

**CPAT Report No 1137**

**Castell Collen Roman Vicus, Llandrindod Wells,  
Powys**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS 2011**



**THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**

**CPAT Report No 1137**

**Castell Collen Roman Vicus, Llandrindod Wells,  
Powys**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS 2011: INTERIM REPORT**

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March 2012

Report for Cadw

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Cover photo: Test pit 9 and the surrounding woodland (CPAT 3356-0021)

## **CONTENTS**

- 1 INTRODUCTION
  - 2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY
  - 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND
  - 4 METHODOLOGY
  - 5 THE EXCAVATIONS
  - 6 CONCLUSIONS
  - 7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
  - 8 REFERENCES
- APPENDIX 1: SITE ARCHIVE
- APPENDIX 2: FINDS ARCHIVE AND ASSESSMENT

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In October 2011 the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) carried out investigations in the environs of the Roman fort at Castell Collen, Llandrindod Wells, Powys. The work was designed to determine the extent and possible nature of the *vicus* around the east side of the fort, by means of excavation. Financial assistance was granted by Cadw.
- 1.2 The work herein described utilised similar methods to those employed in the investigation of the *vici* at Brecon Gaer in 2009 and 2010 (Hankinson 2009; 2010) and Hindwell in 2011 (Hankinson 2011). Unlike the previous work, geophysical survey did not form a part of the investigations. There were two reasons why this was not deemed necessary: firstly, a combined magnetometer and resistivity survey had been carried out in the area around the fort in 1997, and secondly, those areas not examined in 1997 were often wooded and unsuited for a survey of that type.
- 1.3 The 1997 geophysical survey was funded by Cadw and had been prompted by the discovery of a large number of metal objects in the environs of the fort by a metal detectorist in 1995-6. The results of the survey and an assessment of the metal-detecting finds were subsequently reported on in detail (Britnell *et al*, 1999) and the overall results provide the background for the investigations described here.
- 1.4 Excavations were limited to small-scale test pits, spread through the area to the north-east, east and south-east of the fort, where the metal detector finds appeared to suggest *vicus* activity could be expected. Test-pitting provided a rapid method of assessing the potential spread of the civilian settlement, while minimising the impact of the work on the archaeological resource.

## 2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The fort is centred at NGR SO 0560 6286 (see Fig. 1), less than 500m north-west of the outskirts of the town of Llandrindod Wells. It lies on the opposite bank of the River Ithon to the town, occupying a small, elevated, promontory defined to north and south by two streams which flow into the river from the west. The fort lies at an elevation of approximately 195m OD, about 15m above river level, and occupies a central position in the valley of the Ithon, about 7km upstream from the point where the river debouches into the River Wye. The hills which define the valley on its west side rise up to a maximum elevation of 442m OD on Rhiw Gwraidd, while those to the east are partially enclosed by a loop in the course of the Ithon and rise initially to 355m OD on Little Hill before rising again to merge with a larger area of upland whose summit is on the crest of Gilwern Hill at 439m OD.
- 2.2 The soils of the locality are fine silty and clayey soils belonging to the Cegin Soil Association on the higher ground, while the lower ground alongside the River Ithon is occupied by stoneless silty river alluvium of the Teme Soil Association (1983 Soil Survey map and legend). The underlying rocks are siltstones and mudstones belonging to the Ashgill Series of the Ordovician period (1994 Geological Survey map), and lie just to the north-west of a major fault which separates them from the Builth-Llandrindod volcanic rocks. It seems likely that the rocks are locally covered by glacial drift, but the potential depth of this deposit is unknown.

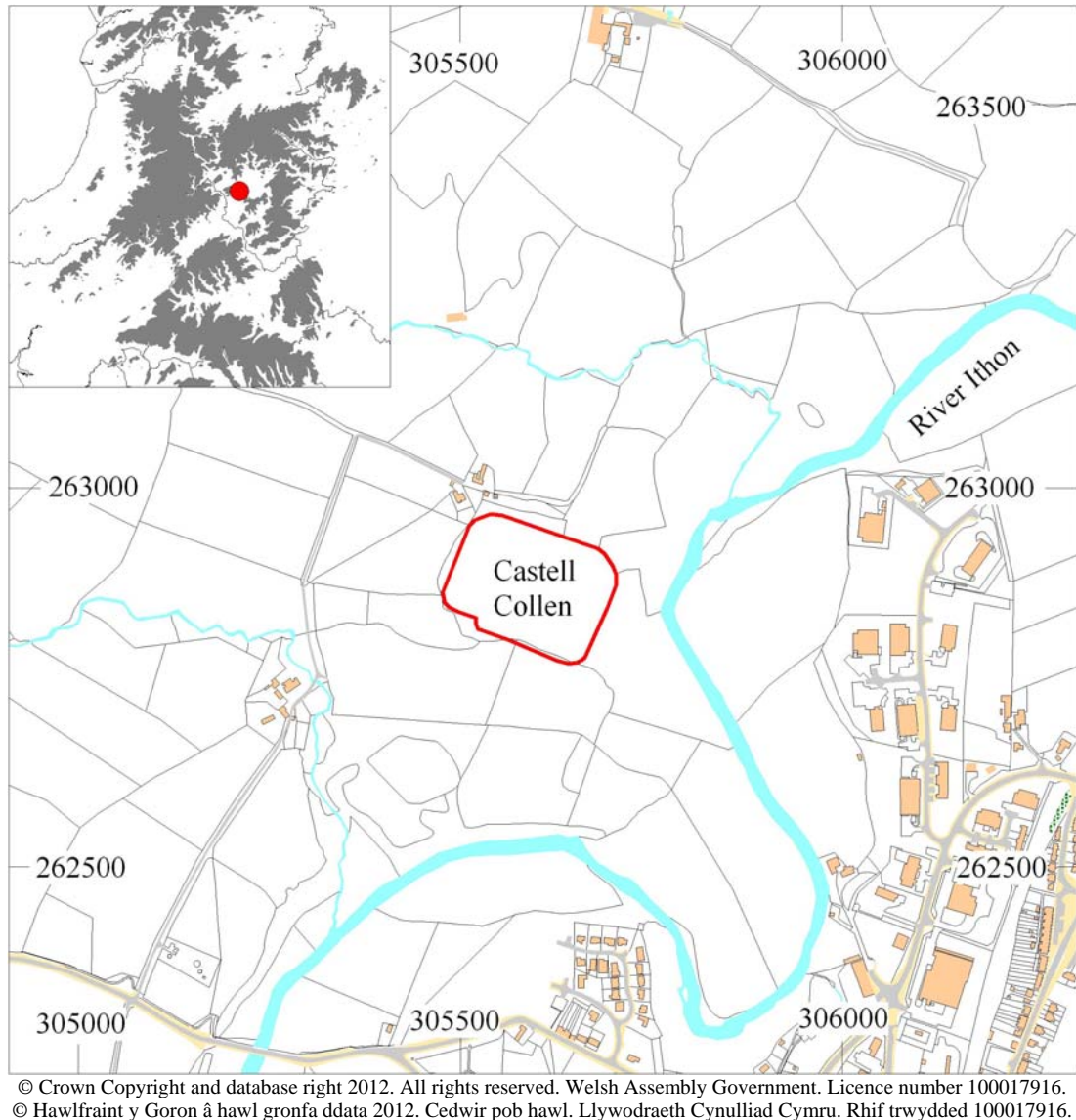


Fig. 1 The location of Castell Collen fort

### 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The existence of the fort at Castell Collen has been known for some considerable time, it having been first identified in antiquarian sources in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The nature of the fort has been investigated a number of times, primarily in two separate campaigns of excavation, which were carried out between 1911 and 1913 and from 1954 to 1957. The geophysics of 1997 has already been mentioned; it examined about 6.5ha of the fort environs and revealed a significant number of anomalies to the west, south and south-east of the fort's defences. Geophysics was not carried out on the east side of the fort owing to the woodland on that side, and none was done on the north side of the fort as it lay outside the area in which metal detecting had taken place. A synthetic study of the geophysics results coupled with the metal-detecting finds (Britnell *et al*, 1999) has been brought up to date more recently (Burnham and Davies, 2010).

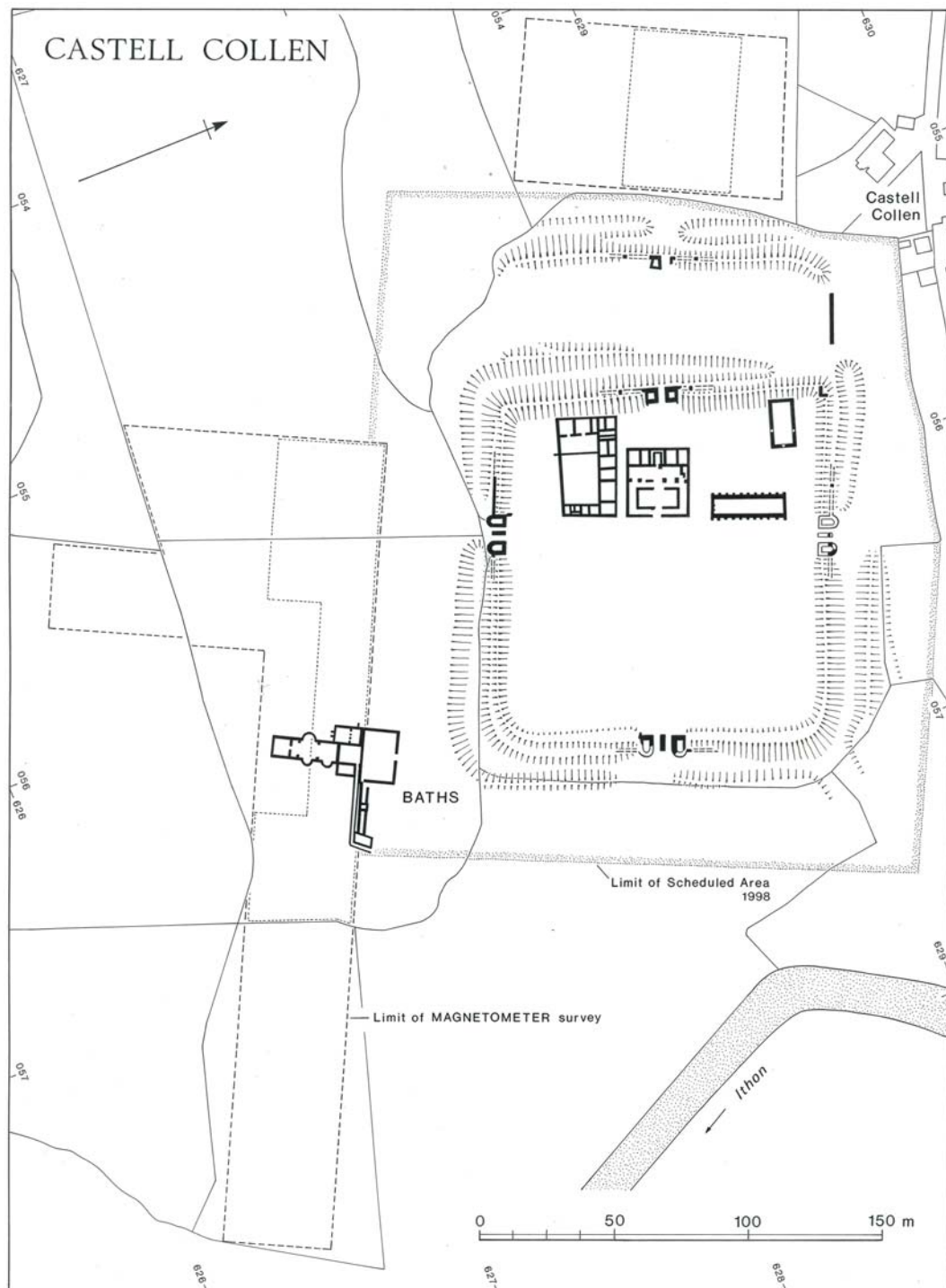


Fig. 2 Castell Collen fort and the geophysical survey areas examined in 1997

- 3.2 The fort is thought to have been built in the AD 70s from timber and turf, at which time it covered an area of about 2ha. The defences were later remodelled in stone and a still later phase saw the reduction in size of the fort to about 1.5ha by the construction of a new western rampart and the slighting of the original.
- 3.3 An associated bath-house was excavated outside the south-east corner of the fort in the 1950s, and showed evidence of continuous use into at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Traces of activity associated with the *vicus* were revealed on the west and south sides of the fort by the 1997 geophysics, and it is believed that both fort and *vicus* were occupied continuously up to the AD 220s, with a possible abandonment or period of light use covering the period

from the AD 230s to about AD 300, after which there was a short-lived phase of occupation up to about AD 330, when the fort seems to have been finally abandoned.

- 3.4 The fort measures about 210m west-north-west/east-south-east by 155m north-north-east/south-south-west, although in the later phase, when its western defences were rebuilt, the former dimension was reduced by 50m to about 160m. The original fort was built with a turf rampart and two ditches, the rampart revetted in stone at a later period. This stone revetment seems to have been renewed on at least one occasion, particularly with the construction of semi-circular fronted towers at the north, east and south gates of the fort, probably around the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. The subsequent reduction in size of the fort has already been mentioned and at some point the original layout of the outer part of the defences was also altered to comprise a single ditch. The internal arrangement of the fort appears to be fairly typical, with the three main buildings constructed in stone and the barracks of timber. The bath-house lay outside the south-east corner of the fort and has been investigated in depth by previous writers, who have noted evidence of numerous alterations; it appears to have continued in use into at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.
- 3.5 Information on the road system associated with the fort is limited to those areas examined by geophysical survey on the west and south of the fort. Traces of road were evident in the results on both sides, that to the south of rather more interest as it appeared to show a junction with another road heading west about 100m beyond the gate. Little is known about the roads running north and east from the fort, but this is due to the lack of investigation in these localities.
- 3.6 Present knowledge suggests that the *vicus* was extensive, as traces are known to exist on the south and east sides, and possible evidence of structures alongside the road heading west from the fort was revealed by geophysics. As with the road network, the situation to the north of the fort is uncertain, owing to the lack of investigation.

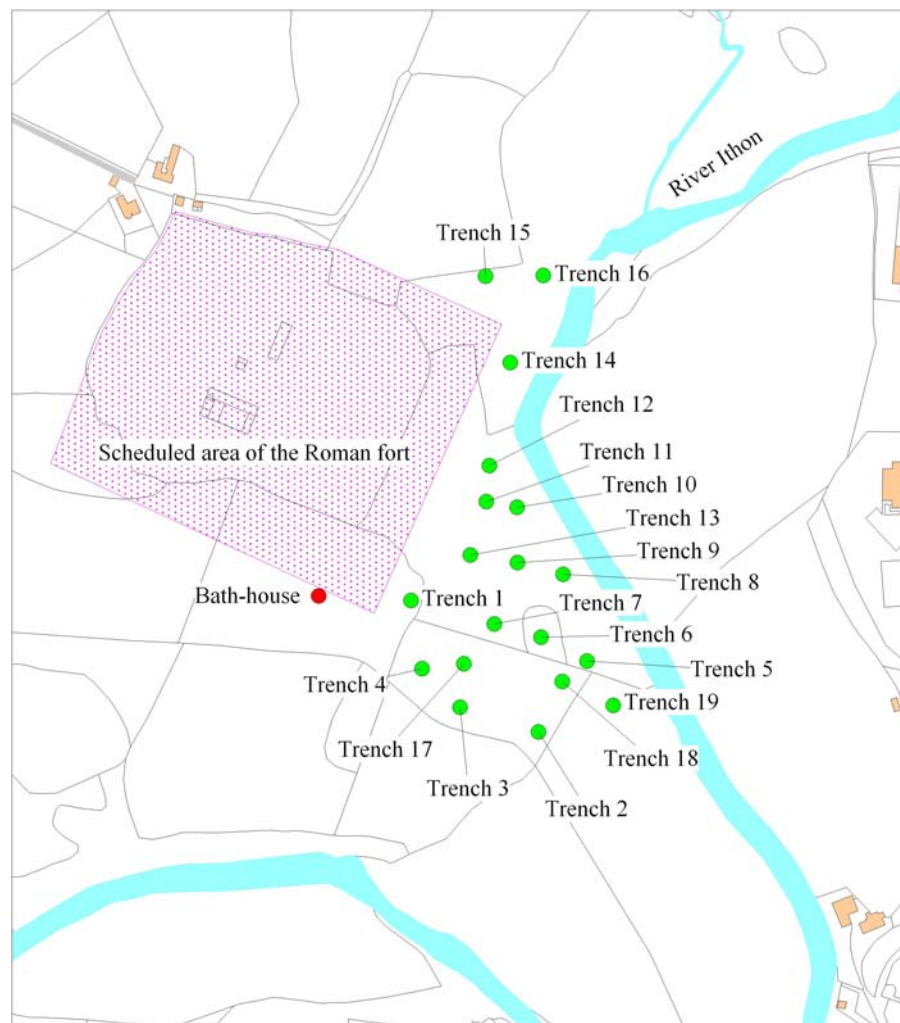
#### **4 METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 The primary aim of the investigations was to assess the extent of any potential *vicus* development in the fields and woodland on the north-east, east, and south-east sides of the fort, whilst keeping ground disturbance to acceptable levels. To this end, the methodology adopted followed that utilised at Brecon Gaer and Hindwell, to allow the limits of Roman activity to be gauged without recourse to large-scale area excavation. The area examined was largely outside that covered by the 1997 geophysics programme, which had already suggested the *vicus* extended to the south-east, south and probably the west of the fort.
- 4.2 A series of test pits (each approximately 1m square) were cut at intervals across the area, in order to identify the presence or absence of layers and/or features of Roman origin. The positions in which test pits were excavated were largely determined by the limited number of available spaces between the trees in the wooded area, and were also designed to examine a collection of anomalies revealed by the 1997 geophysics in a field to the south-east of the fort. Auger sampling was not employed, unlike the examination of Brecon Gaer.
- 4.3 In the case of each test pit, the topsoil and ploughsoil, if present, were removed by hand down to the first significant archaeological horizon, or the natural subsoil if no archaeological horizon was identified. The resulting surface was cleaned and examined to assess its potential, and if appropriate a small amount of investigation was then carried out to elucidate the deposits and recover material which could assist in their dating, while having a minimal impact on their integrity.

- 4.4 As has been noted in previous work of this type, it has to be stated that the understanding of any features will always be limited in test pits of this size, as the restricted view of the features makes interpretation problematical. The interpretations given in Section 5 of this report must therefore necessarily be provisional. It must also be emphasised that although some evidence which has a bearing on the nature and dating of the *vicus* was revealed by the excavations, the primary aim of the work has been to define the extent of the settlement.
- 4.5 Each test pit was located by EDM survey, thus establishing the precise position of each in relation to previous work at the site and the local field boundaries. The accuracy of the locations is qualified only by the scale of the available digital mapping. It should, however, be possible to relocate any test pit in the future from the archived data and ten-figure national grid references for these have been created from the survey data.

## 5 EXCAVATIONS

- 5.1 A total of nineteen test pits were excavated in the area to the north-east, east and south-east of the fort, all of which were small hand-dug trial pits (See Fig. 2). Each test pit is described separately in the text which follows, with the numbers in brackets in this section referring to context descriptions given to individual layers or features within the site archive.



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Fig. 3: Location of the test pits



- 5.2 The site archive is detailed below in Appendix 1 and comprises brief lists of the drawn, written and photographic records generated during the course of the excavations.
- 5.3 Post-excavation finds processing work has commenced, and all finds have now been cleaned, sorted and appropriately packaged. Preliminary catalogues have been completed for most find types, but further detail is awaited from specialist examination of the metalwork and samian ware. At this stage, it is proposed that further work will be carried out at Castell Collen in 2012, so full quantification and reporting of the whole collection will not be undertaken until the next season of excavation has been completed. A Roman pottery specialist will then be consulted for identification and comments on the pottery from both seasons.
- 5.4 *Test pit 1* (NGR SO 05693 62715; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)
- 5.4.1 The test pit was placed just outside the south-east corner of the scheduled area and was the nearest test pit in this programme of work to the site of the bath-house. This lay outside the area examined by geophysics in 1997.
- 5.4.2 The natural, mottled pale grey, yellowish and rusty-coloured clay subsoil (05) was present at a depth of 0.63m, where it appeared in a sondage cut through the overlying deposit of greyish-brown silty clay (04), 0.08m thick, which contained finds of Roman date, seemingly relatively unabraded and therefore probably in-situ. Layer 04 was overlain by a deposit of grey silty clay (03), up to 0.13m thick, from which some Roman finds were recovered. The uppermost layers in the test pit were a presumed ploughsoil of stony grey-brown silt (02), up to 0.30m thick, containing plentiful, if abraded, Roman finds, and the surface layer of mid-grey clay silt (01), 0.12m thick, which forms the topsoil. No features were observed.



Plate 1: Test pit 1, Probable in-situ Roman soil layer (04), from north  
(photo CPAT 3356-0001)

- 5.5 *Test pit 2* (NGR SO 05780 62625; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)
- 5.5.1 Test pit 2 was placed in the field to the south of the woodland that lies on the east side of the fort, within the area covered by geophysics in 1997. No anomalies had been recognised

at this point in the field and it was hoped that this pit would lie beyond the zone of activity related to the *vicus* and thereby help to define its extent.



Plate 2: Test pit 2 after excavation, from south (photo CPAT 3356-0003)

5.5.2 The natural subsoil (09) in this test pit was a mixed pale grey and orange mottled clay with stones up to 0.1m across. It was encountered at a depth of 0.36m below the ground surface and appeared to exhibit traces of plough scarring. The overlying mid-dark grey crumbly and gritty silt (08) contained some Roman finds, but these had evidently been disturbed by plough action. The uppermost layers were similar to test pit 1, comprising a 0.14m-thick layer of stony grey-brown clay silt (07), with a few abraded Roman finds, and the surface layer of grey-brown clayey silt (06), 0.12m thick, which forms the topsoil. No features were observed.

5.6 *Test pit 3* (NGR SO 05726 62641; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)

5.6.1 This test pit was placed about 55m to the west-north-west of test pit 2, in the same field, another location which had failed to produce any anomalies in the 1997 geophysical survey. Again, it was hoped that this test pit would aid in the definition of the extent of the *vicus*.

5.6.2 The natural, pale greyish-orange, clay subsoil (13) contained some stones up to 0.1m in size and was present at a depth of 0.37m. It was overlain by a layer of mid-dark grey crumbly and gritty silt (12), up to 0.10m thick, containing a few abraded Roman finds which suggested that it represented the basal part of the ploughsoil. The uppermost layers visible in the test pit were a 0.15m-thick layer of stony grey-brown clay silt (11), again with some abraded Roman finds, and the relatively stoneless surface soil, a grey-brown clayey silt (10), 0.12m thick. No features were observed.



Plate 3: Test pit 3 after excavation, from south (photo CPAT 3356-0007)

5.7 *Test pit 4* (NGR SO 05700 62669; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)

- 5.7.1 Test pit 4 was located in the same field as test pits 2 and 3, and about 40m north-west of the latter. Natural subsoil was revealed at a depth of 0.39m in this test pit and consisted yellowish-grey clay (20). It had been cut by a linear gully (19), 0.35m wide and 0.10m deep, which crossed the test pit in an east/west direction and was filled with mid-brownish grey soft silty clay (18) containing charcoal flecks and an undated iron object.



Plate 4: Test pit 4, showing linear feature (19) before excavation, from north (photo CPAT 3356-0005)

5.7.2 The feature and natural subsoil were sealed beneath a layer of fairly stony mid-greyish brown clayey silt (17), 0.06m thick, itself overlain by a very similar but less stony layer of greyish-brown clayey silt (16), 0.19m thick, which contained Roman finds. The surface soil layers comprised a mid-brownish grey clayey silt with occasional orange mottling (15), 0.07m thick, and the topsoil of mid to dark brown clayey silt (14), also 0.07m in thickness.

5.8 *Test pit 5* (NGR SO 05813 62674; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)



Plate 5: Test pit 5 after excavation, from west (photo CPAT 3356-0010)

5.8.1 The test pit was located in the south-east corner of the wood to the east of the fort. The natural subsoil was not found as the excavation revealed a layer of rounded stones (22), at least 0.2m in thickness, which was securely dated by Roman finds, including a silver coin, and this was left in-situ. It was overlain by the topsoil, a 0.12m-thick layer of brown powdery silt (21).

5.9 *Test pit 6* (NGR SO 05782 62690; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)

5.9.1 Test pit 6 was excavated in a clearing in the wood, about 35m west-north-west of Test pit 5. The excavation proceeded in a similar manner to test pit 5, in that it was not necessary to reveal the natural subsoil; the basal layer of stony mid-grey clay silt (24), at least 0.15m thick, contained a number of finds which suggested it was a dump or feature fill of Roman date. It was overlain by the surface soil layer of brown silt (23), 0.15m thick, which contained some abraded Roman material.



Plate 6: Test pit 6 after excavation, from south (photo CPAT 3356-0018)

5.10 *Test pit 7* (NGR SO 05749 62699; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)



Plate 7: Test pit 7 after excavation, from north (photo CPAT 3356-0019)

- 5.10.1 The test pit was excavated in a very small clearing in the wood, about 35m west-north-west of Test pit 6. It was excavated to a depth of 0.55m below the ground surface, at which point a layer of firm light brownish-yellow clayey silt (25) was encountered; this was thought to represent the uppermost surface of the natural subsoil. Layer 25 was covered by a loose deposit of mid-brown silt (26), 0.09m thick, itself sealed by a layer of stony mid-greyish brown silt (27), 0.23m in thickness. The latter contained material of Roman date but had been subject to root disturbance.

5.10.2 The uppermost deposits in the test pit comprised a layer of friable brown silt (28), up to 0.16m thick and containing some small stones, overlain by the surface soil horizon of mid-to dark-brown silt (29), 0.07m in thickness, which constituted the local topsoil.

5.11 *Test pit 8* (NGR SO 05797 62733; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)

5.11.1 Test pit 8 was located in another small clearing in the wood, about 60m north-north-west of Test pit 5. Natural subsoil was encountered at a depth of 0.45m below the ground surface, consisting here of firm pale grey stony clay (33). It was overlain by mid-grey gritty clay silt (32), 0.20m in thickness, the southern part of which was left in-situ. The part excavated contained Roman finds and its nature suggested this was a Roman occupation layer.



Plate 8: Test pit 8 after excavation, from east (photo CPAT 3356-0020)

5.11.2 The presumed Roman occupation layer was sealed by a layer of greyish-brown clay silt (31), 0.18m thick, which had been affected by roots but could have been an old ploughsoil. The surface soil layer was a 0.07m-thick layer of brown gritty silt (30), which constitutes the local topsoil.

5.12 *Test pit 9* (NGR SO 05766 62741; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)

5.12.1 The test pit was excavated in a small clearing in the wood, about 30m west-north-west of Test pit 8. It was excavated to a depth of 0.24m below the ground surface, on to the top of a layer of mixed yellowish and grey clay (36). The appearance of the layer suggested it was probably related to Roman occupation. Layer 36 was covered by a deposit of grey-brown stony clay silt (35), 0.15m in thickness, which contained Roman finds and some stones which did not appear to be part of a structure. The surface soil was a layer of grey-brown gritty silt (34), 0.09m in thickness.



Plate 9: Test pit 9 after excavation, from south (photo CPAT 3356-0023)

5.13 *Test pit 10* (NGR SO 05765 62779; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)

- 5.13.1 Test pit 10 was located in a relatively open section of woodland, just to the west of a steep scarp slope leading down to the river Ithon, about 40m north of test pit 9. The ground had been fairly well disturbed by the action of tree roots. Excavation was halted at a depth of about 0.40m when the top of a layer of greyish-brown silty clay (39) was encountered; from the material included within it, this was evidently Roman in origin and so was left in-situ.



Plate 10: Test pit 10 after excavation, from north (photo CPAT 3356-0025)

- 5.13.2 Layer 39 was covered by a very stony layer, comprising stones up to 0.4m in size, in a matrix of grey-brown gritty silt (38), up to 0.30m in thickness. This seemed to represent a disturbed subsoil layer and contained Roman finds throughout. The surface soil here was a layer of brown silt (37), 0.10m thick.

5.14 *Test pit 11* (NGR SO 05744 62783; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)

- 5.14.1 Test pit 11 was located in a clearing in the woodland, about 20m west-north-west of Test pit 10. It was excavated to a depth of 0.28m, at which point a possible surface made from rounded and angular stones in a matrix of grey grit and grey-brown silt (42) was encountered. From the included material this was evidently related to Roman occupation. A 0.2m-thick layer of stones and grey-brown silt (41) overlay the surface and was covered by grey-brown clayey silt (40), 0.08m thick, which constitutes the topsoil at this location.



Plate 11: Test pit 11 after excavation, from south (photo CPAT 3356-0026)

5.15 *Test pit 12* (NGR SO 05746 62808; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)

Plate 12: Test pit 12 after excavation, from east (photo CPAT 3356-0034)



5.15.1 The test pit was located in a small clearing in the woodland, about 25m north of Test pit 11. It was excavated to a depth of about 0.40m, at which point a mid greyish-brown silt (43) with charcoal and patches of burnt clay was encountered; this was evidently a Roman occupation deposit and was left in situ. It was covered by a layer of stones (44), up to 0.13m thick, on the west side of the test pit and both layers were sealed by a deposit of brown gritty silt (45), up to 0.17m thick, containing Roman material. The surface soil was a layer of friable brown silt (46), 0.12m in thickness.

5.16 *Test pit 13* (NGR SO 05733 62747; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)



Plate 13: Test pit 13 after excavation, from south (photo CPAT 3356-0035)

5.16.1 Test pit 13 was located in a very small open area in the woodland, about 30m west-north-west of Test pit 9. It was excavated to a depth of 0.20m, where a layer of yellow-brown clay silt (49) was encountered, at which point the east side of the test pit was taken down a further 0.12m before it became clear that this was an in-situ Roman deposit. Layer 49 was covered by a deposit of yellowish to grey-brown clay silt (48), 0.10m thick. The surface soil was a layer of grey-brown silty loam (47), 0.10m in thickness. Both of the upper layers contained abraded fragments of Roman material.

5.17 *Test pit 14* (NGR SO 05761 62879; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)

5.17.1 The test pit was placed at the southern end of an open field on the edge of the flood plain of the River Ithon. It occupied a slightly elevated position just below a scarp defining an old river channel and was excavated to a depth of 0.40m below the ground surface. The southern end of the base of the test pit was occupied by a deposit of greyish-yellow clay (57) whose depth was not tested but it was evidently not a natural deposit as the presence of charcoal attested; it displayed some in-situ burning but was not excavated. Immediately to the north, the deposit appeared to have been cut by a pit (58), which extended beyond the bounds of the test pit to the east, north and west, thereby making its extent impossible to determine. The fill (59) of the pit was a mixture of angular gritstone, Roman brick and tile fragments, burnt orange clay, and grey gritty silt; it was almost certainly of Roman origin and might even indicate brick and tile manufacture nearby.



Plate 14: Test pit 14 after excavation, from east (photo CPAT 3356-0039)

5.17.2 The probable Roman deposits in the base of the test pit were sealed by a layer of mid-grey stony silt (56), 0.30m in thickness, which contained a reasonable number of Roman finds; the lack of river silts suggested it had not been affected by flooding. The surface soil here was a 0.10m-thick layer of brown silt (55).

5.18 *Test pit 15* (NGR SO 05744 62938; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)



Plate 15: Test pit 15 after excavation, from west (photo CPAT 3356-0038)

5.18.1 Test pit 15 was placed about 60m to the north-north-west of Test pit 14, in a similar location in regard of the old river channel. It was excavated to a depth of about 0.60m below the ground surface, at which point the basal layer of mid-brownish-grey silty and gravelly clay (52) became waterlogged. A depth of 0.22m of layer 52 had been removed revealing a number of fragments of Roman pottery, and this was overlain by a deposit of light brown silty clay with orange mottling (53), 0.15m thick. The surface soil was a layer of mid-brown silty clay (54), 0.22m in thickness.

5.19 *Test pit 16* (NGR SO 05783 62938; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)



Plate 16: Test pit 16 after excavation, from south (photo CPAT 3356-0037)

5.19.1 Test pit 16 was placed on the flood plain of the Ithon, less than 20m from the river, in order to test the nature of the deposits in that locality and to confirm that this area had not seen any Roman activity. The lowest layer encountered was a pale grey silty clay with some brown mottling (51), which continued beneath the excavation and was at least 0.50m in thickness; it was evidently a typical flood silt deposit. The surface soil was mid-brown silty clay (50), up to 0.30m in thickness, most probably of similar origin.

5.20 *Test pit 17* (NGR SO 05729 62672; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)

5.20.1 The test pit was placed in the field to the south of the woodland, about 30m to the east of Test pit 4. It was excavated to a depth of 0.45m, the lower 0.15m being through a layer of dark grey, yellowish and pale grey clay silt (71). Roman finds were recovered from the layer confirming it was related to Roman occupation and the excavation was therefore terminated.



Plate 17: Test pit 17 after excavation, from south (photo CPAT 3356-0045)

5.20.2 Layer 71 was sealed beneath a layer of dark buff-brown clay silt (70), 0.10m thick and containing some Roman finds, which was itself overlain by a layer of mid-grey stony and gritty silt (69), 0.10m thick and again containing some Roman material, although this was unlikely to be an in-situ Roman deposit. The surface soil was a layer of grey-brown clayey silt (68), 0.10m in thickness.

5.21 *Test pit 18* (NGR SO 05796 62660; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)



Plate 18: Test pit 18, base of test pit after the linear feature (64) was investigated, from south (photo CPAT 3356-0048)

- 5.21.1 Test pit 18 was located in the east corner of the field to the south of the woodland, about 20m south-west of Test pit 5. It was excavated to a depth of 0.40m below the ground surface, at which point a strip of pale yellowish-grey clay (60), possibly natural subsoil, was revealed running south-south-west/north-north-east. It was flanked on the west by greyish-brown silty clay (66), which contained flecks of charcoal and seemed to be the fill of a linear gully (65), 0.43m wide, which was left unexcavated. On its east side, the clay was flanked by brownish-grey gritty clay silt (67), containing flecks of charcoal and small brick fragments. This was partially excavated and proved to be the fill of a probable gully (64), at least 0.40m wide and 0.11m deep.
- 5.21.2 The features at the base of Test pit 18 were sealed beneath a layer of mid-brown silty clay (61), 0.13m thick, containing some Roman material and itself covered by a mid-brown stony clay silt (62), 0.17m thick and containing large stones; some fragments of Roman material were also recovered. The surface soil layer was mid-brown sandy silt (63), 0.13m in thickness.
- 5.22 *Test pit 19* (NGR SO 05831 62644; 1.2m north/south by 1.2m east/west)

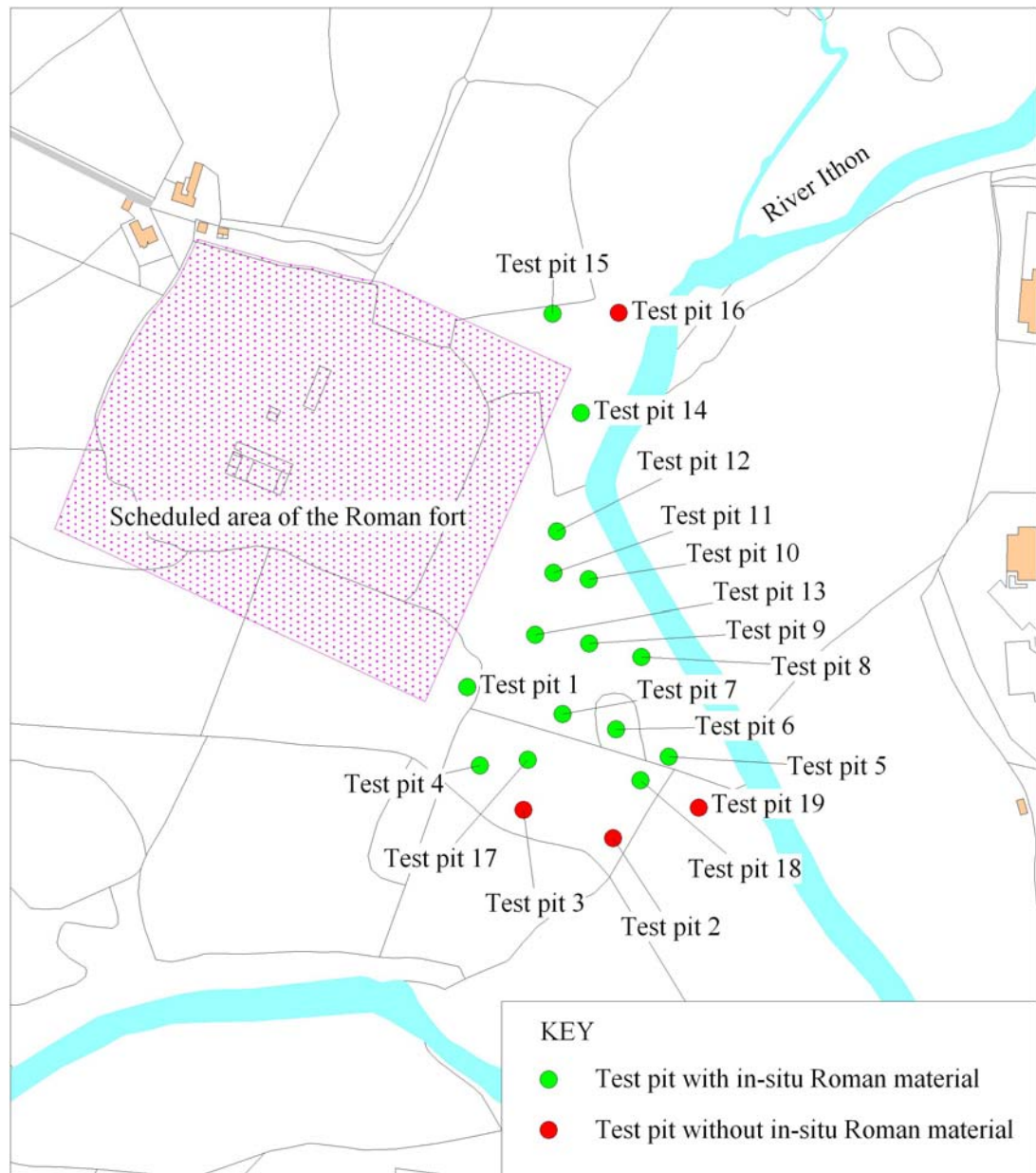


Plate 19: Test pit 19 after excavation, from photo CPAT 3356-0051)

- 5.22.1 Test pit 19 was excavated in the north-west corner of the field encompassed by a meander in the River Ithon, to the south-east of the woodland and about 40m east-south-east of Test pit 18. It was excavated to a depth of about 0.30m, where the natural subsoil of pale yellow gritty silt with orange mottling (72) was encountered. It was covered by a layer of stony greyish-brown silty clay (73), 0.16m thick, itself overlain by the surface soil of greyish-brown silt (74), 0.14m in thickness.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 A total of nineteen test pits were excavated during the programme of work, placed in the area to the north-east, east and south-east of the fort to assess traces of *vicus* activity mentioned in by previous writers. The test pit locations are depicted on the following plan (Fig. 3), with an indication of which test pits produced evidence for Roman activity.



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Fig. 3: Test pits where in-situ Roman material was encountered

- 6.2 The results of the investigations demonstrated significant levels of Roman activity indicative of *vicus* development. The positive and negative evidence for Roman activity in the test pits is depicted on Fig. 3, and conclusively appears to identify the bounds of the civilian settlement.

- 6.3 A range of features were revealed in the test pits, including possible floor and yard surfaces, gullies, and a feature which may hint at brick or tile manufacture in Test pit 14. Given that the excavations were generally terminated when a layer of obvious Roman date was encountered, a significant percentage of the finds recovered are from secondary contexts and exhibit resultant wear; it is almost certain that only the more recent elements of the stratigraphy on the site have been investigated in the excavations.
- 6.4 Unlike previous *vicus* assessment work, the programme at Castell Collen in 2011 did not involve any geophysics; the area examined had either been subject to a survey of this type in 1997 or lay in an area where it was not practicable. The anomalies revealed by the 1997 survey seem to correspond closely with positive evidence produced by test pits 4, 17 and 18 in the field to the south-east of the fort. The 1997 results also suggested that *vicus* activity was present on the south and west sides of the fort, but neither of these areas have been examined in this programme of work.
- 6.5 The extent of the *vicus* to the east of the fort is largely defined by the course of the river, or more correctly, by the top of a scarp slope which leads down to the river from the higher ground on which the fort is sited. The evidence provided by test pits 14 and 15 confirms that this scarp slope was present in the Roman period, having presumably been created by river erosion in an earlier period and then abandoned when the course of the river migrated to the east across the flood plain. It is worth mentioning, in this regard, that the survey used to assist in locating the test pits proved that the river is eroding its western bank in the vicinity of Test pit 16 at a significant rate; some 8m appears to have been lost there since the mid-1990s, compared to a loss of only 20m in the previous 100 years. This may have future implications for the features revealed in Test pit 14, whose extent is presently unknown, particularly given that more flood events are predicted as a result of climate change.
- 6.6 The nature of the investigations has meant that it has not been possible to determine any phases of activity within the *vicus*, although some clues may be provided by a more detailed assessment of the finds that have been recovered. Full quantification and reporting of the whole assemblage will not be undertaken until the forthcoming 2012 season of excavation has been completed.

## **7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 7.1 The writer would like to thank the following colleagues at CPAT for their assistance during the project: J Britnell, W Owen, B Silvester and S Watson for their assistance with the excavation.
- 7.2 The writer would particularly like to thank Mr and Mrs Hughes, the landowners, for permission to carry out the work.

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### 8.1 Published sources

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### 8.2 Cartographic sources

1983 Soil Survey of England and Wales map (Sheet 2 - Wales) and Legend (1:250,000 scale)

1994 British Geological Survey map of Wales (Solid edition at 1:250,000 scale)



**APPENDIX 1****SITE ARCHIVE**

51 digital photographs, CPAT Film No 3356

Photographic catalogue

74 context description forms

6 A4 site drawings

Context register

Drawings register

Correspondence

*Finds*

The preliminary assessment of the finds is included below in Appendix 2.

*Digital data*

Plan of test pits and topographical features – Cascoll.dxf

**Contexts Register**

<b>Context (Test pit)</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Comment</b>
01 (Test pit 1)	Layer	Topsoil
02 (Test pit 1)	Layer	Presumed ploughsoil
03 (Test pit 1)	Layer	Disturbed Roman occupation layer ?
04 (Test pit 1)	Layer	Roman occupation layer
05 (Test pit 1)	Layer	Natural subsoil
06 (Test pit 2)	Layer	Topsoil
07 (Test pit 2)	Layer	Upper part of the ploughsoil
08 (Test pit 2)	Layer	Lower part of the ploughsoil
09 (Test pit 2)	Layer	Natural subsoil
10 (Test pit 3)	Layer	Topsoil
11 (Test pit 3)	Layer	Upper part of the ploughsoil
12 (Test pit 3)	Layer	Lower part of the ploughsoil
13 (Test pit 3)	Layer	Natural subsoil
14 (Test pit 4)	Layer	Topsoil
15 (Test pit 4)	Layer	Upper part of the ploughsoil
16 (Test pit 4)	Layer	Intermediate ploughsoil
17 (Test pit 4)	Layer	Lower part of the ploughsoil
18 (Test pit 4)	Fill	Fill of 19
19 (Test pit 4)	Gully	Linear gully
20 (Test pit 4)	Layer	Natural subsoil
21 (Test pit 5)	Layer	Topsoil
22 (Test pit 5)	Layer	Stone layer of Roman date
23 (Test pit 6)	Layer	Topsoil
24 (Test pit 6)	Layer	Stony silt of Roman date
25 (Test pit 7)	Layer	Natural subsoil ?
26 (Test pit 7)	Layer	Possible Roman soil layer
27 (Test pit 7)	Layer	Possible Roman soil layer
28 (Test pit 7)	Layer	Disturbed soil, not dated
29 (Test pit 7)	Layer	Topsoil
30 (Test pit 8)	Layer	Topsoil
31 (Test pit 8)	Layer	Old ploughsoil ?

32 (Test pit 8)	Layer	Roman occupation layer
33 (Test pit 8)	Layer	Natural subsoil
34 (Test pit 9)	Layer	Topsoil
35 (Test pit 9)	Layer	Undated soil layer, probably post-Roman
36 (Test pit 9)	Layer	Roman occupation layer ?
37 (Test pit 10)	Layer	Topsoil
38 (Test pit 10)	Layer	Disturbed subsoil layer
39 (Test pit 10)	Layer	Roman occupation layer
40 (Test pit 11)	Layer	Topsoil
41 (Test pit 11)	Layer	Undated soil layer
42 (Test pit 11)	Layer	Roman occupation layer
43 (Test pit 12)	Layer	Charcoal-rich soil of Roman date
44 (Test pit 12)	Layer	Partial stone layer
45 (Test pit 12)	Layer	Undated soil layer, some included Roman material
46 (Test pit 12)	Layer	Topsoil
47 (Test pit 13)	Layer	Topsoil
48 (Test pit 13)	Layer	Undated soil layer
49 (Test pit 13)	Layer	In-situ Roman deposit
50 (Test pit 16)	Layer	Topsoil/silt
51 (Test pit 16)	Layer	Flood silt layer
52 (Test pit 15)	Layer	Probable Roman soil layer
53 (Test pit 15)	Layer	Undated soil layer
54 (Test pit 15)	Layer	Topsoil
55 (Test pit 14)	Layer	Topsoil
56 (Test pit 14)	Layer	Subsoil, possibly Roman
57 (Test pit 14)	Layer	Subsoil of artificial origin
58 (Test pit 14)	Pit ?	Roman feature, probably a pit
59 (Test pit 14)	Fill	Fill of 58, large amount of Roman brick and tile fragments
60 (Test pit 18)	Layer	Possible natural subsoil
61 (Test pit 18)	Layer	Possible Roman soil layer ?
62 (Test pit 18)	Layer	Ploughsoil
63 (Test pit 18)	Layer	Topsoil
64 (Test pit 18)	Gully	Linear gully
65 (Test pit 18)	Gully ?	Probable linear gully, not excavated
66 (Test pit 18)	Fill ?	Fill of 65 ?
67 (Test pit 18)	Fill	Fill of 64
68 (Test pit 17)	Layer	Topsoil
69 (Test pit 17)	Layer	Ploughsoil
70 (Test pit 17)	Layer	Possible ploughsoil or disturbed Roman occupation
71 (Test pit 17)	Layer	Roman occupation layer
72 (Test pit 19)	Layer	Natural subsoil
73 (Test pit 19)	Layer	Ploughsoil
74 (Test pit 19)	Layer	Topsoil

### Drawings Register

No	Scale	Contexts	Comment
1	1:10	01-05	Post-excavation plan and section of Test pit 1
2	1:10	14-19	Post-excavation plan and section of Test pit 4
3	1:10	25-29	Post-excavation plan and section of Test pit 7
4	1:10	43-46	Post-excavation plan and section of Test pit 12
5	1:10	55-59	Post-excavation plan and section of Test pit 14
6	1:10	61-67	Post-excavation plan and section of Test pit 18

**APPENDIX 2****FINDS ARCHIVE AND ASSESSMENT**

Post-excavation finds processing work has begun, and all finds have now been cleaned, sorted and appropriately packaged. Lists/preliminary catalogues have been completed for metalwork finds, glass, slag, burnt bone and samian ware. The metalwork is currently being examined by the conservation laboratory in Cardiff, and we await further detail and identification which will be added to the catalogue. The samian ware remains to be examined by a specialist and it is intended that this will be completed together with material from the 2012 season of excavations.

The Roman coarse pottery assemblage has been rapidly examined for the presence of diagnostic sherds, and these have been catalogued and are presented in the table below. Full quantification and reporting of the whole assemblage will not be undertaken until the forthcoming 2012 season of excavation has been completed. A Roman pottery specialist will then be consulted for identification and comments on the pottery from both seasons. The pottery, generally, is in very poor condition, with fabrics degraded and difficult to identify and the sherds themselves very abraded and often with surface encrustations. We only have a very small proportion of each vessel and often no diagnostic details are present. The number of datable vessels in this assemblage is therefore very small.

Quantification of the brick and tile has not yet been undertaken and will be completed together with material from the 2012 excavations.

**Metalwork**

<b>Material</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Test pit</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>comment</b>
Iron	02	1	Bar	1	
Iron	03	1	Nails	2	
Iron	18	4	Bar	5	5 fragments - of probably 1 object
Iron	24	6	Nail	1	
Iron	24	6	Lump	1	
Iron	35	9	Lump	1	
Iron	46	12	Nail	1	
Iron	47	13	Nail	1	
Iron	48	13	Lump	1	
Iron	62	18	Nail	1	
Iron	69	17	Nail	1	
Iron	70	17	Nail	1	Broken into 2 fragments
Iron	71	17	Nail	3	
Iron	71	17	Lump	1	
Lead	03	1	Lump	1	
Lead	38	10	Sheet	1	folded
Lead	56	14	Object	1	Figurine fragment
Silver	22	5	Coin	1	

**Slag**

Material	Context	Test pit	Type	Number	weight	comment
Slag	02	1		1	3g	Small fragment with glassy surface
Slag	38	10		4	308g	1 small lump and 3 fragments
Slag	46	12		1	36g	? furnace lining fragment
Slag	56	14		1	14g	
Slag	69	17		1	21g	
Slag	63	18		1	17g	?slag

**Glass**

Material	Context	Test pit	Type	Number	weight	comment
Glass	2	1	vessel	2	1	Blue green fragments
Glass	24	6	window?	1	0.5	Blue-green v small fragments
Glass	37	10	vessel	1	3	Blue-green
Glass	38	10	vessel	1	1	Blue-green
Glass	43	12	vessel	1	3	Blue-green
Glass	46	12	vessel	1	1	Blue-green with roughened opaque surfaces
Glass	19	73	window?	1	7	Blue-green flat fragment with roughened opaque surfaces

**Burnt bone**

Material	Context	Test pit	Type	Number	weight	comment
Burnt bone	03	1		2	2g	Small fragments
Burnt bone	06	2		1	1g	
Burnt bone	17	4		1	1g	
Burnt bone	24	6		4	1g	Small fragments
Burnt bone	43	12		1	1g	

**Roman coarse pottery**

Fabric	Tr	Cont	Type	No	Wt(g)	dia	Rim %	date	comment
BB	1	03	Cooking pot	1	13	13	10	?mid-late 3rd	?as Gillam 76 nos 9 /10
BB	1	04	Cooking pot	1	15				
BB	1	04	Dish/bowl	1	5				
BB	4	16	Dish -plain rim	1	12	16	5	??late 3rd	Worn exterior surface. No dec apparent. Perhaps latish
BB	7	28	Dish/bowl-flat rim	1	17	25	7		No visible decoration. Not datable
BB	10	38	Dish -plain rim	1		20	36		Small sherd . Not enough burnished pattern to date it
BB	12	45	Cooking pot	1	9	16	6		Rim only
BB	12	45	Cooking pot	1	7	12	7		Rim only
BB	15	52	Cooking pot	1	8	15	8		Rim only

BB	15	52	Cooking pot	1	12				Body sherd from shoulder/neck. Burned? & worn
BB	15	53	Cooking pot	1	9				Small worn rim sherd – outward flaring, so perhaps a late one
BB	17	68	Dish/bowl – flat rim	1	7				Small worn rim sherd
BB	17	69	Dish- plain rim	2	20			??late 3rd	Small sherd with no decoration, so perhaps later rather than earlier
BB	17	70	Dish/bowl flat rim	1	33	22	4		No decoration.
BB	17	71	Dish – plain rim	1	35	21	9	Early-mid 2nd	Chevron decoration. ? as Gillam76 no75
BB	17	71	Bowl	1	19				?Chevron decoration on body sherd
BB	17	71	Dish/bowl – flat rim	1	3	19	4		Small piece of rim/flange
BB	18	63	Dish -plain rim	1	7	18	4	??late 3rd	Diameter uncertain. Small sherd with no decoration, so perhaps later rather than earlier
BB	18	63	Dish – plain rim	1	8	20	4	??late 3rd	Small sherd with no decoration, so perhaps later rather than earlier
BB	18	67	Dish/bowl – flat rim	4	61	30	8		Burnished but no decoration. Joining sherds
BB?	10	38	Dish/bowl- flat rim	2	24	18	10		2 worn burnished rim sherds, profiles slightly different but could be same vessel
RA?	7	27	Amphora?	3	122				Sherd join with context 28 pale fabric. Poss large flagon?
RA?	7	28	Amphora?	1	50				Joins sherds in context 27, pale fabric. Poss large flagon?
RA10?	7	27	Amphora	2	208				Body sherds. ??Pelichet 47 (check)
RA3	9	36	Amphora Dressel 20	2	41				Joining sherds
RA3	10	37	Amphora Dressel 20	3	23				
RA3	12	43	Amphora Dressel 20	1	3				Small flake
RA3	12	46	Amphora Dressel 20	1	15				Small body sherd
RA3	15	52	Amphora Dressel 20	1	20				Body sherd
RA3	17	69	Amphora Dressel 20	1	5				Small flake
RA3	17	71	Amphora Dressel 20	1	6				Body sherd
RA3	18	62	Amphora Dressel 20	16	282				Body sherds
RF	1	2	Beaker?	1	2				White fabric with dark ext colour coat.

RF?	2	7	Nene Valley cup??	1	5			mid 2 <sup>nd</sup> onward ?	Body sherd with barbotine decoration and brown colour coat
RG5	1	3	Jar?					Late 1 <sup>st</sup> - early 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Rusticated decoration. Rustication is a late 1 <sup>st</sup> to early 2 <sup>nd</sup> Century feature
RG8	10	37	Jar	1	21	19	6		Similar to BB ware form, but fabric coarser and vessel thicker. ? Malvern
RG8	10	39	Jar	1	18	13	5		Malvern jar with burnished line decoration. Diam difficult to estimate
RG8	12	46	Jar	1	7	18	4		Malvern jar. Diam difficult to estimate
RG8?	10	38	Jar?	1	18	14	5		Coarse fabric ? Malvern, but fabric is buff/orange in colour
RO?	8	31	Mortarium	1	11				Cream fabric with white quartz trituration grits. Worn body sherd. Perhaps Wroxeter?
RR	2	8		2				Not datable	Body sherds
RR	8	32	Dish – flanged reeded rim	15	53	15	25	Probably datable	Flanged reeded rim and footing base in light orange fabric – ?similar to samian form 35. Fabric like SV ware
RR	8	32	Flagon	1	9				Flagon handle – 3 grooves. Orange fabric
RR	17	70	Flagon?	1	16				Handle with 2 grooves
RR?	10	38	Jar	1	5	10	9		Traces of burnish
RR?	18	62	Jar	1	16	12	15		Very badly worn rim sherd. Diam approx
RR?	23	6	Figurine/face pot?	1	2				Oval-shaped fragment, broken at one end. Fabric is smooth light orange. Perhaps part of a figurine. Possibly phallic? Doesn't appear to be part of a pottery vessel unless part of face pot
RW	1	2	Flagon	1	14				Fragment of handle – single groove
SV	1	3	Jar?	1	20				Body sherd

**Samian**

<b>Fabric</b>	<b>Test pit</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Form</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Wt(g)</b>	<b>dia</b>	<b>Rim%</b>	<b>date</b>	<b>comment</b>
RS	1	02		1	3				Pale buff fabric
RS	1	02		1	1				Decorated fragment
RS	1	02		1	1				
RS	1	03	31?	1	13				rim
RS	1	03		1	4				rim
RS	1	03		1	3				Decorated body sherd
RS	1	03		1	4				
RS	7	26		3	5				Worn sherds
RS	7	27		1	1				
RS	7	28		2	3				
RS	8	32		2	1				Small worn fragments
RS	9	35		1	1				
RS	10	38		1	2				Rim
RS	10	38		1	1				Small fragment of rim
RS	10	38		2	3				Body sherds
RS	11	41		2	6				Pale buff fabric
RS	11	41		2	3				Includes a rim or footring
RS	12	45		2	2				One sherd with worn decoration
RS	12	46		3	5				
RS	17	68		2	4				
RS	17	70		1	5				rim
RS	17	70		1	1				
RS	17	71		1	3				rim
RS	17	71		1	6				
RS	18	66		1	1				Small fragment of rim