b) *Land at Sleaford Moor Enterprise Park, Pride Parkway* (TF 07383 47212):[55] a project ongoing since 2020[56] revealed evidence for Iron Age and Roman field systems as well as Roman structural evidence. The results of the latest excavations from 2021 and 2022 include further enclosure and boundary features, including ditches that enclose an area of industrial activity, remnants of stone and post-built structures, a metalled surface, and a watering-hole. The industrial activity consisted of lime kilns and a possible corn dryer. Roman burial activity was also exposed in the form of inhumations, cremations, and an unusual horse burial with its rear legs folded back towards the head.

(5) **Wragby**, *Land off Horncastle Road* (TF 1405 7766):[57] an excavation was undertaken in summer 2021. In Area 1, industrial activity was identified in the form of two tile kilns, thought to be in use in the late-third to fourth centuries. The kilns were both rectangular, north-west–south-east aligned, distanced 11 m apart. The kilns appeared to be used for most likely local production, manufacturing primarily tile, brick and *tegula*, as well as box flue, *imbrex*, and possibly also *bessalis* for a *pilae* stack, probably for use in a relatively high-status building nearby. Among the large quantities of tiles various impressions and imprints were made including palm impressions, giving insight into the tile manufacture techniques, and other interesting imprints included a child's footprint, and animal paw and hoof prints. Area 2 of the site revealed ring ditches associated with pits and postholes bounded by a large enclosure ditch enclosing a settlement.[58] A mid- to late Iron Age date is suspected.

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## 5. THE MIDLANDS

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### BEDFORDSHIRE

(1) **Bedford**, a) *London Road* (TL 0593 4811): a small excavation behind The Bull public house identified two phases of second-century activity: the initial arrangement of storage pits, post-holes and a large boundary ditch was succeeded by further pits, enclosure ditches and a keyhole-shaped pottery kiln (FIG. 16). The kiln's furnace chamber had an internal diameter of 1.2 m, fed by a flue of coursed, roughly hewn limestone bonded with clay. Some remnants of clay lining covered the inner face of the furnace chamber; no evidence survived of a pedestal or oven floor, nor holes

[55] Work by D. Leigh and C. Clay of Allen Archaeology. Summary by E. Danielsson. Work commissioned by North Kesteven District Council. Allen Archaeology Interim Report No. AAL2022029.

[56] Allen, M., Stockdale, M., and Clay, C., 2020: *Sleaford Moor Enterprise Park, North Kesteven, Lincolnshire: Overarching Archaeological Mitigation Strategy*. Unpublished Allen Archaeology Report No. AAL 2020075.

[57] Information provided by Emily Danielson. Work by D. Leigh and C. Clay of Allen Archaeology. Summary by E. Danielsson. Work commissioned by Gleeson Homes Limited. Allen Archaeology Report No. AAL 2023119 OASIS ID: allenarc1-517351.

[58] Identified previously through a geophysical survey by On-Site Archaeology and aerial photography found in the Historic England National Mapping Programme. On-Site Archaeology, 2016, *Land off Horncastle Road, Wragby, Lincolnshire. Report on a Geophysical Survey*. OSA Report No: OSA16EV19.

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FIG. 16. Bedford, London Road: second-century Roman kiln undergoing cleaning.

for kiln bars in the walls of the chamber. The relative dearth of kiln furniture recovered may indicate that the kiln was intentionally cleared out after its last firing. The kiln is most likely to have been used for grey-ware pottery production, given the high amount that was found on site, including wasters.[59]

b) *Manton Lane* (TL 4164 1912): excavations on high ground on the northern outskirts of Bedford revealed an enclosed settlement covering at least 2 ha (FIG. 17). It appears to have been established during the late Iron Age and was largely abandoned by the end of the first century A.D., although some degree of later activity is attested by third-century coins. Nineteen roundhouses and five four-post structures were grouped into four domestic foci, alongside pits, a large water-pit, a well and two inhumation burials. An iron spear was found alongside a domestic assemblage of pottery, animal bones and quern stones. Nearby excavations on the lower ground of the Great Ouse Valley revealed the edge of at least two contemporary enclosures and a possible trackway; no internal features were revealed, but the density of finds suggests that it represents the edge of a second large settlement.[60]

[59] Albion Archaeology, led by Iain Leslie, Benjamin Carroll and Matteo Palombelli. David Ingham sent information.
[60] Albion Archaeology, led by Kathy Pilkinton, Allan King and Matevz Groselj. Kathy Pilkinton sent information.

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FIG. 17. Bedford, Manton Lane: Aerial view of hilltop settlement.

(2) **Houghton Regis**, *North 1* (TL 01715 25432): a 1.5 ha excavation revealed part of a second- to fourth-century settlement (FIG. 18) at the base of a shallow valley adjacent to the Ouzel Brook, originally identified by trial trenching and geophysical survey in 2012. The settlement was defined by a large boundary ditch following the contours of the surrounding landscape. Its interior contained a series of contemporary rectangular enclosures, a metalled trackway, groups of storage pits and a series of natural springs. One of the rectangular enclosures, *c.* 26 m by 13 m, is likely to have contained a substantial high-status building: artefacts from the surrounding ditches included *imbrex* and *tegula* roof-tile, dressed stone, and box-flue tiles and *pilae* that may have derived from a hypocaust system, although surprisingly little pottery was found. The lack of any intact structural remains may be due to ploughing, or the building may have been constructed on raised ground to combat the high risk of flooding. The metalled trackway measured up to 5 m wide and was flanked by drainage ditches. Its surface had a slight camber and was constructed from medium to large cobble-stones (FIG. 19). No preparation layers were identified, and the cobbles appear to have been set directly in the ground after it had been stripped of any topsoil. A large cluster of undated post-holes just outside the enclosed settlement may represent contemporary stock enclosures or corrals. Three inhumation burials and a horse burial were also revealed outside the enclosed settlement; one contained a fragmented clay vessel dating to the second to third century.[61]

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

(1) **Milton Keynes**, Towergate A (SP 9045 3744): excavations revealed the remains of a later Roman farmstead, with three distinct phases of activity (FIG. 20). The earliest phase, dating to

[61] Albion Archaeology, led by Wesley Keir, Benjamin Carroll and Matteo Palombelli. Benjamin Carroll sent information.

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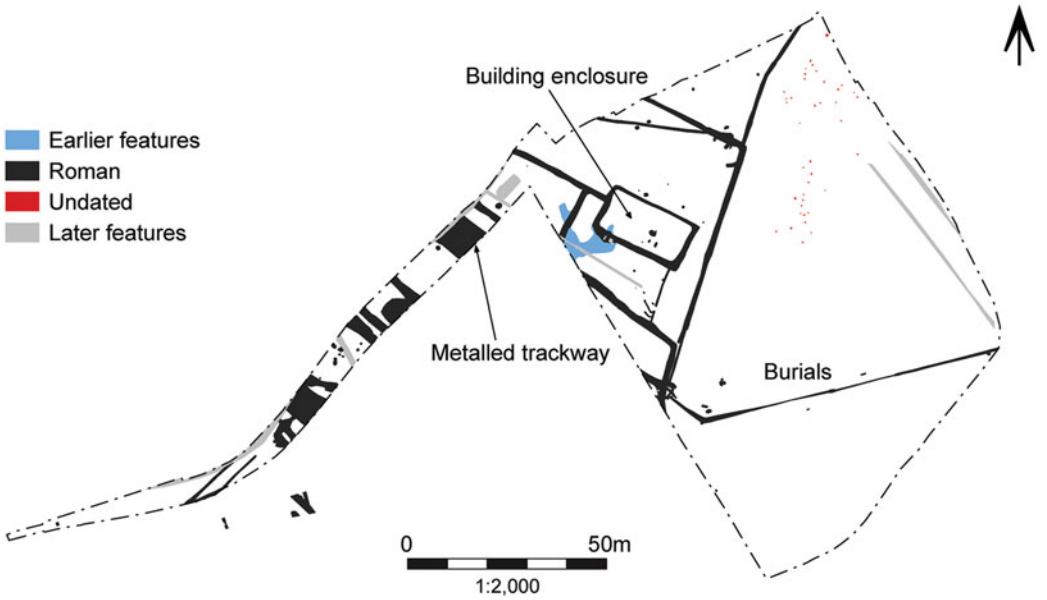



FIG. 18. Houghton Regis, Houghton Regis North 1: Roman settlement.



FIG. 19. Houghton Regis, Houghton Regis North 1: metalled trackway.

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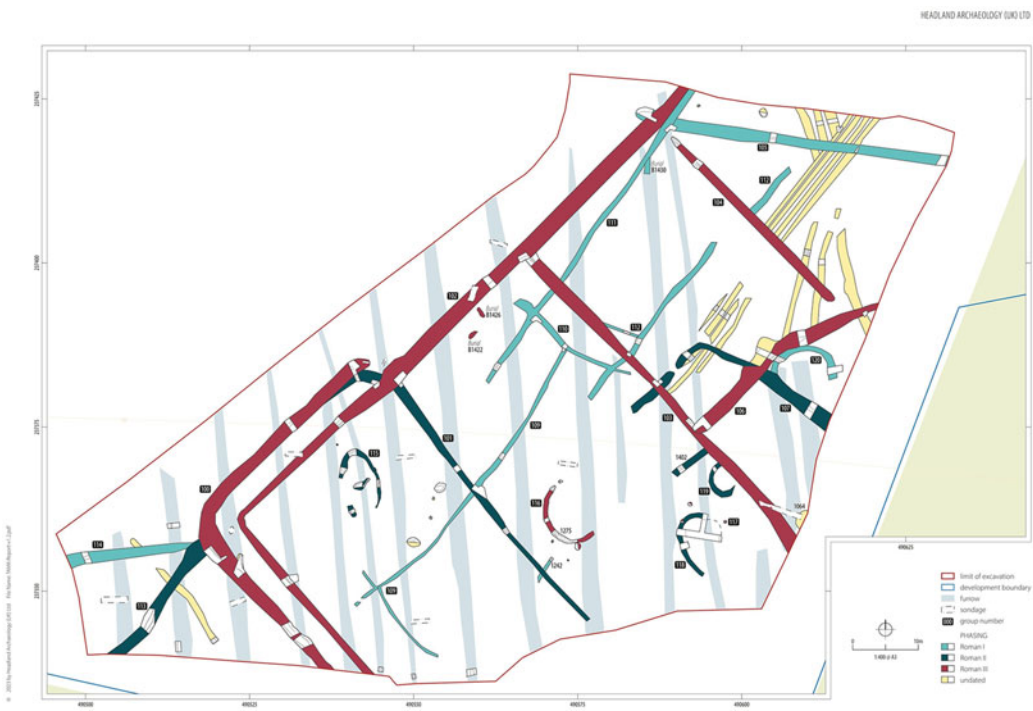



FIG. 20. Milton Keynes, Towergate A: Phased plan.

around the mid-third century A.D., comprised a field system and a single ring-ditch structure. The later phases saw the establishment of an enclosure system, culminating in a large rectilinear enclosure which was abandoned around the early fourth century A.D. Associated with the site were three burials, two of which may define the 'final' phases of the later enclosure.[62]

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

(1) **Milton** (TL 46800 62800): a multi-phase network of enclosure ditches, including an oven/kiln and beam-slots for possible rectangular buildings, covering an area of *c*. 3.5 ha, was excavated. (FIG. 21). The earliest enclosure ditches were laid out in the first century and underwent a series of modifications until abandonment of the site in the fourth century. A substantial amount of animal bone, mainly from cattle, came from the ditch fills with cut marks on many of these bones from butchery and dismemberment of carcasses. The bone assemblage also included the remains sheep/goat, pig and domestic fowl. Barley grains dominated the seed assemblages. The pottery assemblage comprises local utilitarian wares and table wares, including samian, Nene Valley colour-coat and Oxfordshire parchment wares. One unusual piece was the neck and rim of a beaker with a human face modelled on it. Copper-alloy objects include an ornamental drawer handle and an oyster spoon, along with items of personal adornment, including a bracelet, a fibula and a *tutulus* brooch. Other finds include part of a bone comb, an iron knife blade, nails, a whetstone, quern fragments and coins mainly dating to the second to fourth

[62] Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd, led by Sara Machin and Owain Scholma-Mason. Laura James sent information.

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FIG. 21. Milton. View of enclosure ditches.

centuries. Fragments of box flue tiles, *tegula* and sandstone tiles also came from the upper fill of ditches. The enclosures and buildings could have been part of either a villa estate or an affluent farmstead.[63]

(2) **St Neots**, *Wintringham Park* (TL 19809 59308): excavation showed that earlier trackways were maintained and repeatedly realigned through the late Iron Age to early Roman periods, while a dense system of rectilinear enclosures extended to the north and south. The main axes formed the framework for a complex farmstead spanning an area of 7 ha in the centre of the site. Full sub-phasing has not yet been completed but the earlier settlement enclosures had an almost ladder-like pattern of development.

In the early to middle Roman period, a key development was the reframing of enclosures in the centre of the settlement, with a main outer ditch enclosing an area of *c*. 4 ha. This probably related to the establishment of a rectangular Romano-Celtic temple building (FIG. 22), which had stone-filled foundation trenches. The inner walls were the most substantial, forming a line of three cells with clay floors and a central stone-lined hearth, while an outer ambulatory had shallower foundations. Demolition layers contained painted wall plaster (with two phases of decoration evident), and fragments of glass jugs found with a deposit of oyster shell point to ritual activity. The north-western walls had been built over a large earlier ditch and had subsided, revealing signs of repair with post-holes cut through the outer wall and the addition of a possible later buttress. Finds from these deposits suggest a late second- to third-century date for the demolition of the building.

The temple was replaced in the late Roman period by a large eight-post aisled structure, using the same alignment. A contemporary inhumation cemetery lay immediately outside the south-west corner of the main enclosure. This comprised eight graves with nine decapitated burials; in all

[63] Archaeological Research Services Ltd, led by Jim Brown and James Davey. Jim Brown sent information.

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FIG. 22. St Neots. View of rectangular Romano-Celtic temple building.

but one case the skull had been placed near the feet. Four contained near-complete pots of fourth-century date and two have produced middle to late Roman radiocarbon dates. Close to the north-western corner of the main enclosure, another group of (undated) burials contained seven inhumations in single graves, two being decapitated with the skull again placed near the feet.

The very latest Roman features on the site date to the later fourth century and are of a different character. While some of the larger, earlier ditch lines were retained, irregular sub-circular and sub-square enclosures were built extending away from them or dug in isolation with little regard for other earlier features. Structural evidence included stone surfaces laid across the top of earlier ditches, in one instance perpendicular to a pair of beam-slots. At least one early Anglo-Saxon sherd has been found overlying such a surface, in association with a radiocarbon date of fourth- to very early fifth-century date.[64]

LEICESTERSHIRE

(1) **Melton Mowbray**, *Distributor Road Scheme* (SK 74249 21156 to SK 76350 17390): the remains of multi-period settlement activity have been excavated at a number of locations within the Eye valley and its tributaries. Excavations within a pronounced bend of the River Eye focused on multi-period activity ranging from a Bronze Age barrow to a progression of annular enclosures, trackways and large double-ditched enclosures, provisionally dated to the late Iron Age/early Roman period. Evidence of interleaved flooding episodes with maintenance of ditches and changes in layout suggested that enclosed farming on the floodplain gradually

[64] Oxford Archaeology Cambridge, led by Stuart Ladd. Katherine Hamilton and Tom Phillips sent information.

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became untenable or was replaced by meadow. On the higher ground between tributaries, enclosed agriculture continued well into the Roman period. Plots of Roman cultivation trenches overlooked the main floodplain from the south, preserved under a medieval headland, which covered at least one hectare. These features comprised parallel rows spaced at *c.* 4 m intervals. One plot of 11 planting trenches was aligned downslope, bounded to the west by a ditch that abutted two other plots that lay across the slope. The plots were separated by a gully and enclosed at the base of slope by a boundary ditch where first- to second-century pottery was found. The planting trenches are the furthest north of their kind to have been investigated.[65]

(2) **Quorn**, *Flesh Hovel Lane* (SK 56137 17758): an archaeological excavation in summer 2023 revealed an Iron Age activity, along with a rectilinear enclosure, of Roman date. The latter contained at least three phases of ditch recutting, and was connected to an earlier enclosure at its north-east side, which headed beyond the excavation area to the east. Entrances were in its south-east corner and centrally on its east side. Sitting perpendicular within the enclosure was a large post-built structure of Roman date, possibly an aisled barn. The structure consisted of 16 large post-holes, 8 on each side, measuring *c.* 21 m in length and *c.* 8 m in width with two likely associated gullies immediately north and south (FIG. 23). The post-holes were of a large width and depth, with the majority containing large granite packing stones and evidence of




FIG. 23. Quorn, Flesh Hovel Lane. Plan of Roman enclosures, and aerial view of large post-built structure.

post-pipes. Two fragments of oak were recovered from the base of a post-hole with analysis indicating the post was likely *c.* 0.3 m in diameter. The building appeared contemporary with the latest phase of recutting of the rectilinear enclosure surrounding it, bending in slightly to meet its 'gable' ends.[66]

WARWICKSHIRE

(1) **Stratford-upon-Avon**, *Bishopton Lane* (SP 17650 55690): an excavation of *c.* 2.7 ha revealed major parts of a later Iron Age and Roman farmstead (FIG. 24). The earliest excavated features comprised a number of sub-enclosures broadly dated to the mid-to-late Iron Age to early Roman period based on radiocarbon dates and minimal pottery. This developed into a larger complex farmstead during the first to third centuries A.D., with two distinct phases. The earliest

[65] Archaeological Research Services Ltd, led by Jim Brown and Ben Turner. Jim Brown sent information.
[66] University of Leicester Archaeological Services, led by A. Clapton. Gavin Speed sent information.

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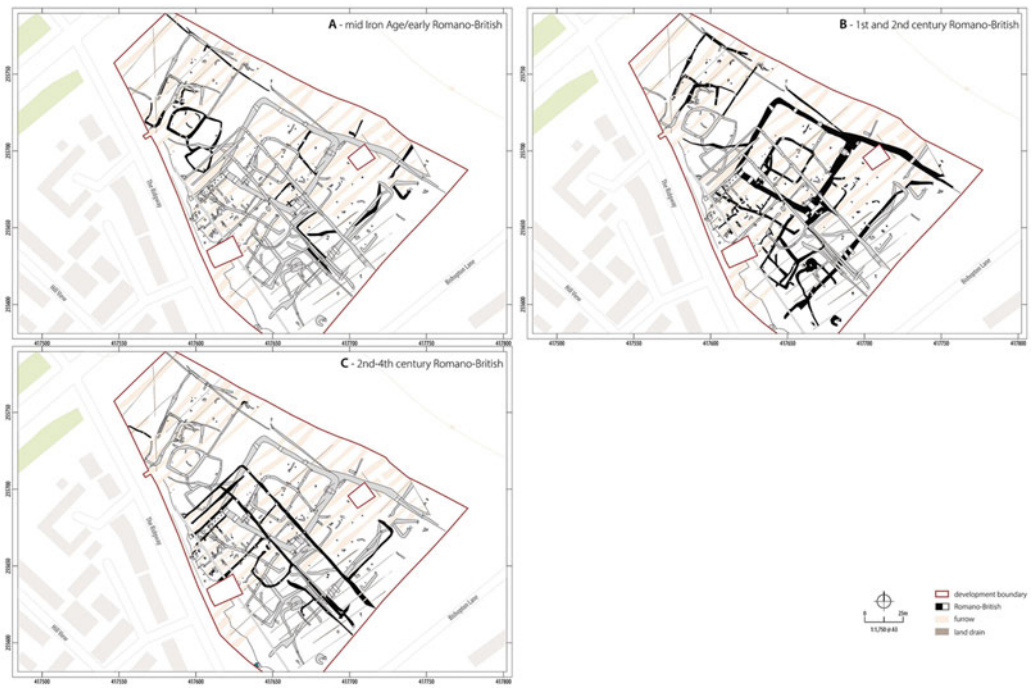



FIG. 24. Stratford-upon-Avon, Bishopton Lane. Roman-period phase plans.

phase comprised two nested square enclosures, multiple sub-enclosures, boundary ditches, timber post-built structures and possible corn-drying kilns. The finds assemblage from this phase dated from the Claudio-Neronian and Flavian periods into the second century and included metalwork which had early Roman military associations. During the later second century A.D., a new system of enclosures and field boundaries was developed focused on a 'ladder'-type enclosure, with other features including a well, a possible malting pit, and post-built and masonry structures, possibly associated with crop-processing activities. Roman occupation seems to have largely ceased by the end of the third century A.D.[67]

## SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

For supplementary material for this article please visit https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068113X2400045X

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[67] Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd, led by Ailsa Westgarth, Debora Moretti. Laura James sent information.

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