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The Vale and Ridgeway Project: Excavations at Marcham/Frilford 2008: interim report

Introduction to the Vale and Ridgeway Project

The background to the project and site has been detailed in the previous seven interim reports in *South Midlands Archaeology* (Lock and Gosden 2002; Lock and Gosden 2003; Lock et al. 2004; Gosden and Lock 2005; Lock and Gosden 2006; Kamash et al. 2007; Kamash et al. 2008), as well as on the project web site:

http://www.arch.ox.ac.uk/research/research_projects/marcham

As in previous years the excavation acts as a training excavation, and is committed to education in the widest sense. This season's excavation saw participants from across the world including Poland, USA, Portugal and Kenya as well as from a selection of British schools and universities. Education Officers were on-site throughout the month of excavation and gave tours to many visitors including groups from local schools and community organizations. Various activities were organized for National Archaeology Day when over 1000 people visited the site.

The 2008 Excavation Season

Excavations this year were spread across Trendles Field and the Noah's Ark garden. In Trendles Field, which has been the focus of our excavations until this year, several trenches were continued from the previous season (MF08: trenches 14, 21, 29, 33 and 36) [Fig. 1]. The aims of the season included: completing the excavation of the large pit in trench 14 and of the western entrance to the semi-amphitheatre (trench 29); continued exploration of the shrine in trench 36, in particular its relationship to the Iron Age pits in the vicinity and to trace the southern continuation of the semi-amphitheatre drain with a view to finding where it ended (trenches 21 and 33). As last year, bad weather and a high water table prevented excavation inside the arena of the semi-amphitheatre. In addition, a new trench was excavated to investigate further the Iron Age occupation at the eastern end of the field (MFP08: trench 2).

This was the first year of excavations inside the Scheduled Ancient Monument (OX211, Scheduled Monument Consent HSD 9/2/9919) in the Noah's Ark Inn Garden, where Bradford and Goodchild (1939) first excavated the temple site. Three trenches (MFNA08: trenches 1 to 3) were excavated in the scheduled area to investigate the date and character of the barrel-shaped, ditched enclosure, including several other curvilinear features visible on the geophysical plot and to explore the southern wall of the *temenos* and its relationship, if any such existed, with the ditched enclosure (trench 1) (Wintle 2007) [Fig. 2]. The geophysics also shows a linear feature running parallel to the enclosure ditch on its inside, possibly a palisade trench. Two further trenches were excavated outside of the scheduled area to the west to find

the continuation of the outer enclosure ditch (MFNA08: trenches 4 and 5); no definite archaeology was identified in either trench, though excavation is on-going in trench 5.

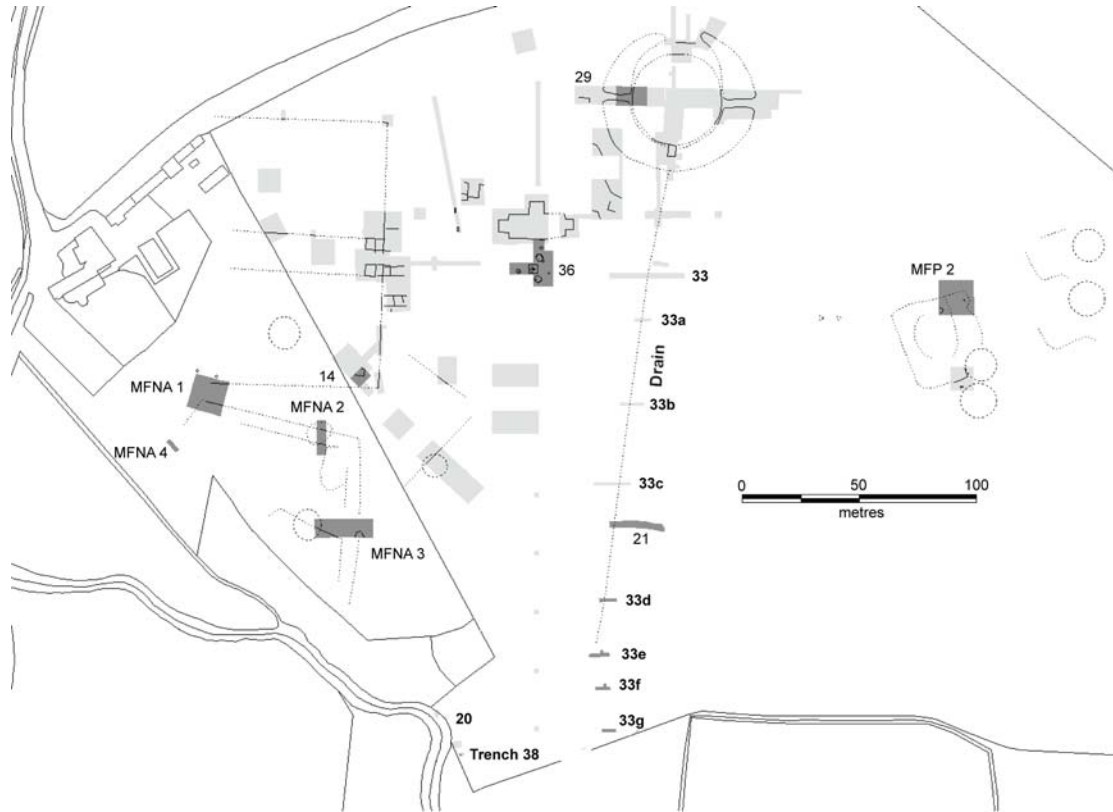


Fig. 1: Overall site plan showing the excavation areas and all trenches (those excavated in 2008 are indicated in darker grey).

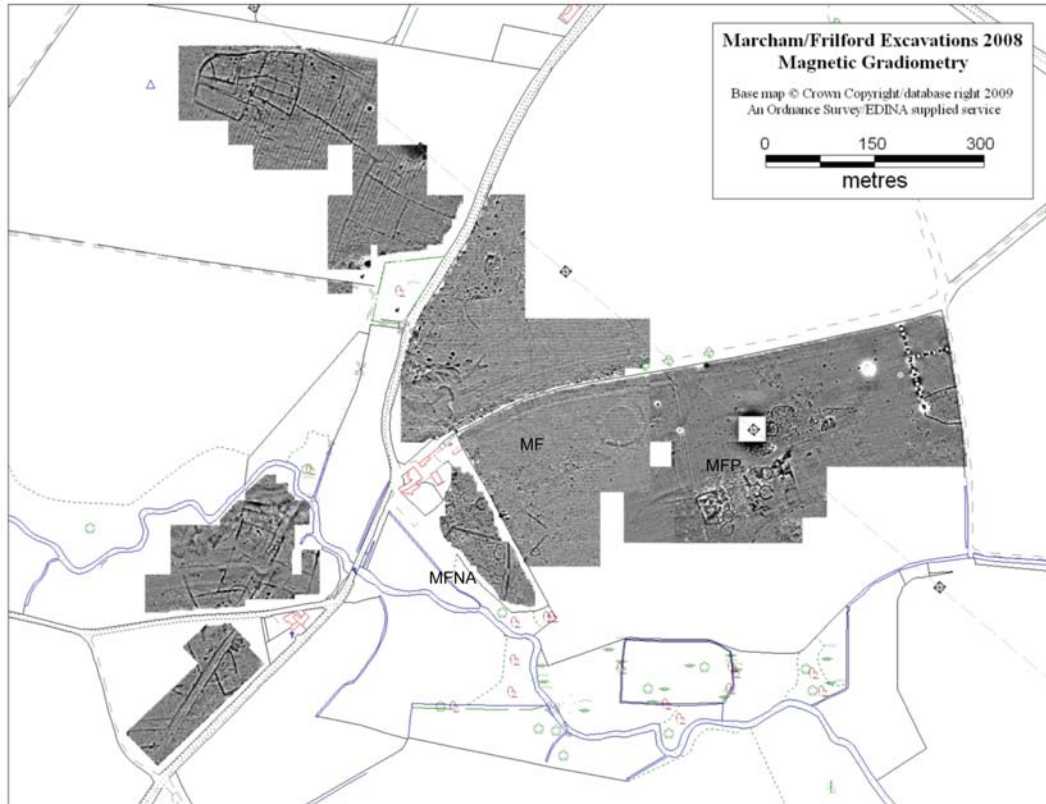


Fig. 2: Plan showing the areas subject to geophysical survey (undertaken by Tony Johnson (2001-2005) and William Wintle (2007-2008)). Excavations have been undertaken in the areas marked MFNA, MF and MFP.

Excavations inside the Noah's Ark Inn garden, Frilford (SAM OX211): MFNA08 Trenches 1-3 [Figs 3-5]

The excavations inside the Noah's Ark Inn garden this year revealed a long sequence of activity in the area. A series of ditches and pits seem to have pre-dated the ditched enclosure, suggesting activity from at least the Bronze Age. Residual finds of a leaf arrowhead and a thumbnail scraper from trench 1 may indicate even earlier activity. The ditched enclosure seems to have dated from the middle Iron Age. A large assemblage of early Roman pottery from the upper fills of the enclosure ditch in trench 1 suggested that it was still open into the early Roman period. Significantly, this pottery and other Roman finds, including coins and brooches, seem to pre-date the earliest suggested date for the construction of the main temple inside the *temenos*. Excavations in trench 1 are still on-going, which should reveal more about any relationship between the ditched enclosure and the construction and use of the *temenos*. Trenches 2 and 3 were completed this season and have been back-filled.

MFNA 08
Trench 1

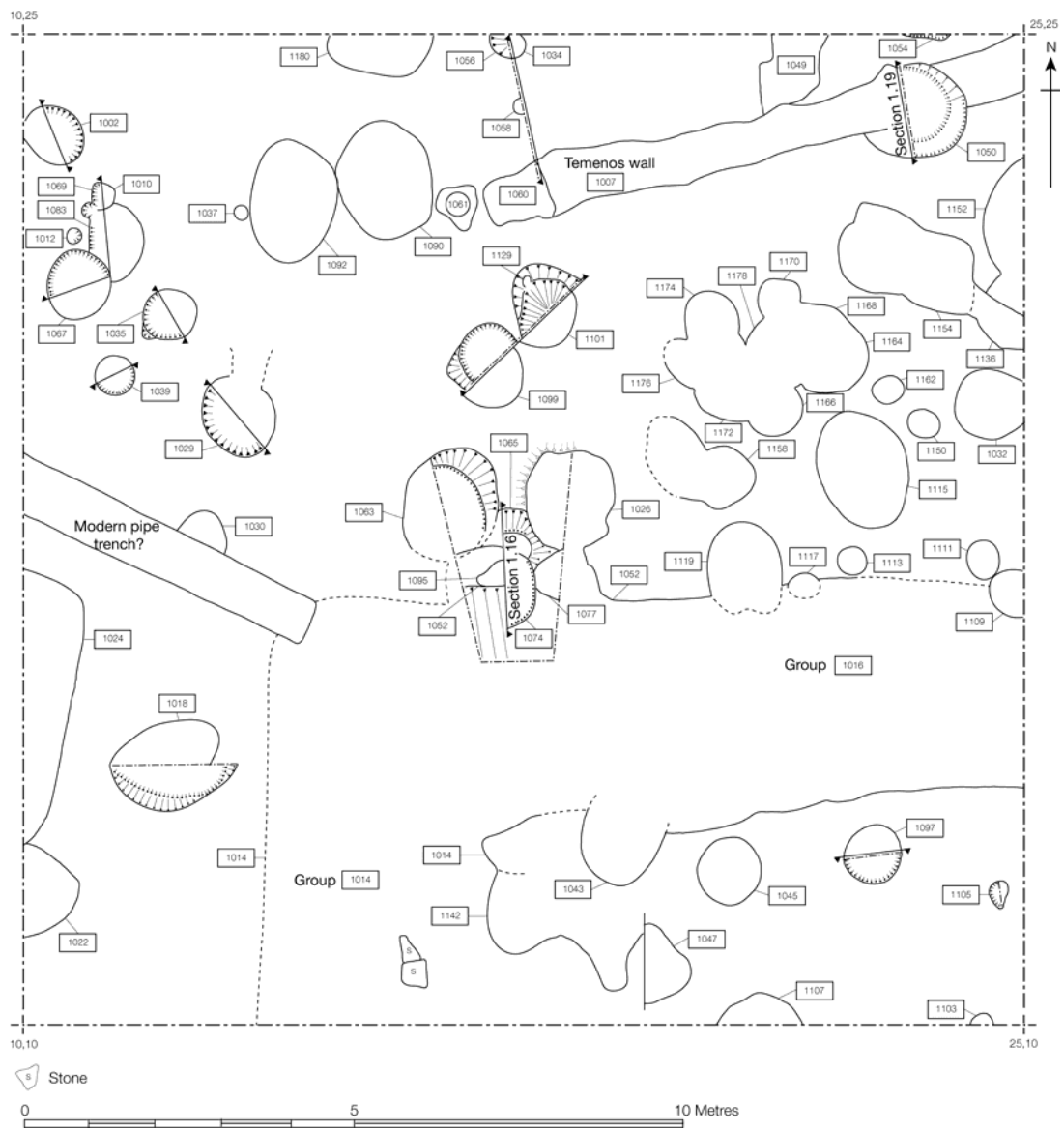


Fig. 3: Plan of MFNA trench 1 showing features excavated in 2008.

MFNA 08
Trench 2

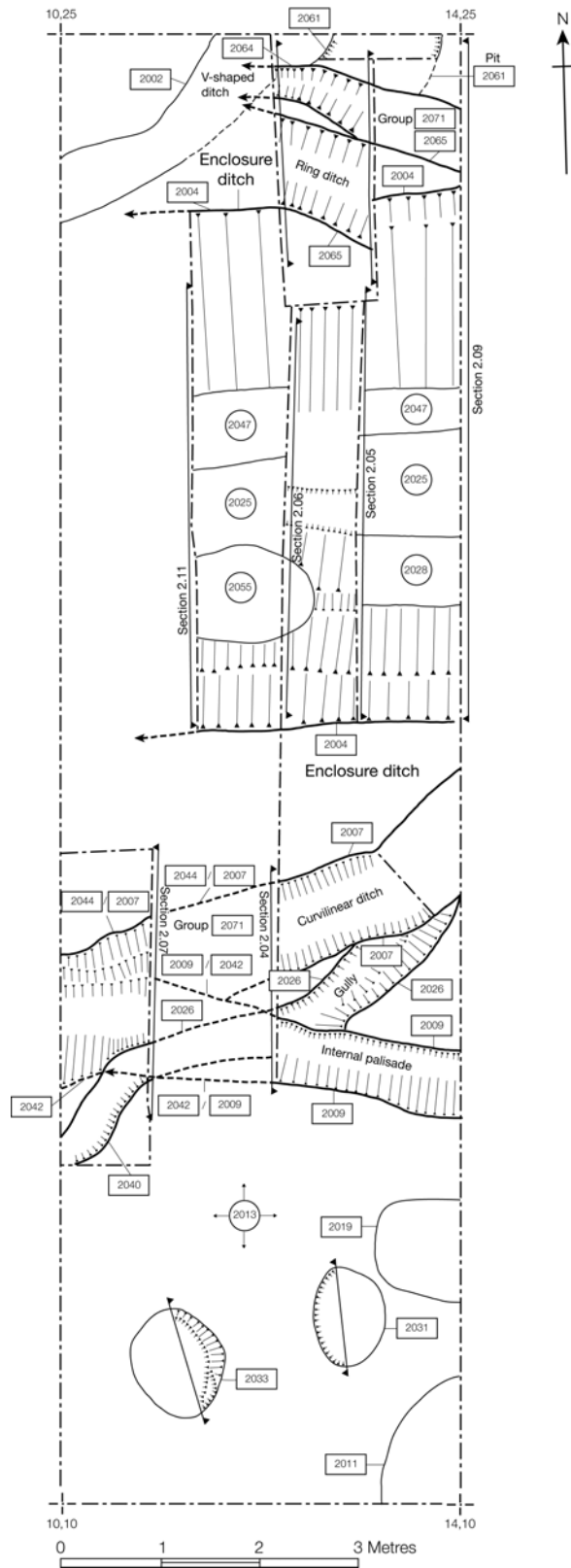


Fig. 4: Plan of MFNA trench 2.

MFNA 08
Trench 3

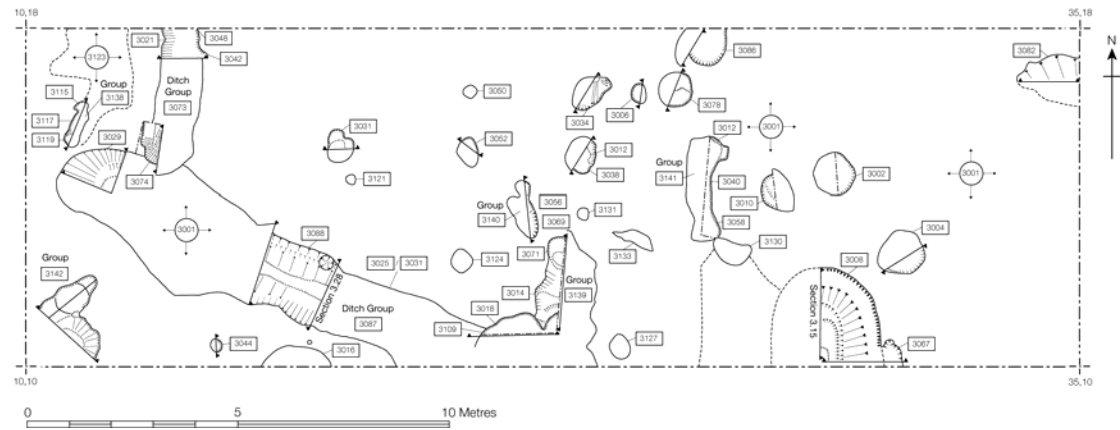


Fig. 5: Plan of MFNA trench 3.

Activity in the Noah's Ark Inn garden before the enclosure

One of the key aims of trench 2 was to investigate the relationship between the enclosure ditch, the palisade, and one of the curvilinear features that appear on the geophysical plot. Excavations revealed that the curvilinear feature (group 2071 [2007=2044=2065]) pre-dated both the enclosure ditch and the internal palisade [2009=2042 and 2004 respectively] [Figs 6-7]. Ditch group 2071, which had up to 3 fills, was 1.2 m to 1.5 m wide and 0.65 m to 1.0 m deep with steep sides and a flat base. It had an internal diameter of c. 7 m. The size of this ditch suggests that it was a ring ditch, rather than a roundhouse gully; this would also fit with its probable Bronze Age date.

MFNA 08
Trench 2
Section 2.13 (=2.05; 2.09; 2.12)

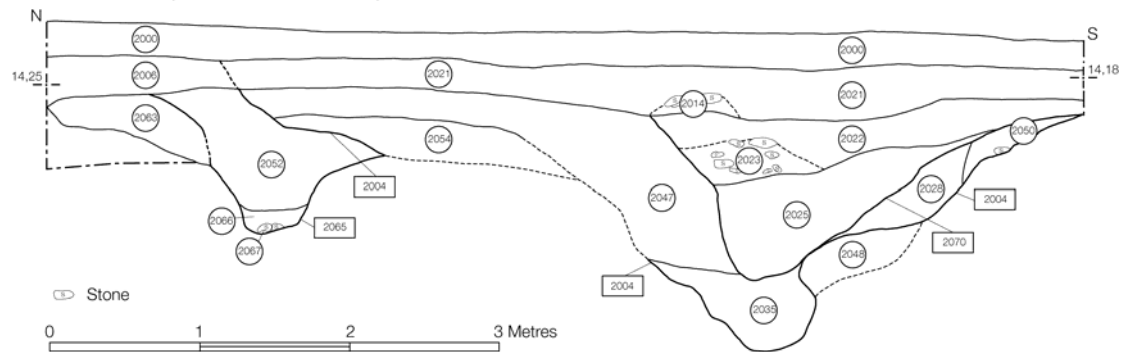


Fig. 6: East-facing section through the intercutting ditches in MFNA trench 2 (composite drawing of sections 2.05, 2.09 and 2.12).

MFNA 08
Trench 2
Section 2.07

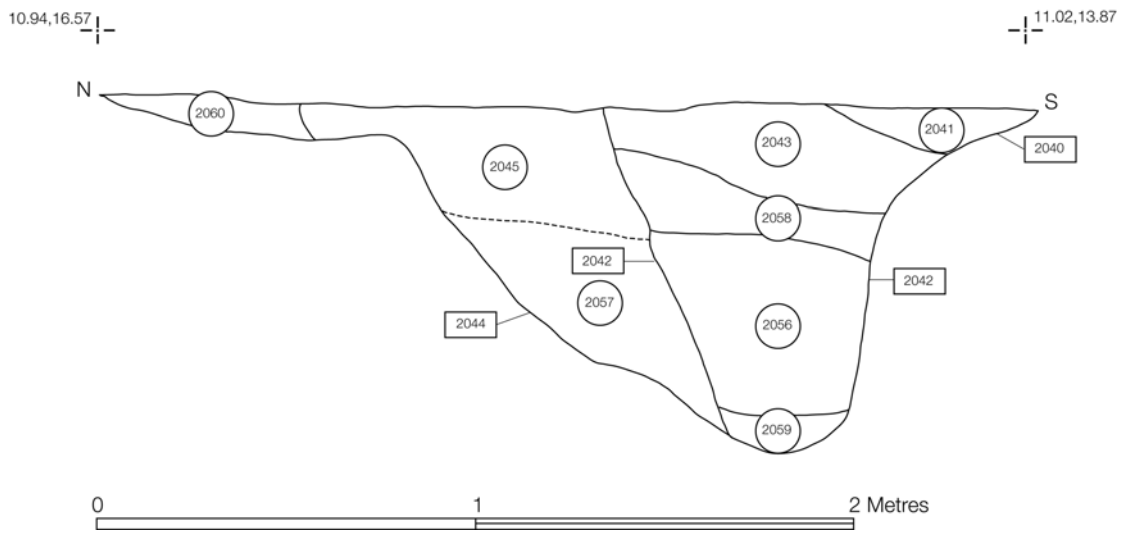


Fig. 7: West-facing section through intercutting ditches in MFNA trench 2.

Ditch group 2071 also cut two earlier features in the northern part of trench 2: pit 2061 and ditch 2064. Pit 2061, which was circular with vertical sides and a flat base, was 0.9 m in diameter and 0.6 m deep. It had two dark, charcoal-rich fills. This pit itself cut a v-shaped ditch 2064, which was 0.5 m wide and 0.4 m deep.

Further to the south in trench 3, a large ditch (group 3087 [3029=3088=3109]) may also have been earlier than the enclosure as it was cut by pit 3025 and penannular gully group 3073, which both appear to have contemporary with the enclosure. Ditch group 3087 ran on a northwest-southeast alignment through the centre of the trench and terminated near the north-western corner. Although the ditch does not appear to run further south-east on the geophysics, the south-eastern terminus of the ditch was not found inside the trench and seemed to run through pit 3018 under the southern baulk. The ditch was c. 2 m wide and 1.5 m deep [Fig. 8]. Its sides were badly eroded at the top, so much so that large pieces of bedrock had collapsed into the fill (eg 3013), which also accounts for its scalloped shape in plan. Towards the bottom it narrowed to 0.5 m and had vertical sides that broke into a flat base. The ditch had up to three fills, the primary of which (3112) was a light whitish grey clayish sand that may have been laid down in water. The ditch was subsequently re-cut [3099] as a much shallower ditch 0.9 m – 1.1 m wide and 0.3 m – 0.4 m deep with a concave base and gently sloping sides. It is possible that ditch group 3087 relates to the ditch complex excavated in Trendles Field (MF trenches 3, 4 and 12).

MFNA 08
Trench 3
Section 3.28

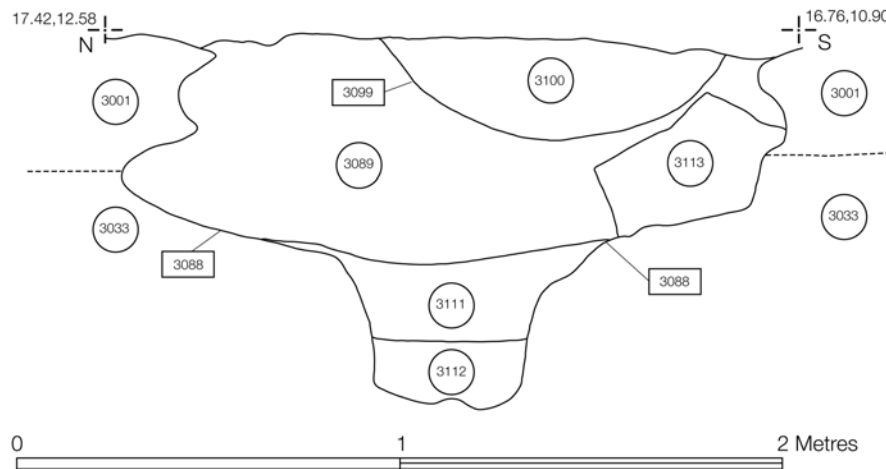


Fig. 8: Section through ditch [3088] (group 3087) in MFNA trench 3.

Two pits in trench 3 [3018 and 3078] appear to have been earlier than the enclosure. Pit 3018, which was oval (1.9 m x 0.5 m) with a flat base and vertical sides, was cut by ditch group 3087. This pit was also distinguished from other pits in this area by being significantly deeper (0.9 m) and containing large amounts of animal bone in its fill (3019). Pit 3078, near the northern baulk, was circular (0.9 m in diameter) with vertical sides and a stepped base (0.4 m deep). Its primary fill (3114) was a mid greyish red sandy silt. Where encountered elsewhere on site, in MF trench 14 and MFNA trench 1, red fills seem to be characteristic of earlier prehistoric features.

The pit [1065] in trench 1, which had a red secondary fill (1076), was the earliest feature in a series of intercutting pits [1074 and 1095] to the north of enclosure ditch group 1016, which was dated to the middle Iron Age in trench 2 [Fig. 9]. These pits were cut by ditch group 1016 [intervention 1052], so may also be earlier than the enclosure, though more excavation is needed before it is known whether 1052 was the original cut. The upper fill (1075) of this pit was a dark, charcoal-rich fill that contained a near-complete foetal canine skeleton.

MFNA 08
Trench 1
Section 1.16

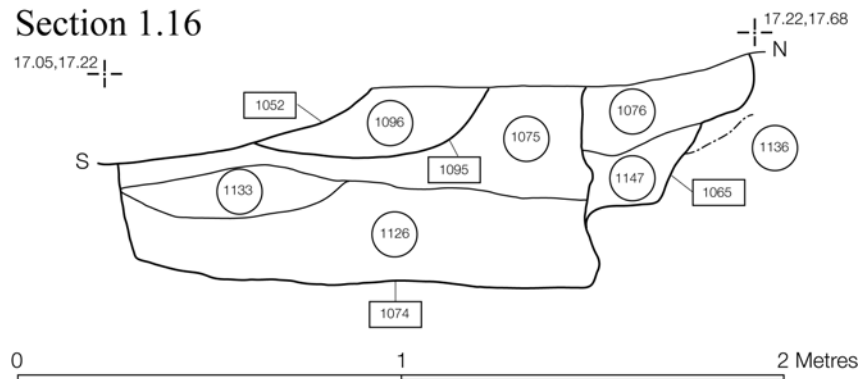


Fig. 9: Section through pits [1074 and 1095] and ditch [1052] in MFNA trench 1.

The enclosure ditch and palisade

The barrel-shaped enclosure, which was c. 60 m wide and over 75 m long, was surrounded by a large ditch and a smaller inner linear feature visible on the geophysics. These were investigated in trench 2 where they were aligned east-west and formed the northern extent of the enclosure. The enclosure ditch [2004] was a stepped v-shape c. 4 m wide and c. 2 m deep [Figs 6 and 10]. The southern side of the ditch was badly eroded as shown by the collapse of a large chunk of bedrock into the ditch (2055). The primary fill of the ditch (2035), which was a light yellowish grey sandy clay, was probably lain in water and contained several sherds of middle Iron Age pottery. At a later date, after the collapse of the sides, the ditch was re-cut [2070] to a similar shape, but smaller (c. 3.3 m wide x c. 1.3 m deep). This later phase of the ditch seems to have partially back-filled from the north by a large dump of limestone rubble (2023). The western continuation of this ditch was traced into trench 1 [group 1016], where it seems to have narrowed to c. 3.4 m wide [Fig. 3]. This ditch turned a right-angle c. 7 m from the eastern baulk. The north-south aligned ditch [group 1015] was of a similar width. Only the upper ditch fills, which are discussed in more detail below, were excavated during this season.

MFNA 08

Trench 2

Section 2.14 (=2.06; 2.10; 2.11)

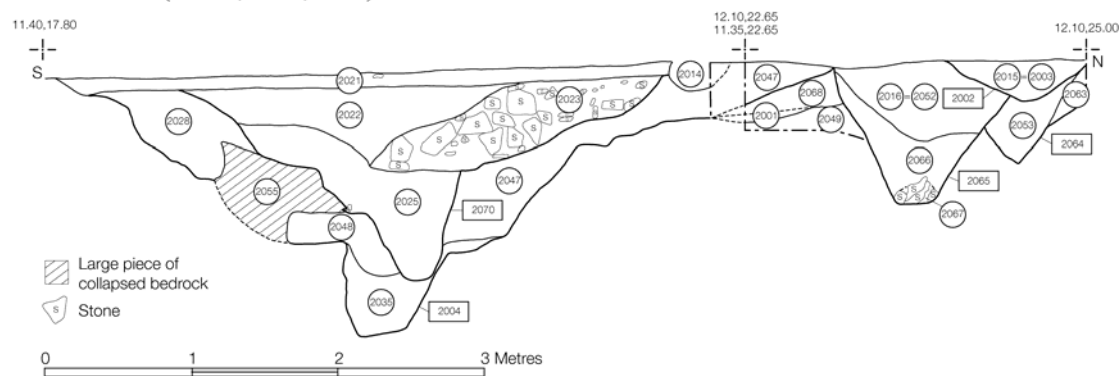


Fig. 10: East-facing section through intercutting ditches in MFNA trench 2 (composite drawing of sections 2.06, 2.10 and 2.11).

The inner feature [2009=2042] was only excavated in trench 2 where it ran c. 4 m to the south of ditch 2004 and on the same alignment. This measured 0.65 m wide x 0.95 m deep, had very steep sides and a flat base [Fig. 11]. The shape and narrow dimensions of this suggest it was a palisade trench inside the enclosure, perhaps free-standing or acting as a revetment for the bank. It was impossible to tell stratigraphically whether the palisade was contemporary with the enclosure ditch, but its relationship to it suggests so.

MFNA 08
Trench 2
Section 2.04

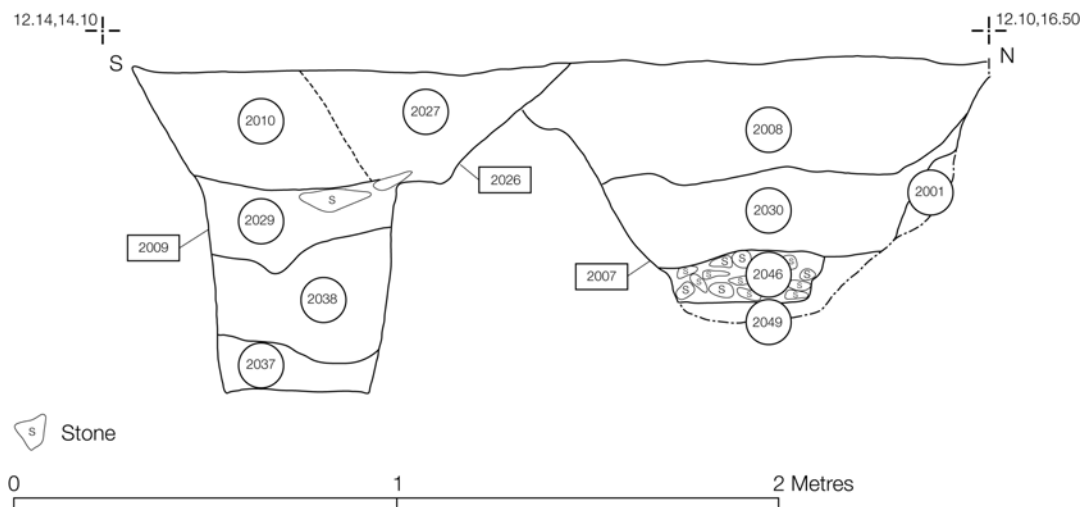


Fig. 11: Section through palisade trench [2009] and intercutting ditches [2026 and 2007] in MFNA trench 2.

The eastern entrance to the enclosure

The barrel-shaped ditched enclosure had at least one entrance in its eastern side. This entrance was excavated in trench 3 that was positioned over the entrance including the northern terminus of the outer enclosure ditch i.e. the southern extent of the entrance [Fig. 5]. The terminus of the ditch [3008] had a similar profile to the ditch as seen in trench 2 (see above). It was 3.2 m wide and 1.4 m deep. There appeared to be no significant placed deposits in the ditch as is sometimes encountered in the terminus section of ditches. A layer of redeposited bedrock (3126) to the west of the ditch terminus may be the scant remains of a bank inside the enclosure.

The geophysics seemed to suggest that there were two large pits positioned in the entrance area slightly to the east, but these were not confirmed by excavation. Instead, an arc of shallow pits or postholes [group 3137: 3004, 3002, 3010, 3130 and possibly 3067] surrounding the ditch terminus was identified. Where excavated, these features were all circular with near vertical sides and flat bases. They were all 0.8 m to 0.95 m in diameter (except [3067], which was just 0.45 m in diameter) and comparatively shallow, varying from 0.23 m – 0.3 m deep. These unusual dimensions, particularly their shallow depth, make any interpretation of their function tentative. The spatial association of group 3137 with the ditch terminus, however, suggests that they were related to it and may have been used to further mark out the entrance. The other side of the entrance was not in the excavation area, but it is possible that a similar arrangement also existed there.

Activity inside the enclosure

An area of c. 12 m x 8 m inside the enclosure was excavated in trench 3, which revealed an assortment of cut features that may have been associated with the enclosure. This picture may be further refined on analysis of the pottery. The enclosure seems to have been divided into two by a row of at least five postholes [group 3106: 3012, 3038/3102, 3052, 3031 and 3023/3080] that ran on an east-west

alignment through the enclosure from its eastern entrance. The postholes were spaced at alternating intervals of 3 m and 2.6 m (from east to west). Posthole 3119 may also have been part of this group, but was spaced further to the west from [3023/3080] than might have been expected in this pattern (c. 3.6 m). The postholes were all circular with vertical sides and flat bases. They varied in diameter from 0.6 m to 0.8 m and in depth from 0.3 m to 0.6 m, getting generally deeper towards the west. Each of the postholes, except 3023, had a single fill, but these were not consistent in colour or composition. There were hints of further divisions inside the enclosure in the form of intercutting groups of pits and/or postholes. These groups [3138, 3139, 3140 and 3141] all seemed to be on a north-south alignment and may have formed smaller radial divisions from the central group 3106. Indeed, group 3141 incorporates one of the group 3106 postholes [3012]. Evidence for internal organisation of a similarly-sized Iron Age enclosure (c. 80 m long x c. 60 m wide) has been excavated at Horcott Pit, near Fairford, Gloucestershire where ring gullies were predominantly found in the eastern part of the enclosure and pits in the western part [Lamdin-Whymark et al. forthcoming]. It is possible that similar divisions were in action in the Marcham enclosure, though given the limited extent excavated this cannot be proven.

At the western end of trench 3 a curvilinear, u-shaped gully [group 3073: 3021 = 3074] terminated 3.6 m south of the northern baulk. It is possible that this was a penannular gully associated with a roundhouse, but a southern continuation of the gully was not found within the trench. The gully was 0.9 m to 1.0 m wide and 0.4 m deep. A series of small postholes [3046, 3048 and 3042] were found cutting the top of the gully on both the western and eastern sides in intervention [3021]. A group [3142] of intercutting pits was also excavated in the south-western corner.

A row of three pits [2019, 2031 and 2033] and a probable ditch [2011] in the southern part of trench 2 would also have been inside the enclosure, though not necessarily contemporary with it. The two excavated pits [2031 and 2033] were both circular with flat bases and c. 0.95 m and 1.2 m in diameter respectively. Like some of the features in trench 2, pit 2031 was very shallow (c. 0.19 m deep), so its function and description as a pit is tentative. Pit 2033 was deeper (c. 0.5 m deep) and may have been deliberately dug down to the level of the natural clay (which interleaves with the natural sand in the area) to provide a waterproof base for storage. Only a small portion of the ditch, also visible on the geophysics, was exposed in the south-eastern corner of the trench and was not excavated. These features all cut a layer of redeposited bedrock (2013) that probably derived from the digging of ditches in trench 2, though it is not clear which ditch.

There appears to have been very little activity outside the enclosure in trenches 2 and 3. In the north-western corner of trench 2 a narrow and shallow curvilinear ditch [2002] (0.4 m wide and 0.3 m deep), possibly a roundhouse gully, was excavated [Fig. 10]. In trench 3 a tree-throw hole [3082] was excavated c. 3 m to the east of the eastern entrance to the enclosure. In contrast there appears to have been significantly more activity to the north of the enclosure in trench 1 in the form of pits and postholes. Most of these features await further exploration next season, so it is currently unclear how they relate to the enclosure. Their presence, however, may begin to provide an explanation for the location of the temple and its *temenos* in the Roman period (see below).

Activity after the enclosure

The date when the enclosure goes out of use is currently unclear. At the northern end of the enclosure, particularly in trench 1, there is clear evidence for early Roman activity in the area. The upper fills (1017, 1015 and 1089) of ditch groups 1014 and 1016 produced a very large assemblage of late 1st-century AD pottery, two late 1st-century AD asses, one of Domitian and the other a Claudian copy and three early Roman brooches (a Nauheim derivative, a T-brooch and a penannular brooch). A Hod Hill brooch also came from this vicinity in topsoil. This type and density of deposition was not encountered in the upper fills of the enclosure ditches in trench 2 and seems to be particular to this location.

One explanation for this level of deposition might be a southern entrance into the *temenos*. Until this season it was assumed on analogy with other Romano-Celtic sites that the *temenos* had a single entrance to the east (excavated in MF trench 32). Excavations in MFNA trench 1 this year, however, suggest that there was also a southern entrance. The southern *temenos* wall [1007=1060] was traced entering trench 1 in the north-eastern corner, where it cut through an earlier pit [1050]. The wall, which was c. 0.8 m wide, was not robbed out as in Trendles Field and existed as a single foundation course of non-local limestone pieces. Notably, the wall had deeper foundations through pit [1050] [Fig. 12]. After running c. 8 m into the trench from the north-eastern corner, the *temenos* wall seemed to come to an abrupt end. No continuation of the wall was identified further to the west, even through the pits in this area. This break in the wall coincided with, and may have been deliberately positioned on, the corner junction between ditch groups 1014 and 1016. It seems possible, then, that the deposition in the upper ditch fills was related to activity inside the *temenos*. Furthermore, the finds assemblages from these fills may also provide backing for Bradford and Goodchild's (1939) original dating of the temple to AD80-90, which was subsequently disputed by Harding (1987) who preferred a later date in the 2nd century AD.

MFNA 08

Trench 1

Section 1.19

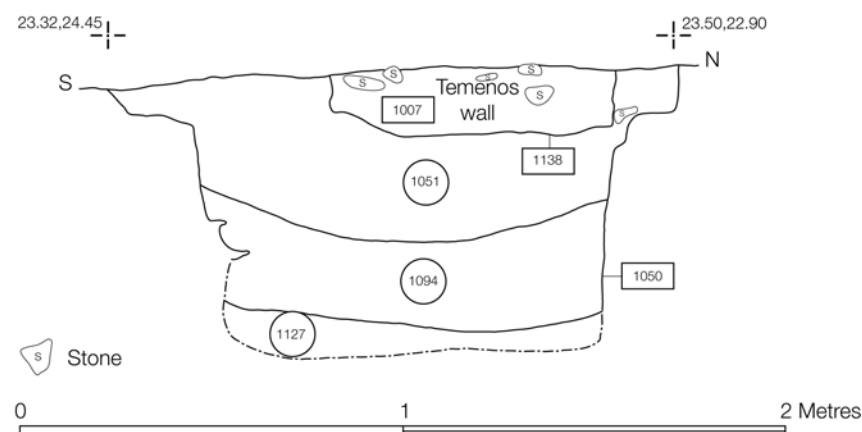


Fig. 12: Section through pit [1050] showing where the *temenos* wall [1007] was later inserted.

Further to the east in trench 2, a south-west – north-east aligned ditch [2026=2040] that contained large amounts of oyster shell and cut the inner enclosure ditch [2009=2042] [Fig. 7] may also date to the Roman period. Inside the enclosure in trench 3 there was no evidence of any activity extending into the Roman period and later. This suggests that by the Roman period the focus of activity was to the north of the enclosure.

Excavations inside Trendles Field

Pit 14295 in trench 14

Excavations of the large pit [14295] inside trench 14 were completed this season. The pit was oval (c. 5 m x c. 3 m) and c. 1.2 m deep. It had vertical sides cut through bedrock and sloping sides when cut through the sand and a flat base [Fig. 13]. The pit had multiple fills, most of which produced large numbers of finds. The majority of these finds date from the 3rd to 4th centuries AD, which suggests that the pit was not in use during the early life of the temple and *temenos*. This may also explain the large amount of stone in the pit, which may derive from reorganisation and rebuilding of the temple complex. The late date of the finds also suggests that similar pits may have existed in other parts of the *temenos*.

MF 08

Trench 14

Pit [14295]

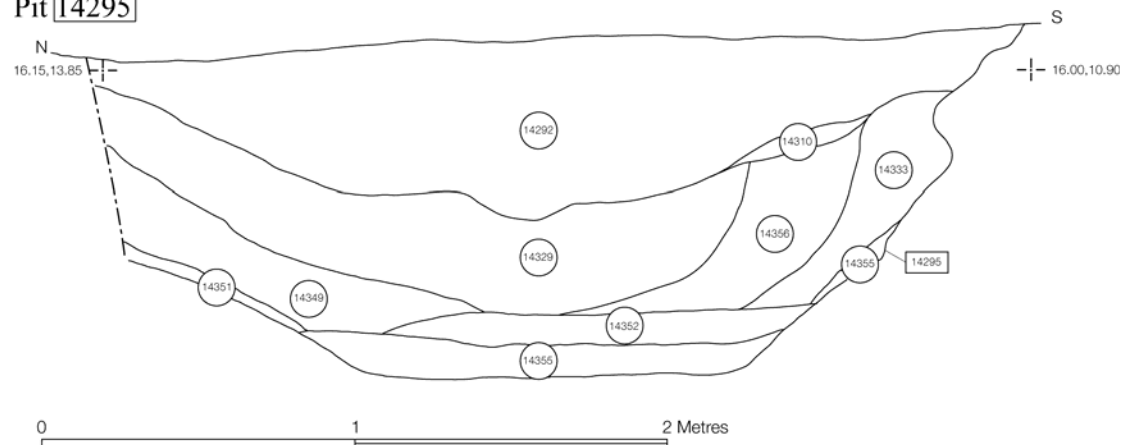


Fig. 13: Section through pit [14295] in trench 14.

The western entrance to the semi-amphitheatre (trench 29) [Fig. 14]

The excavation of the western entrance was completed this season; further excavation still needs to be undertaken inside the arena in trenches 29 and 9. The development of the western entrance seems to have taken place in at least two phases. Phase one was contemporary with the original construction of the semi-amphitheatre and saw the construction of the entrance way with a step and platform leading into the arena. In phase two, there was a general remodelling of the area when the entrance was narrowed.

MF 08
Trench 29

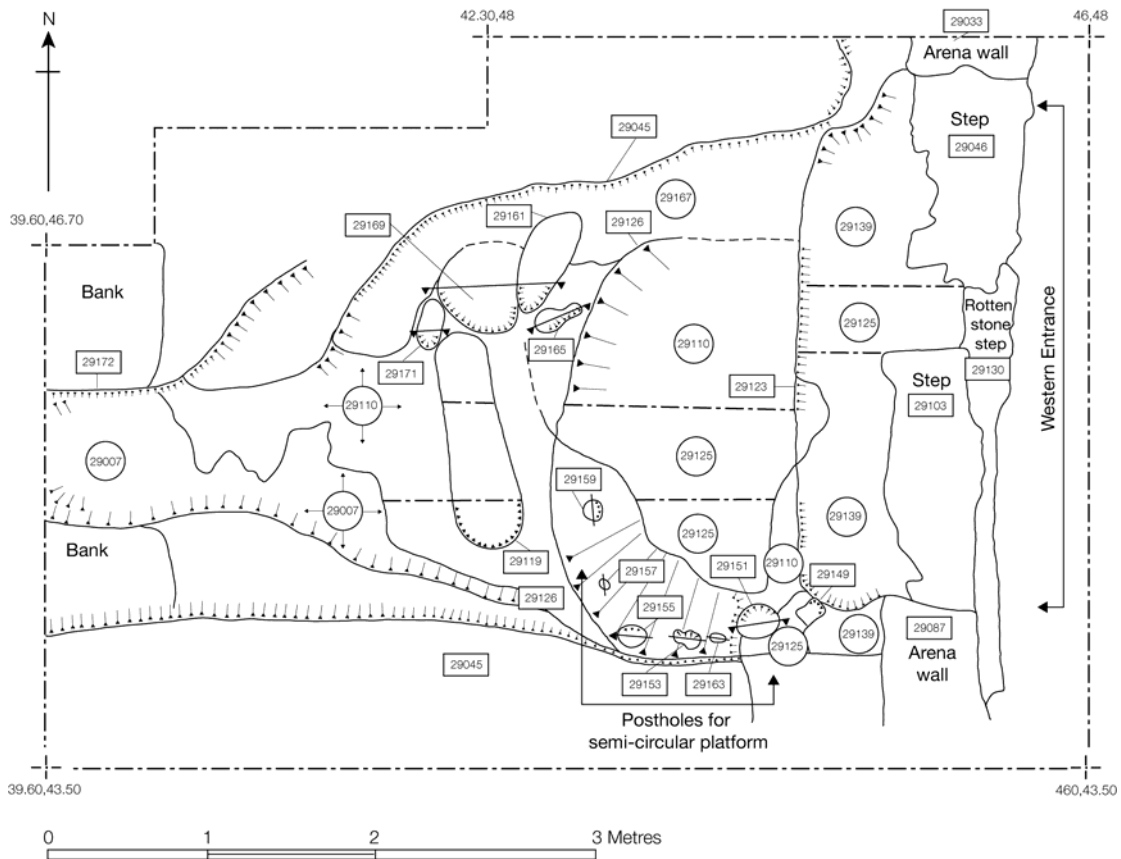


Fig. 14: Plan of the western entrance to the semi-amphitheatre in trench 29.

In phase one, the cut [29045=29085] through the bedrock and sand natural for the entrance was made. This cut was 3.3 m at the edge of the arena and narrowed to 2.2 m as it went west out of the arena. The arena walls were built up to this cut, an original section of which [29033] survives to the north of the cut. The first phase step [29130: 3.3 m long x 0.3 m wide x 0.2 m high] filled this break in the arena walls. While part of the step was constructed using mortared limestone pieces, a large part (2.6 m x 0.3 m) made use of a natural outcrop of rotten stone. At the same time a cobbled surface (29131 – not on plan) was laid down inside the arena and a rubble deposit (29139) was packed behind step 29130 outside the arena. This rubble packing may also have supported the end of semi-circular platform that formed part of the entrance complex. A clear cut [29126] for such a platform was excavated in the sand west of the step. An arc of small postholes [29149, 29151, 29153, 29163, 29155, 29157 and 29159] on the southern side of the cut would have supported this platform. Later activity to the north of the cut removed any evidence for a corresponding set of postholes in this area. A north-south aligned beamslot [29119] west of the entrance may also have been related to this phase of activity, providing a step down to the platform.

In the second phase, repairs were made to the original arena walls to the north and south of the entrance [29068 and 29087 respectively]. The original platform seems to have been removed and a new, narrower step [29046] constructed. This new step was constructed from a single course of squared limestone blocks. The step, 1.3 m long x 0.7 m wide, did not stretch across the original entrance and was positioned towards

the north of the original gap. To the south, a row of postholes [29134, 29135 and 29136], which were set into and packed by structure 29103, formed a fence or temporary shuttering that would have closed off this section of the entrance. Another north-south aligned beamslot [29121 – not on plan] may have provided a wooden step down to step 29046. The entrance was also remodelled further to the west at the top of the slope, where a secondary cut [29172] narrowed the entrance to c. 1 m wide.

The drain (trenches 21 and 33)

The southern continuation of the drain was traced running through trenches 21 and 33E [21060 and 33037 respectively]. In both trenches the drain was constructed in a similar manner to the rest of the drain (Kamash *et al.* 2008); it was c. 1.1 m wide and c. 0.6 m deep. In trench 33E it was sealed beneath a post-medieval field boundary ditch [33030], which was on a north-east - south-west alignment. A further trench, 33F, was dug to the south where ditch [330556], which was on the same alignment as the ditch in trench 33E, was exposed and excavated. The drain, however, did not continue this far to the south. Excavations in the next season will concentrate on the area between trenches 33E and 33F to find the precise location of the end of the drain.

The Iron Age pits and Roman shrine in trench 36 [Fig. 15]

Excavation of the two large pits [36025 and 36023] to the north-east and south-east (respectively) of the central shrine structure [walls: 36010, 36035, 36006 and 36007] was completed. In addition, several smaller pits were excavated in extensions made to the east and north. In an extension to the west of the central shrine excavation revealed an adolescent crouch burial <SK19>. The burial was placed into an oval pit [36104], which was 1.6 m long x 1.2 m wide x 0.4 m deep. This pit had in turn been cut through a larger oval pit [36072], 2.1 m long x 1.6 m wide x 0.5 m deep.

Investigations also continued inside the central shrine, which revealed that (36065) was capping for a circular well, rather than the foundations of a structure. The well [36123], which was 0.6 m in diameter, was excavated to a depth of 1.3 m, but not bottomed. The upper fills of the well contained large numbers of late Roman coins, which suggest that the later phases of this building may have been related to the activities in the late Roman building to the north (MF trench 2) where high concentrations of late Roman coins were also found.

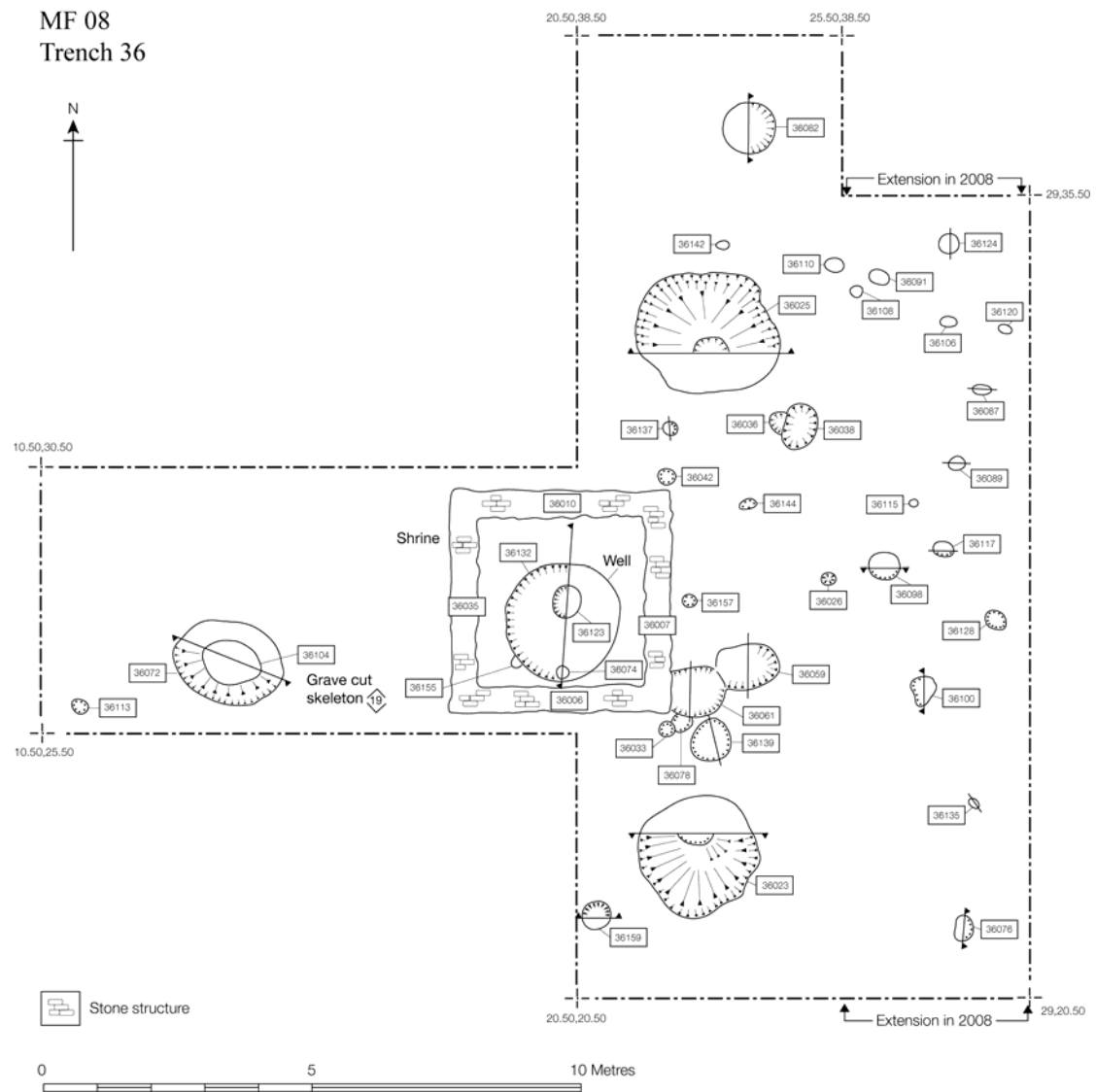


Fig. 15: Plan of the Iron Age features and Romano-British shrine in trench 36.

MFP Trench 2 [Fig. 16]

This 15 x 15 m trench targeted a number of features identified during a geophysical survey of the site. These included intercutting ditches and probable pits which lay within a large D-shaped enclosure, one of several identified during the survey. A thick layer of hillwash overlay the archaeological features and it is also possible that colluvial and fluvial deposits currently mask some features. The main features identified during this season's excavation included a midden, several discrete pits and intercutting ditches.

Midden (2009), which was c. 4.4 m wide and 8.8 m long (minimum), dominated the south-eastern area of the trench. It was formed from the upper layer of a large irregular pit [2012], whose excavation is not yet complete. The midden contained small amounts of Roman material as well as large quantities of early and late Iron Age pottery. It is possible that this was curated material brought in from elsewhere and deposited as a single fill after the pit had remained empty for some time. A large single weathered tabular limestone rock (01.3 m x 0.7 m) lay in the middle of the midden.

MFP 08
Trench 2

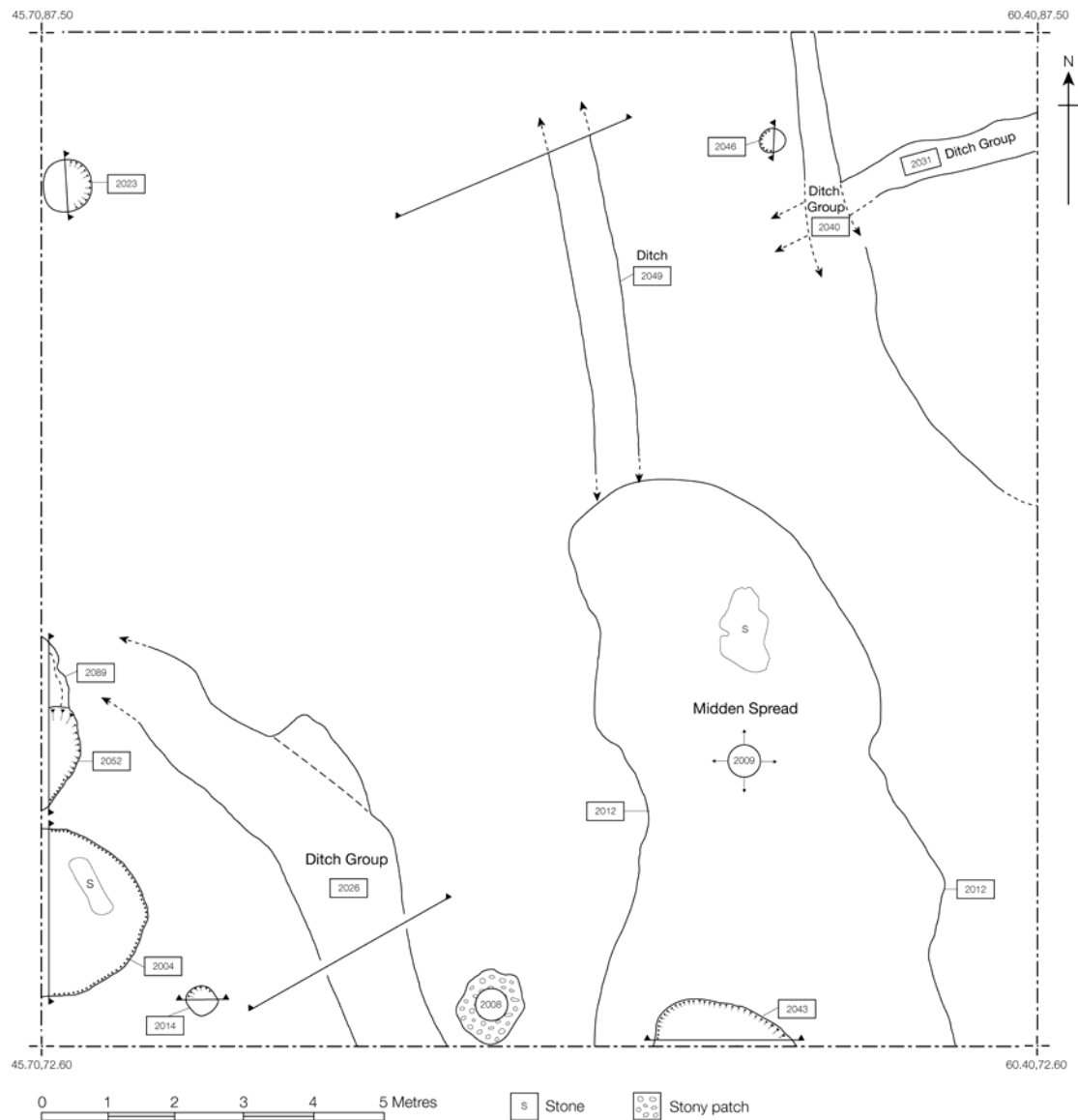


Fig. 16: Plan of MFP trench 2.

Another similarly large piece of limestone had been used to cap pit [2004] (2.5 m in diameter x 1 m deep) in the south-eastern corner. This pit contained few finds and appears to have been backfilled rapidly. The large stones seem to function as markers and/or capping stones, but it is currently unclear why. Two other pits [2052] and [2043] were excavated in the southern part of the trench. Pit [2052], which has not been completely excavated, cut an earlier ditch [2089]. Pit [2043] to the south of [2012] had clay deposits at its base. Extensive shallow features interpreted as quarries have been identified at the Roman and pre-Roman settlement at Baldock, Hertfordshire (Stead and Rigby 1986: 47-50). These pits in the southern part of the trench might have served a similar purpose, possibly for the removal of clay deposits.

To the west of pit [2012] ditch group 2026 ran on a north-west - south-east alignment. This v-shaped ditch was 1.5 m wide and c. 1.15 m deep. Between ditch group 2026 and pit [2012] lay a small patch of stones (2008), which might be the remnants of a cobbled surface whose date and relationship with the other archaeology in the area is unknown.

Excavations in the northern part of the trench revealed a complex network of intercutting ditches. In the north-eastern corner a possible ring ditch [group 2031], which was c. 0.4 m wide and 0.25 m deep, was cut by ditch group 2040. This ditch, which was 0.3 m wide and 0.2 m, ran on an approximately east-west alignment. The continuation of these ditches to the south and west is currently unclear. To the west of these ditches, another ditch [2049] (0.67 m wide x 0.31 m deep) ran on a north-south alignment. A single heavily truncated pit [2023] (c. 0.8 m in diameter and c. 0.14 m deep) was excavated in the north-eastern corner.

Future work

Excavations in MFNA trench 1 will continue next season in order to clarify the later history of the ditched enclosure and its relationship with the temple and *temenos*. It is also hoped that a further trench will be opened in the scheduled area to re-examine the site of the central temple excavated by Bradford and Goodchild with the aim of refining theories concerning its origins.

In Trendles Field, the aim for the 2009 season will be to complete the excavations of the area that formed the focus for the Roman period ceremonial centre. This will involve completing the excavations inside the arena (Trench 9), conditions permitting, as well as finishing the excavation of the interior of the shrine in Trench 36. A new trench will be opened between Trenches 33E and 33F to locate the drain and see if any notable activity occurred in its vicinity. The shift in focus towards the prehistoric enclosures at the far eastern side of the field (MFP) will continue with further excavation in Trench 2.

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