, possibly a paddock or yard. Two shallow gullies noted above (1299 and 1305) may define two sides of a rectangular area *c.* 3m across within this yard, perhaps indicating a structure (i.e. beam slots or eaves drip gullies). A shallow pit (1070) lay to the north-east. A short, undated section of gully (1086) recorded in the same area, truncated by the later Enclosure 2 (Fig. 4), may also be associated with this structure as may an area of cobbling, 1316 (Pl. 2), correlating with a softer, more clayey variation in the underlying geology. It is possible that the cobbles were laid to firm up this softer ground or, more probably, that the surface was originally more extensive but has only survived where it has compressed into the softer ground.

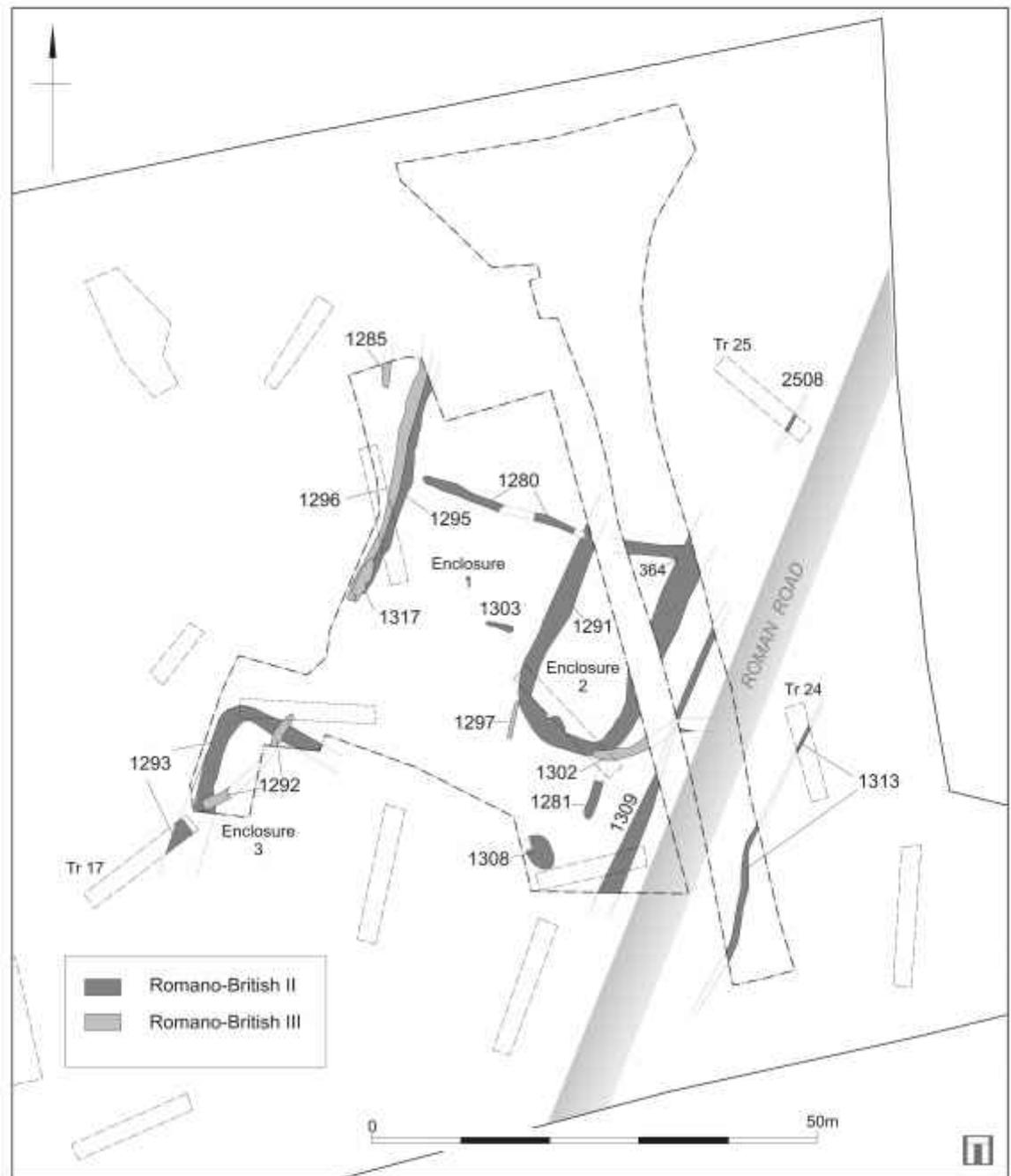


FIGURE 4 Romano-British Phase II and III remains.

One of the presumed structural gullies (1299), cut through a tree-throw hole (1310) which contained Romano-British pottery, suggesting clearance prior to construction of the settlement. Although stratigraphically isolated, tree-throw 1131 may also be indicative of this clearance process.

Curvilinear gully 1298, located towards the western edge of the site, suggested that other structures were present. If projected to form a complete circle, the curved gully would represent a ring-ditch measuring *c.* 5m in diameter. It may have been a small roundhouse but, as no associated remains were found, alternatively it could represent a windbreak or animal shelter associated with the field system, rather than a domestic structure.

Phase II (2nd century) Fig.4

This was the most coherent phase of activity. It was characterised by at least three ditched enclosures, which incorporated and expanded the Phase I field system, and which was serviced by a large waterhole. It is also the earliest recorded phase for the ditches that accompanied the presumed Roman road on the south-east side of the site. Although few structural remains were recorded, the nature of the features, combined with a substantial quantity of artefacts, suggest a small roadside settlement.

The western boundary of the excavated area and of a possible central rectangular enclosure (Enclosure 1) was ditch 1295. This extended beyond the excavated area to the north and recut the phase I ditch (1306), and was itself later re-cut by the phase III Ditch 1296. Ditch 1295 contained a large quantity of late 1st and 2nd century AD pottery and was apparently respected by ditch 1280 (itself a re-cut of earlier ditch 1315) to its east. Ditch 1280 also contained a substantial quantity of similarly dated pottery, including an almost complete *Verulamium* region mortarium (Fig. 8.8; Pl. 3). It is tempting to interpret the gap between these two ditches as an entrance-way between the enclosed areas to the north and south of ditch 1280, but the gap may have been due to upcast bank material beside ditch 1295, although no other physical evidence for such a bank was encountered. The south side of the enclosure is perhaps indicated by a short length of gully (1303).

The east side of Enclosure 1 was formed by the western ditch (1291) of Enclosure 2 (Pl. 1), sited parallel to the course of the adjacent Roman road.

The northern end of Enclosure 2 aligned with the north ditch (1280) of Enclosure 1, but the relationship between them had been removed by post-medieval drainage features. No other internal features were identified apart from a single post-hole (364) on the edge of ditch 1291 in the north-east corner of the enclosure. The quantity of pottery recovered from the ditch suggests that there may have been domestic structures within the enclosure.

The corner of a third enclosure (Enclosure 3) was recorded in the south-western corner of the site. Its ditch (1293) had a broad, relatively shallow, profile similar to that of Enclosure 2 (ditch 1291). Again, no internal features were recorded within the small area exposed.

Parallel with, and to the east of, Enclosure 2, ditches 1309 and 1313 formed a corridor approximately 14–15m wide. Although no evidence for a road *per se* (such as metalling, agger or foundations) was recovered, the ditches appear to confirm the alignment of a previously hypothesised Romano-British road, which had a surviving section of agger to the north of the site (The Viatores 1964, 332–5, Road 175). To the north, ditch fragment 2508 could be a continuation of 1309.

The Phase II settlement may have been supplied by a large waterhole (1308), to the south of the enclosures. It was 4.2m long, 2.7m wide and at least 1.2m deep but Health and Safety constraints prevented its complete excavation. It was filled with a series of naturally-formed silt deposits which contained 32 sherds of Roman pottery, mostly of late 1st and 2nd century AD date, suggesting that it gradually fell out of use during the occupation of the site. An environmental sample taken from its lowest excavated fill (context 1014, sample 59) contained fewer than five cereal grains and a little chaff.

Between the waterhole and the south side of Enclosure 2, a short section of ditch (1281) contained the coursed remnants of a stone wall-foundation of unworked/rough hewn blocks, as well as large pieces of similar stone within its fills. No other features were associated with this and it may have been a boundary wall or a stone-lined drainage feature parallel to the adjacent Roman road. Its northern end, and any relationship with Enclosure 2, had been destroyed by a brick-lined chamber associated with Renny Lodge.



PLATE 1 Archaeological excavation of the road corridor, showing excavation of enclosure ditch 1291 (from the south).



PLATE 2 Cobbling 1316 (from the north-west).



PLATE 3 Mortarium under excavation within ditch 1280.

Phase III (late 2nd century onwards) Fig. 4

The final phase of Romano-British activity is characterised by the re-cutting of the western ditch of Enclosure 1, as well as alterations to the layout of the Phase II features. Although recorded as a separate phase of activity, these remains are perhaps more likely to represent a sub-phase of Phase II.

Ditch 1296 was the final recutting of Enclosure 1. It again extended beyond the northern boundary of the site. At the northernmost extent of the excavation area, the terminal of a second, broadly parallel ditch (1285) was recorded to its west, defining a corridor approximately 3m wide. This may be the beginning of a drove-way or track continuing to the north.

The north-west corner of Enclosure 3 was cut by Ditch 1292, suggesting that the enclosure had gone out of use by this time. The northern length of this slightly curving ditch aligns with ditch 1296 of

Enclosure 1 to the north. The *c.* 14m wide gap between the opposing terminals may indicate re-modelling of the field system at this time.

Similarly, the truncated remains of a curving ditch (1302) extending from the south-east corner of Enclosure 2, may have extended this enclosure, perhaps linking or merging it with the roadside ditch 1309, although any junction between them lay outside the excavated area. A narrow gully (1297) projecting from the south-west corner of Enclosure 2 is of uncertain function.

An area of cobbling (1317) was later put down over the infilled southern terminals of ditches 1295 and 1296, forming the western side of Enclosure 1. It extended over an area *c.* 5.2m by 1.2m, and incorporated sherds from a large, pink-grogged ware storage jar and rim sherds from three dropped-flanged bowls, all dating to the later 3rd or 4th centuries AD. As with the Phase I cobbling, it is probable that the cobbles were laid to firm up the surface of the infilled ditches, and it is possible that it was originally more extensive, only surviving where compressed into the softer ditch fills.

POST-ROMAN FEATURES (FIG. 5)

A number of features clearly post-dated the Romano-British activity but the paucity of artefacts recovered from them has hampered their precise dating. Given the proximity of the known Saxon cemeteries (Fig. 7C), the absence of any evidence for Saxon activity within the site was unexpected, and it is possible that at least some of these later but poorly-dated features could be Saxon.

The principal feature (ditch 1282) ran across the central part of the site, cutting the southern end of the Enclosure 2 and crossing the line of the former Roman road. It is thought to be associated with the open road shown on Thomas Jefferys' 1770 map of the county (Fig. 7A), and is believed to be of medieval origin (BAS 2000). A shallow undated ditch (2414) and hedgerow ditches (2408 and 2412) on broadly the same alignment slightly further south, may also be components of the road, or perhaps an upcast bank.

Approximately 17m to the south, ditch fragments 379 and 2312 may indicate the southern side of the road corridor. Although not traced across the full width of the site, a number of undated tree-throw holes (not illustrated) observed along the projected line of ditch 379 to the west, may suggest

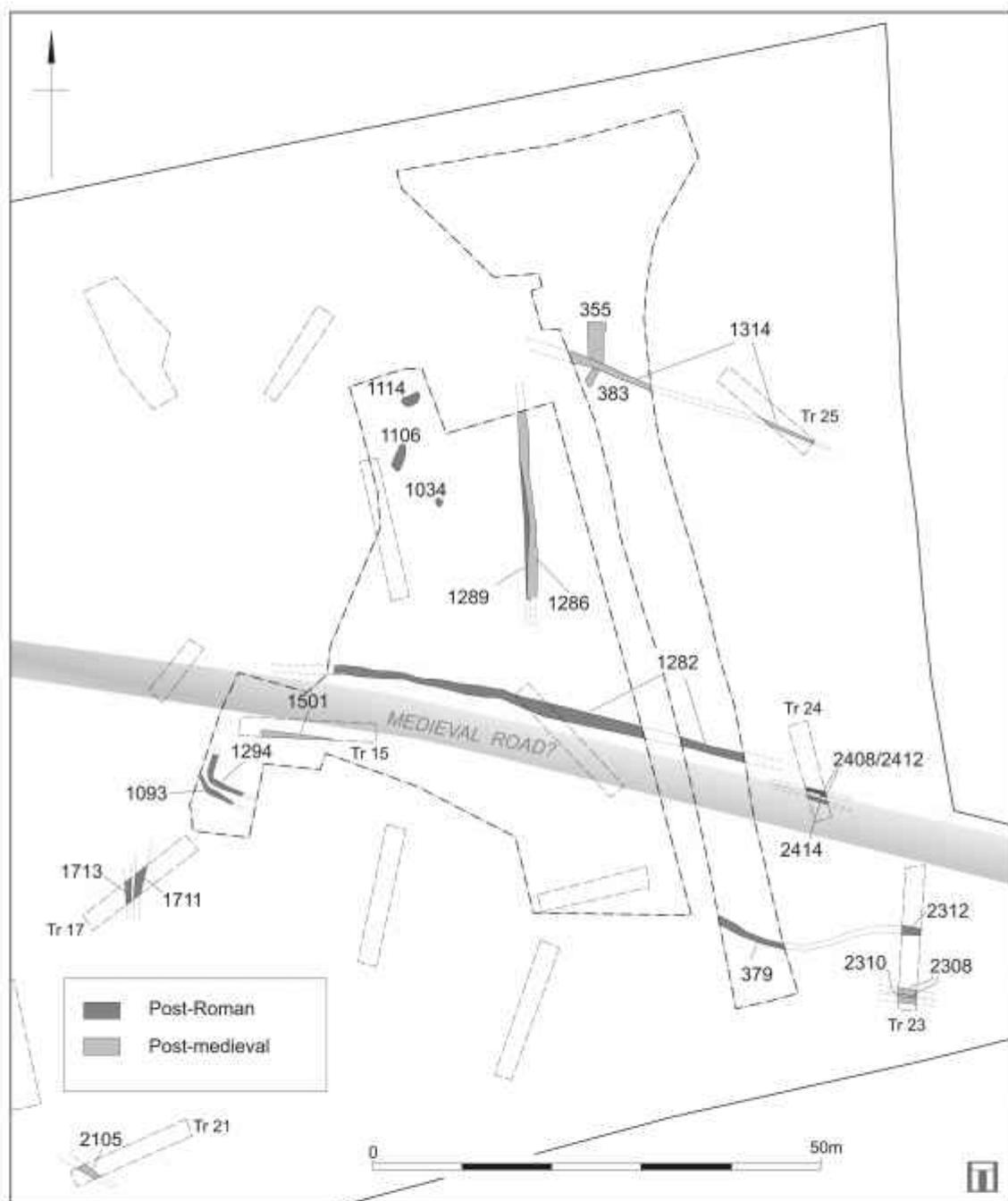


FIGURE 5 Post-Roman and post-medieval remains.

that the road was bounded by trees and/or a hedgerow. Three sherds of pottery dating to the 11th – 12th century AD found in ditch 379 were the only medieval sherds from the whole site.

Although truncated, ditches 1294 and 1093 appeared to form the south-west corner of a double-ditched enclosure. To the south, a second pair of parallel ditches (1713 and 1711) was recorded in Trench 17. Although undated and on a different alignment, these may form part of a second enclosure.

North of the presumed medieval road ditch was ditch 1289 aligned north/south, not quite perpendicular to it. This was later re-cut on more or less the same alignment (ditch 1286), perhaps in the post-medieval period as it contained one piece of coarse red earthenware. Although affected by modern disturbance, the southern ends of these ditches appeared to terminate before reaching the roadside ditch 1282. The gap might be an entrance between plots to the north of the presumed road.

Three tree-throw holes in the north-east corner of the site (1034, 1106 and 1114) were more or less on the line of the infilled Romano-British Enclosure 1 ditches, suggesting that some form of surviving boundary, such as a hedge or a line of trees, preserved the line of these features into the later periods.

A few post-AD 1500 features pre-dating the construction of Renny Lodge were also identified. These included a broad shallow ditch (2308) with a deeper, narrow central slot (2310) along its base, containing the remnants of clay lining, which is likely to have been a drainage feature, located in Trench 23 in the south-eastern corner of the site. Other features belonging to this period include ditches 1314, 1501 and 2105. Ditch 1314 cut two other post-medieval features, a small ditch/gully (383) to the south, and a large sub-rectangular feature (355) to the north. Their functions are uncertain.

RENNY LODGE

In response to the 1834 *Poor Law Amendment Act*, passed with the intention of deterring the able-bodied from obtaining outside poor relief and to provide a refuge for the sick and homeless, the site was chosen as the location of a new workhouse. A design by William Roote, who had previously designed workhouses in Leighton Buzzard and

Newmarket, was chosen by the Board of Guardians of the Newport Pagnell Poor Law Union, established in 1835. The building, designed to accommodate 300, cost £5150 (Cole and Dawson 1967, 65) and the first inmates entered the Newport Pagnell Union Workhouse on 8 April 1837 (APS 2005).

The following account of the workhouse structure is based on a survey of the surviving remains, coupled with map and documentary evidence. Historic photographs provided additional information on the appearance of the building. The results of the survey are illustrated in Fig. 6 and a series of maps show the site in 1881 (Fig. 7B), 1925 (Fig. 7C) and 1970 (Fig. 7D). An early 20th century view of the building is shown on Pl. 4. Although demolished to ground level in 1994, the building footprint survived relatively intact. A mechanical excavator was used to remove the overlying demolition rubble and the site was then cleaned by hand to establish the floor plan and facilitate the subsequent digital survey. Limited hand excavation was undertaken where necessary, to define, for example, the relationship between structural elements.

The earliest structural phase comprised four wings (north, south, east and west) surrounding a central, rectangular courtyard (Fig. 6). Attached to the east wing were four joining blocks, forming a semi-octagonal range of outbuildings around a second courtyard, hereafter referred to as the annexe. It is known from contemporary accounts, photographs and other records that the main complex was two-storey, but it is probable that the annexe was single storey. Although the plan of the annexe suggests it was an addition to the original construction, the survey confirmed that the two elements were contemporary.

The west wing formed the main front of the building, with access via a central driveway from London Road. It included a central arched reception area, an imposing edifice comprising a square building with a pediment and decorative corner porticos in a semi-classical style. On either side of the central archway were symmetrically placed, arched corridors providing separate access from the outside to the north and south wings, facilitating the segregation of male and female occupants.

The south wing was divided into at least four separate rooms on the ground floor, including a scullery. The southern side of the workhouse was

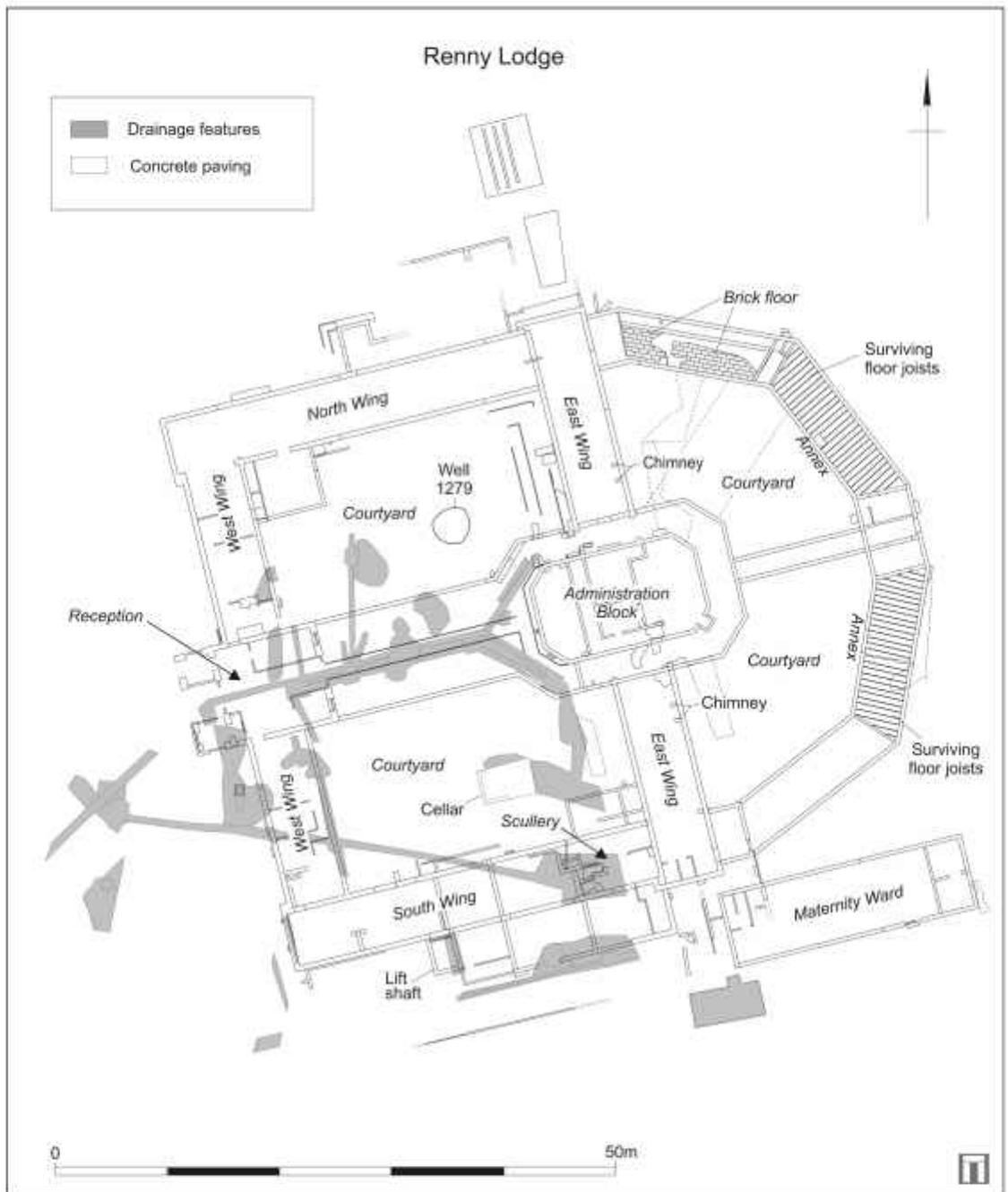


FIGURE 6 Modern remains in relation to the Renny Lodge footprint.



PLATE 4 Newport Pagnell Union Workhouse (reproduced by kind permission of Peter Higginbotham).

reserved for female occupants, who were employed in a variety of domestic duties, including work in the scullery, and probably straw-plaiting and lace-making, both locally important industries. A maternity ward, comprising a separate rectangular building, was located immediately south of the annex.

Although the north wing was a mirror image of the south, no evidence survived to confirm the original layout of any rooms. The male occupants of this area were employed in agricultural labour and general chores relating to maintenance of the building.

The east wing incorporated the main administrative block and master's quarters, a sub-rectangular lozenge-shaped structure, surrounded by a covered walkway. The rooms forming the remainder of the east wing to either side of this block contained evidence for the chimney stacks visible on contemporary photographs (Pl. 4).

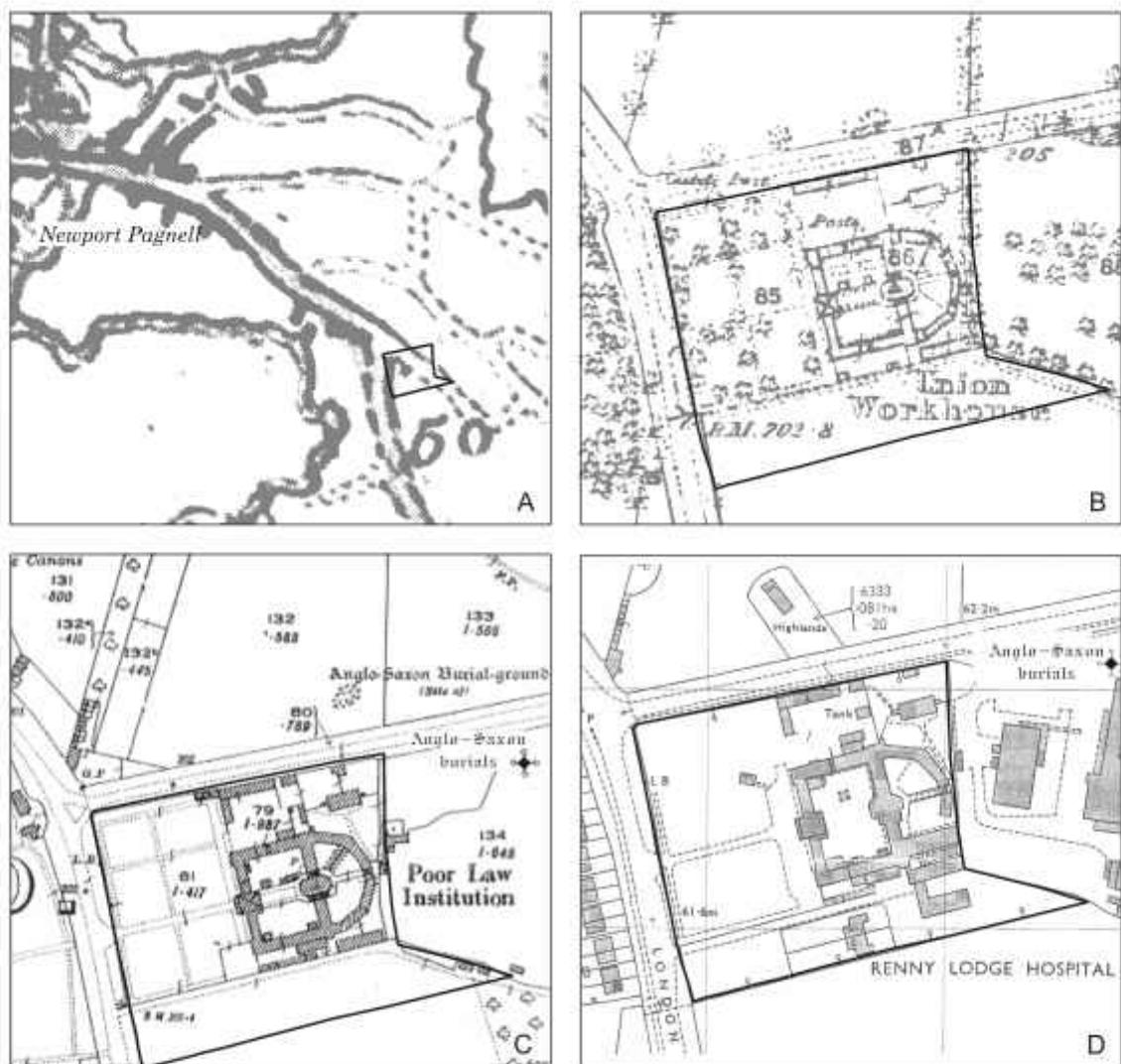
The semi-octagonal annexe was accessed from both ends of the eastern wing, as well as via a central walkway running from the administrative block across the annex courtyard. The north and

south rooms of the annexe were paved in red brick, while the two central rooms had wooden floors.

A large circular feature (1279), measuring *c.* 3.2m in diameter, was identified in the north of the main courtyard (Fig. 6). It was not fully excavated, but was almost certainly contemporary with Renny Lodge, and contained a variety of post-medieval/modern building refuse, including the broken remains of a chamber pot. Its location within the main courtyard might suggest that it was a well.

At some point between 1881 (Fig. 7B) and 1925 (Fig. 7C), various structural alterations were made. The reception area was extended west towards London Road, resulting in a rectangular ground plan. The pedestrian archways were blocked off and windows inserted into these new walls, probably to convert them into reception rooms on either side of the main arched entrance that remained open.

A new block was also constructed against the south wing, approximately doubling its width. This extension included internal partitions dividing it into three rooms. Although the 1925 map (Fig. 7C) shows this block as a separate structure, the juxtaposition of its partitions with those in the original



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FIGURE 7 Historic maps showing the probable medieval road and the development of the workhouse buildings based on: (A) 1770 Jefferys and Bryant map of the County of Bucks, (B) 1881 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, (C) 1925 Ordnance Survey map, (D) 1970 Ordnance Survey map.

south wing may suggest otherwise. A small, rectangular structure built within the south-east corner of the southern courtyard may be broadly contemporary. A blue brick pathway was also added around the edge of the main courtyard.

In 1929 the *Local Government Act* abolished workhouses and transferred responsibilities to local

authorities. The former workhouse then became known as Renny Lodge Hospital, caring primarily for the elderly and chronically sick. Subsequently, a brick-lined, cellared chamber was constructed in the southern courtyard (Fig. 6). This did not correlate with any mapped remains or documentary sources but it is possible that it could be a small air-

raid shelter from World War II.

Renny Lodge Hospital passed to the National Health Service in 1948, but continued to house the elderly and chronically sick. During this period, the southern wing was extended to join with the maternity ward and was closed off from the annex, the southern portion of which was demolished (Fig. 7D). Various concrete pathways were constructed around the grounds and a lift shaft was added against the southern wall of the south wing.

A small, square structure, constructed in the north-west corner of the main courtyard, contained evidence for pipework, perhaps suggesting it was associated with central heating. According to contemporary mapping, the walkway connecting the reception with administrative blocks was removed during this period, possibly to create a larger central garden for patients. Renny Lodge Hospital was closed in 1992 and demolished in 1994.

FINDS

Roman pottery by Kayt Brown

The pottery is predominantly of early Roman date, although some material indicates activity during the later 3rd or 4th centuries AD. Overall, it survives in moderate condition, with an average sherd weight of 14g.

The coarsewares were grouped into broad fabric-categories (such as shell-tempered fabrics, grog-tempered fabrics, etc), although where possible sherds were assigned to specific sources. Nineteen fabrics and fabric groups were identified (totals are given in Table 1) and recorded using the standard Wessex Archaeology recording system for pottery (Morris 1994). Forty-three vessel types were identified and quantified by rim count and estimated vessel equivalents (EVEs); detailed fabric and form descriptions are contained in the project archive.

The shell-tempered fabrics, ubiquitous in this

TABLE 1 Pottery totals by fabric

<i>Ware code</i>	<i>Summary Description</i>	<i>No. sherds</i>	<i>% by no.</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>	<i>% by wt.</i>
E100	Black Burnished Ware (BB1)	2	0.2	12	0.1
E176	Nene Valley colour coat	7	0.7	26	0.2
E178	British lead glazed	2	0.2	15	0.1
E207	<i>Verulamium</i> whiteware (inc. mortaria)	26	2.3	3342	19.8
E209	Oxfordshire whiteware mortaria	1	0.1	64	0.4
E256	Dressel 20 amphorae	1	0.1	66	0.4
E300	Samian (unspecified source)	3	0.3	6	0.1
E301	South Gaulish (unspecified source)	4	0.4	23	0.2
E302	South Gaulish (La Graufesenque)	1	0.1	2	0.1
E304	Central Gaulish (unspecified source)	20	1.8	221	1.3
E310	East Gaulish (Trier)	6	0.5	81	0.5
G100	Grog-tempered fabrics	245	22	2757	16
G101	Soft pink grogged ware	1	0.1	182	1
Q100	Reduced sandy fabrics	270	24	2942	18
Q101	White wares	32	2.8	384	2.3
Q102	Oxidised sandy fabrics	20	1.8	177	1
Q103	Reduced fine sandy fabrics	22	1.9	152	1
Q104	Reduced sandy BBW type fabrics	33	3	497	3
S100	Shelly fabrics	366	32	5089	30
S101	Coarse shelly fabrics	64	5.6	591	3.5
S102	Shell and limestone fabrics	10	0.1	170	1
	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>1136</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>16,799</i>	<i>100</i>

region, comprised 38% by count (34.5% by weight) of the assemblage. The principal fabric, containing abundant shell (S100), is comparable to fabric 1a at Milton Keynes where it was common from the 1st – 4th centuries AD, although the Renny Lodge sherds frequently displayed the oxidised surfaces considered typical of the earlier part of this range (Marney 1989, 174). Fabric S102, containing both shell and limestone, may also fall within this fabric group. The third fabric, tempered with coarse shell (S101), occurred in only small amounts. Local manufacture and/or the kilns at Harrold, Bedfordshire are the most likely sources for these wares.

Like the shell-tempered material, the grog-tempered and reduced sandy wares probably also represent local manufacture and all three groups had their origins in the local, late Iron Age 'Belgic' traditions. The grog-tempered fabric (G100) is comparable to fabric 46 at Milton Keynes and was used well into the 2nd century (Marney 1989, 190). A single large rim sherd (Fig. 8, 6) was identified as 'pink grogged ware' (G101; Marney 1989, 174, fabric 2a). This fabric has a wide distribution across the Midlands with known production at Stowe Park, Buckinghamshire; it is very common from the mid 2nd century and one of the dominant fabrics in the area in the 3rd century (Taylor 2004, 63). The sandy fabrics (Q100–Q104) represent the products of a number of local industries and Q104 has been tentatively compared with the local 'blackware' fabric at Milton Keynes (Marney 1989, 177, fabric 9a).

Jars were the most common vessel forms in these fabrics; of the 97 vessels identified by rim occurrence, jars account for 66 vessels, 29 of which were lid-seated bead rim forms. These are especially common in the shelly and grog-tempered fabrics, with only three examples in the sandy wares. Within this group, development can be seen from the deeply lid-seated examples of the later 1st and early 2nd century AD to those of the mid – to late 2nd century with a skeuomorphic groove (Marney 1989, 58) (Fig. 8, 1, 2 and 5). Other jar types included cordoned jars in grog-tempered fabrics dated to mid-1st to mid-2nd centuries (Fig. 8, 4), and necked or everted rim jars in sandy fabrics, more common from the 2nd century onwards. A few everted jar rim forms in shelly fabrics could be 2nd or 3rd century but there are no 'hooked' rim jars characteristic of the 4th century. There was a single grog-tempered Gallo-Belgic platter copy (Cam 28).

The reduced sandy wares display more variation in form than the other wares, including everted rim jars, a cordoned jar, a lipped bowl and an imitation Cam 12 Gallo-Belgic platter. The latest forms in the assemblage comprise drop-flanged bowls (Fig. 8, 7) of late 3rd or 4th century AD date, found in the Phase III cobbled surface (1317).

Regional industries are represented by small quantities of *Verulamium* region whiteware and mortaria (Fig. 8, 8), Oxfordshire mortaria and Black Burnished ware, although it is possible that the later groups of reduced, sandy fabrics may include some Nene Valley greyware, given the presence of small amounts of the colour-coated fineware from this industry.

Imported material forms a small but significant component of the assemblage, comprising a single sherd of Baetican Dressel 20 amphora (E256), and 33 sherds of samian from southern (E300 and E301), central (E304) and eastern Gaulish (E310) sources. Forms comprised form 18/31, 18/31R, 31, 31R and 36 bowls and dishes, form 33 and 35 cups and a single decorated sherd from a form 37 bowl.

British finewares are equally scarce and are predominantly early Roman in date. A London ware-style bowl (Fig. 8, 3) in a fine silty fabric (Q103) dates to the late 1st to mid-2nd century AD (Marsh 1978, 176, figure 6.18, type 42). A similar vessel from Milton Keynes was found in a mid – late 2nd century pit (Marney 1989, 137–8, fig. 12, 35). London ware-style vessels have a wide distribution and the variation in fabric suggests numerous sources (Tyers 1996, 170). A small number of poppy-head beaker sherds in fine, reduced sandy greyware can be similarly dated to the late 1st – mid 2nd centuries. Two joining sherds from a globular beaker with an angular shoulder and vertical white barbotine decoration, found in ditch 1296, form part of Arthur's South-East English Group of lead-glazed wares, dated to AD 70–120 (Arthur 1978, 298–301, fig. 8.2, type 2). A small number of Nene Valley colour-coated sherds are present, but no examples of the other late colour-coated industries.

Discussion

Only a small proportion of the pottery from phased features came from those assigned to Phase I. Most were from ditch 1315, the northern ditch of Enclosure 1. This group included over sixty grog-tempered sherds and a small number of shelly and

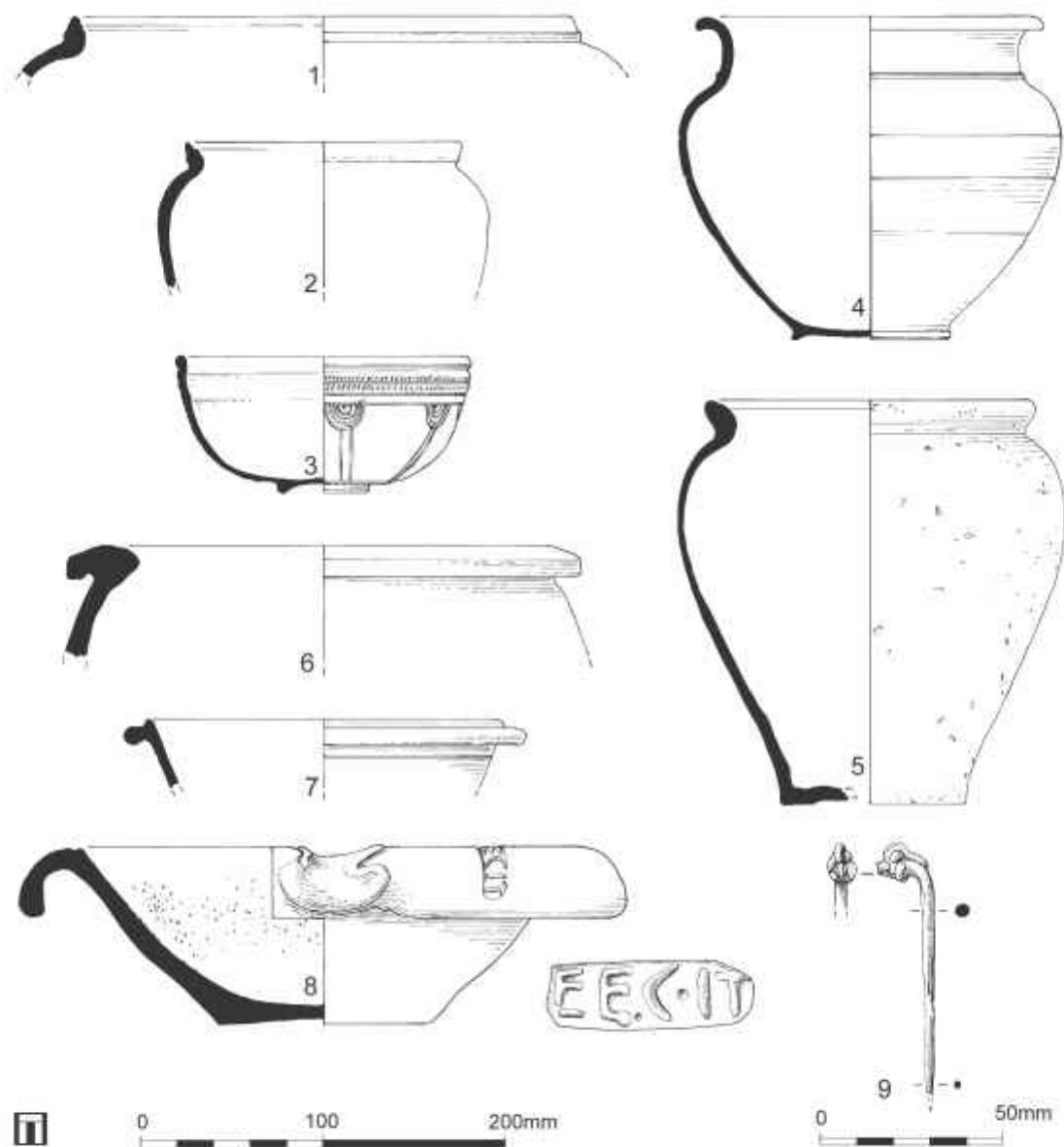


FIGURE 8 1-8 Roman pottery; 9 Colchester brooch (see catalogue for details).

sandy sherds with at least five lid-seated jars (three grog-tempered, one sandy and one shelly; Fig. 8, 1 and 2) as well as a south Gaulish form 35 cup, and is considered typical of the late 1st to early 2nd century AD.

The pottery from Phase II features displays

wider variation in fabric and form than the preceding phase. The material from Enclosure 3 comprised 244 sherds (2,910g) including a small number of poppy-head beaker sherds and a Dressel 20 amphora sherd. This piece showed that the vessel had been altered and reused, with a new rim

formed by trimming and re-shaping the top of the body after the rim, neck and handles had been removed, a relatively common phenomenon for this vessel class. Other poppy-head beaker sherds, the London ware-style bowl (Fig. 8, 3) and the *Verulamium* mortarium (Fig. 8, 8) were found in ditch 1280 forming the northern edge of Enclosure 1. Sherds from a grog-tempered cordoned jar (Fig. 8, 4), were found in Phase II ditch 1295.

There is little within the pottery from features assigned to Phase III to indicate a date later than the end of 2nd century. Much of the material assigned to this phase was from ditch 1296, and may, therefore, have been redeposited during the re-cutting of this western boundary of Enclosure 1. The latest material within the assemblage, the 'pink grogged ware' storage jar rim and three drop-flanged bowls (Fig. 8, 6 and 7), all dated to the later 3rd or 4th centuries AD, came from cobbled surface 1317.

Overall, the relatively small size of the assemblage precludes much detailed analysis in terms of local and regional pottery supply, but it appears to display many of the characteristics shown by other assemblages of the same date within the area. Groups 4 (Loughton Valley) and 5 (Caldecotte) from Milton Keynes (Marney 1989, 16–21), for example, are particularly comparable to Renny Lodge. The roadside location of the settlement at Renny Lodge probably contributes to the slightly wider range of products than might normally be expected in a rural domestic assemblage. The dominance of 'pink grogged ware' in the later 2nd century in this region and its paucity within the Renny Lodge assemblage, along with other late 2nd-century markers may indicate that activity had reduced markedly, if not completely, by the mid-2nd century. The small quantity of later pottery from cobbled surface 1317 implies some limited re-use of the area during the late 3rd and 4th centuries AD.

Catalogue of illustrated pottery and Roman brooch (Fig. 8)

1. Lid-seated bead rim jar, fabric S100. Context 1017, ditch 1315, Phase I.
2. Lid-seated bead rim jar, fabric G100. Context 1017, ditch 1315, Phase I.
3. London ware hemispherical bowl, fabric Q103. Context 1073, ditch 1280, Phase II.
4. Complete profile of necked cordoned jar, fabric G100. Context 1135, ditch 1295, Phase II.

5. Large bead rim jar with skeuomorphic groove on rim, fabric S100. Subsoil context 1103.
6. Storage jar rim, fabric G101. Context 1227, layer 1317, Phase III.
7. Drop-flanged bowl rim, fabric Q100. Context 1227, layer 1317, Phase III.
8. *Verulamium* mortarium rim with stamp. Context 1075, ditch 1280, Phase II.
9. Copper-alloy Colchester brooch. Object Number 102, context 1151, ditch 1291, Phase III. (see below)

OTHER FINDS

by Kayt Brown and Lorraine Mepham

Medieval and post-medieval pottery

Only three sherds of medieval pottery were found. All were from ditch 379 and derive from two relatively straight-sided jars, one in a shelly fabric, the other in a sandy/flint-tempered ware, both of early medieval (11th–12th century) date.

Of the fourteen post-medieval sherds, one (coarse redware) was found in ditch 1286 and eleven in pit 1279, the probable well associated with the workhouse itself. These included ten from a single 19th century yellow ware chamber pot, the other being coarse white earthenware. The two other sherds (coarse redware and creamware) occurred as intrusive finds in ditch 1291 forming Enclosure 2.

Metalwork

A single copper-alloy Colchester brooch fragment (Fig. 8, 9) was found in the ditch (1291) of Enclosure 2. The pin, spring, catchplate and tip of the bow are all missing. Similar brooches are known from Bancroft, Buckinghamshire (Mackreth 1994, 288, fig. 131.2) and other sites within Milton Keynes (Marney and Mackreth 1987, 130, fig. 40, 2–5), where the proposed date extends from the beginning of the 1st century AD to c. AD 50–55.

The nine iron fragments comprised nails and unidentifiable pieces. None is closely datable, but associated finds suggest a Romano-British date.

Ceramic building material

A few fragments of ceramic building material can be identified as Romano-British. These comprise three tile fragments (one a possible *tegula*) in shelly and grog-tempered fabrics and one brick fragment in a poorly-wedged fabric that may be of similar

date. Eighteen other fragments, including brick, roof tile and field drain, are either undiagnostic, or definitely post-Roman.

During the recording of the workhouse building, a number of bricks and other ceramic building material types (floor or paving tiles) were taken as samples from specific structural elements. This assemblage comprised 43 bricks, three 'specials', four paviors, and one quarry tile. The bricks were almost exclusively of a simple, hand-made type, consistent with the construction of the workhouse in the 1830s but could date anywhere from the mid-18th century onwards. The 'specials' were all mould-made; one a single bullnose used for a window surround or wall capping; the second had two corners asymmetrically bevelled to a point, again for a window surround, while the third is a voussoir, for use in an arch or vault, worn on one face and possibly reused. Overall, the impression gained is of relatively poor quality bricks, including some 'seconds', perhaps used in footings or garden walls, places where their appearance was not so important, with the 'specials' giving some hints of the sparse decorative detail.

Fired clay

The fired clay (40 fragments; 917g), mostly consists of small, abraded, featureless fragments of uncertain date. Part of a perforated, triangular weight from ditch 1293 of Enclosure 3 (Phase II) may be of early Roman date (Wild 2002, 10). Pieces from three slabs or blocks in organic-tempered fabrics were also found in ditches 1280 and 1293 and residually in ditch 379. These fragments have at least one roughly smoothed surface and squared edges and are probably examples of clay plates or 'belgic bricks' known from other early Roman sites in the area (Williams 1994, 363). One small fragment, also in an organic-tempered fabric, appears to be a briquetage vessel rim (ditch 1296).

Flint, stone, glass, etc

Nine struck flints (all residual in later contexts), comprised broken blades or broken flakes, some with evidence of marginal retouch, of uncertain prehistoric date and one complete blade of probable early Neolithic date (subsoil 1103). Other finds included a fragment of post-medieval roofing slate, five post-medieval bottle-glass fragments, a small quantity (276g) of light vesicular slag, deriving

from unknown industrial processes, and a single oyster shell. Two pieces of stone from ditch 1291 were limestone and the third was a large, rounded piece of fine-grained sandstone. All are apparently unworked and unutilised.

Animal Bone

by Jessica M Grimm

Although probably biased towards the preservation of the more durable large mammal remains, the 177 animal bones show something of the range of species available in, and the animal husbandry practices of, the area. Most are poorly or moderately well-preserved, and just under half (46%) could be identified to species, with a relatively high proportion of loose teeth being noted.

Cattle predominated (85% of the 81 identified fragments), with sheep/goat accounting for 9% and horse for 5%. No pig bones were recognised but there was a metatarsus (GL of 46.1mm) from an adult fox or a fox-sized dog. A similar reliance on cattle and sheep/goat, followed by pigs, horses and dogs can be seen on sites around Milton Keynes (Zeevat, Williams and Mynard 1987, 180, table 1) and among the 1st to 2nd century AD groups from Bancroft (Levitan 1994, 539, fig. 295).

The cattle included individuals of 5–6 months, less than 20–24 months, 24–28 months, more than 36 months and more than 36–42 months old at the time of death. One individual stood to a height of 108–114cm at the withers (from a metatarsus with a GL of 204mm; Von den Driesch & Boessneck 1974), while a piece of skull with an attached horn core suggested a very large animal, probably an ox (M44: 246 mm/M45: 92 mm/M46: 55 mm after Von den Driesch 1976). One cattle pelvis fragment has chopping marks on the shaft, indicating the removal of meat from the bone.

The horse bones include an adult metatarsus measuring 275mm, leading to an estimated height at the withers of 144cm (15–15.1 hands), a relatively large size for the period (Vitt 1952; May 1985). The sheep/goat bones included a lamb or kid.

ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE (TABLE 2)

Charred plant remains

by Chris Stevens

A series of 34 samples was taken for the examination of charred microscopic plant remains. Most

TABLE 2

Phase		I	I	I	II	II	II	II	II	III	III	III
Group no		1255	1299	1304	1280	1291	1293	1295	1303	1296	1302	
Feature		Ditch	Ditch	Spread	Ditch							
Vol. Ltrs		8	18	10	58	76	18	20	8	69	24	40
Cereals												
<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> sl. (hulled grain)	barley	-	-	-	2	-	1	7	-	5	1	3
<i>H. vulgare</i> sl. (rachis fragment)	barley	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Triticum</i> sp. (grain)	wheat	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Triticum dicoccum</i> (glume base)	emmer wheat	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	27	-	-	-
<i>Triticum dicoccum</i> (spikelet fork)	emmer wheat	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	-
<i>T. dicoccum/spelta</i> (grain)	emmer/spelt	-	-	4	4	12	8	7	3	21	-	-
<i>T. dicoccum/spelta</i> (glume base)	emmer/spelt	24	10	12	11	50	6	25	-	33	11	2
<i>T. dicoccum/spelta</i> (spikelet fork)	emmer/spelt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
<i>Triticum spelta</i> (glume base)	spelt wheat	1	-	-	-	27	8	8	-	74	30	-
<i>Triticum spelta</i> (spikelet fork)	spelt wheat	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Triticum aestivum</i> sl (grain)	free-threshing wheat	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	cf.6	-	1
Cereal indet. (cereal)	unidentified grains	5	5	2	-	3	5	9	-	6	1	1
Cereal frags. (est. whole grains)	cereal grains	-	-	-	-	8	3	4	-	5	-	-
Species												
<i>Ranunculus</i> subg <i>Ranunculus</i> arb	buttercup	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-
<i>Corylus avellana</i> (shell fragments)	hazelnuts	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Fumaria</i> sp.	fumitory	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Urtica urens</i>	small nettle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	fat-hen	-	-	-	-	-	18	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Atriplex</i> sp.	orache	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Stellaria media</i>	chickweed	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	-	-
<i>Stellaria palustris</i>	grass/marsh chickweed	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
<i>Agrostemma githago</i>	corn cockle	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	cf.1	-	-
<i>Silene</i> sp.	campion	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Fallopia convolvulus</i>	black bindweed	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	knotgrass	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Rumex</i> sp.	dock	-	2	-	-	4	1	-	-	-	-	2
<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	sorrel-leaved dock	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-
<i>Spergula arvensis</i>	corn spurrey	-	-	-	-	-	44	-	-	21	-	1
<i>Thlaspi arvensis</i>	field penny cress	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Brassica</i> sp.	mustard type	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-
<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp.	vetch, tare, wild pea	1	-	1	1	3	7	-	-	10	-	-
<i>Trifolium</i> sp.	clover	-	-	-	-	5	3	-	-	6	-	-
<i>Linum usitatissimum</i> (seed)	flax	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	133	-	1
<i>L. usitatissimum</i> (capsule frag.)	flax	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	5	-	-
<i>L. usitatissimum</i> (terminal node)	flax	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
<i>L. usitatissimum</i> (immature capsule)	flax	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Galium aparine</i>	cleavers	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Centaurea</i> sp.	knapweed	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>	spikerush	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Poaceae (seed)	grass	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poaceae (culm node & interculms)	grass stems	-	-	-	-	2	-	5	-	11	-	-
Poaceae (basal culm node)	grass root	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	perennial rye grass	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	8	-	-
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i> var. <i>bulbosum</i>	onion couch grass	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Avena</i> sp. (grain)	oat grass	-	-	-	1	6	-	-	-	7	-	-
<i>Avena</i> sp. (wild floret base)	wild oat grass	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Avena/Bromus</i> (grain)	oat/brome grass	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	2	-	-
<i>Bromus</i> sp.	brome grass	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-

were from Romano-British features (three were from Phase I, 18 from Phase II and ten from Phase III) with one from a post-Roman and two from undated features. All the Romano-British samples were processed using standard flotation techniques and the plant taxa identified following the nomenclature of Stace (1997); the three others were not processed. Most, however, contained only low levels of charred plant remains, and therefore, only the four richest (from ditches 1291, 1293, 1295 and 1296) were analysed in detail, although the identifications and quantified results of a scan of all samples have been incorporated here.

Overall, the predominant cereal remains, consisting of grains, glume bases and spikelet forks of spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta*), represent an assemblage typical for southern England (cf. Jones 1987; 1988). More unusual for this region are the remains of emmer wheat (*Triticum dicoccum*) in several samples. Hulled barley grains and a single rachis fragment were recorded, but these are less well represented than hulled wheat. A few samples, including that from the Phase III ditch 1296, contained grains of free-threshing wheat (*Triticum aestivum*), although such remains are often dismissed as intrusive on Romano-British sites (cf. van der Veen and O'Connor 1998).

The majority of samples also contained a few weed seeds, predominately from large seeded species – vetches/wild pea (*Vicia/Lathyrus* sp.), brome grass (*Bromus* sp.), oats (*Avena* sp.), docks (*Rumex* sp.), knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), buttercup (*Ranunculus acris/repens/bulbosus*), knapweed (*Centaurea* sp.) and black bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*), for example. Smaller seeded species included chickweed (*Stellaria media*), clover (*Trifolium* sp.) and small nettle (*Urtica urens*). Only two seeds of wetland species were recovered, spikerush (*Eleocharis palustris*) and marsh stitchwort (*Stellaria palustris*), and the assemblage generally suggests the cultivation of drier soils.

The predominance of glume bases indicates that the charred plant remains derived from dehusking and final processing operations, conducted routinely throughout the year as crops were taken from storage whenever clean grain was required (Stevens 2003). The low number and predominance of seeds from the larger seeded weed species, indicate that the spelt was stored relatively clean in the spikelet, with winnowing, threshing, coarse and

fine-sieving having been conducted after harvest in mid to late summer prior to the crops being put into storage for the year ahead.

The assemblages from ditches 1293 and 1296 were more unusual in that they contained a different suite of plant species. These samples were dominated by the charred seeds, capsules and stems of flax (*Linum usitatissimum*), items more commonly found within waterlogged deposits (Greig 1991). The weed species also differed from those described above, with a predominance of small-seeded species, mainly fat-hen (*Chenopodium album*) and orache (*Atriplex* sp.) with corn spurrey (*Spergula arvensis*), wild mustard type (*Brassica* sp.) and field penny-cress (*Thlaspi arvensis*) associated with drier, sandier soils. Other species included campion (*Silene* sp.), corncockle (*Agrostemma githago*), fumitory (*Fumaria* sp.) and stems, rootlets and underground "corm-like" swollen culm internodes of false-oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius* var. *bulbosum*). The presence of false-oat grass is probably related to the methods used to harvest the flax; traditionally flax was uprooted, the whole plant pulled from the ground by hand, bringing others, such as false-oat grass, with it.

Flax can be cultivated for linseed oil or for linen. Today, flax for linen is harvested before the seed comes to maturity, with seed heads removed by combing prior to the stems being retted, an operation that in the past would have been conducted in streams around the settlement. A single immature capsule was recovered, but most of the flax remains consisted of charred mature seeds, so that, while it is possible that the flax was grown for linen, the evidence recovered is more in keeping with waste from processing for linseed oil.

Traditionally, both emmer and flax are associated with spring sowing on drier soils. Given the occurrence of such soils in the region, it would appear that both these crops were locally grown.

Charcoal

by Catherine Barnett (née Chisham)

An assessment of all the Romano-British samples indicated only a limited presence or preservation of charcoal and only the single richest sample was selected to provide broad indications of the use and local availability of wood. All the fragments greater than 2mm across were prepared for identification according to the standard methodology of Leney

and Casteel (1975) and identified using the anatomical characteristics described by Schwein-gruber (1990) and Butterfield and Meylan (1980).

The charcoal sample was small (total 3g), fragmentary and highly mineralised. However, 50 fragments, dominated by mature wood with occasional small (>2 year) twigs, were identified.

A highly restricted range of taxa was present. Mature oak (*Quercus* sp.) accounted for approximately eighty percent of the sample, the remainder comprising small quantities of ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Pomaceous fruit (*Pomoideae*), including hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), apple (*Malus*) and pear (*Pyrus*). All these are common types in deciduous woodlands and mature hedgerows and were presumably available locally. The assemblage was too small, and perhaps specifically selected, to provide any clear indications of the nature and structure of the local woodland, but the mix of types and the presence of twigwood is consistent with domestic and small-scale burning (hearths related to crop processing or cooking, for example) rather than industrial waste or burning of structural timbers.

DISCUSSION

The work at Renny Lodge was on a relatively small scale and any interpretations of its results are therefore tentative.

The majority of features were Romano-British and it seems that a small settlement was established sometime in the late 1st century AD (Phase I). There is little solid evidence for structures, but traces of a possible roundhouse, together with a cobbled surface associated with a pit and shallow gullies defining two sides of a square area may suggest the locations of structures within the ditched enclosure.

The 2nd century AD (Phases II and III) saw the continuation and expansion of this settlement, with the original enclosure ditches re-cut and new enclosures created on similar alignments. Although no evidence for a road *per se* (such as metalling, agger or foundations) was recovered, a pair of ditches, forming a corridor approximately 14–15m wide, appears to confirm that the route of a previously hypothesised Romano-British road (The Viatores 1964, 332–35, road 175) crossed the site. The enclosures, waterhole and increased use of domestic pottery during this period suggest a more struc-

tured settlement at the pinnacle of its occupation, the excavated area representing only part of a more extensive complex. The occupants of this settlement seem to have participated in a mixed farming economy; cattle were kept, together with sheep/goat and at least one adult horse. Emmer and spelt wheat and barley were grown on the drier soils of the area, and the final stages of crop-processing (dehusking, grinding etc) seem to have taken place on site as and when clean grain was required. Flax was also cultivated, probably to provide linseed oil.

Subsequently, the settlement seems to have fallen out of use and only limited evidence (the area of cobbling overlying the filled ditch of enclosure 1) for late Romano-British (late 3rd to 4th century AD) activity was encountered. A number of ditches, while clearly post-dating the Romano-British activity, remain otherwise undated as too few diagnostic artefacts were recovered from their fills. The most significant of these (ditch 1282) may indicate the course of an open road shown on a late 18th century map, although its origins probably lay within the medieval or even earlier periods (BAS 2000). No evidence of structures or other settlement or industrial activity was encountered, and in conjunction with the aerial photographic evidence for ridge-and-furrow, it may be inferred that the site was on the outskirts of the hamlet of Tickford, a roadside common field used for arable farming until the 19th century.

In the mid 1830s the Newport Pagnell Union Workhouse was constructed on the site. Although demolished to ground level in 1994, a coherent structural sequence has been established from the survey of the building's footprint coupled with cartographic, photographic and documentary evidence. After the abolition of workhouses in 1929, the building became known as Renny Lodge Hospital, primarily caring for the elderly and chronically sick, a role that continued until closure in 1992. Despite these administrative changes, the survey indicated that only minor alterations and additions were made to the basic workhouse structure during its 160-year existence. The site continues to play a caring role into the 21st century, having been redeveloped to provide affordable housing for the inhabitants of the town.

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Further details can be found in the project archive, currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology under site codes 60830–3 (inc.), but to be deposited in due course with Buckinghamshire County Museum, The County Museum Resource Centre, Tring Road, Halton, Bucks, HP22 5PJ under the accession number 205.123.

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