

CPAT Report No. 1320

Walton Basin, Radnorshire

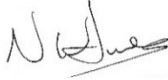
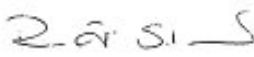
Geophysical Survey and Excavations 2014-15.



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CONTENTS

	Summary	ii
1	Introduction.....	1
2	Geophysical survey	3
4	Prehistoric Pottery by Alex Gibson	14
5	Conclusions.....	18
6	Acknowledgements	19
7	References	19

Summary

The Cadw-funded investigations in the Walton Basin of eastern Radnorshire have been ongoing since 2012 with this, the final season of fieldwork, being conducted in 2014-15. While previous work under the project, and as part of a study of prehistoric funerary and ritual monuments, also funded by Cadw, has often focused on the nationally important complex of prehistoric monuments, recent survey and excavation has also investigated two possible Roman military sites.

Geophysical survey was conducted to investigate three sites and has coincidentally provided further confirmation of the alignment of the 4.6km-long Hindwell Cursus. The veracity of a possible marching camp to the east of Hindwell Roman fort, lying partly within the large Neolithic palisaded enclosure, has been seriously questioned by both the geophysics results, which failed to confirm a northern side for such a camp, as well as the excavated evidence which has demonstrated the slight nature of the feature, which is perhaps too shallow to be associated with a Roman military structure. While it had been hoped that geophysics would shed further light on a possible annexe to one of three marching camps at Walton the results proved disappointing owing to a spread of iron-rich waste from a former smithy nearby.

Much attention has already been paid to the Hindwell Palisaded Enclosure which, with an area of 34ha, is the largest such Neolithic structure currently known in Britain. Despite this there are some important questions which remain unresolved, including the nature of up to nine burnt features on the southern side of the enclosure which have been a matter of some debate since their discovery through geophysical survey in 1998, along with perhaps 20 similar survey anomalies on the north-eastern side of the enclosure. Initially interpreted as evidence for the in-situ burning of the posts which define the enclosure, the recent excavations were too restricted to provide a conclusive answer, although it appears that the pits were positioned immediately inside the palisade and may have cut through the fill of the intercutting post-pits. Pottery recovered from the excavated pit included several sherds of Grooved Ware, as well as a small cup of either late Neolithic or possibly Early Bronze Age date.

The excavations were again conducted with the assistance of local volunteers and it is clear that Walton Basin Project as a whole has had a very positive impact in the dissemination of information to, and engagement with, the local community.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Cadw-funded project work in the Walton Basin under the aegis of the Prehistoric Funerary and Ritual Sites, Roman Military Vici and Walton Basin project initiatives, combined with the results of earlier assessment work by the Trust under the direction of Dr Alex Gibson and also funded by Cadw, has shown that this part of eastern Radnorshire contains an archaeological resource of significant importance and complexity. The area encapsulates the entire span of archaeology in the Welsh borderland and is known to contain evidence for multi-period activity from the early post-glacial period onwards. Recent studies have focused on the complex of prehistoric monuments around the modern settlements of Hindwell and Walton, most of which date from the Neolithic period, and include some of the largest sites of their kind in Britain, such as the Hindwell cursus and the Hindwell palisaded enclosure. The importance of the area as a base for Roman military campaigns is now readily appreciated and the strategically significant routeway which passed through the basin into Central Wales retained its importance well into the medieval period.
- 1.2 The gradual realisation that the archaeology of the Walton Basin is under varying degrees of threat from continued ploughing in this highly productive agricultural area, as well as from piecemeal development, led to the initiation of a new project which was initially approved for funding in 2012-13. This was designed to address a number of pressing management issues relating to agricultural usage and development, affecting the important multi-period archaeological resource within the Walton Basin. The project developed a methodology for assessing the vulnerability and level of threat from agriculture to both upstanding and buried archaeology, based upon COSMIC 2. This methodology has become known as *Archaeological Conservation in Rural Environments*, or ACRE (Jones 2014) and is the first practical agri-environment related archaeological assessment methodology to be developed in Wales. It has the potential to be of significant value across the entire country as a means of predicting the level of agricultural threat.
- 1.3 The project continued in 2014-15 with a programme of geophysical survey and small-scale excavation involving local volunteers. Three sites were chosen for investigation, a section of the Neolithic Hindwell Palisaded Enclosure (PRN 19376), and two possible Roman marching camps, one near Hindwell (PRN 122826) and the other at Walton (PRN 122794) (see Fig. 1).
- 1.4 In the case of the Hindwell Palisaded Enclosure the investigations were positioned within the scheduled area of the palisaded enclosure (SAM Rd 247), with Scheduled Monument Consent for the work being granted by Cadw in January 2015. The remaining elements of the work programme were all located in areas without any such designation. The geophysical surveys and subsequent excavations were all conducted in February 2015.

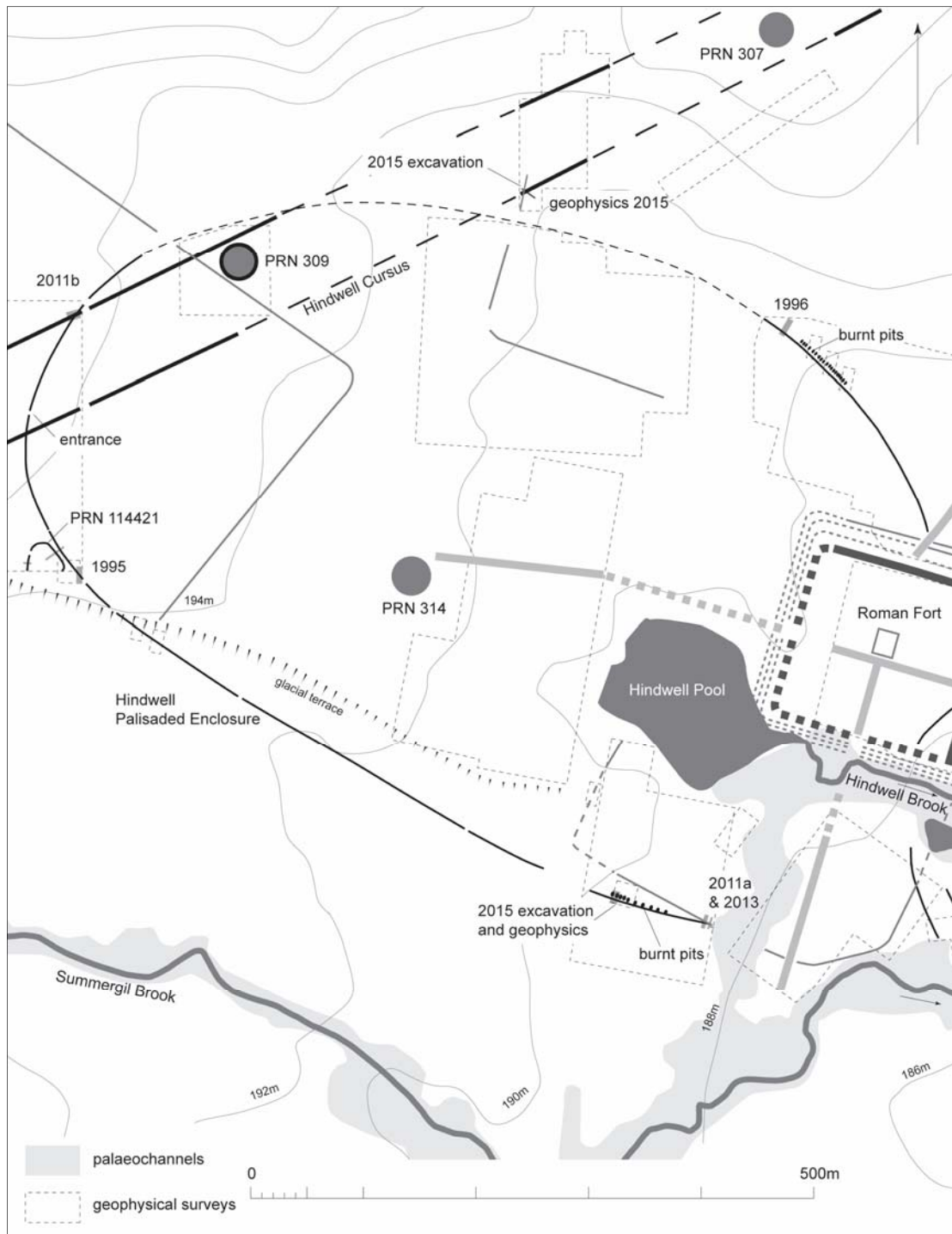


Fig. 1 Location of the 2015 geophysics surveys and excavations at Hindwell

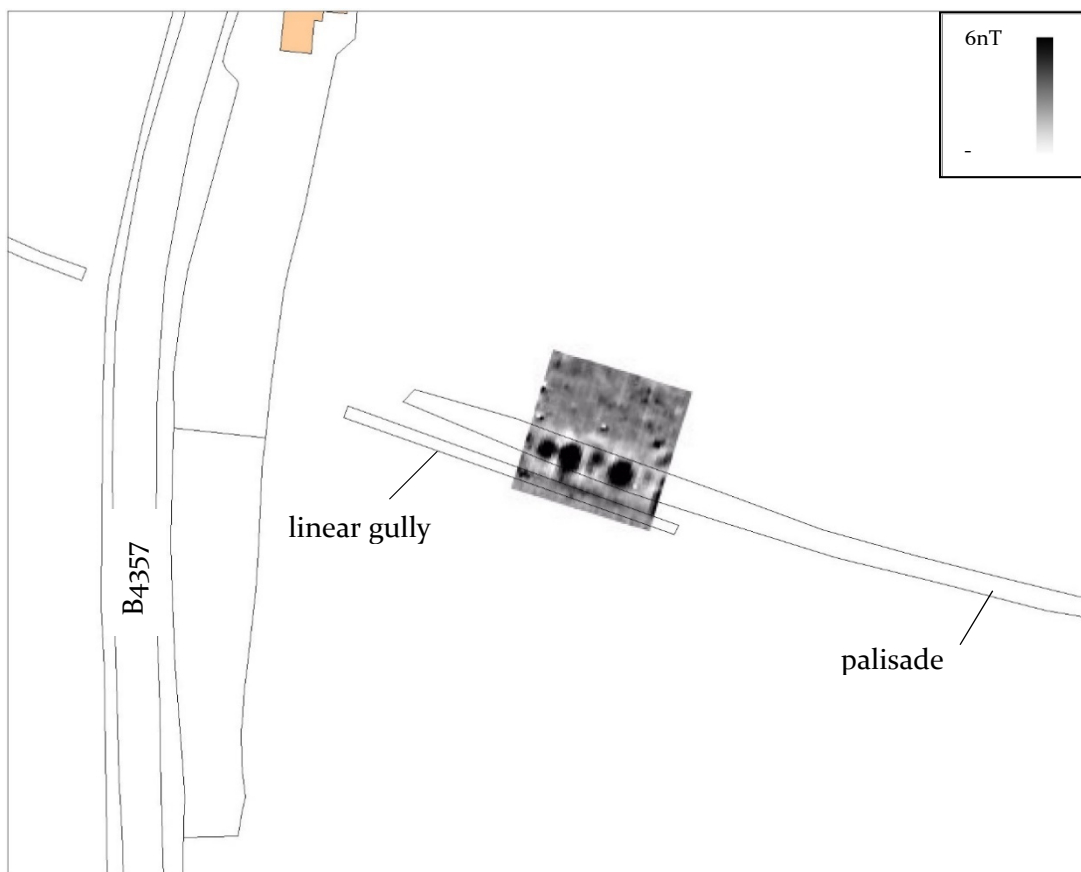
2 Geophysical survey

Methodology

- 2.1 Each survey was based on a series of 20m by 20m grids and employed a Bartington 601 fluxgate gradiometer with two sensors. The readings in each grid were taken along traverses 0.5m apart and the speed of each traverse was carefully controlled such that readings were taken every 0.25m, giving a total of 3200 readings per 20m grid. The grids were laid out by taped measurement and then located in relation to local field boundaries by total station survey. The survey areas could then be related to modern Ordnance Survey mapping, thereby enabling the co-ordinates of any significant anomalies to be determined and the results compared to evidence obtained from other sources. The readings from each area were combined and processed using Archeosurveyor software to provide greyscale and trace images of the results. The only processing functions used were *Destripe* to remove variations in the readings between opposing traverses and *Clip*, to remove the effects of very high and very low readings on the results, thereby allowing anomalies of potential archaeological interest to be identified.
- 2.2 Each of the sites is dealt with separately through a discussion combined with a series of plans. The plans comprise a greyscale plot of the processed data and, where appropriate, a second greyscale plot with added interpretation of the significant anomalies, and also a trace plot of the raw data.

Hindwell Palisaded Enclosure PRN 19376

- 2.3 Large areas of the palisaded enclosure were the subject of detailed geophysical survey in 1998 (Gibson 1999b), and the recent investigations were intended to shed further light on a number of thermo-remnant anomalies on the southern side of the enclosure which were interpreted at the time as reflecting the in-situ burning of posts. Geophysical survey was conducted within a 20m by 20m grid (centred at SO 2558 6036), which identified the anomalies and allowed the subsequent excavation to be positioned with greater accuracy.
- 2.4 The results of the geophysics identified four complete thermo-remnant anomalies (2-5), measuring between 2.5m and 5.0m across, with separations of 3-4m centre to centre, together with a further two which extended beyond the survey area (1 and 6), It is possible that the results show an additional anomaly between 5 and 6, although this is relatively faint in comparison to the others. The survey also identified a linear feature (7) to the south, running parallel with the line of the palisade.



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Fig. 2 The 2015 geophysical survey results compared with the line of the palisade

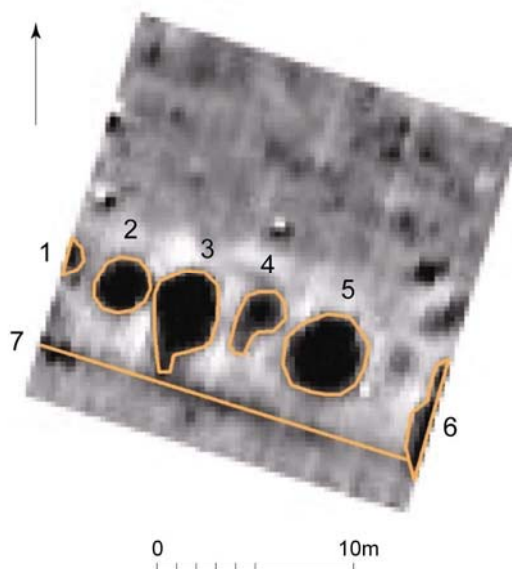


Fig. 3 Interpretation of the geophysics results at the palisaded enclosure

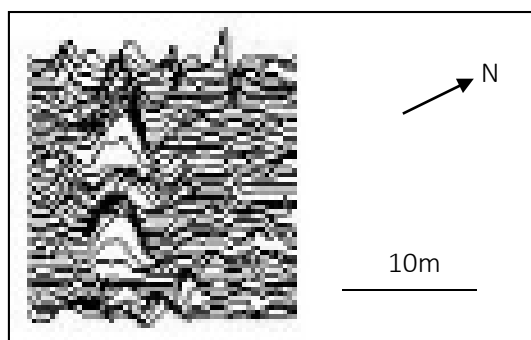
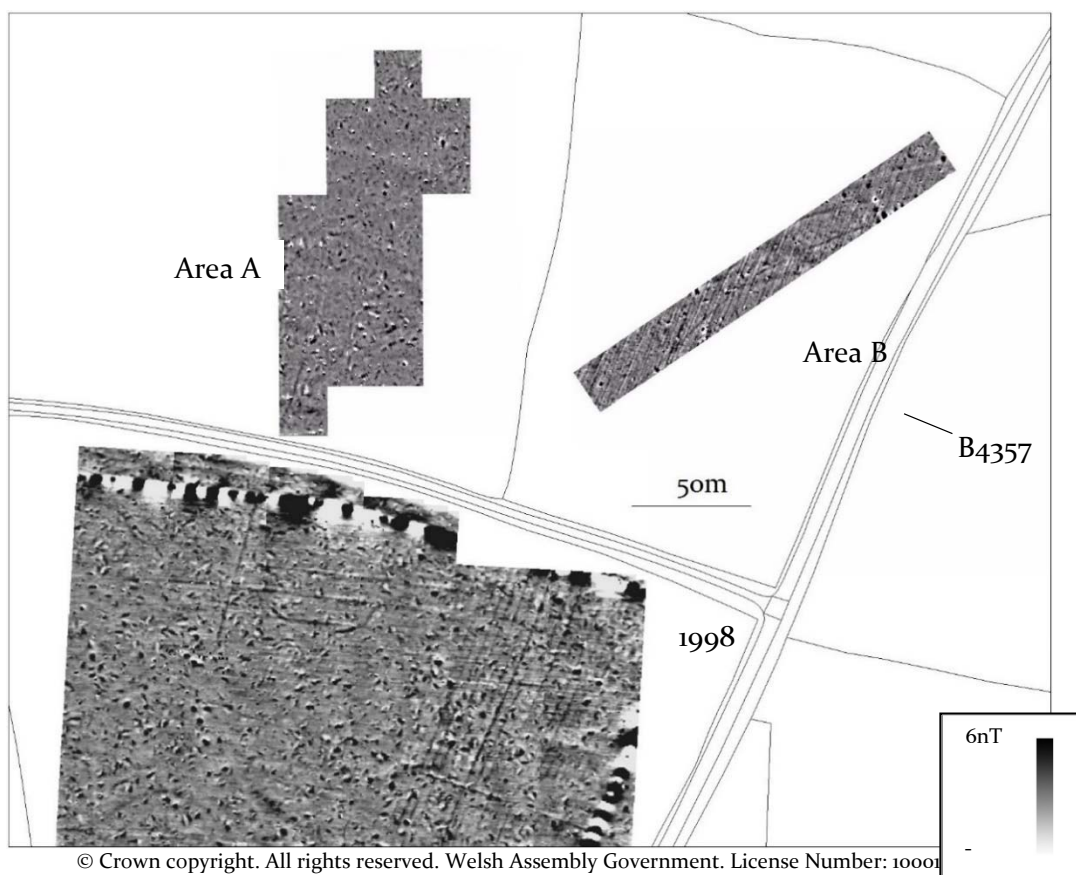


Fig. 4 Trace plot of the results at the palisaded enclosure, originally at 36nT/cm

Hindwell Ash possible marching camp PRN 122794

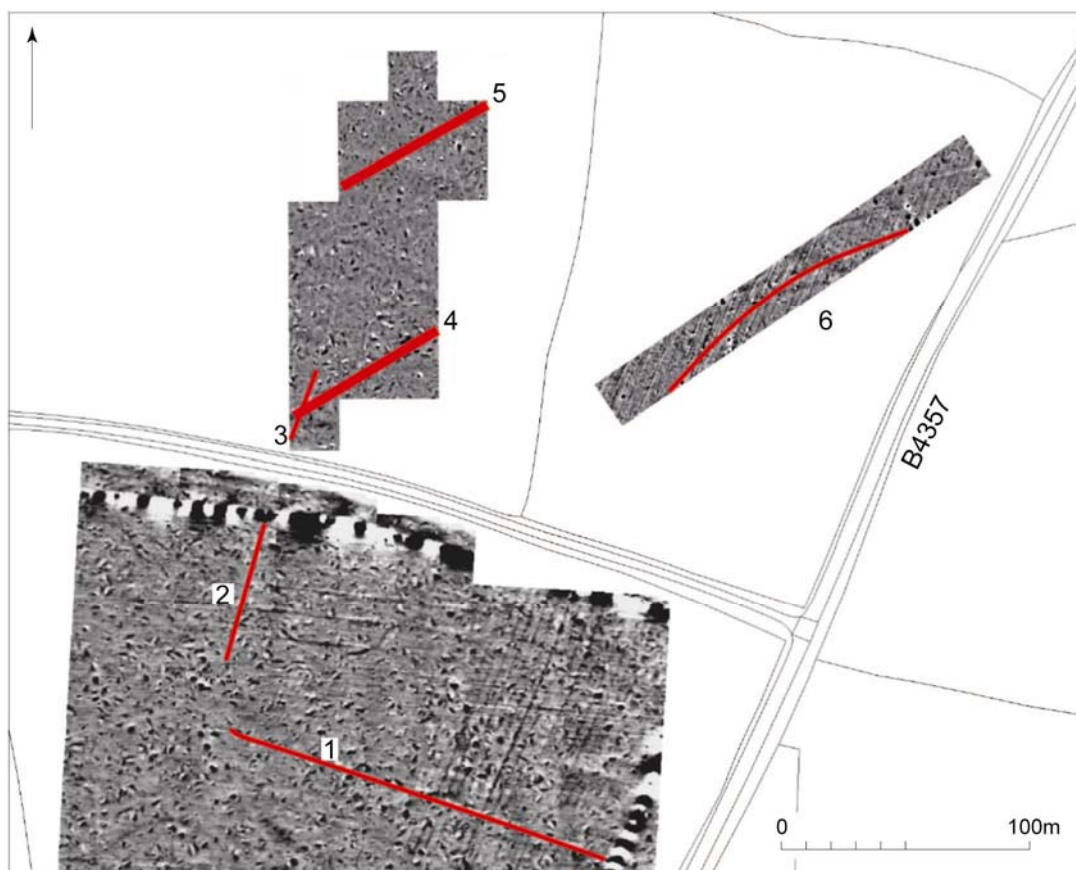
- 2.5 The 1998 geophysical survey (Gibson 1999b) revealed traces of what has been interpreted as a possible Roman marching camp, lying within the interior of the Hindwell Palisaded Enclosure, around 200m to the north-west of the Roman fort at Hindwell. Two narrow, linear ditches were seen as defining parts of the southern and eastern sides, while the survey provided no clear definition of the south-west corner. The recent survey was conducted in two adjacent fields (Areas A and B, centred at SO 2553 6112 and SO 2575 6109 respectively) to the north of the lane leading to Four Stones to investigate the potential continuation of the western ditch and prospect for the northern side of the putative marching camp.



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Fig. 5 Greyscale plot of the geophysics results from Areas A and B in 2015, together with part of the area within the palisaded enclosure surveyed in 1998

- 2.6 The 1998 geophysics identified two ditches, neither more than 1.0m in width. The southern ditch (1) is at least 150m in length and probably continues as far as the B4357. The recent survey has confirmed that the western ditch (2 and 3) extends beyond the lane to Four Stones, with an overall length of at least 125m, and perhaps extends for a further 25m as a negative anomaly, although this may be unrelated. There was no indication that the feature continued further to the north and also no suggestion of a corner or corresponding feature which might suggest the northern side of a putative marching camp in either survey area.
- 2.7 Cropmark evidence and previous geophysical surveys had already confirmed elements of the Hindwell Cursus to either side of the present survey and the results from Area A have provided further evidence for this monumental Neolithic earthwork. Both ditches are visible in the survey data, although only as faint negative anomalies (4 and 5), each around 4m in width and 68m apart.
- 2.8 The only other anomaly which may be significant is a narrow, curving feature (6) in Area B, suggesting a narrow ditch around 1.0m wide, extending for at least 120m. A small number of possible pits were also visible in both areas, although these were little different to the background responses seen in the 1998 geophysics and may reflect natural changes in the glacial gravels rather than archaeological features.



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Fig. 6 Interpretation of the geophysics results from Areas A and B

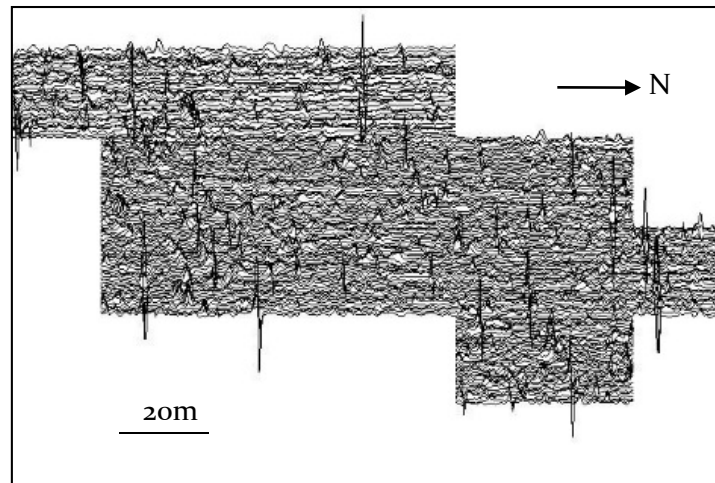


Fig. 7 Trace plot of the results for Area A, originally at 36nT/cm (clipped to ± 50 nT)

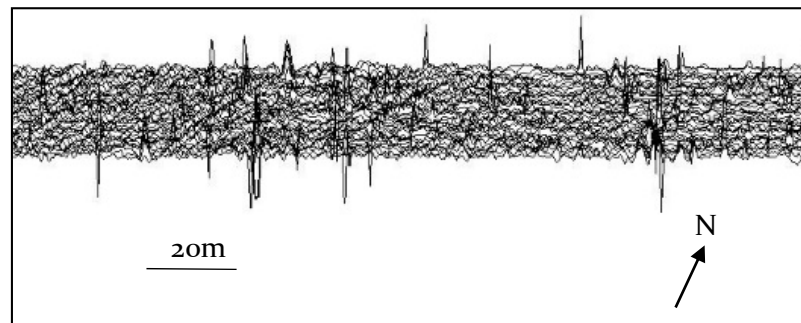


Fig. 8 Trace plot of the results for Area B, originally at 36nT/cm (clipped to ± 50 nT)

- 2.9 A notable feature of the results was the difference between the two fields, the eastern showing marked striations in the data, and these variations are likely to reflect past differences in the agricultural regimes within each field, perhaps indicating more intensive, or deeper ploughing in the eastern field.

Walton marching camp III annexe PRN 122826

- 2.10 A series of three adjacent marching camps have been revealed through cropmark evidence in the fields to the north and west of Walton village. Aerial photography has also suggested a possible annexe on the southern side of the Walton III marching camp, although only the western side and south-western corner are currently known. Although it had been hoped to investigate the continuations of the cropmarks to the north and east, permission was not forthcoming so the survey (centred at SO 2552 5981) focused instead on a small field to the east where it was thought that evidence of any internal detail might be forthcoming.

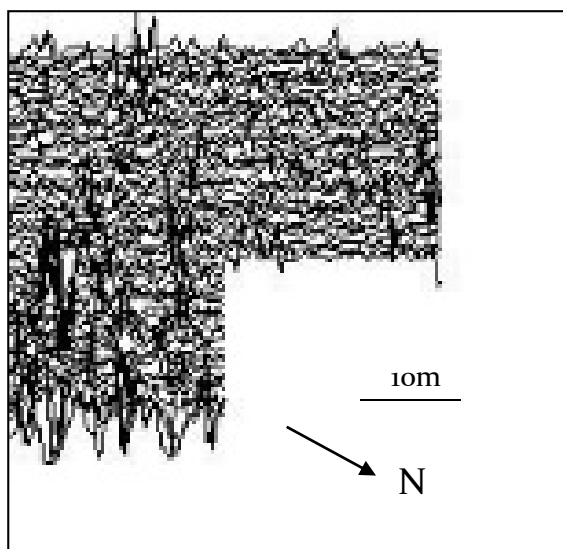


Fig. 9 Trace plot of the survey results, originally at 100nT/cm (clipped to ± 100 nT)

- 2.11 The readings from this site were subject to large variations and consequently no archaeological features could be discerned in the readings. The reason for the variability lies in the proximity of a former smithy, waste from which had been spread across the field. The iron content of this material would no doubt have been considerable and has almost certainly masked any potential anomalies resulting from sub-surface archaeological features.



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Fig. 10 Greyscale plot of the results from the geophysical survey in the area of the putative marching camp annexe at Walton

3 Excavation

Hindwell Palisaded Enclosure PRN 19376

- 3.1 An area measuring 10m by 5m was excavated by machine, located in the south-western corner of the area covered by the geophysical survey (SO 25554 60346). The topsoil and former ploughsoil were removed to reveal the gravelly subsoil (18) which had evidently been disturbed by a number of features, not all of these well-defined.



Fig. 12 An initial view of the excavation from the south with the linear gully (07) in the foreground and the large pit (10) behind the ranging rod.

Photo CPAT 3983.00.

- 3.2 The main focus of the excavation was a large pit (10) containing burnt material, which corresponded with anomaly 2 in the geophysics results (see Fig. 4), while a similar feature to the west corresponded with anomaly 1 and extended beyond the excavated area. The excavation was positioned across the line of the palisaded enclosure and although these were not readily identifiable the positions of two post-ramps, up to 4.2m in length, might be suggested by the outline of soil layers 15 and 17, both consisting of grey-brown silty clay, while a concentration of charcoal in a dark grey-brown clay-silt matrix (14) may represent the position of one of the palisade posts. Two body sherds of possible Neolithic pottery were recovered from the surface of layer 17.
- 3.3 At its surface feature 10 measured around 3.15m across and contained an upper fill (08) of pale grey-brown silty clay, up to 0.2m thick, which produced a flint scraper and a small burnt flint. The nature of the deposit suggested an accumulation of silt within a hollow which may have formed through subsidence of the lower pit fills. This sealed a thin layer of dark grey-brown gritty silty clay (09). Beneath this a deposit of dark grey-brown silty clay (21) contained abundant charcoal, together with 17 sherds of Neolithic pottery, including Grooved Ware, 3 burnt flints and several fragments of burnt bone.

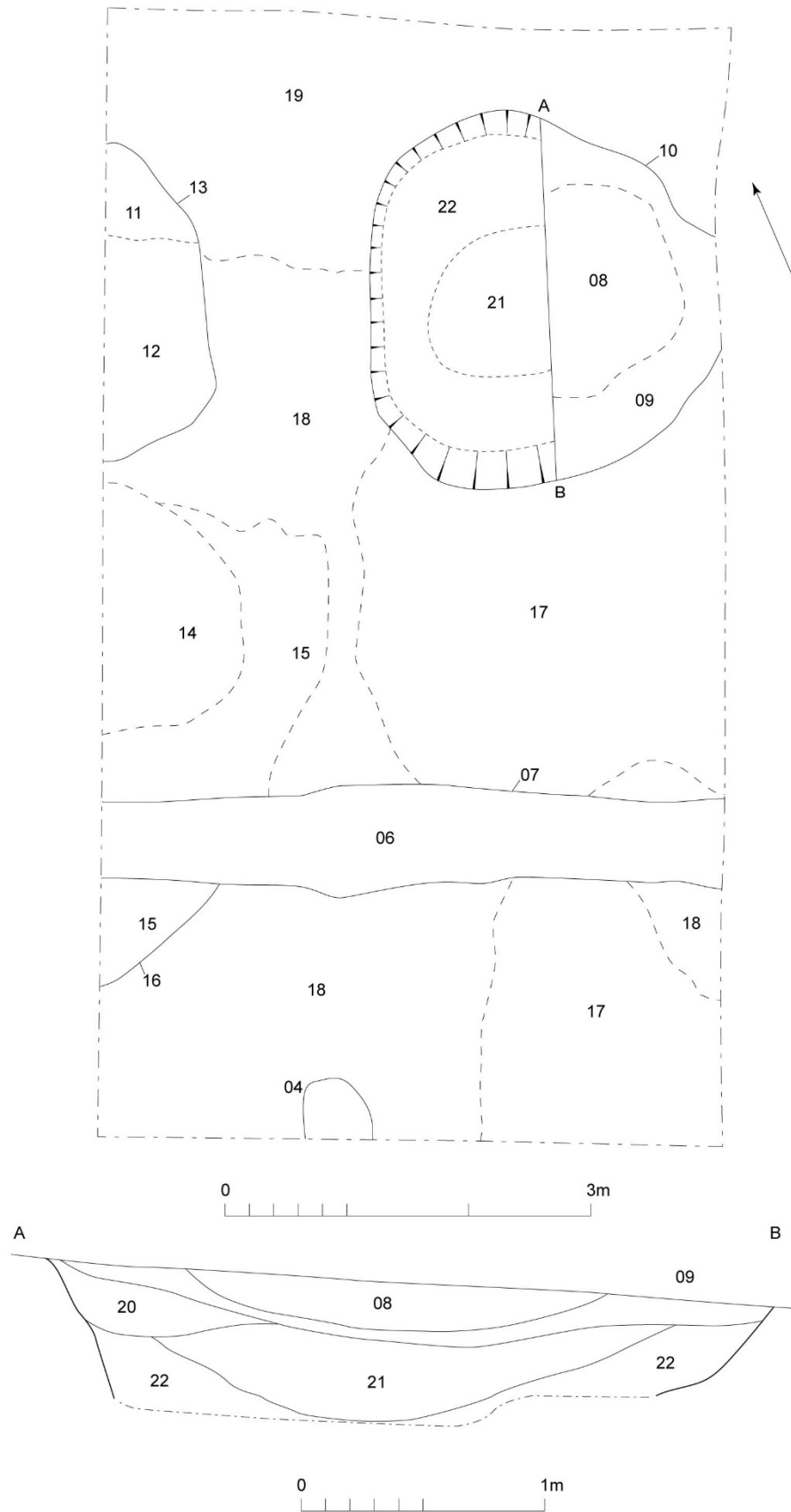


Fig. 11 The 2015 excavation on the southern side of the Hindwell Palisaded Enclosure

- 3.4 The feature was only excavated to a depth of 0.58m owing to time constraints, the lowest layer investigated consisting of successive lenses of silt and silty clay indicating tip lines within the fill of the pit which, for the sake of convenience, were assigned a single context number (22). Eleven sherds of Neolithic pottery were recovered from the layer, including Grooved Ware and a sherd from a small cup of Neolithic, or possibly Early Bronze Age date. At this level the steepness of the sides suggested that the pit was likely to extend to a depth significantly greater than the excavated portion.
- 3.5 Towards the southern side of the excavation there was a linear gully (07) running west to east which had been identified by the geophysical survey as anomaly 7. This measured 0.7m in width and cut the possible post-ramps, although it remained unexcavated.



Fig. 13 The excavated extent of pit 10 viewed from the west. Photo CPAT 3983.00

Hindwell Ash possible marching camp PRN 122794

- 3.6 The excavation consisted of a single trench, measuring 14m by 1.5m, aligned west-north-west to east-south-east (SO 2548 6098). The removal of up to 0.35 of topsoil (23) and former ploughsoil (24) revealed the undisturbed natural glacial gravels within most of the trench, which had been cut by two features towards the western end of the trench.
- 3.7 A broad band of orange-brown silty clay (27), around 4m in width, contained a high percentage of gravel and corresponded with a linear anomaly identified by the geophysical survey, representing the south-eastern ditch (31) of the Hindwell Cursus. This was not investigated further, save for a small sondage against the north-western edge.



Fig. 14 Gully 26 cutting the upper fill of the cursus ditch, defined by the two ranging rods. Photo CPAT 3983.126

- 3.8 The upper fill of the cursus ditch had been cut by a narrow gully (26), around 0.6m wide and 0.28m deep, aligned north/south, its position corresponding with the linear feature identified by the geophysical survey (see Fig. 6, 3). The gully was filled by a layer of light-brown silty clay (25) the removal of which produced no artefactual evidence.

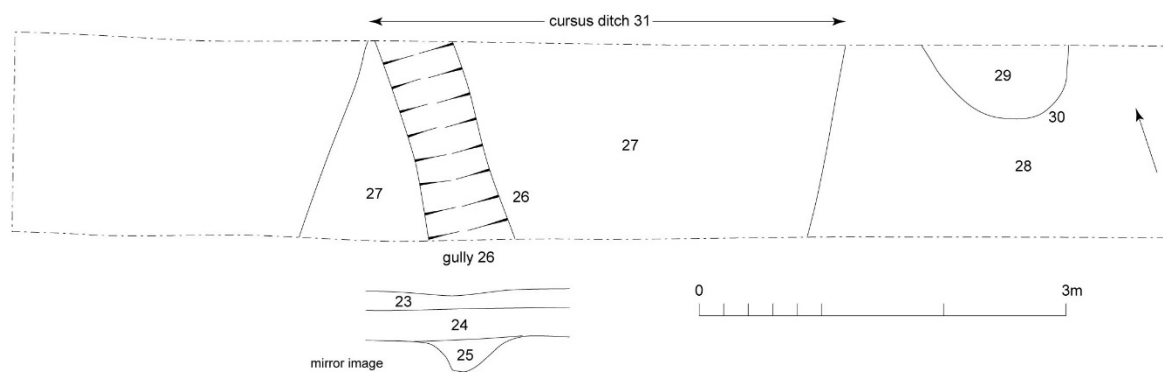


Fig. 15 Plan of the western end of the excavation and the section of gully 26



Fig. 16 Gully 26 viewed from the north with the sondage against the north-western edge of the cursus ditch in the foreground. Photo CPAT 3983.123.

- 3.9 The only other feature consisted of a roughly circular pit (30), around 1.15m across, which extended beyond the excavation and was not investigated further.

4 Prehistoric Pottery by Alex Gibson

- 4.1 The 2015 excavations on the south side of the Hindwell Palisaded Enclosure produced 25 sherds of pottery. The sherds were unpacked and laid out in good natural light and examined macroscopically with the aid of a x10 hand lens. No microscopic analysis of fabrics has been undertaken and consequently fabric groups are liable to refinement should this be undertaken subsequently. Similarly, no chemical analyses have been undertaken though some carbonaceous residues were noted. The sherds were arranged into sherd groups by fabric, finish and thickness thus estimating a minimum number of individual vessels.
- 4.2 The allocation to various ceramic traditions based on fabric alone can be unreliable and subjective; therefore the identifications made here must be so regarded. For example, the use of grog inclusions to open fabrics is found throughout later prehistory and in Neolithic and Bronze Age contexts is found in the Fengate style of Impressed Ware, Grooved Ware, Beaker and Collared Urn. This provides a potential range of some two millennia (c. 3500-1500 BC). Similarly, the flat base thought largely to originate in Late Neolithic ceramics (Grooved Ware) can now be seen to be increasingly present in the Impressed Ware assemblages of the Middle Neolithic as well as in ceramics from the

- Bronze Age onwards. The lack of decorated sherds and/or sherds with distinctive formal characteristics within the present assemblage makes certain identification difficult.
- 4.3 Only two fabrics could be identified, both containing finely crushed grog (pre-fired pottery):
- A Soft, 'soapy' textured fabric with abundant grog inclusions.
 - B Grog and quartz sand giving the fabric a slightly grittier feel than fabric A. Some fired clay, without apparent opening agents, was also present.
- 4.4 Sherd Groups (hereafter SG) 1-2 can be positively identified as Grooved Ware. The vertical cordon on SG 1, from the double-palisade, draws immediate parallels with the Grooved Ware assemblage from nearby Upper Ninepence (Gibson 1999, fig. 53). As at Upper Ninepence, the cordon on SG1 appears to have been applied. The inturned rim forms of SG2 and 3 can also be paralleled in Grooved Ware assemblages amongst closed vessels and cups not least in the large assemblage from Durrington Walls (Wainwright and Longworth 1971). The incised diagonal line on SG2 may reinforce the Grooved Ware identification and such light incision is also found at Upper Ninepence. However, incision is a commonly used technique and not restricted to Grooved Ware.
- 4.5 SG 3 is undecorated and has a distinctive and clearly defined cross-section colouration. The fabric is also hard and well-fired and whilst superficially resembling undecorated Beaker, it must nevertheless be admitted that hard, well-fired fabrics are also found within Grooved Ware assemblages both in Britain (Upper Ninepence) and amongst the small tub-shaped vessels from Ireland such as those from Newgrange and Knowth (Brindley 1999) which are also largely undecorated below the rim. Beaker has, so far, not been found in the Walton Basin though the round barrows within the area and barbed and tanged arrowheads and thumb nail scrapers from some of the flint scatters suggest that the absence of Beaker may be more apparent than real.
- 4.6 SG 4 comprises what appears to be a single carinated sherd in a similarly grog-filled fabric. The concave profile of the vessel walls above and below this carination and the thickness of the fabric are suggestive of the shoulder from a small tripartite Collared Urn which might suggest an early Bronze Age element but again this is based on very little evidence and it may be represent a low raised cordon. It does not appear to come from an uneven base angle.
- 4.7 SG 5 represents a fragment from a small flat-based cup. Cups, of course, are found in many assemblages from Carinated Bowl at the start of the Neolithic to later Iron Age assemblages and indeed rims from apparently small diameter vessels were also encountered in the Grooved Ware assemblage from Upper Ninepence (Gibson 1999). Small cups, albeit highly decorated, are integral to the Woodlands Style of Grooved Ware in southern England (Stone 1949). The undecorated nature of the present vessel therefore makes dating difficult and speculative.
- 4.8 Also known as Pigmy Cups and Accessory Vessels, cups are commonly found in Bronze Age contexts and Welsh cups have recently been discussed by the present writer (in Schlee 2014). These small cups, usually funerary in context, are frequently found with cremations though current research in England is suggesting that this is not necessarily the norm. These cups are normally decorated, sometimes highly, though undecorated or sparsely decorated examples are also encountered (Savory 1980; Gibson 1993). A

sparsely decorated cup from Carneddau, Powys, seems to share the same simple and open form of the present example (Gibson 1993). The few radiocarbon dates for these funerary cups in Wales suggests a range from 2000-1500 cal BC which appears slightly earlier than the range for Northern Britain.

- 4.9 SGs 6 – 11 seem to belong to similar vessels and the soft fabric can be matched to some of the Grooved Ware from nearby Upper Ninepence. Flat bases noted amongst these sherds might belong to either the Grooved Ware or Earlier Bronze Age Collared Urn traditions and therefore cannot be regarded as chronologically diagnostic. A low raised cordon on SG 7 may again indicate Grooved Ware affinity.

Discussion

- 4.10 This assemblage highlights the problems encountered in Neolithic and Bronze Age assemblages when dealing with small sherd material lacking in diagnostic formal or decorative traits. The majority of the assemblage could easily be assigned to vessels in various Neolithic or Bronze Age traditions, particularly Collared Urn and Funerary Cup. The presence of diagnostic Grooved Ware sherds (SG 1-2), however, provides the clue with which to interpret the rest of the material and there is nothing within the assemblage from a fabric point of view that is out of place within a Grooved Ware environment though the lack of decorated sherds is perhaps worthy of comment: Grooved Ware is generally (though not universally) highly and diagnostically decorated.
- 4.11 The carinated sherd (SG 4) is not immediately indicative of a Grooved Ware formal trait and may represent intrusive Early Bronze Age material as may the cup (SG 5); however it is possible that the ‘carination’ in fact represents a pinched or raised cordon similar to that noted on SG 7. Also, as stated above, cups are not unknown in Grooved Ware assemblages.
- 4.12 In short, the assemblage is best compared to the larger and more decorated assemblage associated with pre-barrow activity at Upper Ninepence (Gibson 1999) and, when considered with the Upper Ninepence radiocarbon dates and those from the outer carbonised rings of the posts from the Hindwell enclosure (Gibson 1999), it suggests that both the pit from which the pottery was recovered and the palisaded enclosure itself fall within the currency of Grooved Ware in the Later Neolithic.

Hindwell Palisaded Enclosure

The sherds were derived from four contexts: 12, the upper fill of pit 13; 17, the upper fill of the palisaded enclosure; 21, the fill of pit 10; and 22, a lower fill of pit 10.

- 1 Finds 25 and 28, context 22. A rim sherd and body sherd (17g) in a grey ‘soapy’ textured fabric (Fabric A), with pink, finely crushed grog inclusions and some voids. The fabric averages 10mm thick and has brown patches on the inner surface. The rim is simple and rounded and slightly inturned suggesting a closed vessel. There is a single diagonal, lightly incised line emanating from the rim on the outer surface. A deep sub-circular void on the inner surface may possibly be a seed impression. The body sherd has a brown internal surface and what may be the remains of a moulded cordon on the outer. These sherds are probably (though not certainly) from the same vessel.

- 2 Find 12, context 21. A rim sherd (2g) in a grey 'soapy' textured fabric (Fabric A), with pink, finely crushed grog inclusions and some voids. The fabric averages 6mm thick. The rim is simple and rounded and slightly inturned suggesting a small closed vessel. Despite the fabric and formal similarity to SG 2, it is clear that this has come from a much smaller cup-sized vessel.
- 3 Find 9, 11 and 20, context 21. Four sherds (13g) in a hard, well-fired fabric (Fabric B) with brown surfaces and a black core. The grog and quartz sand inclusions are much more sparse than in SG 1. The fabric averages 5mm thick. There are finishing marks on the outer surface of 011. Although there is no diagnostic decoration, these sherds may represent the undecorated zone from a Beaker.
- 4 Find 27, context 22. A sherd (6g) in a slightly crumbly black fabric with a brown exterior (Fabric B). The quartz sand is sparse but sufficient to give the sherd a slightly gritty feel. The outer surface of the sherd is marked by a ridge above and below which the surface is concave. This suggests the shoulder of a vessel such as a tripartite Collared Urn. However, the identification must be regarded as tentative.
- 5 Find 23, context 22. A single sherd and several crumbs from a small cup in a soft light brown fabric with grey-black core (Fabric A). The rim is simple and slightly flattened. The cup measures 30mm high with a rim diameter of c.80mm and a base diameter of c.60mm. The fabric averages 8-10mm thick. The cup wall has separated from the base sherd along a coil break (this has been rejoined). The grog inclusions give the fabric a slightly speckled appearance but otherwise the cup is undecorated.
- 6 Find 21 and 22, context 22. Two sherds (50g) with orange-brown surfaces and a black/grey core (Fabric A). The fabric averages 12mm thick and both surfaces are abraded. Grog up to 7mm across breaks both surfaces and some small possible quartz inclusions may be naturally occurring in the clay. Both sherds exhibit evidence for a base angle. Both are undecorated.
- 7 Find 26, context 22. A single sherd (26g) in a soft light brown fabric with grey-black core. The sherd at first sight resembles a base angle but on closer inspection this appears to be a low raised cordon or pinch as the surfaces are concave on either side of the ridge.
- 8 Find 7, 13 and 14, contexts 17 and 21. Four sherds (66g) in a soft 'soapy' fabric with well-crushed grog inclusions (Fabric A). The sherds average 14mm thick and are light buff/brown throughout. Wipe marks occur on the outer surface of the largest (and thickest) sherd (014) but the sherds are otherwise undecorated.
- 9 Find 8, context 21. A hard, well-fired sherd (7g) with a brown outer surface, light brown inner surface and a black core (Fabric B). The grog and quartz sand inclusions are much sparser than in SG 1. The fabric averages 5mm thick. The surfaces are abraded but the sherd may be related to SG 4 above though the fabric has a softer feel (perhaps due to the erosion).
- 10 Find 10, context 21. An abraded, undecorated wall sherd (12g) with a light brown outer surface, grey inner surface and core (Fabric A). Fabric averages 8mm thick.
- 11 Finds 4, 5, 24, 29, 30 and 31, contexts 12, 17 and 22. Six body sherds (29g) with light brown outer surfaces, light brown to grey internal surfaces and a grey core (Fabric

A). The sherds are abraded and average 10-15mm thick. All sherds contain abundant finely crushed grog inclusions. These sherds may well belong to the same or at least similar vessels.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The recent investigations have added further to our understanding of the complex of prehistoric and later monuments in the areas around Walton village and Hindwell Farm.
- 5.2 The geophysical survey has provided further confirmation of the alignment of the 4.6km-long Hindwell Cursus, as well as casting doubt on previous suggestions that two linear ditches east of Hindwell might represent elements of a Roman marching camp. Although the putative western ditch of the camp is now known to extend to the north of the land to Four Stones, small-scale excavations in the wake of the geophysics have demonstrated the slight nature of the feature which, at only 0.6m wide and 0.28 deep is perhaps too shallow to be associated with a Roman military structure. The excavation of a section of one of three marching camps at Walton in 2009 revealed the ditch to be rather more substantial, at 2.25m wide and 1.4m deep, with a distinctly punic profile (Jones 2010).
- 5.3 The nature of up to ten potentially burnt features on the southern side of the Hindwell Palisaded Enclosure has been a matter of some debate since their discovery through geophysical survey in 1998, along with perhaps 19 similar survey anomalies on the north-eastern side of the enclosure. Initially interpreted as evidence for the in-situ burning of the posts which define the enclosure the recent excavations were sadly too restricted to provide a definitive answer, although the results have discounted the possibility that they were Roman field ovens, similar to those cut into the mound of a barrow within the palisaded enclosure (Jones 2012b). What is clear, however, is that at this point the pits are positioned immediately inside the palisade and contain significant quantities of burnt material in their fills, accounting for the geophysical responses, but without any sign of in-situ burning. The presence of Grooved Ware and worked flints suggest a broad contemporaneity with the palisade itself and mirrors the presence of Groove Ware recovered from the post-pipe of one of the posts in the inner circuit of the Hindwell Double-palisaded Enclosure (Jones 2012). Further to the east, however, the geophysical survey suggests that the features may overlie the palisade, implying that they post-date the enclosure.
- 5.4 The presence of a linear gully apparently cutting through the tail of the post-ramps is interesting in that a similar gully had been recorded previously during the excavation at the junction between the palisaded enclosure and the northern ditch of the Hindwell Cursus (Jones 2012a). This feature remained unexcavated and no dating or obvious interpretation can be proposed.
- 5.5 The excavations were again conducted with the assistance of local volunteers and it is clear that Walton Basin Project as a whole has had a very positive impact in the dissemination of information to, and engagement, with the local community.

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