AN IRON AGE BOUNDARY SYSTEM AND ROMAN BURIALS AT LEICESTER LANE, ST JOHNS, ENDERBY

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Fieldwork between 2006 and 2008 has located evidence of a double-ditched Iron Age boundary system, the Fosse Way Roman road and later Roman burials west of St Johns and south of Leicester Lane, Enderby. Dating evidence from the eastern ditch suggests the formalisation of a boundary and/or trackway in the Mid-Late Iron Age that probably directly or indirectly relates to the Iron Age enclosures that have been recorded at Grove Farm to the north. This boundary was then reused and remodelled shortly after the conquest to form part of a new settlement system extending to the east. The Roman burials may be of inhabitants of this as yet unconfirmed Roman settlement.

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the results of archaeological work carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) in advance of the construction of the Leicester Park and Ride terminal, between St John’s and Leicester Lane, Enderby, Leicestershire (NGR SP 5520 9956, Fig. 1). The work was carried out on behalf of Leicestershire County Council, Department of Planning and Transportation, Highways Department, between June and August 2008. An excavation undertaken in 2008 followed a geophysical survey and an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching undertaken in 2006.

The site is located 7km south-west of Leicester, to the north-west of the village of Enderby. It consisted of an area of c. 6.4ha that is bounded to the north by Leicester Lane and to the east by St John’s Road (Figs 1 and 2). The site lies on a slight south-east facing slope, between heights of 65m and 70m OD, overlooking the confluences of Lubbesthorpe Brook and other tributary streams that flow into the River Soar to the east. The underlying geology within the areas investigated comprised Mercia mudstone group and drift glacial clays with gravel spreads. A band of sandy clay with pockets of soft sand was also observed against the eastern extremity of the site.

The site was within an area of known archaeological potential. A Romano-British brooch and an Anglo-Saxon die stamp had previously been found within the development area by metal detecting, while the western edge of the site followed the line of a former field boundary reflecting the projected alignment of the Roman ‘Fosse Way’, the major arterial road connecting Leicester with Lincoln to the north-east, and Cirencester and Exeter to the south-west (Fig. 2).
Fig. 1. Site location plan (shaded area), 1:10,000. Reproduced from OS Street View®. Contains Ordnance Survey Data. © Crown copyright and database right 2011.
Two Iron Age settlements are known to the north of the site. A large ‘D’ shaped enclosure dated to the late first century BC was partially excavated 450m to the north of the site in 1983–84 that contained a sequence of circular roundhouse structures (Clay 1992). Additional work during a watching brief phase of the Grove Farm development in 1996 revealed further circular structures to the south of the enclosure, suggesting different phases of open and enclosed settlement (Beamish and Ripper 1997). A second, sub-circular enclosure located 150m north-west of the site was also partially excavated in 1996 during the Grove Farm development that also dated to the first century BC. The settlement had two clear structural phases, each represented by a pair of circular buildings within the enclosure. The enclosure itself had a large gateway complex on its north-east side, with a possible trackway extending away from the enclosure (Meek et al. 2004, fig. 10).

Based on the potential of the site highlighted by the known sites in the vicinity and a geophysical survey conducted on the site (Stowe 2006), an archaeological evaluation was undertaken within the proposed development between late January and early February 2006 (Harvey 2006). The aim of the evaluation was to establish the nature, extent and significance of archaeological deposits on the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the proposed development. Eighteen trenches were excavated, targeting anomalies revealed by the geophysical survey (Fig. 2). This revealed two large ditches highlighted by the geophysical survey in the north-east corner of the site. Two post-holes, a gully and a possible ring-gully were also recorded in close association along the eastern edge of the site. On the western side of the site, make-up layers relating to the Fosse Way Roman road were also recorded.

In the light of the results from the trial trench evaluation, the Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council requested that two areas along the eastern side of the site were to be examined prior to the development, and an intensive watching brief undertaken along the western edge of the development (adjacent to the Fosse Way) site during any groundworks in that area.

RESULTS

Boundary ditches

The excavation area was crossed by two parallel ditches, running broadly north to south. They were clearly associated as they both exhibited the same subtle changes of alignment along their course. The western ditch spans the whole length of Area 1 and its continuation can be projected into Area 2, giving a length in excess of 180m within the development area. The eastern ditch was observed for 75m, although it is likely that it would have continued parallel to the western ditch, extending beyond the development area a short distance north of Area 2. Despite the clear similarities in the ditch alignments, the features themselves are very different in character from one another.

The eastern ditch was only observed within Area 1, its width varying between 1.17m and 2m, and its depth between 0.6m and 0.9m. To the south a clear
The interruption of the ditch was visible with two clear termini demarcating a gap measuring 3.17 m, covered with a gravel spread that extended westwards. It was made up of brown gravel, generally only a single layer thick that had been pressed into the natural clay. There was no evidence of re-cutting within the eastern ditch and the profile was very similar throughout. The sides were steep and straight with an incline of c. 50–60°, and it had a flat base, while the two ends of the termini were similarly steep and straight. The excavated slots revealed two fills consisting of similar firm mid-yellow/grey brown silty-clay, the upper fill containing a higher charcoal content than the lower. Pottery was only present in small quantities in the upper fill, which may indicate that this was the result of final levelling, probably using material from surviving bank material. The fills at the termini were slightly different. The upper fill of the northern terminal was much richer in charcoal than anywhere else along the ditch, while the southern terminal contained a charcoal rich dark orangey grey silty-clay primary deposit below a dark orangey brown sandy-clay deposit, above which were the two fills observed elsewhere.
The majority of the pottery assemblage recovered consisted of mid-late Iron Age forms, with three small sherds of abraded second-century Roman pottery.

The western ditch was observed in Areas 1 and 2, with a projected length in excess of 180m. The in-filled feature varied in width between 2.8m and 4.5m. Unlike the eastern ditch, it appears that this ditch has been subject to re-cutting and remodelling during its lifespan. At least two, possibly three, separate phases of cuts were observed within the excavated sections, although the pottery present could not be dated with sufficient resolution to provide clear divisions between these phases of activity.

The northernmost excavated sections exhibited similar profiles, with two clear cuts along the ditch’s western side. The earlier cut was a minimum of 1.2m in

Fig. 3. Plan showing excavated features within areas 1 and 2.
width, and varied in depth between 0.77m and 1.1m. The eastern side was steep and straight with an incline of c. 50–60°, and the remains of the base appeared relatively flat. Pottery that dated between the late first and early second century AD was recovered from the fills of this cut. The later cut varied in width between 2m and 3m, and was c. 1m deep with a ‘U’ shaped profile and a concave base. The uppermost fill contained pottery dating to the late third/early fourth century. Disarticulated human bones relating the lower body of an unsexed individual were found in the upper fill in the northernmost excavated section, and may suggest that an articulated burial had been disturbed during the later re-cutting of the ditch.

Clear remodelling of the ditch system was recorded further south in Area 1 that included widening along its eastern side. A gully, aligned east to west, 1m wide and varying in depth between 0.2m and 0.5m, clearly cut the eastern ditch before changing its alignment and merging with the western ditch. The gully was filled by a single grey brown silty-clay deposit that contained small quantities of pottery dating between the late first and mid-second century AD. In addition to first-second century pottery, two second-century trumpet brooches (Fig. 7.1 and 7.2) and a silver denarius of Septimius Severus (AD 192–211) were recovered.

The western ditch clearly continued into Area 2. The ditch varied in width between 2.7m and 4.5m over a 20m stretch, and again clear re-cutting was also observed. A difference between the backfill of the sections excavated in this area compared with Area 1 was also evident. The fill generally consisted of a homogenous grey silty-clay with very few finds, the small quantities of Roman pottery that were recorded consisting of small and abraded sherds.

Iron Age activity

To the south of Area 2 an area was examined to target two post-holes, a gully and a possible curvilinear gully located during the evaluation. The two post-holes were relocated, while the curvilinear feature recorded in the evaluation turned out to be elliptical and irregular when fully exposed, and is likely to represent the remains of a natural tree throw feature. A further gully to the south contained one sherd of mid-late Iron Age pottery, while to the west another post-hole was identified. These features probably represent some small-scale late prehistoric activity, although no clear functionality can be interpreted from their limited remains. The three post-holes were all well-defined features and may indicate the presence of a timber structure, the remainder of which has been lost through plough truncation.

Burials (with Harriet Jacklin) (Fig. 4)

Six burials were located during the excavation, although five of these were located directly below the plough line and had been subject to extensive truncation and disturbance. The burials were all roughly aligned north-north-west to south-south-east, the same alignment as the ditch system, and appear to have been adults,
although only three of the burials could be sexed. SK06 was located within the fill of the western ditch and survived comparatively intact (Figs. 4 and 8).

SK01
Only faint traces of a grave cut were recorded that measured 0.9m in length, 0.25m wide and 50mm deep. Little can be said about the cut as the remains clearly only represented the extreme base of the feature that seemed to be fairly flat. Within the cut the fragmentary human remains of lower limb bones were excavated, including parts of the femur and tibia. The crushed remains of some of
the pelvis and lower vertebrae were also present. The adult individual had been buried in a supine position. What little remained of the grave fill consisted of a dark yellow brown silty-clay deposit that was probably re-deposited natural substratum.

SK02
As with SK01, only slight traces of a grave cut [121] were recorded that measured 1.22m in length, 0.30m wide and 50mm deep. Again, clearly only the base of the feature remained that was relatively flat although uneven in places. Within the cut were fragmentary human remains of the torso, as well as upper and lower limbs as far as the femurs and fragments from the back of the skull. A lower limb bone was also identified 1.5m south of the burial during topsoil machining that is likely to have been dragged away from the body fairly recently. This individual is likely to be a female aged between 36 and 50, and was buried in a supine position. The grave fill consisted of a dark yellow brown silty-clay deposit that was probably re-deposited natural substratum.
Fig. 6. Selected sections through the boundary ditch: Sections A–F (western) and Sections G–K (eastern).
Fig. 7. Two Roman trumpet brooches (1 & 2) and Late Iron Age Nauheim brooch (3) recovered during the course of the archaeological investigations.
Fig. 8. Burial remains recorded in Area 1.
SK03
No obvious cut was observed for these remains that were pressed into the natural clay. The fragments of bone consist of a crushed skull and ribs of an adult.

SK04
Only the base of the grave cut remained that measured 1.5m in length, a maximum of 0.6m wide and a maximum of 120mm deep. The base of the cut was fairly flat although uneven in areas. Within the cut were the remains of only the right side of a burial consisting of fragmentary elements from the femur to the skull. This individual appears to have been an adult male deliberately buried on their right-hand side (the left-hand side having been removed by horizontal truncation) as the remaining bones were well articulated, suggesting any movement/disturbance of the body would have had to have happened soon after burial.

SK05
This was the only burial recorded on the eastern side of the western ditch. Again, only the base of the grave cut remained, which measured 1.21m in length, 0.43m wide and 70mm deep, and within the cut only the lower remains on an individual were present, consisting of the lower limb bones, fragments of the left pelvis and lower left arm. This adult individual (16–35 years) had been placed in a supine position.

SK06
This burial was located during the excavation of a section of the western ditch. Stratigraphically the grave cut the latest phase of the ditch fill, and the cut of the grave measured 1.65m in length and 600mm wide. The total depth of the cut could not be clearly established because the fills of the upper ditch and grave were indistinguishable from one another. The grave did clearly cut the lower ditch fill to a depth of 0.20m. Within the grave cut was a reasonably complete burial, although the bones were fragmentary. The vertebrae were particularly fragmented, with the upper area almost entirely absent. Another noticeable absence was the lower right arm and hand, with the radius and ulna cut off halfway down. This cannot be attributed to the state of preservation because the left side was reasonably well preserved. It is unclear whether this burial was cut after the ditch had filled up completely or whether the grave was cut into the ditch when it still existed as a partially open feature. The burial appears to have been a male aged between 36 and 50, and was orientated along the alignment of the ditch at that point. Also, the burial was clearly located on the eastern edge of a later ditch cut, so spatially it seems more likely that the burial was dug into the ditch post-disuse while the feature was still a prominent feature within the landscape.

The Fosse Way (Fig. 9)
Although not observed during the excavation, evidence of the Fosse Way was located during the evaluation and subsequent watching brief.
Fig. 9. Remains of the Fosse Way, recorded at the south-east end of Trench 18 during the evaluation (Harvey 2006).
The agger for the Fosse Way was partially exposed at the south-east end of Trench 18 during the 2006 evaluation (Harvey 2006, 19). The accepted construction method for Roman roads involves the building of an embankment or agger, often using material from the roadside ditches, on top of which large blocks of stones or gravel layers would be laid to form a foundation. This would have supported a surface consisting of gravel above. There would have also been a camber that would have helped with the drainage (Bagshawe 1979, 15). However, there is variation in construction methods (Davies 2004, 55).

Two distinct layers were observed; the lower layer consisting of large stones forming its foundation known as ‘hard bottoming’, also observed further north at Grove Farm (Sharman and Clay 1991, 9). The upper layer consisted of a silty sand and gravel with a maximum size of 80mm. It is unlikely that this is part of a surface and is more likely to be a middle foundation layer, as the uppermost layers of the road in this area have been subject to considerable truncation through plough action. A possible roadside ditch was observed to the north-west of the road, but again this has suffered considerable plough damage. A gravel surface was also observed to the north-west of the trench. Land was often levelled beyond the agger during the construction of the road; it is possible gravel was laid down in order to aid the transportation of materials for the road across difficult terrain due to the unsuitability of the natural clay. A Nauheim brooch was recovered in close proximity to this layer that may date as early as the late first century BC (Fig. 7.3).

There was no evidence that the natural clay had been used to build an agger. Davies suggests that this is the case for only 26% of the Roman roads in Britain and that the likelihood that larger stones will be found in the foundation layer increases towards the north of Britain. It has also been argued that ‘hard bottoming’ was favoured by military road-builders (Davies 2002, 58). The word ‘Fosse’ is derived from the Latin Fossa, meaning ‘ditch’. For the first few decades after the Roman invasion of Britain in AD 43, the Fosse Way marked the western frontier of Roman rule in Britain. It is possible, therefore, that a defensive ditch pre-dated the road, or ran alongside it for at least some of its length, although to date there has been no evidence of this located.

DISCUSSION
The evidence suggests that the initial activity on the site consisted of one or, more likely, a pair of parallel ditches dating to the mid-late Iron Age, although an earlier date for their establishment cannot be ruled out. Only the eastern ditch contained clearly stratified prehistoric material, but the parallel nature of the ditches that exhibit similar changes to their alignments reveals a clear relationship between the eastern and western ditch. Also, the western ditch does contain hints of an earlier ditch (along with residual Iron Age pottery) within the excavated section that does point to a pre-Roman double-ditch system. Linear ditch systems are numerous in the East Midlands (14 known from Leicestershire and Rutland), in the form of single, double, triple and even quadruple parallel
ditches (Willis 2006, 123). It is also feasible that further ditches relating to this phase could exist further to the east of the site. It is clear that these ditch systems are often complex features. Some were long lived, showing some re-cutting, while some are certainly multi-period. Recent excavations on the Earl Shilton Bypass, for example, have revealed a pit alignment associated with Bronze Age barrows that had been partially superseded by a linear monument within the recorded area (Jarvis 2009). The linear arrangement at the Park and Ride site was recorded over a distance of 175m (although land between Areas 1 and 2 was not investigated), and it is likely to continue beyond the limits of the site. Normally they are traceable for a few hundred metres, although some had been recorded up to 3km long. At ‘The Larches’, Stowe-Nine-Churches, in Northamptonshire, a length of triple-ditch system is extant as an earthwork for 600m and continues as a cropmark for a further kilometre (RCHME 1981, 179–81). It is noted that these ditch systems are not particularly regular in form or alignment, and generally do not respect topography. This seems to be the case for the double-ditch system recorded. It cut the gentle topography at an angle and although it was orientated roughly north-south, it did exhibit notable curving along its recorded length. The ditches are likely to have had associated banks, but it is unlikely the boundaries were defensive. This seems to be the case for the recorded ditches as there was a clear break in the eastern ditch with a possible gravel surface. It is generally considered that these types of monuments were acting as a way of controlling people and animals, perhaps functioning as a boundary and/or a trackway.

It is likely that the ditches were open during the occupation of Enderby Enclosures I and II, although relating the ditch system to these settlement sites to the north is tentative. The ditches were not seen north of Leicester Lane (within the balancing pond area) during a watching brief for Grove Farm industrial estate (Ripper and Beamish 1997). Initially, the ditches on the park and ride site were not clearly visible, and it is feasible that, under watching brief conditions, they may not have been identified (S. Ripper pers. comm). Enclosure I was remodelled and extended during its lifespan. An entrance at its north-east corner was recorded during its early phase (Phase 3.1; Clay, 1992, 24) although beyond this period no clear divisions within the enclosure were recorded, probably due to the entirety of the enclosure not being fully examined during the excavation. Activity to the south-east of Enclosure I was recorded during the watching brief, including a number of circular buildings (Ripper and Beamish 1997). Projecting a straight line from the ditches found at the park and ride site would lead to this settlement activity, perhaps suggesting that the ditches initially acted as a trackway (Fig. 10). Enclosure II had a clear entrance on its north-eastern side (Meek et al. 2004). Between the two terminals was an area of gravel and one ditch was recorded leading away from the enclosure, perpendicular to the southern terminus. It is feasible that this represents a similar trackway leading away from the enclosure, perhaps leading to the settlement activity in or around Enclosure I. It is clear from the archaeological investigations that Mid to Late Iron Age activity in this area was extensive. There appears to be evidence of increased land use compared to the preceding centuries and this may have necessitated formalisation of boundaries at
this time (Willis 2006). Two other double-ditch systems have been recorded in the wider landscape from aerial photographs. Approximately 2km due south of the site, west of Whetstone (SP 550 973), a c. 250m long stretch of a double-ditch system has been observed which seems to enclose an area by cutting off the angle between the River Soar and Whetstone Brook (Pickering and Hartley 1985, 34). Adjoining the ditch system within the enclosed area is a ‘washing line’ enclosure, as well as possible further rectangular enclosures, perhaps indicating settlement
activity associated with the feature. Another double-ditch system is recorded east of Blaby, some 3km south-east of the site (SP 578 974) running north to the River Soar, again with a cluster of adjoined enclosures suggesting a possible farmstead (ibid). There is no suggestion that these sites are directly related to the ditch system, although it is tempting to suggest that the site at Whetstone represents contemporary land division in the area. However, they do indicate a clear relationship between these systems and the River Soar. Considering the direction of the western ditch in Area 2, it seems feasible that the ditch system may have originally continued to the river, some 450m south-south-east of the site.

Ithas been interpreted that boundaries have been used to divide different land resources. These boundaries often run along or perpendicular to natural features such as water courses or changes in geology. The westernmost ditch recorded on site definitely appeared to demarcate a change of geology on the site, even though this change was not obvious topographically. To the west of the ditch, Mercia Mudstone group bedrock with shallow patches of overlying gravel was recorded, while to the east was an orangey brown sandy-clay deposit that contained bands of red sand. Excavation of the ditch slots showed this deposit to butt up against and overlie the mudstone. The geological map on the area loosely suggests this division marks the boundary between the Mercia Mudstone and a small deposit of Mid-Pleistocene Glaciofluvial material extending eastwards, consisting of sand and gravel that is itself encapsulated south, east and north-east by a small area of terrace gravels of the River Soar.

It is clear that the eastern boundary ditch went out of use before or around the point of the Roman conquest. Three extremely abraded sherds of Roman pottery were also found in one of the excavated slots, and it was suggested their poor condition may indicate re-deposited material. The enclosure ditches at the two enclosures at Grove Farm also included small quantities of abraded Roman pottery in their upper fills (Pollard 1992; Marsden and Morris 2004). The western boundary does clearly continue to be re-used into the Early Roman period, although it is uncertain whether there was an abandonment period between the double-ditch system and re-use of the western ditch, as the paucity and apparent mixing of finds has made it difficult to phase the ditch. However, there does seem to be at least two phases of re-cutting associated with the western ditch. The majority of the pottery dates between the late first to second century AD, along with a smaller assemblage of pottery dating to the later third–fourth century. A silver denarius of Septimius Severus (AD 193–211) was recovered towards the base of the ditch at the southern end of Area 1 that would indicate the ditch was still functional at the turn of the third century.

The projected line of the Fosse Way, the Roman road that linked Exeter (Isca Dumnoniorum) in south-west England to Lincoln (Lindum Colonia) in the East Midlands, via Ilchester (Lindinis), Bath (Aquae Sulis), Cirencester (Corinium) and Leicester (Ratae Corieltauvorum), passes within 150m west of the ditch systems, and evidence of the road make-up layers was recorded during the course of the evaluation. The word ‘Fosse’ is derived from the Latin Fossa, meaning ‘ditch’. For the first few decades after the Roman invasion of Britain in AD 43, the Fosse Way is
believed to have marked the western frontier of Roman rule in Britain. It is possible, therefore, that a defensive ditch ran alongside the road for at least some of its length, although this was not evident here. It appears that neither of the Iron Age settlements located to the north-west (Enclosures I and II) continued into the Roman period, and this in some part may relate to their location on the western side of the Fosse Way. Unfortunately, it is not possible to trace the extent of the western ditch beyond the confines of the site, but only consider why the ditch remains in use despite the establishment of a new alignment. Features at the north end of the site suggest that archaeological deposits dating to the late first to second century continue to the east of the site. A gully aligned perpendicular to and merging with the western ditch was recorded with a possible open and closed phase against the ditch. This may be evidence of a ‘clothes line’ type paddock enclosure associated with the ditch. Aerial photography in 2006 has revealed possible archaeological activity 200m to the north-east, on the arable field north of the police headquarters on St John's (MLE 16568). Here, a clear linear cropmark can be observed orientated on the same alignment as the western ditch that may indicate further activity associated with the site (Fig. 10). This feature leads to a rectangular cropmark feature that appears to contain an apsidal element on its southern side. As it is parallel to the projected alignment of the Fosse Way (200m to the west), this could suggest a Roman date. Further ditches and a possible ring gully can also be traced, suggesting that the features would continue beneath the police headquarters to the south. This location would appear to be a good position for a settlement, as the geological map suggests it occupies an island of sand and gravel terrace separated to the west by clay and alluvium to the east. If there was a settlement to the east of the site it seems likely that the western ditch acted as a boundary to this activity. This suggestion of settlement activity close to the north end of the site is supported by the pattern of artefact recovery identified along the western ditch. A clear artefactual bias towards the north of the site can be seen, with the three northernmost excavated sections producing the greatest density of pottery and variety of forms. Given that the bulk of the pottery recovered from the western ditch and the associated gullies dated between the late first and second century AD, it is likely that there is a nearby settlement dating to this period. It was noted from the faunal assemblage recovered from site that there were notably high proportions of cattle and horse bones represented. Work on spatial patterning of bones at other sites has suggested that larger bones tend to be located around the edges of the settlement, and that fragments are smaller towards the centre due to movement of bone through re-working of deposits (Wilson 1996, 14). Spatial analysis carried out at Manor Farm Humberstone (Browning 2011), indicated that cattle and horse bones were most common in the enclosure ditches, while sheep occurred more frequently in the roundhouses. The proportion of horse bones was particularly enhanced in the enclosures, compared to the roundhouses, suggesting that disposal of horse bones was occurring away from the centre of the settlement. The very low density of charred plant remains recovered, a single chaff fragment in only one sample, suggests also that the site is away from the area of occupation or other cereal-related activities.
The theory that the western ditch marks a settlement boundary is given further substance by the burials recorded on the site. A clear characteristic of all six burials was their relationship to the western ditch. The ditch exhibits subtle changes of alignment across the site and these changes in alignment are also evident in the burials. The differences between the bearing of the ditch and the bearing of adjacent sections of the ditch only vary by a maximum of 6.5° (although four of the five burials only vary by a maximum of 2.2°). The difference in orientations between the burials themselves varies by 12.2°, so it is clear that the localised orientation of the western ditch has a direct influence on the burial location. The locations of SK01–05 are between 2.63m and 4.76m away from the edge of the ditch, with four of the five burials (SK01–04) occurring along the western and one along the eastern side (SK05). It is possible the burials on the western side may be respecting the line of a possible bank, formed by the excavation of the ditch. Perhaps a similar case could be suggested for SK05, but clearly a different burial practice was observed for SK06 which may either represent different treatment of the individual or more likely a later phase of activity. The presence of disarticulated human remains located at the northern end of the ditch does suggest the association of burial practice with this boundary, and this may have been a long tradition given that at least one further burial had been disturbed. It is possible that there was an initial phase of burials associated with the family group relating to the settlement, and then a later phase of burial occurred that reflects an association with the boundary feature.

When considering the specific research questions that were proposed prior to the excavation, it can be seen that the results have added to our understanding of the relationship between Late Iron Age and Roman settlements within the Grove Farm area. Neither Enclosure I nor II showed any evidence of continuity into the Roman period, although both did reveal Roman pottery in their ditch backfills. It is not clear whether these settlements were still occupied at the time of the conquest, but it is suggested that Enclosure II may have been abandoned by this point (Meek et al. 2004, 17). However, the Park and Ride site has provided an insight into a continued picture of settlement activity within the area, although it is not certain whether the evidence represents a continued re-use of features or whether periods of abandonment took place between the different phases of activity. Dating evidence from the eastern ditch suggests the formalisation of a boundary and/or trackway in the Mid-Late Iron Age that probably directly or indirectly relates to the Iron Age enclosures that have been recorded at Grove Farm. This boundary was then reused and remodelled shortly after the conquest to form part of a new settlement system extending to the east. It was clear that the boundary still held territorial importance, as it was used as a place of burial during this period. The pottery assemblage suggests that the settlement activity was relatively short-lived, with most of the material dating no later than the late second century AD. However the boundary continues to be used into the third century at the very least, with a continued tradition of burial along its course.
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