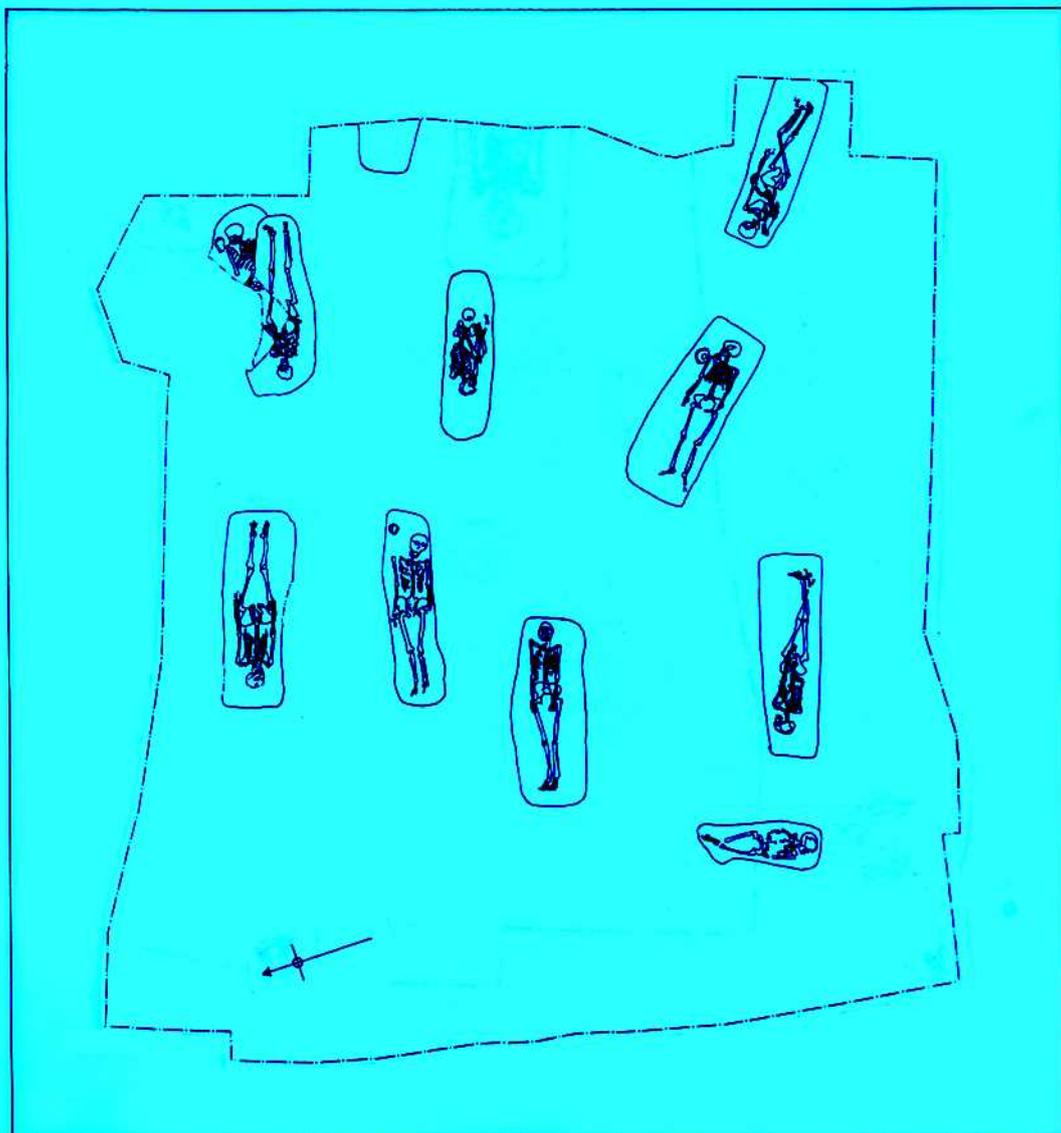


*Archaeological Investigations  
on the Slip End, Ashwell to  
Wicker Hall, Royston Pipeline.*



**Archaeological monitoring and excavations  
along the  
Slip End to Wicker Hall water pipeline  
between Baldock and Royston, Hertfordshire**

by

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Commissioned by Lee Valley Water Plc

North Hertfordshire District Council Museums  
Field Archaeology Section  
Department of Engineering and Leisure Services  
Commissioned by Lee Valley Water Plc

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Cover and illustrations by Faith Pewtress, George Luke and Paula McCarroll.

# 1 Introduction

Over the period February to September 1991 the field team of the North Hertfordshire Archaeology Unit undertook to monitor a pipeline being laid by Docwra Construction Ltd on behalf of, and funded by, Lee Valley Water Plc.

The projected route crossed a number of known archaeological sites including the Roman cemetery at Slip End (Sites and Monuments Record No. 242) and the Mile Ditches (SMR No. 125) just west of a roundabout on the A505 east of Royston. In addition it impinged upon several North Hertfordshire District Council designated 'Areas of Archaeological Importance (AAS)'. These are portions of the landscape in which a number of archaeological features are known, from fieldwork or aerial photography, and are considered to have a probability of containing more, as yet undiscovered, archaeological remains. In all, the pipeline route crossed through a total of five of these archaeologically sensitive areas (Nos 9, 35, 36, 37 and 43).

Therfield Heath (AAS No. 9) is itself one of the best surviving ancient landscapes in the country, including a Neolithic long barrow and a Bronze Age barrow cemetery comprising twelve mounds (Scheduled Ancient Monuments No. 17 and 97). A length of probable Iron Age boundary ditches known as 'The Mile Ditches' (SAM No. 125), medieval stock pens, ridge and furrow ploughing, and cultivation terraces have also been identified from aerial photographs of Therfield Heath.

AAS 25 encompasses a large number of sites to the north of the A505, incorporating a section of the ancient Icknield Way, several prehistoric ring ditches, enclosures, trackways, field systems and multiple linear ditches. A particularly high concentration of cropmarks occurs at Slip End where two Romano-British cemeteries and a settlement (SAM No. 105) are known.

AAS 36 contains cropmarks of a prehistoric ring ditch and a double ditched linear feature.

AAS 37 comprises cropmarks of a prehistoric ring ditch and a multiple ditched linear feature of unknown date.

An area of extensive cropmarks (AAS 43) to the south of the Icknield Way includes numerous ring ditches, enclosures and a system of multiple boundary ditches.

In the light of this information it was considered that the projected pipeline route was highly likely to impinge upon a number of archaeologically important features. It was therefore decided that coverage, in the form of a monitoring project, was necessary, and that provision for further excavation should be made particularly in respect of the Roman cemetery and settlement at Slip End (areas A & J).

## 2 Methodology

Due to the long length of the route and the prolonged timescale of the pipe laying it was decided that a watching brief was the best means of providing the necessary archaeological coverage. This coverage was divided into two stages, following the groundworks programme clearing the topsoil to form an easement, and later during the machine excavation of the actual pipe trench. The easement was approximately 10 m wide and involved stripping away the topsoil to expose the subsoil surface. At this point the exposed surface was examined for features revealed in plan. The damage caused to the subsoil horizon by modern cultivation made the accurate identification of archaeological activity difficult. In the cases of specific sites such as the cemetery and occupation areas at Slip End and the ditch system opposite Odsey House, it was necessary to remove the disturbed subsoil by machine in order to reveal features cutting into the natural chalk.

Features thus exposed within the easement area were recorded in plan by means of photography, scale drawings and written descriptions on pro-forma record cards. In general no actual excavation was undertaken except for the two sites mentioned above. In accordance with the Law, which states that burials must be removed with 'due care and attention', all of those in danger of being disturbed by the pipe trench were excavated stratigraphically and recorded before being lifted. Similarly, the section of pipeline route between the cemetery and the A505 was selectively sampled by means of sections excavated across features to assess their function, date and sequence. These methods also applied to the sinuous triple ditches opposite Odsey House.

Where there was no prior knowledge of archaeological remains the sections exposed in the pipe trench were examined to locate various small and widely spaced features such as pits which were not readily visible in the easement. The pipe trench also provided clear sections across ditches which could then be thoroughly recorded. Excavation of these was limited to cutting back the sections in order to collect soil samples and datable artefacts.

## 3 Results

### Areas A and J

Though investigated as two separate areas and producing quite different results, A and J should be considered together as they were an integral part of the known Roman settlement at Slip End.

Area A (GR TL 284370) was excavated as a long, narrow strip 160 × 2.5 m along the south side of the road to Ashwell between the pumping station and the A505 (within AAS No. 35). The collection of a large amount of pottery sherds from the field surface prior to the pipeline works indicated Romano-British activity. Accordingly the area affected by the pipe trench was carefully stripped by machine. Subsequent excavations revealed a high density of features surviving below the plough soil. Though excavation was only undertaken along the line of the pipe trench, rather than across the whole easement, it uncovered substantial evidence of occupational activity, including a wide range of ditched forms, several occupation layers including compacted chalk surfaces, together with posthole arrangements and a large number of ambiguous cuts and fills. Due to their truncated nature and, to some extent, lack of time it was difficult to determine many of the relationships between the features found, thus rendering the phasing of this small area almost impossible.

A total of nine reasonably substantial ditches were found, varying in depth between 0.20 m and 0.60 m although they may be presumed to have been up to a metre deep having subsequently been truncated by agricultural activity. There were essentially two alignments of the ditches, one north-east/south-west and the other roughly perpendicular on a north-west/south-east orientation. At the east end of Area A, the north-east/south-west ditch [14] (with its recut [16]) and [28] (fills (13) and (15) both yielded Roman pottery sherds, tile, bone and oyster shell with the former also producing two copper alloy coins. Their position and orientation suggests that they were continuations of two boundary ditches belonging to a large enclosure of the Romano-British settlement on the opposite side of the Ashwell road which has been identified from aerial photographs (see Fig 00). This may also be the case with significant ditch cut [32] (fill (31) further to the west in relation to a narrower adjoining enclosure. In between the former arrangement [14] and [28], and therefore presumably within the enclosure discussed above, only a few traces of occupation material could be identified in plan.

A fragmentary spread of compacted white chalk rubble, heavily plough damaged, may have been the remains of a yard or even a floor surface, [22]. This material appears to have been brought in from outside the immediate vicinity of Area A where the pipe trench revealed the natural to be much softer and of a more yellow colour. This spread was very similar to another layer encountered, [18], which extended further to the east and outside the postulated enclosure. This perhaps indicates that further enclosed settlement evidence survives toward the Icknield Way, beyond the confines of the area under investigation. Of interest, a single posthole ([24], fill (23)) only 0.08 m deep, was also found within the primary enclosure. It contained a quantity of charcoal with white flecks throughout, together with small fragments of scorched pottery. This was originally interpreted as an unurned cremation; however, in the light of comparison with those from Area J it would seem that this was unlikely. Alternatively it may have been the last vestige of a wooden structure destroyed by fire. The pipe trench section within this interesting area revealed a number of shallow cuts, [126] to [136] which penetrated the chalk natural, and although they did not yield any artefactual evidence, it appears that they may have been man-made. Without further investigation, it is impossible to be certain, but others such as [124] were more noticeably natural, perhaps caused by the action of tree roots.

To the west of the main enclosed feature, within the other similar arrangement mentioned, [16] and [32], were found two north-west/south-east orientated ditches. Ditch [20] (fill (19)) was a substantial cut approximately 0.85 m wide and up to 0.30 m deep with a roughly U-shaped profile cut into the natural chalk. Another ditch cut, [26] (fill (25)), appeared to run off it to the south-west at right angles, suggesting the further continuation of boundaries to the south. A wide and relatively deep ditch cut, [30] (fill (29)), appeared to mark the end of the settlement enclosures to the west. At 1.20 m wide and 0.30 m deep it was the most substantial of the north-west/south-east orientated ditches. The eastern end was somewhat obscure, possibly cutting through the fill of ditch [32], seen to represent a boundary line, then petering out toward a junction with the ditch or gully [52]. Between these two major north-west/south-east ditches were a further pair of intersecting narrow ditches, [42] and [46]. Their relationship with the similarly aligned substantial ditches just outlined, [20] and [30], could not be established within the limited ??? of the project. Three postholes of an uncertain function were also uncovered in this vicinity. All were only 0.10 m deep and between 0.20 and 0.35 m in diameter. [40] contained flint and chalk packing while [38] (fill (37)) and [44] (fill (43)) had clay silt fills containing pottery sherds, tile and animal bone. Again, this may indicate that some structure once occupied the enclosure although no pattern could be discerned within such a narrow area of excavation. The conclusions reached rest heavily upon conjecture. They could be assessed in greater and more precise detail when more information is known about the enclosed

substantial settlement complex which exists in the vicinity. This could be achieved in the context of a detailed ??? or resistivity survey at the scheduled area.

The nature of the archaeological remains to the west of ditch [30] and hence outside the evidently complex enclosure arrangement, were markedly different thus supporting the idea that it was perhaps the edge of the settlement. A large number of shallow, generally rounded, cuts appeared in both plan and section but none were found to contain any artefactual remains, their fills being either fine dark silts or else brown silt containing a high proportion of rounded flint pebbles. Only one feature, [21], was obvious in its function. This shallow, rounded cut contained the lower half of a coarseware jar containing burnt material [17] including presumed human bone fragments and an unidentified iron object. This was the plough damaged remains of an urned cremation which, in the light of discoveries discussed below, would appear to have been an outlier relating to the known Roman cremation cemetery in the vicinity of the pump house precinct at Slip End.

While little else was uncovered in the western half of Area A, a coin and a brooch both of copper alloy and Roman in date, were recovered during the stripping of the subsoil. These were probably accidental losses on the periphery of the settlement, perhaps in a field or fallow land between the occupation site and cemetery ??? up in Area J.

Area J (TL 284371) would seem to be a natural progression westward from Area A, with the outlying cremation of [17] giving way to the concentrated burials of a recognised cemetery. By and large the preservation of the archaeological remains within Area J was remarkable. The majority of the recovered vessels were complete or near complete, evidently beyond the range of the potentially damaging plough. The silt subsoil deposits within this area were seen to be remarkably deep. In places up to 2 metres of earth was removed prior to the emergence of the important archaeological layers. Such depth of topsoil deposits has undoubtedly proved to be the factor that has led to the superb preservation of these artefact forms.

The full excavation of an area of only 100 square metres yielded a total of fifty-two cremation assemblages together with ten inhumations. In actuality the cremations were confined to one half of the site, approximately 50 square metres, of which a third was found to be subject to fairly recent machine truncation. Therefore an average density of one cremation per 0.64 m<sup>2</sup> area may be estimated.

The truncation was in the form of a series of three machine scoops, two of which were straight trenches of one bucket width, and the other a wide delving into the chalk, presumably dug for some reason during the construction of the pumping station in the 1960s. They disturbed a number of the cremations but not the inhumations which survived in their deeper cuts. Using the estimated cremation density discussed above it is possible to suggest that as many as twenty-six such burial assemblages may have been destroyed.

The surviving cremations displayed a surprisingly wide range of variation (Appendix 1). Both urned and unurned burials were located, the majority in round cuts. Several of the cremation features contained evidence of wooden or basketry linings. The cremation assemblages were largely placed within rounded cuts which bottomed onto, or cut slightly into, the natural chalk. It can be estimated that they would have been as much as 0.60 m below the Roman ground surface. Each cremation assemblage consisted of a range of vessels numbering from one to five. Essentially, they comprised cremated human remains with several ancillary vessels placed around it. The most common ancillary vessels were terra sigillata (samian) dishes and bowls together with small flagons and beakers. Occasionally other vessel forms were encountered including two styles of folded beaker and a range of jars. Interestingly variations existed, with the discovery of burials displaying only a single, large vessel [196] or features which contained more than a single primary vessel for the cremated remains [173]. It is possible to infer that the Roman cremation burial included ritual offerings and libations which were deposited in these ancillary vessels. On excavation some of the dishes were found to contain animal bone fragments, perhaps the remains of an offering of food and some flagons contained residues which will be analysed in due course. One such flagon emitted a distinctively unpleasant odour (rotten fish smell) when its contents were exposed to the air. It is possible that the vessel contained a concentrated sauce (*liquamen?*) or wine which was considered desirably enough to accompany the individual to the afterlife.

One significant aspect of these assemblage was the occurrence of terra sigillata or samian ware, a high status and expensive range of ceramic tableware made in Gaul and imported into Britain. A total of twenty-two of these distinctive, glossy red-coated vessels were recovered from stratified deposits, displaying a limited range of forms, predominantly Dr 33, Dr 36, Dr 18 and Dr 31 (Appendix 2). Significantly, no assemblage contained more than one samian item. The majority were undecorated shallow bowls together with some deeper bowls and a cup. It is interesting to note that all of the forms present were prevalent during the second century AD. This chronology could be refined further, however, if the vessels possessed the ??? addition of the potter's signature. A common feature of samian is that it is often stamped with the mould-maker's or potter's name. As the dates of when these craftsmen were at work is known, it is possible to date their products with some accuracy. Until specialist opinions are

sought only three of the nineteen stamped vessels can be identified, two belonging to the period 140-160 AD and the third to 165-200 AD. They are not only useful as dating evidence but as further indicators of funerary practice for it seems that it was a desirable inclusion as a grave good possibly because of its relative expensiveness. It has been suggested that samian often had a long life, perhaps being coveted as a decorative rather than a functional item, or even as an heirloom. Two vessels, from assemblages [280] and [344], had been repaired, one with holes drilled through the sherds and fastened with lead wire and both displaying black resin glue along the broken edges. This would seem to support the idea that the vessels were prized possessions.

Obversely, there is evidence to suggest that the samian vessels were deliberately broken on deposition. They tend to have been placed in the grave in one of two positions: as a lid for the cremation urn or slipped down between the side of the cut and the primary urn on its edge. It is probable that the lids were deposited complete and subsequently broken. However, those placed at the side of the cremation urns were almost always incomplete. In most cases, pieces of the vessels were actually missing or placed on the opposite side of the urn. The latter action could not have occurred once the grave had been backfilled and sealed, therefore it seems that it was a deliberate act and presumably part of the burial rite.

One of the more interesting assemblages was context [210]. This consisted of an earthenware jar (in Fabric 23), a samian dish (form Dr. 18/31) and an orange flagon of Fabric 22 or possibly Fabric 47 variety. The samian dish in this ??? had been placed over the opening, though broken, still in place. On its excavation the urn was found to be complete and sealed by the dish. Inside were the large fragments of partially burnt human bone with pieces of skull and long bones visible. An interesting fact was that these remains had evidently been cleaned before being placed in the urn.

Three of the four obviously square cuts were found to contain remains of carbonised wood indicating the presence of some form of lining to these graves in which the cremations were deposited. Cuts [219], [257] and [345] all appeared to have contained wooden boards as a form of shuttering up against their sides for no traces were found above or below the cremations. Another form of lining was noted in cut [348] where what appeared to be traces of carbonised basketry surrounded an unurned cremation were observed. With the absence of an urn to contain the burnt remains it seems probable that such a bag or basket would have been used.

On the whole, the cremations were well spaced with only occasional intercutting. This indicates that the majority, at least, were broadly contemporary though the spatial distribution and grouping of the burials is difficult and perhaps meaningless given the small area of the total cemetery excavated as Area J. However, the cremations did appear to display a definite limit in their extent both to the south and east, and it may be that the south-east corner of the cremation phase of the cemetery was located.

As regards the inhumation content of the cemetery, it seems to have been of a lesser density and perhaps spread over a larger area than the cremations. A total of ten inhumations were found within Area J which, like the cremations, displayed wide variation. Eight of the ten grave cuts were of roughly the same north-west/south-east orientation and of similar depth. These may be seen to form three ranks of graves which ran east-west especially if a possible, though unexcavated, grave found along the eastern limit of Area J is taken into account.

However, this apparently regular layout of the inhumation cemetery is confused by the differing attitudes of the inhumations they contain. Four of the eight lay with their heads to the west, and four to the east, apparently at random across the ranks of graves. This was not the only variation for two were prone (face-down) ([333] and [331]), one crouched ([378]) and the rest supine (face-up) ([204], [226], [375], [220] and [314]). Three of this possible group were accompanied by grave-goods: [220] contained a samian bowl with decorated rim, [226] a small black biconical vessel and [378] a flagon and a decorated copper alloy pin.

The remaining two inhumations did not fit the patterns discussed above. [212] was the flexed prone remains of an adolescent, orientated north-east/south-west with the head at the southern end. Deposited in a very small, shallow cut the skeleton had its hands behind its back and its legs bent at the knee pressing against the end of the cut. [322] was a flexed prone adult in an east-west oriented cut with its head at the east end. It was overlain by grave cut [314], the only such intersection, and so was possibly earlier than all of the eight discussed above. It was also a significantly deeper grave and contained a large fragment of a saddle quernstone by the head of its occupant. Although no more dating evidence was recovered this appears to be the earliest burial on the site possibly even being late Iron Age in date.

The difficult aspect of analysis of the cemetery is that of the relationship between cremations and inhumations. Mixed cemeteries were common in the Roman period, but five of the inhumations were stratigraphically below cremations while this sequence was not seen to be reversed in any instance. It may be seen that the remaining five were outside or on the very edge of the apparent limit of the cremation cemetery and not deliberately respected as initially thought. It is possible that the cemetery has two major phases, firstly of inhumation and later of cremation.

## Area B

Area B (GR TL 295380) was located just to the south of the A505, opposite Odsey House and Lodge, and lay within NHDC Area of Archaeological Importance No. 37. Approximately 50 × 15 m, this section of the pipeline easement was stripped down to the natural chalk, rather than only to the subsoil, in order to locate and expose a system of sinuous triple ditches (SMR No. 2902) which had previously been identified from aerial photographs. Three main ditches, [04], [07] and [10], were found running roughly north-south and were interpreted as being those visible from the air. However, excavation showed them to be very shallow, surviving to a maximum depth of only 0.2 m, which can only be accounted for by the amount of plough truncation. One can hypothesise that they may have been in excess of 0.8 m deep if one includes the upcast banks. In addition to the three ditches there were more minor linear features which were not visible on the photographs, such as [12] to the west and [02], a cut running east-west with possible small, fragmentary remains of gullies running both parallel with and at right angles to it. Their function is uncertain though they may be plough marks or possibly trackways. It was very difficult to identify relationships between intersecting features as they all contained similar fills, a light brown highly calcareous silt although some fills did contain small patches of apparently burnt clay and charcoal flecks. Sections through [02], [04] and [10] revealed very irregular profiles to the ditches. [02] contained a recut [06] and all had undulating sides and bases suggesting further, possibly multiple, recuts.

No dating evidence was collected from any of the features so their suggested prehistoric origin remains unproven.

## Area C

Area C was essentially the chance find of a large feature exposed in the sections of the pipe trench during routing monitoring. It was located along the hedge line behind the Precision Engineering Works near Bewlay House (GR TL 291373).

Investigation revealed it to be a 2 m wide linear ditch cut 0.8 m down into the natural chalk. The cut, [138], had sides sloping at approximately 45 degrees down to a flat bottom and contained three fills, [137], [139] and [140], all slightly clayish calcareous silts with varying proportions of chalk inclusions. None of these yielded any finds and layers [137] and [139] were disturbed by animal burrowing.

This feature was probably one of a number of presumed prehistoric ditches identified from the aerial photographs of this vicinity (SMR No. 2599). They are shown running across the field to the south along a roughly north-south orientation although traces of them fade out toward the hedge line. [138] appears to be in the right location and on the same alignment.

## Area D

Area D was located some 260 m to the north-east of Area C and just east of the road to Sandon from the A505 (GR TL 293376).

The machining of the pipe trench exposed two features in the natural chalk. The cuts, [142] and [144], appeared to be regular and rounded in section with similar fills of reddish brown, slightly sandy calcareous silt. Limited excavation revealed that both were actually very irregular with undulating bases and sides suggestive of tree root holes. However, fill [143] yielded two sherds of provisionally Roman pottery and a small iron object.

The two features were approximately 8.0 m apart with three small stakehole-like features in between.

## Area E

These two features were again observed in the pipe trench section during routine monitoring. They were located on the south side of the A505 along a stretch roughly opposite Odsey Corner and the Shell filling station (TL 301384).

Approximately 200 m apart, they appeared to be rounded in plan with wide U-shaped profiles, the larger part of them surviving to the north of the pipe trench. Cut [146] was 1.00 m wide and 0.40 m deep, whereas [148] was 1.90 m by 0.40 m. Both contained similar dark brown calcareous silts with chalk patches and lenses. No finds were collected but it appears that these features were pits of unknown function, possibly of prehistoric date.

Approximately 250 m south-west along the pipe trench, opposite Odsey Corner, one or possibly two linear features were observed following the topsoil-strip. Unfortunately these were not investigated before the subsequent machine trench was backfilled. This was probably the presumed prehistoric ditch (SMR No. 2900) identified from aerial photographs.

## Area F

Just to the south-west of the 'Green Fields' petrol station close to Lower Coombe Farm (TL 303386) the pipe trench revealed a sequence of soil layers and cut features, apparently within the chalk, extending over 100 m. A thin, 0.02 m, layer of reddish-brown calcareous silt ran along either section approximately 0.6 m below the ground surface. From this, small V-shaped features filled with the same material cut down into the natural chalk below. These features, numbering in the hundreds, varied in size from a few centimetres in length and maximum width, to 0.60 m by 0.5 m. Their density in the sections also varied, generally occurring every 3-4 m but sometimes virtually every 1.0 m. The layer and tapering features were all sealed by a deposit of apparently clean and solid chalk averaging a thickness of 0.12 m.

Above this was another, this time intermittent, thin band of reddish brown chalky silt 0.04 m thick overlain by a further deposit of clean, solid-looking chalk totalling 0.187 m. This occurred below the subsoil. Although the V-shaped features looked like stake-holes cut through a prehistoric land surface it is likely that they were the product of a much earlier phase of vegetation between marine incursions in some geological age as the chalk bands appear to be too clean, solid and massive to be redeposited.

## Area G

Area G covered a number of parallel linear features which were evident in the subsoil following the topsoil strip. These were located behind the 'Green Fields' petrol station (TL: 305386) and in Archaeological Area of Importance No. 43. Two such features were known from aerial photographs and interpreted as being associated with the approach to an 18th century racecourse nearby.

A total of five features were observed on the ground and were examined in section. Only two were found to be worth recording in any detail, no doubt those which appear on the aerial photographs. [152] was a 4.0 m wide cut, stepped on its eastern side down to a U-shaped profile. It contained three fills: the lowest, [154], was a light brown calcareous silt, [153] a thin deposit of grey charcoal-rich calcareous silt and the highest, [151], another brown calcareous silt. This sequence of silting was repeated in the other major cut, [160], which was actually comprised of two cuts, both of which contained light brown silts overlain by thin charcoal-silt deposits below a single levelling brown chalky silt fill, [155].

Between these linear cuts were a pair of shallow grooves in the surface of the chalk, each 0.30 m wide and approximately 1.80 m apart. To the east of [160]/[161] was another shallow ditch or gully 0.50 m wide and a very shallow presumed ditch over 4.0 m wide. All five of the features shares the same north-south orientation and would seem to be closely associated. Only fill [51] yielded dateable evidence in the form of a single fragment of post-medieval glass.

Cuts [152] and [160]/[161] may be interpreted as flanking ditches of an approach to the 18th century racecourse with the grooves between them wheel ruts, the only remains of a trackway to survive. The lower fills of the two ditches seem to be the product of natural silting and the charcoal-rich bands ([153], [156] and [157]) a single act of deposition, perhaps the burning of stubble in the surrounding fields.

## Area H

This area covered the two features found in the pipe trench section between the driveways leading to The Jockey Cottages and Thrift Farm through the field known as 'The Thrift' (TL 317393). Revealed as wide irregular profiles, the cuts [165] and [168] each contained a single fill of brown calcareous silt. Limited excavation established that they were roughly circular in plan and possibly pits although no diagnostic finds were recovered.

## Area K

Located to the west of the roundabout where the A505 meets the Baldock Road entering Royston, Area K (GR TL 332402) was a length of pipe trench running along the verge only 1.0 m from the road. Being located between the road and a drainage ditch no easement stripping was undertaken so features were not located in plan, only in section as exposed in the pipe trench.

As mentioned in the introduction, the location of 'The Mile Ditches' was known, and the line of the parallel triple ditches is distinct as linear bands of darker and thicker grass running down the slope of the golf course on Therfield Heath toward the road. A section of them had already been excavated when the road was widened into a dual carriageway but no dating evidence found.

All three ditches were identified in the sections, of which the north facing section was recorded. Although the construction of the road and a number of drains running into the ditch had caused much disturbance along the verge, only small portions of ditches [424] and [427] had been truncated. Both were of similar size and shape, c 1.60 m wide and in excess of 1.0 m deep, although some of their upper portions were probably removed by the plough and more recently by roadworks and ditch digging. Their steep-sided

V-shaped cuts both contained two fills, the upper of each being a very loose, light brown calcareous silt containing 10-20% chalk fragments. The lower fills were much lighter in colour being approximately 50% chalk in calcareous silt matrices. Ditch cut [430] was much larger, 2.65 m wide and in excess of an estimated 1.2 m deep. It also had a V-shaped cross-section, though with slightly less steep sides, and two fills much the same as the others. All were heavily disturbed by roots and rabbit warrens.

It appears that the three ditches were regularly spaced with a distance of roughly 7.0 m between [424] and [427] and 7.30 m between the latter and [430]. While a small number of possible struck flints were collected from the machined upcast in the vicinity of each ditch, no artefactual evidence was recovered from the stratified fills in section. It is probable that they originally had upcast banks on one or more sides to accentuate their depth (which have since been ploughed away) and seem to have functioned as a major prehistoric land boundary.

## 4 Conclusions

The pipeline route provided an excellent opportunity to examine a cross-section through a very important prehistoric landscape. The Archaeology Section's monitoring, excavation and recording has preserved a record of what otherwise would have been damaged or destroyed by the pipeline. It has provided a valuable insight into the location, nature and density of archaeological remains across this part of North Hertfordshire.

The information gathered has enhanced our knowledge of the prehistoric sites which flank the Icknield Way. The burial mounds which proliferate amidst this undulating landscape are only part of a wider picture of territorial boundaries, enclosures and settlement indicated by this recent work. The Icknield Way is perhaps the most dominant feature, dictating the orientation of many of the ditches revealed in the pipeline route.

This importance appears to remain true in the Roman period which saw the continued use of the route between Wessex and East Anglia. The occupation remains revealed in Trench A were a small part of a roadside settlement no doubt involved in farming the surrounding land and acting as a satellite of the Roman town on the site of modern Baldock. Further analysis of the artefacts collected from the ditches which extend under the road and can be traced across the main area of settlement will hopefully give an insight into its date and phasing.

The cemetery site at Slip End is in many ways the most important discovery of the project. Closely associated with the settlement, that analysis of the pottery and of the manner in which the dead were disposed of will yield information regarding the wealth and beliefs of the Romano-British population which lived here as well as provide more dating evidence of their occupation.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Area J cremations

Context	Description
[162]	Truncated assemblage. 2 vessels in cut [170]: shell tempered jar (Fabric 4) including cremation and flagon (Fabric 20).
[163]	Truncated assemblage. ?5 vessels in cut [237]: sand-tempered decorated jar (Fabric 12) including cremation, 2 bowls (or small jars, Fabric 22) and 2 fragmentary pots (Fabric 14 and Fabric 20 flagons?). Glass bead SF <22>.
[172]	Truncated assemblage. 2 vessels in cut [208]: globular jar (Fabric 11) and folded beaker fragments (Fabric 20). Probably part of assemblage [201].
[173]	5 vessels in cut [216]: 2 coarseware jars (1 sand tempered (Fabric 8) and 1 shell tempered (Fabric 4)), both including cremations, small greyware carinated jar (Fabric 11), flagon (Fabric 20) and samian Dr. 18/31R dish.
[174]	Truncated assemblage. 1 vessel in cut [191]: 1 vessel, a sand tempered greyware jar (Fabric 11) including cremation.
[175]	Truncated assemblage? 3 vessels: a shell tempered jar (Fabric 4) including cremation, flagon (Fabric 20) and samian Dr. 18/31 dish.
[176]	4 vessels in cut [188]: a large sand tempered globular greyware jar (Fabric 11) including cremation, small black/grey globular beaker, samian dish and fragments of a red ware vessel.

- [177] 4 vessels in cut [184]: a sand tempered jar (Fabric 12) including cremation, dimpled flagon (Fabric 20), samian Dr. 18/31 dish and folded beaker (whole and large colour coated with two horizontal stripe decoration (Fabric CC4)).
- [178] 1 vessel in cut [185]: a very large pink shell tempered coarseware storage jar (Fabric 4) including cremation.
- [179] 3 vessels in cut [194]: a shell tempered grain jar (Fabric 4) including cremation, samian bowl and small flagon (Fabric 20).
- [180] 3 vessels in cut [181]: a large dark grey (shell tempered?) coarseware cordoned jar including cremation, samian Dr 18/31 dish and flagon (Fabric 20).
- [186] 4 vessels in cut [198]: a sand tempered globular coarseware jar (Fabric 2?) including cremation, flagon (Fabric 20), folded beaker (Fabric 23?) and samian ?dish.
- [196] 1 vessel in cut [200]: a pinkish-grey shell tempered globular coarseware jar (Fabric 4) including cremation.
- [201] 1 vessel in cut [202]: a shell tempered coarseware jar (Fabric 4) including cremation, Fe nail SF <25>. Assemblage [172] probably belongs with this vessel.
- [210] 3 vessels in cut [211]: a globular earthenware storage jar (Fabric 23?) including cremation, samian dish and orange flagon (Fabric 22).
- [217] 2 vessels in 'shuttered' cut [219]: a black sand tempered globular jar (Fabric 38 or 39?) including cremation and flagon (Fabric 20).
- [223] 3 vessels in cut [225]: a large sand tempered globular coarseware storage jar, decorated samian Dr. 36 dish and small greyware globular beaker (Fabric 11?).
- [229] 2 vessels in cut [231]: a sandy/yellow globular coarseware necked jar (Fabric 20) including cremation and small ?black-burnished beaker.
- [239] 2 vessels in cut [240]: a large jar (Fabric 22) including cremation with flagon (Fabric 22) inside it.
- [242] Machine truncated assemblage. 1 vessel in cut [234]: a shell tempered coarseware jar (Fabric 4) including cremation.
- [244] Machine truncated assemblage. 3 vessels in cut [252]: a shell tempered globular coarseware jar (Fabric 8) including cremation, second coarseware jar (Fabric 3) and small jar (Fabric 11).
- [246] 3 vessels in cut [247]: a shell tempered coarseware storage jar (Fabric 4) including cremations, very large squat globular flagon (Fabric 22) and samian Dr. 31R bowl.
- [249] 2 vessels in cut [250]: a shell tempered coarseware jar (Fabric 4) including cremation and small jar (Fabric 11).
- [254] 1 vessel in cut [255]: a grey sand tempered jar (Fabric 11) including cremation.
- [257] 1 vessel in 'shuttered' cut [253]: a decorated pinkish-grey shell tempered coarseware jar (Fabric 4) including cremation. 2 Fe nails SFs <29> and <30>.
- [260] 2 vessels in cut [261]: a decorated shell tempered storage jar (Fabric 8?) including cremation and samian Dr. 18/31 dish.
- [265] 3 vessels in cut [266]: a pink and grey shell tempered coarseware jar (Fabric 4) including cremation, flagon (Fabric 20) and samian dish inside the urn.
- [268] 3 vessels in cut [269]: decorated sand tempered jar (Fabric 12?) including cremation, flagon (Fabric 22 or 23) and earthenware dish (Fabric 23) imitating Dr. 18.
- [271] Truncated assemblage. ?3 vessels in cut [272]: a decorated and burnished sand-tempered storage jar (Fabric 8) including cremation, decorated samian Dr. 36 dish and flagon (Fabric 20).
- [274] 3 vessels in cut [275]: a large sand tempered cordoned jar including cremation, flagon (Fabric 20) and samian Dr. 18/31 dish. Fe nail SF <33>.
- [277] 2 vessels in cut [278]: a large decorated dark sand tempered storage jar (Fabric 8) including cremation and small black-burnished bottle (Fabric 39).
- [280] 4 vessels in cut [281]: a decorated globular sand tempered jar (Fabric 12?) including cremation, repaired samian Dr. 18 dish, globular flagon (Fabric 22 or 23) and small black decorated beaker (Fabric 11).

- [283] 2 vessels in cut [284]: an orange-buff sand tempered coarseware cordoned jar including cremation and cream sand tempered flagon (Fabric 20).
- [286] Truncated assemblage. 2 vessels in cut [287]: a large shell tempered coarseware jar including cremation and small grey sand tempered pot (Fabric 11).
- [289] 3 vessels in cut [290]: a blue-grey sand tempered jar (Fabric 12?) including cremation, samian Dr. 18/31 dish and flagon (Fabric 20).
- [292] 3 vessels in cut [293]: a black sand tempered coarseware cordoned jar (Fabric 12?) including cremation, samian Dr. 18/31 dish and flagon (Fabric 20).
- [295] 1 vessel in cut [296]: a large sand tempered coarseware jar (Fabric 11) including cremation.
- [298] 1 vessel in cut [299]: a large sand tempered black-burnished jar (Fabric 39) including cremation.
- [301] 3 vessels in cut [305]: a decorated sand tempered cordoned jar (Fabric 8) including cremation, large flagon (Fabric 47) and samian Dr. 31 bowl. Hobnails SF <37>.
- [302] 2 vessels in cut [307]: a large shell tempered coarseware jar (Fabric 4) including cremation and samian Dr. 18 dish.
- [303] 2 vessels in cut [309]: a large shell tempered globular coarseware storage jar (Fabric 4) including cremation and flagon (Fabric 20).
- [311] 2 vessels in cut [312]: a sand tempered jar (Fabric 8?) including cremation and samian Dr. 33 cup. 50 Fe hobnails SF <32>.
- [317] Truncated assemblage. 1 vessel in cut [318]: a sand tempered jar (Fabric 8) including cremation.
- [319] Unurned cremation in cut [320].
- [344] 3 vessels in 'shuttered' cut [345]: a sand tempered coarseware storage vessel (Fabric 8?) including cremation, repaired samian Dr. 18 dish and flagon (Fabric 16).
- [352] Unurned cremation in ?lined cut [348]. 3 Fe nails SFs <35>, <36> and <38>.
- [353] 3 vessels in cut [355]: a shell tempered globular coarseware jar (Fabric 8?) including cremation, flagon (Fabric 5) and samian Dr. 18/31 dish.
- [357] 2 vessels in cut [358]: a decorated sand tempered jar (Fabric 8?) including cremation and flagon (Fabric 15).
- [360] 2 vessels in cut [361]: a large sand tempered coarseware storage jar including cremation and small brown globular beaker (Fabric 5?).
- [363] 4 vessels in cut [364]: a large globular coarseware jar (Fabric 8) including cremation, flagon (Fabric 20), black dish (Fabric 11 or 49?) and small black globular beaker (Fabric 10).
- [366] 2 vessels in cut [367]: a sand tempered black-burnished storage jar including cremation and flagon (Fabric 47).
- [369] Truncated assemblage. ?1 vessel in cut [370]: a coarseware sherd and charcoal.
- [372] Truncated assemblage. 2 vessels in cut [373]: a sand tempered coarseware jar (Fabric 4), sand tempered sherds (Fabric 11) and cremated bone.

## Appendix 2: Samian ware from Area J cemetery (LVP-2 '91)

Context	Form	Description	Stamp
[173]	Dr. 18/31R dish		<b>PRIMANIM</b>
[175]	Dr. 18 dish	Disturbed cremation	<b>__ICA.IFC</b>
[176]	Dr. 18 dish		<b>MIFCAT or MIRGAT</b>
[177]	Dr. 18/31 dish	Plain.	<b>*AELIANIM</b>
[179]	Dr. 18 dish		<b>CERIALI.MA</b>
[180]	Dr. 18/31 dish		<b>MA__IA.M</b>
[186]	Dr. 18? Dish	Still in jar.	<b>X</b>
[210]	Dr. ? platter		<b>SACRIM.S.M</b>

[220]	Dr. 17 dish	Inhumation grave good SF <28>. Barbotine decoration	
[223]	Dr. 36 bowl	Barbotine decoration	
[246]	Dr. 31R bowl		Undeciphered
[260]	Dr. 36 bowl		<b>CLEMENS</b>
[265]?	Dr. 17 dish	Still in jar?	
[271]	Dr. 36 bowl	Barbotine decoration	
[274]	Dr. 18/31 dish		<b>MOXXIM</b>
[280]	Dr. 18/31 dish	Repaired	<<<<<<<<<
[289]	Dr. 18/31 dish		<b>F.MOXI.M</b>
[292]	Dr. 18/31 dish		<b>GONDI.M</b>
[301]	Dr. 36 bowl		Undeciphered
[302]	Dr. 18/31 dish		<b>VI_.M</b>
[311]	Dr. 33 cup		Undeciphered
[344]	Dr. 18 dish	Repaired	<b>SACROIMA</b>
[353]	Dr. 18/31 dish		Undeciphered
U/S	Dr. 18/31 dish		<b>PATER.F</b>

### Appendix 3: LVP-2 '91 Area J inhumations

Context	Description
[204]	Extended supine adult in cut [206]. Head at east end.
[212]	Flexed prone adolescent in cut [214]. Head at south end.
[220]	Extended supine adult in cut [221]. Head at east end. Grave good: samian dish SF <31>.
[226]	Extended supine adult in cut [228]. Head at east end. Grave good: small black pot SF <28>.
[314]	Truncated, extended supine adult in cut [315]. Head at west end.
[322]	Truncated, flexed prone adult ?male in cut [323]. Head at east end. Grave good: saddle quern fragment SG <34>.
[331]	Extended prone adult in cut [332]. Head at west end.
[338]	Extended supine adult in cut [339]. Head at west end.
[375]	Extended supine adult in cut [376]. Head at west end.
[378]	Crouched adult on right side in cut [379]. Head at west end. Grave goods: decorated copper alloy pin SF <43> and flagon (Fabric 22) SF <42>.