

Land at Station Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire

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1. CFA Archaeology LTD

SUMMARY (A)

CFA Archaeology Ltd carried out a programme of archaeological work at Station Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire between March and May 2017 (Hills and Hunt 2020). The work followed two previous evaluations by CFA Archaeology Ltd on the site in September 2016 and January 2017 which uncovered evidence of Roman and medieval activity along with the remains of Georgian buildings (Barton 2016, Nowak 2017). This phase of work focussed on the area immediately to the east of the Roman and medieval features uncovered in the 2017 evaluation at the southern edge of the site and uncovered a series of pits, including a pit burial, wells, and a boundary ditch, ranging from late Iron Age to medieval in date, along with the remains of a Georgian building. The assemblage of prehistoric to post-medieval pottery along with radiocarbon sampling was used to date the features. Following the late Iron Age and Roman activity on the site there appeared to be a hiatus in activity until the medieval period, with a number of pits and wells dated to this period as well as the post-medieval period uncovered. The remains of the Georgian building overlay most of the site, with this representing the extension to the south-west wing of (the still upstanding) Raban Court, which is visible on the 1842 Tithe map.

Keywords: *Boundary ditch, Roman pits, burial, bone comb, pottery, medieval well, votive model, Roman, Georgian, Medieval*

INTRODUCTION (A)

This article presents the results of a programme of archaeological work at Station Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire (NGR: TL 24635 34137), by CFA Archaeology Ltd (Hills and Hunt 2020, Fig. 1).

The archaeological work revealed features dating from the late Iron Age to the post-medieval period. The earliest features were two late Iron Age-early Roman ditches or elongated pits, a large boundary ditch, and a pit. Later Roman features comprised of a spread of pits across the site containing some large pottery assemblages, as well as a pit burial. The post-medieval activity was represented by multiple pits and two wells, along with the remains of the Georgian extension to Raban Court which is visible on the 1842 Tithe map.

The site was located between Station Road and Royston Road in Baldock and was formerly a vehicle crash repair centre and a car showroom. The underlying geology was chalk.

<Fig. 1 here>

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND (A)

Baldock was a Roman town, lying adjacent to a late Iron Age settlement, and was re-found as a market town by The Knights Templar in AD1140. The focus of the town is twin market places overlooked by the church and is to the west of the Site. The Site lies to the north of the late Iron Age settlement, at the crossroads of the Icknield Way, a prehistoric trackway to the flint mines

at Grimes Graves in Norfolk, and the Great North Road, originally the Roman Road to Godmanchester (Thompson 2005).

An early Iron Age pit alignment found during excavations in 2012 at Station Road to the north of the site revealed an early landscape boundary supplanted by later ditches on slightly different alignments (Ashworth 2012). The late Iron Age settlement covered about 20 hectares on the east side of Baldock with the line of the (later) Great North Road running through the centre of the settlement. It probably supplanted the occupation at the hillfort at Arbury Banks. To the east of the settlement at Baldock, and possibly beyond a boundary demarcated by the pit alignment, lay a cemetery with some satellite burials further to the east. The settlement itself seems to have been a series of small farmsteads with paddocks and small fields between them, although probably denser than the settlements visible to the north of the railway line (Burleigh 1995). The settlement appears to stop just south of Station Road, to the south of the Site. Routes within the settlement seem to have developed into later Roman routes. Late Iron Age occupation has been found to the east of the Site at California and to the west at The Engine public house (Richmond, Burleigh and Went 1992). Late Iron Age and Roman cemeteries have been excavated immediately to the east of the Site at 5a Icknield Way and 5a Royston Road (Fitzpatrick-Matthews 2016).

The Roman activity in the wider area seems to extend into the fourth or fifth centuries, however in the vicinity of the Site there appears to be a hiatus in archaeological evidence until the late medieval period. The Site lies just outside the boundary of the grant of land to the Templars for Baldock, with the boundary and hiatus appearing to respect the line of the Great North Road. However, there are medieval records in the Hertfordshire HER data in the immediate vicinity of the Site, including Raban Court immediately to the south-west, which was built in the early sixteenth century and may have originally been an Inn built at the crossroads.

Buildings identified as maltings lay to the north of Raban Court and within the Site. The 1842 Tithe map shows a long extension to south-western wing of Raban Court extending across the Site along Station Road. Opposite this, buildings attached to the north-eastern wing of the court also extend across the Site to Icknield Way East. The plot, which includes Raban Court is marked 'Cottage And Homestead'. To the north-east is a group of buildings between Icknield Way East and Royston Road enclosing a yard marked 'Farm House, Yard And Cottage'. The two groups of building have a road or track between them, and further east is a plot marked as a garden.

Historic mapping from 1880 shows buildings only in the extreme north-eastern corner of the Site from 1897 to 1950 and the rest of the Site as vacant. These buildings were presumably demolished to make way for levelling of the Site for the agricultural engineering works (tractor factory) built in the 1950s which was used as the vehicle repair centre. Baldock thrived in the sixteenth century and many of the Listed Buildings in the conservation area to the west of the Site demonstrate the growth of the town with a number of public houses and brewing facilities built to presumably serve travellers on the Great North Road and Icknield Way. However, the arrival of the railway in 1850, meant that although still prosperous, the town did not thrive as well as it had once done.

CFA conducted two previous stages of evaluation on the Site in September 2016 and January 2017 (Barton 2016 and Nowak 2017), in the north-western half and southern corner respectively. Both evaluations revealed evidence of the Georgian extensions to Raban Court

which are shown on the 1842 Tithe map, while the 2017 evaluation also uncovered a Roman ditch and pit along with a number of medieval layers.

RESULTS (A)

The archaeological work uncovered numerous features comprising of pits, including a pit burial, wells, a boundary ditch, and the foundations of a Georgian building. Six main phases of activity were identified, late Iron Age to early Roman, early to mid-Roman, mid to late Roman, medieval to late medieval, late medieval to post-medieval, and Georgian, which are discussed chronologically below (Figs 2a-b). The relevant results of the 2017 evaluation (Nowak 2017) are also included. Due to the depth of the development works, as well as on site health and safety, the lower parts of some of the deeper features were left in situ, with auguring utilised to determine possible depths.

<Figs 2a-b here>

Late Iron Age to Early Roman (B)

The earliest phase of activity on site was represented by two parallel linear features [400 and 412], a ditch [070], and a pit/well [306]. These have all been dated by the pottery recovered from their fills.

The parallel linear features [400 and 412] were aligned north-west to south-east and located at the south-eastern edge of the site, continuing outwith the site to the south-east. Only two sherds of pottery were recovered from the fill of feature [412], with its dating to this phase based on its similarity and relationship to ditch [400], which contained 128 sherds of pottery. These features were initially identified as the truncated ditches however, as only a small section of these features were uncovered, it is possible that they are elongated pits.

Ditch [070] ran roughly north/south across the north-western half of the site and was likely a continuation of evaluation ditch [315]. It likely represents a boundary ditch and contained a large quantity of grog-tempered and shelly ware pottery sherds.

<Fig. 3 here>

Pit [306] towards the western corner of the Site contained nineteen bodysherds of grog-tempered ware, along with fragments of post-medieval CBM which are likely present due to truncation from a later wall.

The grog-tempered ware recovered from the fills of these features dates primarily to the late Iron Age, however its use is known to continue into the early Roman period and therefore these features may date to either phase or show a continuity of use between them.

<Fig. 4 here>

Early to Mid-Roman (B)

Five features uncovered on site dated to the early Roman period.

Pit [022] was located towards the eastern corner of the site and contained a total of 357 sherds of pottery, including South Gaulish Samian, an Italian amphora spike and a sherd of Baetican amphora. Two fragments of long bone, possibly from a single perinatal infant, along with a molar, which may have been deliberately extracted and discarded, were also recovered from the fill of this pit.

Pits [068] and [466] were located towards the south-western side of the site, to the west and east of the ditch [070] respectively. A number of sherds of earlier grog-tempered wares were recovered from the fills of both these pits, suggesting they may have been contemporary with the previously discussed features dated to the late Iron Age - early Roman phase of activity. A large quantity of pottery was recovered from pit [068], including a worn Verulamium-type stamped mortarium, with a production date of AD60-100, and a sherd of fine black micaceous ware with a single perforation, along with numerous fragments of Roman glass, possibly from a single object, and a number of Roman hobnails. Two joining pieces of an incomplete perforated disc were recovered from the fill of pit [466], which also contained a quantity of animal bone included a cattle skull.

Pit [453] was located to the north of pit [466] and contained sixty sherds of pottery including a pinched or trefoil mouthed flagon dating from the Flavian period.

Pit [474] was located towards the northern side of the site and likely truncated ditch [070], however multiple later pits [472, 470, and 468] obscured any direct relationship between them. Multiple sherds of earlier grog-tempered wares were recovered from the fill of this pit along with a sherd of Samian dated to AD40-65. It was similar in shape and size to pit [445] which was also cut into ditch [070] towards the southern end of the site, and it is possible that these are contemporary, and that pit [474] is actually later mid-late Roman in date.

Mid to Late Roman (B)

This phase of activity on the site was represented by seven pits and a possible hearth spread across the site.

Sub-square pit [074] lay to the south-eastern side of the site and was set within a larger sub-circular shallow depression [416]. This pit contained one of the highest concentrations of Roman pottery, fill including with several broken, but complete, or almost complete, vessels along with two stamped wares, dated to AD130-180 and AD160-200. A large amount of oyster shell was found concentrated within the pit, as if it had been contained within an organic pouch.

To the north of pit [074] was pit [079], within which a large number of disarticulated human remains were recovered from the lower most excavated fill [404]. Two of the teeth were radiocarbon dated to AD261-540 and AD247-525 (95% probability, SUERC-123022 and SUERC-123023). This layer appeared to have been deliberately sealed by a chalk layer [403] before being backfilled. The pottery recovered from the upper backfill of this pit included a sherd of Oxfordshire red-slipped ware (AD240-400), and was all quite fragmentary, suggesting a deliberately backfilled waste deposit fairly soon after the burial and sealing of the human remains.

<Fig. 5 here>

A number of similar shaped and sized pits were uncovered across the site dated to this phase [097 and 445] as well as the earlier phases [022, 306 and 474] of activity. The lower part of these features were all left in situ, and it is possible that human remains were also buried within their lower fills, which had been subsequently sealed and backfilled with waste deposits.

Pit [097] was located towards the north-western edge of the site and contained 130 sherds of pottery, including Central Gaulish Samian, Cologne colour-coated ware and Baetican amphora. All of the pottery was fragmentary, and this along with the presence of a high concentration of shell fragments, may suggest deliberate backfilled waste deposits, similar to the upper fill of pit [079].

Pit [445] was cut into ditch [070], towards the southern side of the site. A possible stone edged hearth [495] was cut into or built within the pit after it had been partially backfilled. Two conjoining fragments of a Roman Mayen lava quern were recovered from the pit. A possible votive model or pin was recovered during the excavation of the pit, however it is uncertain if it came from the fill of pit [445] or ditch [070], and a Roman copper alloy pin was recovered from the lower fill [496] of the pit. The only pottery recovered from this feature was dated to the mid-late Roman period and was from the upper backfill [444] of the pit, above hearth [495]. It is therefore possible that the pit itself is of an earlier date and that it was later re-used as a hearth.

Two pits [408 and 443] contained fragments of Roman pottery, however none were diagnostic and therefore the date of this feature, although likely Roman, is still uncertain.

Pit [472] was located towards the northern corner of the site, it was cut into pit [474] and truncated by pit [470]. Pottery dating to AD155-185 was recovered from the fill of pit [470], placing it in this phase, whilst pit [472] is of uncertain date.

Medieval to Late Medieval (B)

Only three features uncovered on the site are dated to this phase of activity. Pit [439] appears to be the oldest and is dated to the high medieval period by the pottery, although it also contained material from the late Iron Age and Roman periods. To the west of this pit are pits [480] and [482], both of which contained a mix of pottery but are securely dated to the medieval period.

Late Medieval to Post-Medieval (B)

This phase of activity is represented by a number of features, concentrated within the south-eastern part of the site.

A hearth [087] was partially uncovered at the south-eastern edge of the site, continuing outwith the excavation area. It was constructed with bricks which were heat-discoloured and dated to the late medieval to post-medieval period, along with stone cobbles that were bonded with friable mortar. It was set into a larger shallow depression [092], however the relationship between the two features is uncertain.

A flint-lined well [086] was uncovered to the south-west of hearth [087]. It was constructed using large nodules of flint set within mortar and had been backfilled with chalk and rubble.

No finds were recovered from the primary fill [084] of this feature, although post-medieval building material was recovered from its upper fill [083].

<Fig. 6 here>

To the south-west of the flint-lined well was a series of intercutting features of medieval to post-medieval date. Some of these features contained ceramics from multiple periods and therefore only a terminus post quem can be provided. Pit [418] truncates the eastern side of pit [439], as well as a partially tile lined circular feature [421] whilst pit [418] was cut by pit [414]. All of these intercutting features contained a large quantity of Roman to post-medieval tile, probably due to damage to feature [421].

The southern corner contained two irregular pits [072/340] and [464]. These features were shallow but comparatively widespread and may represent very small-scale quarrying or aggregate extraction. A large irregularly shaped feature [077/441] was identified towards the northern corner of the site, with medieval pottery recovered from its fill. Given its similarity to pits [072/340] and [464] it is possible that this also represents small scale quarrying or aggregate extraction.

A large sub-circular pit [497] was located centrally within the site and heavily disturbed by later pits and the Georgian building. A worked bone comb, a 17th century Venetian glass goblet, a copper-alloy ring, as well as post-medieval pottery, building material and fragments of clay pipe were recovered from its fill.

A possible well [406] was uncovered towards the north-western edge of the site, it was not fully excavated but contained a mix of finds including CBM and pottery dating from Roman to post-medieval.

A further 11 pits ([036], [067], [410], [414], [418], [421], [457], [468], [490], [492], [494] and [500]) were uncovered across the site dated to this period, either by the finds recovered from their fills or due to their truncation by the Georgian building.

Georgian Building (B)

<Fig. 7 here>

The foundations [002/013/023/064] of the extension to the south-western wing of Raban Court shown on the 1842 Tithe map were uncovered on the site. Within the site the building measured a maximum of 15.5m in length by 14m wide, with it extending further to the north-west, north-east, and south-east.

The foundations of the north-eastern wall [002] survived to 12 courses (0.85m), with the other walls only surviving to a maximum of 5 courses. The walls were made up of consistently sized moulded bricks. The partial remains of partition walls [009, 017, 018 and 063] creating smaller internal spaces, were also uncovered.

A smaller rectangular structure [013/023] set within a depression [082/096] and with a possible brick floor [434] was also identified on the western edge of the main extension and may represent a walled garden or sunken terrace.

No direct evidence for a floor surface was present within the extension, though a few square post-holes ([008] and [011]), brick plinths ([016] and [053]) and alterations to the bonding of the brick, imply truncated features. It is possible the floor was removed during the demolition of the building and levelling of the site in the twentieth century.

A brick lined well [024] was uncovered against the north-western outer edge of the possible walled garden/ sunken terrace [023]. The bricks measured 1.75” in width, indicating a medieval date. It is likely the construction of the possible walled garden/ sunken terrace [013/023] respected the site of the well, which may still have been in use. The well had been backfilled with tile rubble [041], then sealed with chalk [024]. It is probable that the well was constructed during the medieval to post-medieval phase, but it is difficult to date when it fell out of use due to the wide range of dates attributed to the pottery within the fill.

FINDS (A)

Detailed finds reports and full catalogue data are available in the site archive.

Late Iron Age - Roman Pottery (B)

J. R. Timby

A total of 2478 sherds of pottery weighing 41.5kg, and with an estimated vessel equivalent (EVE) of 31.11, were collected from a number of features across the site. The condition of the assemblage is very variable with fragmented material alongside several semi-complete vessels. Non-diagnostic crumbs account for 10.6% of the total count. The distribution of material is quite uneven with just three features producing 67.7% (count) of the assemblage.

Late Iron Age – Early Roman Fabrics and Forms (C)

The assemblage can be divided into four main ware groups: grog-tempered (GR), sandy (SA); shelly (SH) and continental imports. A minor additional group with organic temper is also present.

Grog-tempered wares (Rigby 1986, fabrics 1, 2 and 25; Wells 2009, F06) dominate, accounting for 33% by count of the total late Iron Age-Roman assemblage. These can be divided into ‘Belgic’ type handmade and wheel-made vessels and larger, handmade, storage jars often with scoring or combing on the exterior surface or a rippled surface. The former includes pedestalled jars with projecting feet; necked, cordoned jars; beaded rim jars; bulged shoulder jars and platters many of which have a burnished finish. The ware appears in the first century BC continuing into at least the middle of the first century AD. The forms can all be found in Thompson (1982) falling into her Zone 7. Other minor variants include grog and limestone, grog and shell and sandy with grog.

Contemporary with the grog-tempered wares are a small number of handmade sandy wares and some shelly wares (Wells 2009, fabric F24). The latter include lid-seated jars with at least one example showing a slashed rim from ditch [043] and pit [022] and one trimmed base from pit [097]. One sherd of sandy ware from pit [474] has a post-firing perforation.

Also dating to the pre-Roman Iron Age or early Roman period is a single piece of Gallo-Belgic imported beaker (fabric GAB TR3) from feature [441] and two sherds of Italian amphorae: one

bodysherd from pit [445] or ditch [070] and the other a solid spike, probably from a Dressel 2-4 type wine amphora, from pit [022].

Roman Fabrics and Forms (C)

The Roman assemblage can be divided into features broadly dating to the Flavian-early second century; the later second-third century and late Roman (mid-third-fourth century). Overall, the group is dominated by presumed local wares, mainly grey and black sandy wares; fine grey and black wares, several of which probably come from the Lower Nene Valley or Hadham kilns and various oxidised and pale wares. Accompanying these are a few notable continental imported and traded wares.

Imported wares: Samian (D)

Continental fine ware imports are dominated by sherds of Samian both from South (La Graufesenque, Montans) and Central Gaul (Lezoux, Les Martres de Veyre) which account for 4.3% (count) of the LIA-Roman assemblage. The South Gaulish wares include (Dragendorff (Drag.) forms 18, 27, 29, 30 and 72) and the Central Gaulish wares cups 27, 33, dishes 18, 18/31(x3), 31(x3) and 35/6 and bowls 30 (x3), 37 (x7).

There are at least four stamped vessels (S1-4).

- S1: MARINVS'FE (NOTS 5, 287-8, die 4a), La Graufesenque. Drag. 18. Date AD40-65. Pit [474]. (**Note – the M and A should be ligatured cf. samian font**)
- S2: [M ...] Les Martres-de-Veyre. Probably a dish Drag. 18. Well-cut letter with serifs. The underside of the base has a scratched *post cocturam* graffiti. Pit [470].
- S3: CALETINVS (NOTS 2, 167 die 1b). Lezoux. Date: AD160-200. Pit [074].
- S4: REGALIS (NOTS 7, 335, die 3a). Lezoux. Date AD155-185. The footring has two incised *post cocturam* notches the lines of which extend down the interior of the footring. Pit [470].

There are a number of small sherds with decoration from bowls Drag 29, 30 and 37, only two of which are large enough to show some of the scheme of decoration:

- D1. Bodysherd from a decorated Central Gaulish (LEZ SA2) Drag. 30 bowl depicting a free-style hunting scene featuring deer, a hound and horse. Probably Antonine in date. Pit [074].
- D2. Bodysherd from a Central Gaulish (LEZ SA2) Drag. 30 bowl. Triple terminus as Rogers (1974) G67 set within a St. Andrews cross defined by beaded rows with a small goose facing left with head to right in an adjacent panel. Pit [074].

In total four vessels have some form of graffiti, two of the stamped vessels mentioned above; a Central Gaulish cup Drag. 33 with three incisions on the rim from either pit [445] or ditch [070] and one base from pit [470] with a single cut on the footring. One vessel from pit [097] has a rivet repair hole.

Other imported wares (D)

Other imported finewares are sparse but include Central Gaulish colour-coated ware (CNG CC2); Cologne beaker (KOL CC); Central Gaulish black-slipped ware (CNG BS) and one small sherd of Argonne colour-coated ware (ARG CC). Further imports are represented by a single sherd of Central Gaulish mortarium and eight sherds from Baetican olive oil amphora from Southern Spain.

Regional wares (D)

Various products from the local regional industries are present including Verulamium-type white wares and mortaria (VER WH) (M1-2); an Upper Nene Valley stamped mortarium (M3); Lower Nene Valley colour-coated and grey wares; Hadham grey, oxidised and white-slipped ware and from further afield Oxfordshire white ware and colour-coated ware. All are present in minor amounts the most common being Lower Nene Valley colour-coated vessels.

Verulamium-type wares (D)

A small group of Verulamium-type white wares are present including trefoil mouthed and ring-necked flagons; reeded rim bowls; jars and mortaria. The latter vessels are generally quite worn and include two stamped examples (M1-2):

- M1: SOLLVS. Fabric: VER WH. Flanged and beaded rim mortarium with a broken spout and very worn interior surface with few grits surviving. The flange is stamped either side of the spout with the same stamp facing the same direction. This is one of the most commonly used of Sollus's three dies showing a wide distribution including one from previous work at Baldock (Hartley 1986, 238). AD60-100. Pit [068].
- M2: Incomplete broken stamp? JIVI. This is probably the potter DOINVS another prolific potter working in the Verulamium region. A more complete example came from the 1968-72 excavations (Hartley 1986, 237, fig. 97.8). Fabric: VER WH. AD80-110. Pit [445] or ditch [070]

Nene Valley wares (D)

Lower Nene colour-coated ware account for 2.8% (count) of the assemblage and includes several complete or semi-complete vessels including indented beakers, everted rim, cornice rim and bag-shaped forms with rouletted, barbotine scale or roughcast decoration; a flask, jars; plain-sided dishes and a bowl copying a Drag. 35/6 form (cf. Perrin 1999, 102, fig. 63.242-4). A few sherds of Lower Nene Valley grey ware are also present including a shallow dish with burnished decoration (cf. *ibid.* fig. 38.79) and an indented beaker with another in unslipped oxidised ware. A fine black ware from pit [466] decorated with concentric London-style decoration may also be a Nene Valley product. Other Nene Valley vessels of note include a stamped mortarium (M3) typical of the Upper Nene Valley producers:

- M3: CVS FEC/CAMVLO. A double line stamp belonging to Camulacus III. The stamp has previously been recorded from Baldock (Hartley 1986, 237, fig. 97.4). Fabric: UNW WH. AD 130-80. Pit [075].

Local /unprovenanced wares (D)

Local and unprovenanced sandy wares account for 28.6% count of the total assemblage, 25.23% by weight and 49.5% EVE with Roman shelly wares accounting for a further 9.2% (count). The shelly wares are mainly wheel-made vessels some of the later wares with fine horizontal rilling and some, if not all probably came from the kilns at Harrold, Bedfordshire (Brown 1994). Most of the forms are jars or bowls, including one almost complete example.

Reduced wares, black or grey in colour, dominate accounting for 33.4% (count) with oxidized wares contributing 2.2%, pale/ white wares 3.4% and white-slipped wares 0.4%. The reduced wares are likely to have come from a variety of local sources including Hadham and the Nene Valley and feature a range of forms including jars; bowls, dishes; beakers; lids and platters. There are also a few black surfaced white wares mainly confined to bowl forms. Mica-slipped

wares add a further 0.8% and include one vessel impressed with a vertical herring-bone stamp, plain-walled dishes and a globular beaker.

Forms (C)

An overall break down of forms shows jars to be the dominant form accounting for 44.4% of the total eves of which storage jars contribute 5.8%. This is followed by beakers accounting for 18% and bowls 9.2%. Fine tableware (cups/dishes/bowls) contribute 8.9% with all other categories falling below 6%. The range of forms including more specialised wares such as mortaria is typical of that to be expected from a small consumer town where a range of activities, domestic, commercial and processing/industrial may have been taking place.

Modified sherds (C)

Several sherds have been modified after firing. Four Samian sherds noted above display graffiti, either a scratched name or simple cut marks. One Samian sherd (Drag. 31) from pit [097] has a rivet repair hole. Other modified sherds include a shelly ware base from pit [097] probably trimmed for a secondary purpose, whilst a base with a footring from pit [072] appears to have been deliberately holed. Two joining pieces of an incomplete perforated disk (fabric BWFSY), diameter 35mm, came from pit [466]. A jar from pit [074] decorated with a burnished lattice displayed four small holes in the base and one in the lower wall. A sherd of fine black micaceous ware from pit 068 and a basesherd from pit [474] also show single perforations. Finally, a fine grey ware bowl from pit [072] had two incised cut marks on the rim.

Distribution and chronology (C)

Early Roman features probably dating from the Flavian period perhaps into the early second century include pits [022], [068] and [453]. Pits [022] and [068] both contained large assemblages, with 357 sherds from [022] including several South Gaulish Samian pieces, the Dressel 2-4 amphora spike and a sherd of Baetican amphora and 260 sherds from pit [068] with some earlier grog-tempered sherds but also more Romanised wares including a worn Verulamium-type stamped mortarium with a production date of AD60-100. The 60 sherds from pit [453] include a pinched mouth or trefoil mouthed VER WH flagon dating from the Flavian period onwards.

Features likely to date from the mid-later second into the third century include pits [066], [074], [097] and [445] along with possible hearth [495]. Pit [066] contained just three sherds of grey ware and thus not particularly closely datable. By contrast pit [074] yielded an exceptional group of 356 sherds (8156g) with several broken, but complete, or almost complete, vessels. There are two dated stamped wares; one a Samian dish (S3) dated AD160-200; the other the Upper Nene Valley mortarium (M3) dated AD130-180 which are accompanied by at least six LNV CC beakers; several mica-slipped wares; 15 sherds of Samian; single sherds of Central Gaulish colour-coated ware; black-slipped ware and mortarium; Argonne colour-coated ware and Baetican amphora alongside local coarse-wares. Of note amongst the latter is a lattice decorated, deliberately holed jar. Many of the vessels have a partial, post-depositional, white calcareous encrustation on the surfaces/ breaks. This is an unusual deposit but can be paralleled with material found in earlier excavations at Baldock, particular from pit deposits dating between AD50-250 where several complete or semi-complete pots featured (Rigby 1986, 257 ff). It was noted that example with products dating to the second half of the second century

were particularly well represented, as is the case with pit [074] here. Rigby (ibid) suggests that these pits may have had a ritual aspect pointing to deliberate selection, perhaps even associated with some form of funerary process.

Pit [097] also produced a moderately large group of 130 sherds (1701g) but without any complete or semi-complete vessels and showing a lower average sherd weight of 13g compared to the 23g in pit [074]. In addition to 16 sherds of Central Gaulish Samian, imports include single sherds of Cologne colour-coated ware dating to the later second-third centuries and Baetican amphora. The 115 sherds (1682g) from pit [445] are largely local coarse-wares with just three sherds of LNV CC and two of Samian.

Late Roman activity is evidenced by the assemblages in pit [079], pit [445], hearth [495] and possibly the small group of three sherds from pit [414] which includes a sherd of Hadham ware. The only Oxfordshire red-slipped ware (AD240-400) from the site came from pit [079]. In total this pit yielded 211 sherds but in quite a fragmentary condition reflected in an average sherd weight of just 7.7g intimating a completely different process of deposition compared, for example, to pit [074]. Pit [445]/hearth [495] produced a nearly complete late Roman shelly ware bowl.

Three further features (pits [408], [443] and [494]) all contained exclusively Roman pottery but with less than 10 sherds and all non-diagnostic. An additional 212 sherds of late Iron Age-Roman pottery was recovered from cuts and contexts dated to the post-Roman period on the basis of the presence of later pottery or ceramic building material. Of this 78% comprise sherds of later Iron Age type. Sherds of note include the only piece of Gallo-Belgic terra rubra beaker, the decorated mica-slipped bowl and two of the stamped Samian pieces (S2, S4).

Discussion (C)

The later Iron Age and Roman pottery is entirely in keeping with that to be expected from a Roman small town such as Baldock. In general terms the pottery closely mirrors the considerably larger assemblage of some two tons recovered from the 1968-72 excavations (Stead and Rigby 1986), both in terms of the range of material and the condition. The 1968-72 pottery report (Rigby 1986) was prepared using the methodology prevalent at the time where fewer wares could be identified to source and quantification was not routinely used. This prevents any direct comparison of the relative proportion of the different wares between this and other sites in the immediate area. Similarly, the Bypass assemblage (Wells 2009), which is slightly smaller than this assemblage, was only quantified in general terms and not by fabric. This assemblage did not feature the same diverse range of wares as seen on the Station Road site. Excavations largely undertaken in the area to the south-east of the present site in the Clothall Common area and beyond and summarised in Fitzpatrick-Matthews and Burleigh (2007) also yielded a large assemblage of pottery much of which was recovered from a series of cemeteries (Ashworth 2007). Although not directly comparable this group of material yielded broadly the same range of fabrics from the later Iron Age through to the fourth century with a general paucity of imports that would perhaps be expected from a flourishing small town but a dominance of early grog-tempered wares and grey sandy wares. The considerably larger assemblage from Stead and Rigby's work (1986) by contrast shows a significantly more diverse range of material but this may be a consequence of the size of the assemblage. Samian, generally taken as an indicator of socio-economic status, accounts for 4.3% (count) of the Station Road assemblage which is closely mirrored by the 4.8% from the Bypass site and would be typical of a small town and generally higher than that usually associated with rural sites.

The slightly unusual pit group containing complete or semi-complete pots represented by pit [074] here can be paralleled by a number of similar features at the Clothall Road site (Stead and Rigby 1986) and demonstrates a continuation of this slightly unusual practice of deposition to the north of this site.

Overall the Station Road assemblage reflects the chronological emphasis seen elsewhere in the settlement with a preponderance of later Iron Age material, approximately 44% (count) of the recovered assemblage compared to just under 50% from work carried out 1978-84 (Wells 2009, 202); continued activity throughout the mid-first-early third centuries, with an overwhelming dominance of coarse-ware but relatively limited fine-ware, and an apparent decline in the later Roman period.

<Fig. 8 - 11 here>

Catalogue of illustrated sherds

- P1. Tall, handmade/ wheel-turned jar with a pushed out neck carination/cordon, Thompson (1980) type B3-8. Fabric: GR1/Rigby 2/ Wells R06B. Ditch [70] [88].
- P2. Wheel-made, beaded rim, round-bodied jar, Thompson (ibid) type C1-2. Fabric: GR1/Rigby 2/ Wells R06B. Ditch [70] [88].
- P3. Wide mouthed, everted rim jar with a bulge between narrow cordons, Thompson (ibid) type B3-1). Fabric: GR1/Rigby 2/ Wells R06B. Ditch [70] [88].
- P4. Foot from a pedestalled urn, Thompson (ibid) type A1. Ditch [70] [88].
- P5. Handmade round-bodied jar with a slashed rim. Fabric: SH1/Rigby 4/Wells F07/R13. Ditch [70] [42].
- P6. Handmade, everted rim, wide-mouthed jar with a rippled body. Fabric: GRSJ/Rigby 2/Wells F06C. Ditch [70] [42].
- P7. Several joining sherds from a wheel-made, cordon-necked, jar pinched in at the waist. Fine sandy grey ware. Fabric: GYFSY/Rigby 6/7/Wells R06C. Pit [453] [452]. Early Roman.
- P8. Lid-seated round bodied jar. Oxidised. Voids from dissolved inclusions on the interior surface. Fabric: SH1/Rigby 4/Wells F07. Pit [21] [22].
- P9. Lid-seated jar. Black sandy ware. Fabric: BWSY/Rigby 4/Wells R07B. Pit [21] [22].
- P10. Stepped platter. Fabric: GYF/Rigby 6-7/Wells R06C. Pit [21] [22].
- P11. Flanged and beaded rim mortarium. Broken spout and very worn interior surface with few grits surviving. Stamped either side of the spout by the potter SOLLVS (M1) with the same stamp facing the same direction. AD70-100. Fabric: VER WH. Pit [68] [69].
- P12. Short everted rim beaker oxidised with rouletted decoration. Fabric: LNV CC. Pit [74] [75].
- P13. Cornice-rimmed beaker. Brown-slipped with rouletted decoration. Fabric: LNV CC. Pit [74] [75]. Late second-third century.
- P14. Squat indented beaker/cup. Dark brown in colour at the rim changing to orange towards the base. Fabric: LNV CC. Pit [74] [75].
- P15. Indented beaker with a curved rim. Dark grey in colour. Fabric: LNV CC. Partial calcareous concretions mainly to one side and on break. Pit [74] [75]. Third century.
- P16. Indented beaker with a curved rim. Orange-beige hard medium sandy ware. Fabric: OXIDF. Pit [74] [75].
- P17. Flask with comb-impressed decoration on the shoulder. Fabric: LNV CC. Brown colour-coat. Pit [74] [75].

P18. Wheel-made grey ware jar with burnished line lattice decoration. The base is eroded and the vessel has calcareous deposition on one side. The base has four equidistant drilled holes made after firing with at least one further hole through the lower wall. Semi-complete apart from a spalled hole on one side. Fabric: BWFSY. Pit [74] [75].

P19. Reeded rim hemispherical bowl with a low shallow carination. Fabric: BSWH2. Pit [74] [75].

P20. Shallow dish with a triangular rim. Burnished interior with concentric rings and a wavy line with a small spiral in the centre (cf. Perrin 1999, fig. 38.79). Mid second-century onwards. Fabric: LNV RE. Pit [74] [75].

P21. Plain sided, mica-slipped dish. Fabric: MICA/Rigby28. Pit [74] [75].

P22. Deep bowl with a triangular rim. Well burnished interior and exterior surfaces include the underside of the base. Patchy calcareous concretions on one side. Fabric: GY/Rigby 13/Wells R06B. Pit [74] [75].

P23. Reeded rim bowl. Fabric: VER WH. Pit [74] [75].

P24. Expanded rim jar. Fabric: VER WH. Pit [74] [75].

P25. Wheel-made, short, everted, rim jar. Fine, horizontally combed, exterior. Fabric: SH2/Rigby 4/Wells F07/R13. Patches of calcareous concretion on the upper exterior. Pit [74] [75].

P26. Bead and flanged mortarium with a double-line potter's stamp CVS FEC/C\MVL. This is the potter Camulacus III working in the Upper Nene Valley between AD130-180. Fabric: UNV WH. Pit [74] [75].

P27. Large bowl with a flat rim with a slight internal overhang. Finely rilled exterior. Fabric: ROB SH/Rigby 4/Wells F07/R13. Layer [460].

P28. Mica-slipped copy of a Drag. 30 bowl with impressed herring-bone decoration. Fabric: MICASL/Rigby 28. Residual in pit [439] [438].

Graffiti

P29. Central Gaulish cup, Drag. 33. With three incised cut marks on the rim made after firing. Fabric: LEZ SA2. Pit [445/447] [445/446].

<Fig. 12 - 15 here>

Post-Roman Pottery (B)

Sue Anderson

Five hundred and ninety-four sherds of pottery weighing 8788g were collected from 28 contexts during the 2017 evaluation and excavation.

Medieval pottery (Mid-twelfth-fourteenth century) (C)

Ninety-four sherds of 31 vessels were of medieval date, but no medieval coarsewares were present, all fabrics being glazed wares. A range of wares was present, with Brill/Boarstall types from Buckinghamshire being the most common. From Essex, there were sherds of a single vessel of Hedingham ware, and from Hertfordshire there were sherds of three vessels. Fragments of green-glazed Surrey whiteware (?coarse border ware) were also identified. Three glazed wares are currently unprovenanced, although one of these (UPG2) was similar to a ware identified at Grove Priory to the south of Leighton Buzzard (Slowikowski 2013, Fabric C069, coarse slip decorated).

Most vessels in this group were probably jugs, but only six rims were present. These included two triangular beaded forms of Brill/Boarstall ware, one of which had decoration comparable with an example from Oxford (cf Mellor 1994, pl.9). Other Brill jugs in this assemblage were decorated with applied rouletted strips, applied pellets and horizontal brown and white slip lines. A beaded rim from a Hertfordshire glazed ware jug was found, and this example had combed horizontal lines on the body. A Hertfordshire glazed ware dish rim was also found and is likely to belong in the later medieval part of this type's broad date range (M.12th-15th c.; Jenner and Vince 1983). The Hedingham ware vessel was also relatively late, being part of a cistern with a small bung-hole. Of the unprovenanced vessels (UPG1), one jug had a collared rim with combed horizontal lines, and a horizontal white slip line on the neck, and the other had a flat-topped beaded rim with very fine combed horizontal lines and combed wavy lines on the upper half. Two large fragments of a carinated jug with a strap handle (UPG2) had thick white slip applied below the carination.

Late medieval and post-medieval pottery (fifteenth-eighteenth century) (C)

Twenty-one sherds of late medieval or early post-medieval date represented fifteen vessels. There were fragments of at least two Cistercian ware mugs, a late medieval oxidised ware ?jar with a short upright plain rim and globular body, and a bowl with a bifid everted rim. Four body sherds of LMR were present in two contexts. Sherds recorded as LMT included harder fired oxidised wares; two of these may be Midland Purple types.

Glazed red earthenware sherds of post-medieval date (broadly 16th–18th c.) comprised bead rims of three large jars and a small body sherd. These were all orange-glazed vessels. Fragments of two iron-glazed blackware mugs were also of this period, and there was a base-fragment of 17th-century Metropolitan slipware from Harlow and a small fragment of another post-medieval slipware vessel. A small fragment of a coarse whiteware vessel with pinkish purple surfaces may be a Midlands ware. A body fragment of tin-glazed earthenware had mottled manganese purple decoration.

Modern pottery (eighteenth-twentieth century) (C)

Most of the pottery in this assemblage was of recent date. A total of 208 sherds belonged to a heavily fragmented 18th-century speckle-glazed ware pancheon with a beaded rim. A ?flanged rim from a very worn bowl in the same fabric was also recovered. Other redware vessels (LGRE) were probably broadly contemporary with these vessels, although in some areas 'country pottery' redwares continued to be made into the mid-20th century. This fabric group included rims of six large bowls or pancheons. A late blackware bowl in a hard pale pink fabric, with a flat-topped everted rim, was also recovered. Fragments of unglazed redwares (LPME) were generally pieces of plantpot.

Stonewares of this period comprised fragments of a Derbyshire stoneware base with rouletted decoration, pieces of a rouletted Nottinghamshire stoneware lid, and various body sherds including two from a vessel with a stamped label.

A base fragment of Chinese porcelain with hand-painted blue decoration internally is likely to belong to this period, but could be earlier. Other porcelains were recovered, including an early soft paste example with hand-painted blue decoration, fragments of a ?cup of hexagonal or octagonal form with gold line decoration, a small base fragment with transfer-printed willow pattern internally, and several pieces of a plate with polychrome floral overglaze enamelling.

Of the factory-made whitewares, there were a few examples of creamwares including a plate in Queen's style, but pearlwares and refined whitewares predominated. The majority of these were decorated with transfer printing, examples of designs including willow pattern, asiatic pheasant and a variety of floral and foliate types, but most sherds were too small or damaged to determine the full pattern. Most transfer prints were blue, but there were also examples in green and brown. Two blue spongeware vessels were present, and there was a tiny fragment of flow blue ware. One shell-edge plate was also found. Two tiny fragments of industrial slipware had blue stripes, one with brown mocha on the main band. A few fragments of white ironstone, generally undecorated, were also recovered.

Distribution by site phase (C)

Late Iron Age to early Roman (D)

One small sherd of GRE was probably intrusive in ditch [070].

Early–Mid-Roman (D)

A small sherd of medieval (SWW) pottery was recovered from Roman pit [474]. The SWW (Coarse Border ware) sherd may be from the same vessel as another found in the nearby well [406].

Late/post-medieval (D)

This site phase produced the largest quantity of vessels, but a high proportion were residual or intrusive.

The largest single context group was from depression fill (035), but 208 of the 283 sherds (4711g) of pottery from this feature were part of a single speckle-glazed ware pancheon. There were also 26 sherds of an LBW bowl and ten sherds of a pearlware mug. Fragments of three plantpots, several pearlware and refined whiteware transfer-printed tablewares, a hand-painted porcelain vessel, a post-medieval whiteware, and some stoneware storage vessels were also found in this area, and would be intrusive in this site phase.

A smaller group of largely intrusive material (GRE, PEW, ESWN) was found in pit [418], including fragments of plates, a jug, a jar and a lid, and there was a REFW serving plate in post-hole [410].

Pit [500] also contained a few small sherds of modern pottery (LPME, CRW, PEW, PORCC) which could be intrusive, as the majority of sherds from this feature were medieval glazed wares (BRIL, HERT), including a HERT dish fragment. Another sherd of BRIL was the only pottery find from pit [457].

High and late medieval wares were recovered from well [406], including six sherds of a HERT jug, but also SWW, BRIL and LMT sherds. Well [084] also contained sherds of LMT, together with a small fragment of Metropolitan slipware.

Fragments of 18 vessels were recovered from two features. Six sherds in pit [482] were from three Brill vessels, but two of these had cross-links to Brill sherds in pit [439]. This latter contained a total of 67 sherds representing 17 vessels. Apart from one small fragment of LMR, all vessels in this fill were medieval glazed wares, including a Hedingham ware ?cistern, and various Brill and unprovenanced jugs.

Twenty-six sherds of broadly 16th-century date were recovered from pit [497], including fragments of at least four CTW and IGBW mugs, an LMO ?jar and bowl and sherds of Coarse Border ware and LMR.

Two fairly large sherds of a transfer-printed willow pattern plate were recovered from post-hole [410] and are presumably intrusive in this phase.

Georgian (D)

The largest group of sherds was recovered from the latest backfill of well [025] of the 87 sherds the majority were of 18th- and 19th-century date. Fragments of LGRE including a bowl, an LPME plantpot, a SPEC bowl, some stoneware, and various tablewares (REFW, PORC, IRST, PEW, INDS) and a pearlware chamber pot were all recovered from this backfill. This range of material could represent house clearance debris, although no complete vessels were found.

Eight sherds were recovered from the sunken terrace [082], including fragments of LMT, a GRE ?jar and a TGE vessel with mottled manganese purple spatter decoration were all presumably residual, as the fill contained three small sherds of pearlware.

Unphased/Georgian (D)

Apart from a few modern fragments from evaluation Trench 2, the majority of unphased material was from the latest layers on the site (006) and (028)–(031). The total group of 73 sherds (MNV=57) was largely of late 18th- and 19th-century date and probably relates to clearance and demolition. It included a variety of pearlware and refined whiteware plain and transfer-printed vessels, as well as more utilitarian LGRE and YELW bowls. A single small sherd of post-medieval slipware was residual in these contexts. A fragment of stoneware from (037) may be from a vessel also found in hollow fill (035).

Discussion (C)

The earliest post-Roman wares from this site are largely as expected for the area, although no coarsewares are present and much of the assemblage is likely to be quite late. Even the ‘earliest’ ware in the group (Hedingham fineware) may be a late version of the type (perhaps an Essex redware rather than true Hedingham ware). Few medieval groups have been recovered from Baldock previously, and the group is therefore of significance for the history of the town in the late medieval period. Unfortunately this also means that there is little comparative material for the earliest period covered by this assemblage.

The high to late medieval group contains a number of regional wares together with some unidentified wares which may be of more local manufacture. The high proportion of glazed wares with no medieval coarseware and only a small quantity of late medieval reduced wares is unusual, and suggests that a high proportion of the vessels discarded on the site were jugs for serving and storing liquid. Glazed wares of this type in this period would normally be considered ‘table wares’, and this may indicate that the site in this period was involved in the hospitality trade. The lack of ceramic cooking vessels may simply be due to the use of metal cauldrons, or possibly suggests that the area excavated did not include the part of the site where kitchen waste was discarded. However, in terms of MNV, this and the early post-medieval assemblage are both relatively small.

The modern pottery is typical of the 18th to early 20th centuries and much of it would have been found in any household of the period. However, as much of the 18th/19th-century assemblage appears to be linked to a single structure, it does provide some evidence for the use of ceramics in a Baldock household of 18th and 19th-century date. The group includes typical kitchen wares used for preparation and storage of food, as well as other utilitarian vessels such as chamber pots and plant pots, but is dominated by table wares. A few early examples of porcelain and creamware are present, but the majority of the refined whitewares are pearlwares of late 18th- and 19th-century date, with transfer-printed decoration particularly common. This suggests that much of the modern group relates to the last few decades of occupation of the Georgian structures on the site. The presence of Chinese porcelain may suggest that the household was of above average means at some point in the period it was occupied, but much of the rest of the assemblage would be common in any household of moderate means, and even the poorest by this period might own a few secondhand decorated plates and cups. The concentration of vessels – even though not complete – in the terrace fill and overlying layers of the site suggests that these vessels had been left in the building prior to its demolition.

Ceramic Building Material (B)

Sue Anderson

Introduction (C)

Ceramic building material (CBM) totalling 1362 pieces (82406g) was recovered from 60 contexts during the evaluation and excavation. Summaries of fabric types by form and in total are included in the archive.

The Assemblage (C)

CBM fabrics were largely tempered with fine sand, although a few slightly coarser sandy fabrics were also present. Other inclusions were generally naturally-occurring and included chalk, argillaceous clay pellets, flint, ferrous oxide, and/or rounded quartz. Occasional examples of grog-tempering were also present. A small group of roof tile was in a white-firing fabric which had also been used to make one of the bricks and one of the floor tiles. The majority of the assemblage was, as is typical, in a range of orange to red oxidised fabrics, occasionally with reduced cores.

Only a small proportion of the assemblage comprised material of Roman date or possible Roman date, a total of 41 fragments. This material was recovered from 13 contexts, some in association with later material. Most pieces were unidentifiable to specific form (RBT), but there were at least four flanged tegulae (FLT), one with a surviving flange and one chamfered below, and measuring 25–30mm thick. Five probable or possible imbrices were also present, and one small roughly cuboid fragment with traces of mortar on five sides may be a coarse tessera. Thickness measurements were recorded for six of the tiles recorded as RBT. These varied between 22–38mm and probably included further flanged tegulae and possibly one or two wall or floor bricks. Fabrics were generally fine sandy with flint/coarse quartz, fine chalk or clay pellets/soft ferrous particles being the most common inclusions. Firing was variable, with both soft and hard examples present, and some with reduced surfaces which may indicate re-use or variable firing conditions.

The overwhelming majority of fragments in this assemblage were pieces of plain roof tile, most of which were in fine to medium red-firing sandy fabrics with a range of local inclusions, coarse

flint being the most frequent. The group as a whole was of typical form and where method of attachment could be ascertained, these tiles had peg holes and no nibs were seen. Most peg holes were circular, a few were square and, unusually, two examples were triangular. A few fragments with reduced cores or patchy green ?glaze may be of medieval or late medieval date (RTM). Fully oxidised examples were recorded as RTP, but this group included a number of fragments which had been burnt and it is possible that those which showed signs of 'glaze' were used in a kiln. There was vitrification of some tiles and some of the post-medieval bricks (see below), suggesting that they may have been used in a kiln or furnace. They were noted in deposit [033] and well [405] in particular, but other examples occurred elsewhere. A few fragments of other types of roof tile, including curving hip and ridge tiles and a possible pantile, were also present, and there was one fragment of a chimney pot.

One possible fragment of a late medieval brick with straw impressions on the base was recovered from pit [075]. Later bricks were more frequent and came in a range of sizes. There appeared to be two main groups comprising those measuring 58–67mm thick which are likely to be of 19th-century or later date, and those measuring 53mm or less in thickness which may well be earlier. Most of the former were recovered from walls in Trench 2 of the evaluation, at some distance from the excavation site and relating to structures on the Station Road street frontage. Some thicker bricks were recovered from contexts to the south end of the Georgian building (033, 038), and these may also be relatively late; one compressed shale brick of modern date was also recovered here. Fragments recovered from hearth [087] were worn and varied in thickness, and most had burnt surfaces, but their size may indicate a 16th–18th-century date.

Two fragments of quarry floor tiles, one red firing and one white-firing, were found in wall [052] and well [083] respectively. The red tile appeared to have been deliberately rubbed along one edge to form a curve. The white tile had been knife-scored prior to firing to make it easier to break into quarters or diagonally and was broken along the diagonal line. It was found in association with 17th-century pottery but could be of 18th-century date.

Fragments of field drains in fine sandy calcareous fabrics were recovered from deposit [033] and depression [036]. These are likely to be of 19th-century date.

Most of the unidentified fragments were small, abraded pieces recovered during bulk sample sieving. One larger piece from sub-rectangular feature [077] was black with a red surface and could be either floor tile or Roman tile. A fragment from deposit [033] had a flat surface and a curving underside with a reduced core, but its form and date are uncertain.

CBM by site phase (C)

A few fragments were recovered from Roman and medieval contexts, but the majority were collected from the late/post-medieval and Georgian-period contexts. Undated and evaluation finds will not be considered further.

Late Iron Age to Early Roman (D)

There were 42 fragments from six contexts assigned to this phase, and representing 12 objects. Of these, only three were Roman: one Roman tile, one imbrex and one large piece of flanged tegula from ditches [447] and [464]. The majority were later and presumably intrusive. These comprised fragments of five post-medieval plain roof tile, two ?post-medieval brick, one

chimney pot and one unidentified. The later fragments were recovered from feature [306], and ditches [043], [070], [447] and [464].

Early–Mid-Roman (D)

Thirteen fragments of 8 objects were collected, but all were later than the phase. Fragments of medieval and post-medieval plain roof tile, post-medieval brick and one unidentified piece were collected from pits [022], [068] and [466].

Mid–Late Roman (D)

The 66 fragments represented 42 objects, of which 14 were Roman, including Roman tile, flanged tegulae, imbrices and a possible tessera. These were from hearth [495], pits [079], [443] and [445]. Pit [074] contained a possible medieval brick, although this may be a fragment of fired clay given its context. Seven very small fragments of LB/RT from pit [079] could be wrongly identified due to their size. The fragments of post-medieval roof tile from well [097] are likely to be intrusive in this phase.

Medieval/late medieval (D)

All fragments from this phase were from pit [439] and were either Roman or undated. The finds included some heavily abraded pieces of Roman tile and flanged tegula.

Late/post-medieval (D)

The majority of CBM was recovered from features assigned to this phase. Most of the CBM came from pits, with the largest groups being found in pits [494] and [497], and well [406]. By far the majority of CBM fragments were pieces of post-medieval plain tiles, with only 16 pieces of post-medieval brick relating to this phase. Three pieces of field drain are likely to be intrusive, while eight Roman tiles were residual and were all found in well [406], which also contained much of the medieval roof tile. The 73 fragments of 14 objects in hearth [092], most of which were heavily abraded brick pieces, all showed signs of burning.

Georgian (D)

This phase produced the second largest quantity of phased CBM. Apart from well [025], the CBM was all from linears relating to walls/foundations. Nevertheless, plain roof tile is still more frequent than brick. Three pieces of a burnt brick were collected from the brick-lined well, but no samples of the walling itself were recovered.

The ‘Undated/Georgian’ phase group was recovered from three layers, with the majority being from deposit [033]. Again, this was dominated by plain roof tile fragments of post-medieval date, with a few small pieces of medieval tile and post-medieval brick.

Discussion (C)

This is a largely unremarkable assemblage which includes a small group of Roman tile, some of which was redeposited and some re-used in later features, with only a small quantity occurring in contemporary features. The range of Roman types does, however, appear to suggest that it derived from a relatively high status structure, possibly with a mosaic floor. The medieval period was represented by a small group of roof tile and a possible brick, although the latter could instead be a fragment of a Roman fired clay object. The vast majority of the assemblage comprised plain roof tile in fabrics variable enough to suggest that it came from several sources, although all of it, with the possible exception of the white-firing fragments, is likely to be of local origin. The few bricks were in a similar but smaller range of fabrics, with

flint and calcareous materials being the most common inclusions other than sand. These are typical of the country brickworks which supplied most towns in the 16th to 19th centuries. Occasional more specialist forms were identified, including pieces of ridge and hip tile, quarry floor tiles, a chimney pot and field drains. Few fragments were recovered from in situ structures and it is likely that the majority represent demolition waste which was used to backfill inconvenient holes and level the site between different phases of use.

Fired Clay (B)

Sue Anderson

One hundred and twenty-eight fragments (218g) of fired clay were collected by hand and from bulk samples recovered from eleven contexts during the excavation.

Four fragments from pit [022] had organic inclusions (grass?) and one of these pieces had three flattish surfaces and two near right-angled corners, suggesting that it may be part of a kiln bar or similar (or possibly a flange from a Roman tile – although the fabric would be unusual).

There were two joining fragments from well [406] which were part of a flat slab measuring 13mm thick. These were in a cream-coloured clay containing fine sand, chalk and flint, and may represent the remains of a clay-based render.

All other fragments were heavily abraded and of uncertain type. Most were in fine sandy fabrics, commonly with chalk and occasionally flint/coarse quartz inclusions.

Human Bone (B)

Sue Anderson

A large group of disarticulated human remains were recovered from mid-late Roman pit [079]. Three fragments were also recovered from early to mid-Roman pit [022].

Pit [079] (C)

The assemblage as a whole was in fair or good condition, but most bones were incomplete and/or fragmented. Several complete bones were reconstructed from fragments and it was possible to measure lengths of ten long bones.

The minimum number of individuals represented is difficult to calculate. It is likely that several bones belonged to perhaps three to five individuals, but owing to breakage, it was generally only possible to pair bones and not to link them to articulating bones. Size can be used as a guide, but all the bone was of similar colour and condition, so this was not a factor in determining whether bones belonged to a particular individual.

At least one sub-adult was present and was represented by fragments of the right femur, a complete left tibia shaft, two fragments of a fibula shaft, two fragments of the left ilium, six small pieces of vertebrae and three fragments of rib; the individual was aged c.14–15 years. In addition, a distal tibial epiphysis, pair of tali and three metatarsals appeared too large to belong with the other bones and may represent a second sub-adult.

The majority of bones belonged to adult individuals. Based on the presence of three left innominates and three left tibiae, at least three adult individuals were present, but all three of

each of these bones appeared to be female. At least two males appeared to be present based on other bones in the group, most notably two large left calcaneums (80mm and 81mm long respectively).

A single near-complete skull (fragmented) was recovered and appeared to be that of an adult female. Also found were a fragment of right maxilla, most of a female mandible and a complete ?male mandible. It was not possible to determine whether the maxilla and/or one of the mandibles belonged to the cranial vault. The maxilla and the female mandible both showed evidence for ante-mortem tooth loss and periodontal disease, with an abscess also present in the first premolar position of the maxilla. The male mandible had all its teeth at the time of death, but the premolars had been lost post-mortem. Both (or all three) individuals appeared to be middle-aged based on tooth wear.

Fragments and more complete bones which may belong together included a right scapula, left clavicle, pair of humeri (the left with a green stain midshaft, suggesting a copper alloy object had been present), right radius, one of the left innominates, pair of femora and left tibia. A few other bones, such as rib fragments and some ankle/foot bones could also belong. These bones represent at least one adult female, possibly in middle age, and perhaps the same as the skull and maxilla/mandible. Estimated stature from the left femur and tibia is 1.53m (just over 5ft), whereas the estimate from the humeri is 1.66m (5ft 4in), but measurements of the arm bones generally produce a higher estimate of stature than those of the legs.

Several bones may be attributable to a smaller female individual, including several cervical vertebral fragments, a small carpal navicular, one of the left innominates, a small left humerus and radius, and a small femur shaft and head. The humerus provides an estimated stature of 1.50m (4ft 11in) and the radius suggests a height of 1.57m (5ft 2in), which is within the normal range for different bones from a single individual.

A complete left humerus of a male provided a stature estimate of 1.75m (5ft 9in) and a long but gracile ?female tibia produced an estimated height of 1.64m (5ft 5in).

Non-metric traits are small asymptomatic deviations from the 'normal' skeletal anatomy and are scored on a present/absent basis. A number have been shown to be of genetic origin, and this may be the case for others. The skull had retained the metopic suture into adulthood, although it was partially closed by the time of death. It also had large precondylar tubercles, parietal foramina and lambdoid wormian bones. A mandibular torus was present in the male mandible. The right scapula which may belong to the adult female described above had a supra-scapular foramen. Several of these are relatively unusual traits which may provide evidence for family relationships if a larger population is excavated in the area in the future.

Pathology was noted where possible, of note are several examples of degenerative joint disease. The second and third cervical vertebrae of a male had large osteophytes, thickening and Grade II osteoarthritis of the facets. Several rib facets and vertebral bodies exhibited osteophytosis, and there were large osteophytes around the flenoid facet of a female right scapula. The small carpal navicular had a small patch of eburnation at one end. Eburnation was also noted on one talus of a pair, with the other having a small patch of healed osteochondritis dissecans or possibly osteoarthritis.

In summary, this group represents at least three adult/mature females, perhaps two mature males, and at least one sub-adult. At least two or three of the adults had been affected by

degenerative or stress-related pathologies affecting the shoulders, spine, wrist and ankles. Dental disease was also present in the population, with abscess and tooth loss affecting at least two individuals.

Pit [022] (C)

This small assemblage comprised two fragments of long bone (distal radius, proximal humerus), possibly from a single perinatal infant. Also from this context was a second or third permanent molar with evidence for dental caries and advanced attrition, which may perhaps have been deliberately extracted and discarded.

Radiocarbon Dating and Stable Isotope Data (B)

Joshua Toulson

Introduction (C)

Bone from two of the individuals identified in pit [079] were sent to the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre (SUERC) for radiocarbon and stable isotope analysis. Carbon, nitrogen, and sulphur isotopes were analysed in both samples. Henceforth the samples from each individual will be referred to as A and B respectively.

Sulphur isotope ratios can be used as an indicator of geographical origin, whilst carbon and nitrogen are used as proxies for dietary practices.

Results (C)

Sample A had a sulphur ratio relative to the VCDT standard of 2.5%. The nitrogen ratio relative to air was 10.1%, whilst their carbon ratio relative to the VPBD standard was -19.7%. A radiocarbon date of AD261-540 (95% probability, SUERC-123022) was recorded.

Sample B had a Sulphur ratio relative to the VCDT standard of 2.0%. The nitrogen ratio relative to air was 10.2%, whilst their carbon ratio relative to the VPBD standard was -19.6%. A radiocarbon date of AD247-525 (95% probability, SUERC-123023) for individual B was recorded.

Discussion (C)

Individuals A and B had a slightly different sulphur ratio, suggesting that they did not originate from the same location. The specific bone sampled is unknown, therefore the results reflect an unknown time in the individuals lives but given bone growth rate it is likely that it reflects the decades prior to their death.

Individual A's sulphur ratio is not very diagnostic and they may originate from a variety of areas within the UK. Though not indicating an origin within Baldock, they may have originated from the area directly south of the site, between Baldock and London. Other areas of possible origin lie in the area between Worcester and Sheffield.

Individual B has a sulphur ratio which indicates an origin directly in or in the immediate vicinity of Baldock, indicating the possibility they were of local origin. Other possible origins are located in Central and Southern England, excluding almost all regions north of Lincoln or south of Guildford.

Individual A and B have negligible difference in their carbon and nitrogen ratios, indicating a similar diet for both. As is common in the British Isles, C3 plants likely dominated the diet. Carbon values above -20‰, in addition to the higher nitrogen values, indicate a marine component in the diet, within British contexts, which suggests that the individuals had a small but not insignificant part of their diet come from freshwater or saltwater sources.

Ivory Comb (B)

Dr Elizabeth Foulds with material identification by Dr Hannah Russ

The ivory comb was recovered from the fill [450] of the late-post medieval pit [497] and is a double-sided type, although very little of the ends and teeth remain. It is difficult to date due to the surviving pieces; however, based on the material type and what can be inferred about the form, it is likely to be early post-medieval in date.

The comb fragment consists of two pieces, one of which is a small chip from a much more substantial fragment. It was carved from a single piece of ivory with teeth cut on either side of a central solid rectangular bar. One original comb end is intact, while the remainder of the comb has broken away. This end appears to have been vertical, but as it is incomplete this is uncertain. Both sets of teeth are set in a straight-line projecting from the central bar. There is no evidence of setting out lines, used to guide the saw when cutting the teeth. All the teeth are broken and most are only short stubs. The teeth on one side are cut more finely and are set closely together (7–8 times/cm) than on the other side, which are coarser (4–5 times/cm). No decoration is present on the comb fragment, but there is a single circular indent on either side of middle solid zone. These indents do not align but they are nearly opposite each other.

<Fig. 16 here>

Discussion (C)

Double sided combs are known in Britain from as early as the Roman period. They are generally associated with personal hygiene and in the Roman period they are particularly associated with elite women (Swift 2011). However, combs were not restricted to female use and in general the range of toilet and medical implements, communal bathing culture, and texts from this period demonstrates a desire to maintain the body. In the medieval period, concern with personal hygiene is also apparent from medieval texts, but social and religious changes in the late medieval and early post-medieval period led to more widespread changes in attitudes towards hygiene (Smith 2008).

This ivory comb fragment is small and lacks features that would aid in confidently dating the object. Although the Pit [497] that the comb was found in disturbed Roman pit [457], the comb is unlikely to be Roman in date. Single piece Roman combs found in Britain ('H-combs') are usually made from boxwood (MacGregor 1985; Pugsley 2003), such as at Cataractonium (Croom 2021, 366, no. 1285) and Vindolanda (Birley 1977, plate 60). Ivory examples of this type of comb are known from continental finds but are not found in Britain (MacGregor 1985) and Roman composite combs were usually made from antler (Greep 1983). Apart from a small number of early medieval examples, single-piece ivory combs are known from the fourteenth century onwards (Ashby 2006, Type 14b) and it is most likely that the comb is contemporary with the medieval or early post-medieval pottery in Pit [497]. These combs are described as being small, made from a single piece of material, undecorated, and with a rectangular profile

(Ashby 2006, Table 6.1). It is not clear why this example has a small dimple on either side. Combs of this type are generally not decorated, so it may be that the marks are related to the manufacturing process.

Medieval combs were primarily made from wood (especially boxwood), but other materials such as horn, bone, and ivory were used. In the medieval period, ivory came from elephant and walrus tusks, and combs made from ivory were more expensive compared to wood (Ashby 2006, 77–78; Egan & Pritchard 2002, 376). In the medieval period, it seems that ivory was considered a luxury material, but by the post-medieval period ivory was the usual material for combs (Egan 2005, 65; Margeson 1993, 66).

Similar combs with a medieval and post-medieval date are known from London (Egan & Pritchard 2002, 366–376; Egan 2005, 64–65, nos 295–297; Watson & Pearce 2010; Killock et al. 2005), Norwich (Margeson 1993, 65–68, nos 408–429), on the Mary Rose shipwreck (Maddocks & Richards 2005, 156–159), at Landguard Fort, Suffolk (Meredith 2008), and at Guildford, Surrey (Fryer & Shelley 1997). The ivory combs from Norwich in particular bear remarkable similarities with this example (especially no. 419, which was found in a seventeenth century context). Closer to Baldock, a comb was discovered from Boxworth, Cambridgeshire (Clarke 2011), which has a similar description.

Mayen Lava Querns (B)

Ann Clarke

Fragments of Mayen lava were found in four contexts and represent at least three querns. The lava is vesicular, and grey in colour interspersed with occasional clear crystals which are visible in fragments from three contexts and with black and blue crystals from two pieces in a fourth context. Lava was brought to Britain in the Roman and early medieval periods from the Eifel region in Germany and is known as Mayen lava (also referred to as Niedermendig lava) (Peacock 2013, 152). It was used specifically for querns.

<Fig. 17 - 19 here>

Within each context the lava fragments are likely to derive from one quern stone, though the pieces do not conjoin. Lava fragments become rounded and misshaped through weathering and it is often not possible to match potential breaks. The weathering also destroys the original worked surfaces.

Two fragments from layer [458] which seals hearth [495] are from a probable upper stone. The slight concave grinding face has been shaped by pecking and the upper face is flat. A wide indentation on a fractured edge may be the remains of a perforation for a handle.

Two conjoining fragments from hearth [495] are from a probable lower stone. The slight convex grinding face is too weathered to determine the surface finish. The base has been pecked flat.

A third quern is different in form to the others. A fine grinding face survives on two thin fragments from pit [439]. The grinding surface is flat in cross section and bears radial grooves on which the raised surfaces are ground flat from use. Visually the lava appears slightly different to the rest of the lava on site since it has black and blue crystal inclusions. The two

fragments are not rounded or weathered and may have not been subjected to the same redeposition process as the other pieces.

A further rounded weathered fragment of lava was also recovered from pit [445].

Discussion (C)

The remains of potentially three querns are present: an upper stone from sealing layer [458], a lower stone from hearth [495] and a flat, possible lower stone from pit [439]. The first two examples are Roman in date and are redeposited.

The lava fragments from pit [439] are in a mixed deposit with Roman and medieval finds, and the dating of this quern is uncertain. Grinding surfaces on early medieval querns are flatter and more level in comparison to the angled surfaces of Roman querns (Parkhouse 2014) but Parkhouse suggests that surface dressing with radial grooves is more usual on Roman pieces (ibid). Meanwhile Shaffrey has recorded flatter disc lava querns with radial grooving from Roman deposits at Stanford North, Essex (Shaffrey 2012). On balance a Roman date could be ascribed to this quern fragment.

Metal (B)

Christina Hills

The metal recovered from the site consisted of one pewter, 206 iron and 26 copper alloy items.

Religious or Ritual objects (C)

A possible votive model or pin was recovered from pit [445]. The head is broken but appears to be in the shape of a Pickaxe or Adze. The shaft is also broken, it is tapered and is long enough that it could possibly have been used as a hairpin. The object roughly fit Cool's (1990, 168) Group 18c, a group of pins with object shaped heads. The small size of the head, relative to the long shaft also aligns with other examples (Kiernan 2009, 119).

<Fig. 20 here>

Cool (1990) speculates that these objects could be votive objects, noting that they are often found at temple sites. However, Kiernan (2009) comments that these objects are often found at military sites in Britain. The site is located near to the scheduled monument Roman Town of Baldock, which has been described as a 'cult centre' (Fitzpatrick-Matthews, 2016, 34) and so it seems most likely that this object is of religious or ritual origin.

Dress Accessories (C)

The majority of dress accessories recovered on site were hob nails, with 22 individual examples found in pits [068], [074], [079], [439] and [466]. All of the hob nails are Roman and broadly fit type 10 of Manning's nail typology (Manning 1985, 133).

A copper alloy pin of likely Roman date was recovered from the lower fill of pit [445]. The head is flattened and broken, similar to an example from Hampshire (Hinds 2019).

A possible pin or brooch pin was recovered from the secondary fill of possible ditch/ elongated pit [400]. This short length of copper alloy is curved at one end, possibly indicating a brooch spring or spiral pin head.

A copper alloy brooch pin was found in lower fill of pit [068], it likely would have been part of a Roman bow brooch, but further identification is not possible (Watters 2011).

Additionally, an early medieval annular brooch was recovered from pit [497], it is similar to examples recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme (Daubney 2010 and Cobby 2019).

Buildings and Services (C)

The majority items within this category were nails, with 99 identified. These were dated using a mix of context phase, alongside the forms. The forms seem to be that of general or weight-bearing use (Manby 2024), and it seems likely that the majority were structural, with many of the nails from Roman contexts covered in concrete.

Other objects within this category included a hinge pivot from layer [033] and a hook from the fill of well [084] both of which are post medieval.

Equestrian objects (C)

One Crotal Bell was recovered from the upper fill of well [086]. It is cast in pewter with a 'sunburst' and 'fish scale' pattern. Similar examples have been found in Hertfordshire and date to the broad Post Medieval period (Fittock 2023). This bell was likely used on a horse drawn vehicle to warn other road users of their approach (McSloy & Collier-Jones 2022).

Glass (B)

Christina Hills

Roman (C)

A small assemblage of Roman glass was recovered on site, all of which are probably from drinking vessels.

Sixteen clear vessel body fragments were found in deposit [033], as this context also contained modern pottery it is likely a result of movement on site over time. Vessel body fragments were uncovered in multiple fills of pit [068], possibly all from the same object. A rim and a body fragment from a vessel were found in the fill of pit [074].

Seventeenth Century (C)

A decorative vessel was found in the fill of pit [497]. This is a Venetian Glass Goblet, there are body and stem fragments, and the stem has raised decoration with what appear to be grapes.

ENVIRONMENTAL (A)

Animal Bone (B)

Joshua Toulson

An assemblage of preserved animal remains (4794 fragments weighing 23.96kg) were recovered via hand collection and flotation.

Overall Assemblage (C)

The assemblage is somewhat fragmented, having been rated on average a 3 out of 5 for preservation and fragmentation. This contrasts with the animal bone report on excavations of Roman Baldock in 1968-72 which states that the assemblage was particularly fragmented (Stead & Rigby 1986). The fragmentation of the assemblage limited the number of bones that were viable for biometric analysis, however enough were taken to aid any regional or national studies. The assemblage had a small, but significant quantity of burnt, butchered, and gnawed bone.

The assemblage is characterised by mammalian domesticates, chiefly cattle and sheep/goat. Other main domesticates recovered included dog, pig, chicken, and horse.

Cattle were recovered from every historic phase on site and was the most common taxa by count from the overall assemblage. The role of cattle changes significantly throughout the historic periods on site, at times being primarily raised for meat or traction. Cattle of neonatal, juvenile, sub-adult, and adult ages were recovered and evidence for cattle rearing is consistent across all phases. Cattle remains showed evidence of butchery, burning, calcination, and gnawing.

Sheep/goat are raised mainly for meat, wool, and dairy production. The goal of sheep/goat husbandry changed through the phases, as demonstrated by the remains. Sheep/goat were recovered from every historic phase on site, being the second most common taxa recovered on site.

Dogs are found in all of the phases except Georgian, with adult dogs recovered from the early-mid and mid-late Roman as well as late medieval and post-medieval contexts, with a neonatal dog also present in the later phase. No taphonomy or pathology is present on the dog bones, and there is no evidence to indicate their role.

Pig bones are similarly found in every phase with the exception of Georgian, though in very small quantities. Pigs are raised to produce meat and the low density of pig remains on site suggests a secondary source of meat from pigs.

Chicken bones are present in all of the phases, in low quantities, and always of adults where identifiable. This likely represents the use of hens for egg laying in addition to meat and feather production.

Horse bones are present in early-mid and mid-late Roman, as well as the late medieval and post-medieval contexts. Horses are used for traction and transportation and were present in the 1968-72 excavations from the late Iron Age (Stead and Rigby 1986).

The main rodents on site are the black rat and the house mouse. The rodent remains reflect the abundance of food available to scavengers on site, and rodent gnawing on bones in the assemblage provides further evidence of this.

Identified fish remains belonged to the European perch and the northern pike. Both are freshwater species and are present in the early-mid and mid-late Roman, and late medieval and

post-medieval phases. As the River Ivel is situated immediately north of site, it is highly likely that the settlement would have fished river fish from it throughout all phases.

A significant number of common frog bones are present in the assemblage, and their proliferation is likely due to the favourable conditions created by being located near to a river.

Late Iron Age – Early Roman Discussion (C)

Cattle is the most prevalent species identified with adult, sub-adult, and juvenile bones present, suggesting that cattle rearing was occurring nearby. Iron Age cattle assemblages tend to be mainly adults, a reflection of the non-specialised economy which valued the variety of resources cattle could contribute (meat, traction, and dairy production). The relatively high proportion of non-adults (N=6; MNI=2) would indicate less emphasis on the need for traction, and an increased demand for meat. This trend may suggest these features were post conquest rather than late Iron Age with the Roman's introducing dietary preferences and a more specialised economy (Albarella 2020; Dobney 2001).

Pig is the second most common animal by count in this phase, although the majority of remains are from a single neonatal animal. Pig breeding and rearing was evidenced, with animals at every stage of life from neonatal to adult.

Sheep/goat is the third most prevalent species, with juvenile, sub-adult and adult bones indicating sheep/goat breeding was taking place near the site, with the animals kept for a variety of uses.

One species of corvid, the hooded crow, was identified from this phase. The remains came from adults and did not show any signs of butchery or burning. Corvids are particularly associated with the Roman period, with a significant decrease seen following the Roman abandonment of Britain. Reasons for this phenomenon include the symbolic significance, and the possibility they were kept to screen predatory birds (Parker 1988; Albarella 2020). Corvids are also scavengers, and so their remains may be a result of food waste being available to them.

Of note is the remains of black rat, although there is some evidence that the black rat was introduced into Britain in the late Iron Age (Turner 1999), it seems much more plausible that the remains are intrusions from truncating features. The remains are particularly degraded and fragmentary, further indicating intrusive material.

Early-Mid Roman Discussion (C)

Cattle was again the most common animal on site during this phase. Remains of cattle included neonatal, juvenile, and adult bones, indicating that they were still being bred near the site. The neonatal remains imply that dairy production was an important secondary product. Cattle were being utilised for traction alongside meat, as attested to by the arthritic humerus identified in pit [068].

Sheep/goat was the second most prevalent species. Animals of neonatal, juvenile, sub-adult, and adult ages show sheep/goat breeding continued near the site.

A smaller quantity of corvid remains were recovered from this phase, with only raven identified.

Mid-Late Roman Discussion (C)

By count, the most prevalent species in the assemblage from this phase was the common frog, with an MNI of 20, however, most of these remains are from a single deposit. This likely represents a single event, such as a backfilling or dump on to breeding frogs, rather than a significant increase of their numbers on site.

Sheep/goat becomes the most common domesticate by count in this phase, this is inflated by singular animals, but still a marked change from what occurs in other areas of Britain (Albarella 2020). There is relatively little taphonomy in the sheep/goat assemblage to indicate any reason for an increase in the population.

Horse is present in this phase in line with the noted increase in the frequency of horse remains occurs during the late Roman Period (Albarella 2020). This may be due to an increase in the number of animals being utilised, or a change in how horse remains are treated. However, the MNI is only 2, as the vast majority of fragments are from a singular, very fragmented, skull. It is likely that horses on site would have been used for transportation, especially given the more urban setting of the town.

Cattle continue to be part of the more specialised Roman economy with an arthritic cattle radius recovered from pit [079] indicating use in traction. Juvenile and neonatal remains attest to the breeding and rearing of cattle continuing in the local area.

Short-tailed field vole remains, likely representing a single individual, was recovered from pit [074]. Field voles live in moist grassy habitats, and so are likely to have been relatively abundant in the vicinity of the river. They are known to burrow, and likely represent intrusive material.

A small quantity of red deer remains show that hunting was practised in the locality and are possibly further indication of Romanisation of the town (Albarella 2022 p.128).

Although single fragments of chicken bone were recovered from the first two phases, it is only in this phase that multiple remains were recovered. No taphonomy was recorded, though it was noted that the bone came from an adult. Chicken was popular in Roman Britain, accounting for 82% of recovered bird remains (Albarella 2020 p.97).

A smaller quantity of corvid (hooded crow) remains were identified, with an MNI of 1, and a reduction in the quantity of house mouse remains, as well as the absence of rat were noted in this phase. This may be evidence of changes in waste disposal, leading to a reduced ability to scavenge.

Medieval – Late Medieval Discussion (C)

Only two features dated to this period contained animal bones with cattle, followed by sheep/goat, being the most frequently identified animals in this phase.

Horse is also present including burnt horse remains, indicating that horses in this period are being used for meat, perhaps after their usefulness in traction or transport was over.

Late Medieval and Post-Medieval Discussion (C)

Cattle were once again the most frequently identified animal in this phase. The proportion of adults has increased when compared to the Roman period, possibly due to the gradual replacement of oxen used for traction with horses, as became more common in the late medieval period (Langdon 1986).

Dog was the second most prevalent species in this phase by count, although the remains are all from one neonatal animal.

The proportion of adult sheep/goat remains also increased, possibly reflecting the smaller community now sustained in Baldock, and the proportionally smaller meat requirements. It may be that wool had become the primary reason for sheep/goat animal husbandry.

Chicken is also still present on site, with once again only adult remains being retrieved it is probable that egg laying was important in addition to meat and feathers.

Georgian House discussion (C)

The animal bone assemblage from contexts associated with the Georgian house is the smallest of any phase. The main, and only relatively well represented animal was chicken, again only adult remains were retrieved, probably present to provide eggs as well as meat and feathers.

Domesticates are not well represented, with only 34 fragments of cattle and 16 of sheep/goat recovered. With such a small assemblage, it is difficult to postulate on any trends although cattle were still being processed on site, with saw marks on adult remains reflecting new butchery techniques.

Conclusion (C)

The occupation of the site over such a significant period allows for comparisons which often are not possible. Evidence suggests that cattle rearing and breeding occurred near the settlement during occupation phases over more than 1800 years. The phases themselves offer further evidence for regional and national trends, such as the introduction of the Roman specialised economy, and the change from oxen to horse as traction animals. The assemblage also indicates interesting differences, such as the increase in sheep during the later Roman period. The overall narrative of the site is one of diverse animal usage, with varied local fauna, and animals raised near the settlement.

Plant Remains (B)

Mhairi Hastie

Fifteen samples were deemed representative of the features and deposits uncovered on site and were processed and have been analysed for archaeobotanical remains.

Distribution of Plant Remains (C)

Thirteen samples contained carbonised plant remains (including cereal grains, chaff remains, weed seeds, nut shell, legume seeds and fruit pips).

The bulk of the plant remains were recovered from features and deposits dating to the late Iron Age to mid-Roman period; the plant remains recovered from a variety of pit and ditch fills. The largest concentrations of carbonised cereal grains, and other plant remains, being recovered from the fills of pits [022] and [068] and ditch [070].

Plant remains recovered from late medieval and post-medieval deposits/features were sparse and generally poorly preserved, suggesting that they are reworked contaminants from the earlier deposits.

Discussion (C)

The composition of the cereal grain and chaff, recovered from the samples, is similar to that recorded from Roman-British deposits uncovered during previous excavations at Baldock (Fitzpatrick-Matthews & Burleigh 2007) and is consistent with cereal assemblages recovered from other Roman-British sites, throughout Southern England (Dark 2000); with the main cultivars being spelt wheat and barley.

Given the distribution of the plant remains, with quantities spread throughout many different features and deposits, and the much abraded and fragmentary nature of the grains, it is likely that the debris is remnants of burnt grain from everyday processing (i.e. food accidentally burnt during food processing or crop-processing activities) which has found its way into many unrelated features and deposits across the site.

The larger concentrations of cereal chaff (spelt glume bases and barley rachis) recovered from the fill of pit [022] probably indicates cereal crops were being processed at the site, or in the local vicinity, with the chaff likely remnants of waste material charred either in refuse fires or whilst being used as fuel for hearths (Fitzpatrick-Matthews & Burleigh 2007). The bulk of the chaff, recovered from the samples, was identified as glume bases from spelt wheat. The grains of spelt are tightly closed in tough glume (husks) which means that when threshed the wheat ears break up into spikelets that then require further processing, such as milling or pounding, in order to remove the tough husks.

Only a sparse weed seed (wild taxa) assemblage was recovered from the samples, with the greatest number of seeds being recovered from the fill of pit [022] along with some cereal grain and a number of chaff fragments. The weed seeds included taxa commonly associated with hedges and waste places (cleavers, clover, knotgrass), pasture areas (clover, buttercup) and wet margins (spikerush).

The presence of other plant remains, such as legume seeds (broad bean & field pea) and flax seeds hints at their cultivation. These have been recovered along with cereal grain assemblages from many Roman-British sites (Dark 2000) and the assemblage from Baldock fits into an established pattern. The presence of these seeds may indicate the use of crop rotation methods, with the seeds being remnants from the previous year's crop mixed with the cereals (Jones 1981, cited by Dark 2000).

Of note, is the recovery of a carbonised grape pip (*Vitis vinifera*) from the fill of pit [074]. Grape pips are quite commonly recovered from Roman deposits, along with other exotic plant foods, and this was thought to indicate that the pips were arriving in imported raisins (Dark 2000). However, evidence for the cultivation of grapes in Britain, during the Roman period, has recently been discovered at Wollaston, Northamptonshire (Brown et al 2001); where grape

pollen has been recovered from a series of planting trenches, indicating the presence of a Roman vineyard at the site.

DISCUSSION (A)

Late Iron Age to Early Roman (B)

The late Iron Age settlement at Baldock consisted of a series of enclosed farmsteads separated by paddocks, vegetable plots and tracks (Burleigh 1995) with the Station Road site lying at the north-western edge of the known settlement. The boundary ditch uncovered on site is likely part of this settlement, and is a probable continuation of the ditch previously uncovered to the NNE at 2 Icknield Way (Wilson 2011). It is likely this ditch continues further NNE to connect with the Icknield Way, a prehistoric trackway which runs to the north and to the south of the site. The Icknield Way would have been more of an agreed corridor for travelling directly between points, rather than a tightly controlled road and it appears to have migrated north and south across a broad corridor (Albion Archaeology 2008).

The two parallel ditches or elongated pits at the south east edge of site may represent part of a sub-division of land in this area. The scarcity of other features dated to this period suggests that activity in the area during this phase was limited, and adds to the evidence that the core of the late Iron Age settlement in the area is to the south-east of the site.

Rather than there being two distinct phases of activity, the late Iron Age and the Early Roman, the archaeological evidence shows a continuity of activity in the area. This aligns with the extensive field system at Bygrave, to the north-east of the site (HER1654), which produced both Roman and late Iron Age pottery.

Early to Mid Roman (B)

The Roman settlement at Baldock was well established by the mid first century AD with the site located on the northern edge of the known settlement activity (Burleigh 1982; Burleigh & Fitzpatrick-Matthew 2007). The Roman settlement thrived in this period and grew to cover at least 40 hectares in the second century.

The boundary ditch uncovered on site may still have been in use at the very start of the Roman settlement, although it was likely infilled soon after, as the Roman occupation changed the landscape of the area. Pottery dating to AD40-65 was recovered from the fill of a pit which truncated the boundary ditch, however, the pottery recovered from the other pits that truncated the ditch date from the early-mid second century AD, which may suggest that the earlier pottery was residual, and possibly from the boundary ditch itself. This would also add to the evidence that there was a continuity of activity between the late Iron Age and Roman settlement in the area.

All of the activity on site from this phase is in the form of pits, most likely waste pits. The animal remains from the pits show that cattle and sheep/goat breeding continued into this period, again showing a continuity between these phases. However, a change in purpose in the use of the cattle is possibly shown by the higher proportion of adult cattle, including evidence of arthritis, suggesting their use as traction animals rather than for milking or meat. The large concentrations of cereal chaff also indicates that cereal crops were being grown in the area, consistent with the use of the land as a farmstead.

Mid to Late Roman (B)

Activity on the site in this period continued to be solely represented by pits, with the range of pottery recovered from these pits similar to that excavated in the main Roman settlement to the south. The pottery is consistent with that from the outskirts of a small Roman town and even pit [074] with a number of nearly complete vessels has parallels from the excavation of Clothall Road (Stead and Rigby 1986).

The animal and plant remains from these pits show a continuation in cattle and sheep/goat rearing, along with cereal crop cultivation, taking place on or nearby the site, consistent with the site being located on the outskirts of a town.

The human remains recovered from pit [079] came from a minimum of 3-5 adults and one sub-adult. Dating of the teeth of two of the adults produced dates of AD261-540 and AD247-525 (95% probability, SUERC-123022 and SUERC-123023), which does not rule out the possibility that they were of the same date and the possibility of the remains representing a mass grave. However, it is more likely given the disarticulated nature of these remains along with the fragmentary nature of the large amount of pottery from the sealing layers, that they represent a reinterment of multiple inhumations. The pit was not fully excavated, due to the development limits, and so it is likely there were further human remains in the pit which may represent further individuals, and be further evidence of reinterment.

At least eight formal Roman cemeteries, in use after AD200, were located to the east of the site (Fitzpatrick-Matthews 2016), and although these were some distance away it is possible that more were in the vicinity which have not been uncovered. All of the pottery recovered from the sealing layers is of a similar date to the human remains. It is therefore difficult to ascertain when any reinterment would have taken place or the date of the pit. It is possible that the pit is of a much later date, and associated with the medieval or post-medieval activity on site, possibly when a nearby cemetery was cleared as part of the expansion of the town.

Medieval to Late Medieval (B)

The site was abandoned for a period after the late Roman activity until at least the medieval period. This hiatus, although seen across Baldock, may not be representative of a complete abandonment of the town, as it is now thought that this may be due to medieval truncation rather than a complete lack of activity (Thomson 2005).

Only three pits of a possible medieval to late medieval date were uncovered on the site, suggesting limited activity in the area. The site lies to the north-east of the known medieval settlement, with the north-east to south-west aligned highway leading to the marketplace running directly to the south-west of the site, and a leper hospital possibly located on the other side of the highway (Thomson 2005).

Late Medieval to Post-medieval (B)

The parish boundary of Baldock was located to the east of the site, on the other side of what is now Station Road, with the site lying on the outskirts of the town. The late medieval and post-medieval activity on site was spread across the site and included two large features which may represent small scale quarrying activity, along with a number of pits of unknown function. No

evidence of any structures dating to this period were uncovered and the features are consistent with activity on the edge of a town.

Georgian (B)

The final phase of occupation identified during the excavation is the Georgian building which is also seen on the 1842 Tithe map, and which was levelled in the nineteenth century. The building is part of an extension to the south-western wing of the (still upstanding) Raban Court. The brick lined well located on the outer edge of this building was probably built around the same time. A number of likely midden pits dated to this phase were also uncovered which contained broken objects including a worked bone comb and a seventeenth century Venetian glass goblet.

The excavations at Station Road have allowed us to add to our expanding knowledge of the transitional period between the late Iron Age and the Roman occupation of Baldock, along with its transformation in the medieval period into a thriving town, continuing into the twentieth century. The results suggest that the site lies at the edge of the Iron Age, Roman, and medieval centres of Baldock, which fits squarely with our existing knowledge.

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