

**An archaeological watching brief  
at 12 St Clare Road,  
Colchester, Essex  
November 2010**

**report prepared by  
Donald Shimmin**

**on behalf of  
Mr R Carbiner**

CAT project ref.: 10/11a  
Colchester and Ipswich Museums accession code: COLEM 2010.83  
NGR: TL 9745 2496



**Colchester Archaeological Trust**  
12 Lexden Road,  
Colchester,  
Essex CO3 3NF

*tel.:* (01206) 541051  
*tel./fax:* (01206) 500124  
*email:* [archaeologists@catuk.org](mailto:archaeologists@catuk.org)

**CAT Report 582**  
September 2011

## Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	1
4	Aims	2
5	Methods	2
6	Results	2
7	Finds	
7.1	Introduction	5
7.2	Prehistoric and Roman pottery, <i>by Stephen Benfield</i>	5
7.3	Cremated human bone, <i>by Adam Wightman and Richard Ward</i>	8
7.4	Miscellaneous finds, <i>by Stephen Benfield</i>	10
8	Conclusions	10
9	Archive deposition	11
10	Abbreviations and glossary	11
11	Acknowledgements	12
12	References	12
	Figures	after p 14
	EHER summary sheet	

## List of figures

- Fig 1 Site location, showing the Lexden cemetery area.
- Fig 2 Site plan.
- Fig 3 Burial F1: plan, section and pottery.
- Fig 4 Burial F2: plan and profile.

## 1 Summary

*During an archaeological watching brief at 12 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex, two Roman urned cremation burials were uncovered. One of the burials had an accompanying flagon within the urn. Among the other finds recovered from the site was a quantity of prehistoric and Roman pottery. The two cremation burials are part of the Late Iron Age/Roman Lexden cemetery area.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief took place at 12 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex, on behalf of Mr R Carbiner, during groundworks in advance of the construction of an extension and an outdoor swimming-pool. The watching brief was carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) in November 2010.
- 2.2 The site is located just over a mile (1.75 km) west of the walled area of Colchester town centre. The site lies on the western side of St Clare Road and consists of a detached residential property with a garage and large rear garden. The site is centred at NGR TL 9745 2496.
- 2.3 The excavation and recording methods used were outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the site, which was produced by CAT in October 2010 (CAT 2010). The WSI also set out proposals for post-excavation work, the production of a report, an archive and, if necessary, publication texts. It followed a brief written by Colchester Borough Council's Archaeological Officer (CBCAO) in September 2010 (CBC 2010).
- 2.4 This report follows the standards set out in Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CIMS 2008a), and also those in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IfA 2008b). The guidance contained in English Heritage's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE 2006), and in the documents *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. resource assessment* (EAA 3), *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. research agenda and strategy* (EAA 8), and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14) was also followed.

## 3 Archaeological background (Fig 1)

- 3.1 The site lies on the western side of the site of the Late Iron Age *oppidum* of Camulodunum, which was defined by a system of defensive dykes. One of these, Lexden Dyke, extends roughly north-south in Lexden Park, immediately to the west of the properties on the western side of St Clare Road (CAR 11, 34-45). Excavations in 1932 indicated that there was probably an entrance through Lexden Dyke Middle adjacent to the current site (*ibid*, 42-4).
- 3.2 The site lies within the Late Iron Age/Roman Lexden cemetery area (CAR 9, 261). The cemetery area, which has not been fully published (but see CAR 11, 164-9), was in use from the 1st century BC to the 3rd or 4th century AD. It has been possible to identify a cluster of mainly early cremation burials, c 50-10 BC, immediately to the south of the site (*ibid*). This group was found in the early 20th century and consists of around 27 vessels, representing at least ten Late Iron Age grave groups.
- 3.3 Near the corner of St Clare Road and Fitzwalter Road, approximately 220 m south of the site, lies the Lexden Tumulus. This scheduled ancient monument was excavated in 1924 and produced a rich Late Iron Age cremation burial dating to c 15-10 BC (Foster 1986).

- 3.4 CAT has also undertaken a number of other fieldwork projects in St Clare Road in recent years, but which have all been negative, ie at 1a (CAT Report 99), 14 (CAT Report 136), 10 (CAT Report 195), 1 (CAT Reports 225 and 455), and 30 (CAT Reports 250 and 568).

## 4 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to record the depth and extent of any archaeological remains uncovered during the building work, and to assess the date and significance of these remains.

## 5 Methods (Fig 2)

- 5.1 The groundworks included a large trench, to the west of the house, for a 10 m x 5 m outdoor swimming-pool. The trench measured approximately 13.5 m east-west by 7.5 m north-south and was 2.5 m deep. A series of narrow trenches was dug for the foundations of an extension on the western and southern sides of the house, and also for a small porch on the eastern side. The foundation trenches were 0.5-0.6 m wide and 1.1-1.4 m deep. A soakaway was dug to the west of the swimming-pool.
- 5.2 The watching brief took place on the 2nd-11th November 2010. The contractors dug the trenches using a mechanical digger with a toothless bucket. Following the removal of the modern topsoil (L1), the deposits in the trenches were progressively stripped under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Where no archaeologically-significant deposits were exposed, machine-excavation continued into the natural subsoil (L3). The contractors gave CAT staff time to investigate, clean and record any archaeological remains uncovered, and to collect up the finds which were unearthed.
- 5.3 Individual records of archaeological contexts, such as layers or features, as well as finds, were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets. Site plans were drawn at 1:20, and plans and section drawings of individual burials were drawn at 1:10. Standard record shots of the site and of individual contexts were taken on a digital camera. Further details of the recording methods used can be found in the WSI (CAT 2010) and in the CAT document *Policies and procedures* (CAT 2006).

## 6 Results

- 6.1 The natural subsoil (L3) consisted of reddish-yellow gravelly sand. This was capped in places by shallow pockets of pale brown cover loam. The natural subsoil lay approximately 0.4 m below the modern ground-level.

### 6.2 Roman burials (Figs 2-4)

- 6.2.1 During machine-stripping in the eastern half of the trench for the swimming-pool, two urned cremation burials (F1, F2) were uncovered. Both burials had been truncated by later activity and were disturbed by roots. The burials cut the natural subsoil (L3) and were sealed by a brown clayey deposit (L2).

#### 6.2.2 Urned cremation burial F1 (Fig 3)

##### Description

A small oval pit, 0.75 m long and 0.25 m deep, contained the cremation urn. A few sherds displaced from the urn were recovered from the surrounding area. There was no charcoal or bone in the pit fill.

##### Cremated human bone

A total of 1,076 g was recovered from a small adult or a sub-adult of indeterminate sex.

### Burial goods

The cremated human bone was contained in a large jar (F1.1, finds no 7). A small flagon (F1.2) had been placed above the cremated bone inside F1.1. It was found lying on its side close to one side of the urn. Two iron nails were found near to each other, halfway down in the fill of F1.1. A small lump of melted glass was found fused to a fragment of cremated bone in F1.1. A few other pottery sherds were recovered from the pit fill.

### Date

Mid 1st-early/mid 2nd century.

### Pottery catalogue

**F1.1** Large storage jar. Illustrated (Fig 3). Finds no 7, F1, whole base and much of body, and 14 other sherds; finds no 2, L2, 4 sherds from spoil immediately north of F1; finds no 5, 2 sherds, one joining and including a decorated shoulder sherd, from cleaning in area around F2.

Fabric HZ, Cam 270B, 3,539 g. Complete base and wall to lower part of shoulder, joining rim and neck sherds; significant part of upper neck and rim missing, surviving EVE 0.30. Interior surface reduced dark grey, much of exterior oxidised reddish-brown, dark grey/black sooting around shoulder area. Fabric grey with common black, burnt organic fragments. Dragged temper marks on half of body. Single row of stab decoration below neck. Neck burnished, and burnished on and over rim. Rim not fully hooked as is most typical for form Cam 270B but under cut and can be closely compared with *CAR 10*, figure 6.105, no 49. Form type dated pre-conquest-2nd/3rd century (*CAR 10*, 479). The fabric allows the vessel here to be dated to the post-conquest period and suggests an early Roman date of c mid 1st-early 2nd century AD.

**F1.2** Flagon, finds no 9. Illustrated (Fig 3). Fabric DJ, Cam 155B, 302 g, EVE 1.00. Complete accessory vessel placed inside the cremation urn (F1.1). Everted, slightly cupped, three-ring neck with two-rib handle and pear-shaped body. Cream-coloured fabric. Surface of pot degraded, presumably due to soil conditions. There are hairline cracks on one side of the flagon, the lower parts of which appear to emanate from a small stone in the fabric of the wall of the pot. As this vessel had been protected inside the cremation urn, this cracking may well be ancient and suggests that it is a possible kiln second or waster pot. The use of imperfect vessels placed with Roman cremation burials has been noted at a number of sites in Britain (Philpott 1991, 36). Form dated Claudio-Neronian to early Antonine period (*CAR 10*, 475).

Other pottery sherds: finds no 7, Fabric RCW, 1 rim sherd, 8 g, dated mid 1st-early 2nd century.

Fabric GX, 2 sherds, 4 g, dated Roman.

### Other objects

#### Glass

Spit 5, finds no 8, small undiagnostic lump of melted glass, pale green, 0.7 g, fused to a fragment of cremated bone

#### Iron nails

Spit 4, finds no 16, a) Complete nail, approximately 60 mm long (pointed tip of nail missing), ?round, flat head approximately 15 mm diameter, corroded, shaft bent almost to a right-angle, 11 g. b). Complete nail, approximately 50 mm long, ?round, flat head approximately 15 mm diameter, corroded, shaft bent almost to a right-angle, 8 g. Both nails are of Manning's Type 1b (Manning 1985, 134).

### 6.2.3 Urned cremation burial F2 (Fig 4)

#### Description

A small pit with poorly-defined edges, approximately 0.60 m in diameter and 0.12 m deep, contained the cremation vessel. There was no charcoal or bone in the pit fill.

#### Cremated human bone

A total of 252.3 g was recovered from an adult of indeterminate sex.

#### Burial goods

The cremated human bone was contained in a jar (F2.1), which was much fragmented. The fill of the vessel F2.1 was excavated in spits. A small quantity of sherds from at least two flagons was recovered as a result. A few other pottery sherds were found in the pit fill.

## **Residual finds**

A prehistoric pottery sherd.

## **Date**

Early/mid 2nd century to late 3rd/early 4th century

## **Pottery catalogue**

**F2.1** Jar. Finds no 6, F2, most of pot; finds no 5, F2, 1 sherd from surface cleaning. Fabric GX, Cam 268, 745 g. Much of the body of the pot was present in the ground, but fragmented (189 sherds and fragments). Only a small part of the rim (2 sherds, EVE 0.15) and grooved neck (3 sherds) survived. Form dated early/mid 2nd century to late 3rd/early 4th century.

### *Other pottery sherds*

finds no 6, prehistoric sherd (1 g); Fabric DJ, 2 sherds, 5 g, dated mid 1st-2nd/3rd century; Fabric GX, 3 sherds, 10 g, dated Roman.

Spit 2, finds no 12, Fabric DJ, 2 sherds including neck sherd from a flagon, 3 g, dated 1st-2nd/3rd century.

Spits 2-5, finds no 13, Fabric DJ, 1 base sherd from a large pot, 53 g, dated 1st-2nd/3rd century.

Spit 3, finds no 14, Fabric DJ, 1 base sherd, probably from a flagon, 9 g, dated 1st-2nd/3rd century.

Spit 5, finds no 15, Fabric DJ, 1 sherd, small two-rib handle, probably from a flagon, 3 g, dated 1st-2nd/3rd century.

## **6.3 Other contexts and finds (Fig 2)**

- 6.3.1** The burials (F1, F2) were sealed by a brown clayey layer (L2), which was approximately 0.20 m thick. This extended across most of the site and sealed the natural subsoil (L3). It probably consisted mainly of subsoil, re-worked and redeposited as a result of post-Roman activity, such as cultivation.
- 6.3.2** During the machine-stripping of L2, a scatter of potsherds (F3, finds no 4) was uncovered 0.70 m north-east of F1. A total of 38 sherds were found, mostly clustered in a fairly confined area, approximately 0.35 m across. However, excavation did not reveal a recognisable feature in this area. Most of the sherds came from two pots of Late Iron Age-early Roman date and probably derive from burials or associated funerary activity nearby. A small quantity of other sherds were also found, including two prehistoric sherds, a single Late Iron Age sherd, and a later Roman sherd. A worked flint flake and several pieces of burnt flint were also recovered. The association of these finds of widely-differing dates within a fairly small area was probably fortuitous.
- 6.3.3** A further quantity of pottery sherds was recovered from L2 (finds nos 1, 2, 3) during machine-stripping. These were found by CAT staff among machine spoil immediately north of F1 and between F1 and F3. They included four sherds from jar F1.1, and 20 other sherds. Most of the latter were early Roman in date, with one sherd dating to the Late Iron Age-early Roman period. They probably derive from disturbed burials and/or associated funerary activity.
- 6.3.4** A small quantity of unstratified Roman potsherds (finds nos 10, 11) was found by workmen during machining. These sherds probably came from the northern edge of the trench for the swimming-pool, close to the modern garage. They included a large base sherd of a jar (finds no 11) which, when found, had some fill adhering to it. This contained a small quantity (14g) of cremated human bone fragments. The sherd and bone clearly derive from a cremation burial. The other sherds (finds no 10) came from a large storage jar and probably also derive from a burial or from other funerary activity.
- 6.3.5** The clayey deposit L2 was sealed by dark greyish-brown modern topsoil (L1), which was 0.15-0.20 m thick. Some modern disturbance was observed during the digging of the footings for the extension, notably in the south-eastern corner.

## 7 Finds

### 7.1 Introduction

A quantity of finds was recovered during the watching brief. They came from two Roman cremation burials and from other features and layers. Some is unstratified. As appropriate, the finds were washed, marked and bagged according to context, in line with the recommendations in *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IfA 2008b). The finds from the two *in situ* cremation burials are listed in section 6.2 above and the pottery and human bone from these burials are discussed further in sections 7.2-7.3 below. The finds from other contexts and the unstratified material are described and discussed in sections 7.2-7.4. The types and total quantities of all of the finds recovered are set out in Table 1 below. Further details of the finds are provided in the site archive.

**Table 1: Type and quantities of finds.**

Bulk finds types	Qty	Wt (g)
Pottery	289	5,733.0
Worked flint	1	3.0
Burnt flint and heated stone	3	41.0
Iron nails	2	19.0
Glass	1	0.7
Cremated bone	-	1,342.3

### 7.2 Prehistoric and Roman pottery

by Stephen Benfield

#### 7.2.1 Pottery fabrics and vessel form types

The pottery fabric types referred to in this report are listed in Table 2 below. The prehistoric pottery fabrics follow those devised for the recording of prehistoric pottery in Essex (Brown 1988). The Roman pottery fabrics refer to the Colchester fabric series listed and described in *CAR 10*. Additional Late Iron Age and Roman pottery fabrics described in Niblett 1985 and Crummy *et al* 2007 have also been referred to. Roman pottery form types were recorded, where possible, using the Camulodunum (Cam) Roman pottery form type series (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Hull 1958).

**Table 2: pottery fabric types.**

(Note size of prehistoric pottery inclusions: S - small (<1 mm), M - medium (1-2 mm), density of inclusions: 2 = 6-10 per square cm.)

Fabric code	Description
<i>Prehistoric pottery:</i>	
B	flint S-M 2
J	sand, S2 with vegetable voids particularly on surface
M	grog, often with some sand or flint and occasional small rounded or sub-angular voids
<i>Roman pottery:</i>	
CZ	Colchester and other red colour-coated wares
DJ	coarse oxidised and related wares
GTW	grog-tempered wares
GX	other coarse wares, principally locally-produced grey wares
HD	shell-tempered and calcite-gritted wares
HZ	large storage jars and other vessels in heavily-tempered grey wares
RCW	Romanising coarse ware

#### 7.2.2 Prehistoric pottery

Just three sherds of prehistoric (pre-Belgic) pottery were recovered, weighing a total of 17 g (Table 3). All are undecorated body sherds and are residual

from the fill of features F2 and F3 which also contained Roman pottery. A full catalogue of the pottery is provided in the site archive.

**Table 3: quantity of prehistoric pottery by fabric type.**

Fabric code	Qty	Wt (g)
B	1	1
J	1	13
M	1	3

The few prehistoric sherds recovered are all residual. In the absence of any diagnostic elements, such as rims or decorated pieces, any discussion and dating of the pottery relies entirely on the pottery fabrics. Two of the sherds - F2 (finds no 6) and F3 (finds no 4) - are small, weighing between 1 g and 3 g. Both contain flint-temper; and one (F3, finds no 4) also contains grog-temper. The use of flint-temper in these sherds suggests that they probably date to prior to the Middle Iron Age when sand-temper became dominant among local assemblages (Sealey 2007, 50). The remaining sherd, also from F3 (finds no 4), is larger (13 g). It appears to derive from a hand-made, sand-tempered pot and is probably of Middle Iron Age date.

### 7.2.3 Late Iron Age and Roman pottery

A total of 62 sherds, weighing 1,037 g, was recovered from contexts other than excavated Roman burials. This does not include four sherds in Fabric HZ which came from L2 but which derive from cremation urn F1.1. The pottery sherd count and weight were recorded for each finds number by context. The pottery fabric names and quantities are listed in Table 4 below. The quantity of pottery by context is shown in Table 5 below. A full catalogue of the pottery is provided in the site archive.

**Table 4: quantity of Late Iron Age and Roman pottery by fabric type.**

Fabric code	Qty	Wt (g)
CZ	1	8
GTW	1	16
GX	7	172
HD	1	27
HZ	5	509
RCW	47	305

**Table 5: quantity of Late Iron Age and Roman pottery by context.**

Context	Type	Qty	Wt (g)
F3	pot scatter	36	249
L2	disturbed subsoil	20	135
U/S	unstratified	6	653

The closely-datable pottery spans the Late Iron Age to mid-Roman period of the 2nd-3rd century, although the majority of the sherds (Fabrics GTW, HD, RCW) can be dated to the Late Iron Age-early Roman period. Given the presence of at least two Roman cremation burials on the site and the absence of any evidence of occupation, it appears likely that most or all of this pottery is associated with disturbed burials or associated funerary activity.

The largest quantity of pottery by sherd count was recovered as a pot scatter (F3). This scatter includes single sherds of Late Iron Age grog-tempered ware (Fabric GTW) and late Colchester colour-coated ware (Fabric CZ). The Colchester colour-coated sherd (a type current from the early-mid



2nd century until the mid-late 3rd century) is one of the latest closely-dated Roman pottery types from the site, the other being the jar from cremation burial F2. However, most of the sherds from F3 appear to derive from two pots in Romanising coarse ware (Fabric RCW). One is represented by base and body sherds (14 sherds) and the other is probably a bowl of form Cam 218 (16 sherds). The bowl can be dated to the mid 1st-early 2nd century, and the fabric of the other suggests a similar date range. These two pots may have been displaced from one or more burials. The sherds from the bowl are in a noticeably poor condition. The surfaces of the sherds are quite abraded or degraded and two have a dark burnt residue on them. The pot must have been exposed to heating or burning at some point, possibly from a cremation pyre, although the surfaces may also have suffered from acidic soil conditions.

The pottery from L2 does not contain any significant numbers of sherds from any individual pots which might represent displaced burial pots. The eight sherds recorded in one fabric type (Romanising coarse ware (Fabric RCW)) represent at least two pots. Some of these sherds contain pale grog-temper or inclusions. Two of the sherds in this fabric are from a necked jar or bowl, probably from a jar of form Cam 266 which dates to the 1st-early 2nd century. There is also a sherd from an early shell-tempered pot (the shell has leached out leaving numerous small voids) which also contains some red-grog and can be dated to the Late Iron Age or early Roman (pre-Flavian) period.

In addition to the pottery from numbered contexts, sherds from two pots were recovered as unstratified. One pot (finds no 11), probably a jar, is represented by a complete base with part of the lower wall. The other pot (finds no 10) is a large storage jar, probably similar to that from cremation burial F1, and is represented by base and body sherds. As large sherds or significant parts of individual pots, both of these vessels were probably displaced from burials or had been used in associated funerary activity.

#### 7.2.4 Discussion

There is a very small quantity of prehistoric pottery sherds. Most of these cannot be closely dated other than as later prehistoric, although one sherd can be assigned to the Middle Iron Age. There is also one sherd in grog-tempered ware which can be dated to the Late Iron Age, and a sherd from a shell-tempered pot may also date to the Late Iron Age or early Roman (pre-Flavian) period.

The majority of the pottery is of Roman date. The assemblage consists of two excavated Roman cremation burials (F1, F2), a pottery scatter (F3) and sherds recovered from layers and spoil. It is likely that most or all of the pottery from layers and spoil is displaced from Roman burials or was associated with Roman funerary activity here.

Of the two excavated cremation burials, both were urned. One cremation (F1) had been placed in a large storage jar (Cam 270B) along with a flagon (Cam 155). The latter has small cracks on one side which appear to emanate from a stone in the fabric and it may have been a kiln second or waster pot. The occasional use of unserviceable or waster pots is attested in other Roman cremation burials in Britain (Philpott 1991, 36). The large storage jar may have been chosen as a cremation urn because it was large enough to accommodate the flagon as well. The two pots broadly date this burial to the mid 1st to early-mid 2nd century. The other cremation burial (F2) was contained in a jar (Cam 268) which was current from the early/mid 2nd century to late 3rd/early 4th century.

Among the other pottery recovered from the site, the latest closely-dated piece is a sherd of late Colchester colour-coated ware (Fabric CZ) which was current from the early-mid 2nd to mid-late 3rd century. While the large number of sherds in Romanising coarse ware fabric (Fabric RCW) types suggests that much of the pottery dates to the period of the mid 1st-early 2nd century, the jar recovered from cremation burial F2 and the Colchester colour-coated sherd demonstrate that cremation burials and associated funerary activity here continued to the mid 2nd century and, possibly, later. However, none of the closely-datable pottery need date to later than the mid-late 3rd century, and a

cessation of cremation burials here by that period would fit with the rise in inhumation as the main form of burial in the late Roman period in Colchester.

### **7.3 Cremated human bone**

*by Adam Wightman and Richard Ward*

#### **7.3.1 Introduction**

This report examines the cremated bone from two urned cremation burials (F1, F2) and a small group of unstratified fragments recovered during the watching brief.

#### **7.3.2 Methodology**

Both groups of cremated bone (F1, F2) were excavated from the pottery vessels in spits. With the exception of a few fragments which were hand-collected on site, both groups of bone were wet-sieved prior to analysis. The bone from the lower spits excavated was mixed with pea-grit. The removal of all of the small bone fragments for weighing is very time-consuming. Therefore, the larger pieces were removed and the remaining bone was scanned for recognisable fragments and the weight of the bone remaining was estimated based on the approximate percentage of bone present.

Bone fragments were sorted into four categories: cranial (elements from the skull), axial (elements from the trunk including pelvic girdle), appendicular (elements from the limbs), and unidentified. All fragments were weighed to the nearest 0.1g. Observations were made, where possible, concerning bone colour, age, sex, dental remains and pathology. Identifiable fragments were noted and, if possible, the limb bones were separated into upper or lower if the precise element could not be determined.

#### **7.3.3 Results**

Table 6 below shows the bone weights, percentages of identified bone, and the proportions of bone identified from the three areas of the skeleton (cranial, axial, limb), for each burial. The expected proportions (McKinley 1994, 6) are provided in the bottom row.

Considerably more bone was recovered from the urned cremation burial F1 than F2. In fact, more bone was recovered from the urn from F1 than from 35 of the 39 urned and probable urned cremation burials from the cemetery found at the Handford House site (CAT Report 323). However, Mays (Mays 1998, table 11.2) notes that the combusted weight of an adult skeleton has a mean of around 1,500g for females and 2,300g for males. This may suggest that the bone from urn F1 is from a sub-adult or, as is the case with F2, that the burial is incomplete. The quantity of bone recovered from the urn in F1 is above the average bone weight recorded for urned cremation burials at a number of other sites, for example, at the Abbey Field site in Colchester (327.3g; CAT Report 138) and the eastern cemetery of Roman London (845g; McKinley 2000, 270). The low quantity of bone in F2, however, suggests that post-cremation collection of the bone was, as has been identified at other Roman sites, far from complete and that collection was simply token, with a few fragments of each part of the body being buried.

Table 6 shows that the axial elements are over-represented in F1 and that the cranial fragments are largely under-represented in F2, despite this area of the skeleton being generally accepted to be the easiest to identify, even for very small fragments. Although there is bias inherent in the identification of elements, this low representation of cranial fragments could suggest, in this instance, various explanations, ie a) the fragments were not collected, b) they were deposited elsewhere, c) they were deposited in the uppermost fill of the pot which was subsequently truncated, and d) the head of the deceased was not placed on the pyre. However, as no cranial fragments were recovered from the upper four spits of the urn from F2, c) is unlikely.

As the vessels were excavated in spits, the relative proportions of the three main skeletal areas throughout the vessel can be compared (Table 7). In F1, there is an increase in the amount of cranial fragments in the middle of the vessel. However, if the bone had been collected systematically, then we might

expect to find the highest proportion of cranial fragments at either the top or bottom of the vessel. In F2, there is no structure in the pattern of deposition of identifiable fragments. This may be due to post-depositional disturbance or, perhaps, because more than one person was involved in collecting the bone (hence not collecting it systematically from one end of the body to the other).

The bone from both cremation burials was well preserved and in good condition. It was fully oxidised and cream to white in colour. Both burials appeared to contain the remains of one individual only. Numerous large bone fragments were recovered from the urned cremation burial F1. These were seemingly from a smaller individual, perhaps a sub-adult. The urned cremation burial F2 was very incomplete but included some robust and large bone fragments, suggesting that this individual had been an adult. No degenerative changes were noted on the bones from either burial.

**Table 6: percentages of identified fragments out of total identified to area of skeleton.**

Feature	Total wt/g	% identified	% cranial	% axial	% limb
F1	1,076.0	61.5	17.0	25.9	57.1
F2	252.3	68.5	6.8	20.9	72.3
<i>expected</i>			18.2	20.6	61.2

**Table 7: weights of bone by skeletal position for each excavated spit from each context.**

Con-text	Spit	Skeletal position	Wt (g)	Elements identified
F1	1	cranial	6.8	
		axial	0.6	
		appendicular	2.2	
		unidentified	0.3	
F1	2	cranial	2.7	
		axial	2.9	
		appendicular	1.7	
		unidentified	1.3	
F1	3	cranial	9.9	tooth indentations on three pieces
		axial	13.7	rib (3=4.2g), vertebrae (3=5.6g)
		appendicular	13.7	upper limb (1=4.4g)
		unidentified	9.4	
F1	4	cranial	57.4	maxilla (1=3.2g), ear (2=4.2g)
		axial	17.5	rib (13=14g), clavicle (1=4.1g), vertebrae (14=23.2g)
		appendicular	69.7	radius (2=5.6g), humerus (2=1.3g), phalanges (6=2.2g), fibula (1=0.6g), tibia (1=6.7g), femur (1=5.5g)
		unidentified	123.8	
F1	5	cranial	23.5	maxilla (1=3.7g), tooth (3=0.7g)
		axial	60.5	melted glass on a vertebra (14g), pelvis (2=5.7g), rib (7=13.9g), scapula (1=4.3g), vertebrae (10=13.9g)
		appendicular	73.5	patella (2MNE=9.1g), tibia (1=3.7g), carpal (1=0.5g), phalanges (1=0.8g), fibula (1=1.4g), humerus (2=9.5g)
		unidentified	35.1	
F1	6	cranial	9.9	mandible (1=2.1g)
		axial	45.6	vertebrae (8=17.8g), pelvis (2=8.4g), rib (3=2.7g)
		appendicular	87	femur (3=9g), tibia (2=3.4g), talus (2=8.6g), 1st phalanges (1=0.6g)
		unidentified	174.7	
F1	7	cranial	2.1	tooth (3=0.6g)

		axial	25.5	vertebrae (6=6.3g)
		appendicular	65.2	fibula (1=2.1g), tibia (2=3.8g)
		unidentified	40.3	
F1	8	cranial	0.3	tooth (2=0.5g)
		axial	4.7	vertebra (1=2.5g)
		appendicular	64.8	tibia (1=2.8g), phalanges (1=0.2g), humerus (1=4.6g), femur (2=6.8g), radius (2=16.3g)
		unidentified	29.7	
F2	1	cranial	-	
		axial	-	
		appendicular	2.6	
		unidentified	0.5	
F2	2	cranial	-	
		axial	1.3	vertebra (1=0.2g), rib (1=0.6g)
		appendicular	4.1	
		unidentified	2.7	
F2	3	cranial	2.4	
		axial	4.5	vertebrae (2=0.4g), pelvis (2=2.9g)
		appendicular	8.4	upper limb (1=44.4g)
		unidentified	7.4	
F2	4	cranial	1.6	
		axial	5.6	vertebrae (4=1.7g), rib (3=0.8g)
		appendicular	22.8	upper limb (2=8.4g), patella (1=1.4g)
		unidentified	9.9	
F2	5	cranial	4.3	tooth fragment (1=0.1g)
		axial	9.9	vertebrae (5=1.9g), pelvis (4=4.7g)
		appendicular	45.5	upper limb (3=8.7g), lower limb (2=4.6g)
		unidentified	19.8	
F2	6	cranial	1.6	tooth fragment (1=0.1g)
		axial	10.1	vertebrae (6=3.4g)
		appendicular	24.1	lower limb (2=5.5g), upper limb (1=1.8g), talus (1=0.8g), phalange (1=0.1g)
		unidentified	24.4	
F2	7	cranial	1.9	
		axial	4.7	vertebrae (4=1.4g), pelvis (1=0.6g)
		appendicular	17.4	femur (1=3.1g)
		unidentified	14.8	
U/S		cranial	-	
		axial	2.1	2 x vertebrae
		appendicular	7.6	
		unidentified	4.3	

## 7.4 Miscellaneous finds

by Stephen Benfield

### 7.4.1 Later prehistoric worked flint

A single, unpatinated, worked flint flake (3 g) was recovered from F3 (finds no 4). There is cortex surviving on the upper edge on one side of the striking platform and earlier flake removal scars on the dorsal face.

### 7.4.2 Burnt flint

Three pieces of burnt (heat-crazed) flint (41 g) were recovered from F3 (finds no 4). Burnt flints are most commonly associated with later prehistoric activity or occupation.

## 8 Conclusions

8.1 Apart from a sparse scatter of later prehistoric finds, there was no definite evidence for activity on the site pre-dating the Roman period. In particular, there were no features contemporary with the group of early cremation burials,

c 50-10 BC, found some years ago to the south of the current site (CAR 11, 164-9; Fig 1).

- 8.2** Two Roman cremation burials (F1, F2) were uncovered on the site. In both cases, the cremated bone was contained in a pottery vessel used as an urn and, in one of the burials (F1), there was an accompanying flagon within the urn. The flagon was found on its side but may originally have stood upright and contained drink. This burial can be dated to the mid 1st-early/mid 2nd century. The other burial (F2) is less closely dated, but is attributable to the early/mid 2nd century-late 3rd/early 4th century.
- 8.3** A quantity of Roman potsherds was found elsewhere on the site. These probably derive from burials or associated funerary activity. Most of them are of mid 1st- to early 2nd-century date, although at least one sherd of later Roman date was also found.
- 8.4** The two cremation burials provide more examples of burials from within the Lexden cemetery area. A number of other comparable Roman cremation burials have been recorded widely scattered across the St Clare Road area (CAR 11, 169, fig 7.1; Fig 1). They show that, although the Lexden cemetery area originated in the Late Iron Age, it continued in use well into the Roman period.
- 8.5** The two burials probably lay close to the line of a road or trackway leading to the entrance through the Lexden Dyke near the site (CAR 11, 42-4, fig 2.16, fig 7.1; Fig 1). However, no trace of the road or of roadside ditches was observed on the site. Roman burials and cemeteries were often located alongside the main roads out of Roman towns (Crummy 2001, 108).

## 9 Archive deposition

- 9.1** The archive from the watching brief, including the site records, photographs and finds, is held by CAT at 12 Lexden Road but will be permanently deposited with Colchester and Ipswich Museums, under accession code COLEM 2010.83, in accordance with *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester and Ipswich Museums* (CIMS 2008b) and *Archaeological archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (IfA 2007).

### 9.2 Contents of archive

1 x A4 cardboard wallet containing the site record sheets  
 2 x sheets of drafting film, sundry papers  
 1 x CD containing digital material including the site photographs

Finds: 1 x museum box and 1 x tray containing reconstructed pot F1.1.

## 10 Abbreviations and glossary

AOD	above Ordnance Survey datum point based on mean sea level at Newlyn, Cornwall
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBC	Colchester Borough Council
CIMS	Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service
context	specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made; usually a layer or a feature
cover loam	a natural, wind-blown deposit, probably formed towards the end of the last Ice Age
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, held by Essex County Council at County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex
EVE	estimated vessel equivalent, ie the fraction of a complete vessel that survives, usually calculated from rim sherds
feature	an identifiable context, such as a pit, a wall or a post-hole
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
Late Iron Age	period from c 100 BC to AD 43
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c AD 1500

Middle Iron Age	period from c 300 BC to c 100 BC
modern	period from c 1850 onwards to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
<i>oppidum</i>	a large Late Iron Age settlement, usually fortified
post-medieval	period from c AD 1500 to c 1850
residual	finds which were deposited earlier than the context in which they were found
Roman	period from AD 43 to c AD 410
UAD	Urban Archaeological Database, maintained by Colchester and Ipswich Museums, Colchester, Essex
U/S	unstratified, ie without a well-defined context

## 11 Acknowledgements

CAT is grateful to Mr R Carbiner for commissioning and funding the watching brief, and to the contractors, Clark Construction, for their help on site. The work was monitored by Martin Winter, CBC Archaeological Officer. The site work was carried out by D Shimmin and E Spurgeon.

## 12 References

Note: all CAT reports (except DBAs) are available online in .pdf format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk/>

Brown, N	1988	'A Late Bronze Age enclosure at Lofts Farm, Essex', in <i>Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society</i> , <b>54</b> , 263-4
CAR 9	1993	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 9: Excavations of Roman and later cemeteries, churches and monastic sites in Colchester, 1971-88</i> , by N Crummy, P Crummy and C Crossan
CAR 10	1991	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 10: Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-86</i> , by R P Symonds and S Wade, ed by P Bidwell and A Croom
CAR 11	1995	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 11: Camulodunum 2</i> , by C F C Hawkes and P Crummy
CAT	2006	<i>Policies and procedures</i> (Colchester Archaeological Trust)
CAT	2010	Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological watching brief at 12 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex, by A Wightman, October 2010
CAT Report 99		Report on an archaeological watching brief at 1a St Clare Road, Colchester: October 2000, unpublished CAT archive report, by K Orr, 2000
CAT Report 136		An archaeological watching brief at 14 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex: April 2001, unpublished CAT archive report, by K Orr, 2001
CAT Report 138		Archaeological excavations at the Garrison sports pitch, Circular Road North, Colchester, Essex (Abbey Field), February to March 2000, unpublished CAT archive report, by C Crossan, 2001
CAT Report 195		An archaeological watching brief at 10 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex: June 2002, unpublished CAT archive report, by H Brooks, 2002
CAT Report 225		An archaeological excavation at 1 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex: March 2003, unpublished CAT archive report, by M McDonald, 2003
CAT Report 250		An archaeological evaluation at 30 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex: November 2003, unpublished CAT archive report, by K Orr, 2004
CAT Report 323		Archaeological excavations at 1 Queens Road (Handford House, now 'Handford Place'), Colchester, Essex, 2003 and 2004-2005, unpublished CAT archive report, by K Orr, 2010

CAT Report 455		Report on a negative watching brief at 1 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex: January 2008, unpublished CAT archive report, by H Brooks, 2008
CAT Report 568		An archaeological watching brief at 30 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex: September 2010, unpublished CAT archive report, by C Lister, 2010
CBC	2010	Brief for archaeological attendance and recording (a watching brief), 12 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex, by M Winter, September 2010
CIMS	2008a	<i>Guidelines on standards and practice for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester (CBC)</i>
CIMS	2008b	<i>Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester and Ipswich Museums (CBC)</i>
Crummy, P	2001	<i>City of Victory: the story of Colchester - Britain's first Roman town</i>
Crummy, P, Benfield, S, Crummy, N, Rigby, V & Shimmin, D	2007	<i>Stanway: an élite burial site at Camulodunum</i> , Britannia Monograph, <b>24</b>
EAA 3	1997	<i>Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. resource assessment</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, <b>3</b> , ed by J Glazebrook
EAA 8	2000	<i>Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. research agenda and strategy</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, <b>8</b> , ed by N Brown and J Glazebrook
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, <b>14</b> , ed by D Gurney, ALGAO East
Foster, J	1986	<i>The Lexden Tumulus: a re-appraisal of an Iron Age burial from Colchester, Essex</i> , BAR, British Series, <b>156</b>
Hawkes, C F C, & Hull, M R	1947	<i>Camulodunum, first report on the excavations at Colchester 1930-39</i> , RRCSAL, <b>14</b>
Hull, M R	1958	<i>Roman Colchester</i> , RRCSAL, <b>20</b>
IfA	2007	<i>Archaeological archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation</i>
IfA	2008a	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i>
IfA	2008b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
Manning, W H	1985	<i>Catalogue of the Romano-British iron tools, fittings and weapons in the British Museum</i>
Mays, S	1998	<i>The archaeology of human bones</i>
McKinley, J	1994	<i>The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Spong Hill, North Elmham part VIII: the cremations</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, <b>69</b>
McKinley, J	2000	'Cremation burials', in <i>The Eastern cemetery of Roman London. Excavations 1983-1990</i> , by B Barber and D Bowsher, MoLAS, Monograph, <b>4</b> , 264-77
MoRPHE	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (English Heritage)
Niblett, R	1985	<i>Sheepen: an early Roman industrial site at Camulodunum</i> , CBA, Research Report, <b>57</b>
Philpott, R	1991	<i>Burial practices in Roman Britain, a survey of grave treatment and furnishing AD 43-410</i> , BAR, British Series, <b>219</b>
Sealey, P R	2007	'The Early and Middle Iron Age pottery', in Crummy et al 2007, 48-68

© Colchester Archaeological Trust 2011

**Distribution list:**

Mr R Carbiner

Martin Winter, CBC Archaeological Officer

Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



**Colchester Archaeological Trust**

12 Lexden Road,  
Colchester,  
Essex CO3 3NF

tel.: (01206) 541051  
(01206) 500124

email: [archaeologists@catuk.org](mailto:archaeologists@catuk.org)

Checked by: *Philip Crummy*  
Date: 30.09.11

Adams x c:/reports11/12 St Clare Road/report582 xx.doc



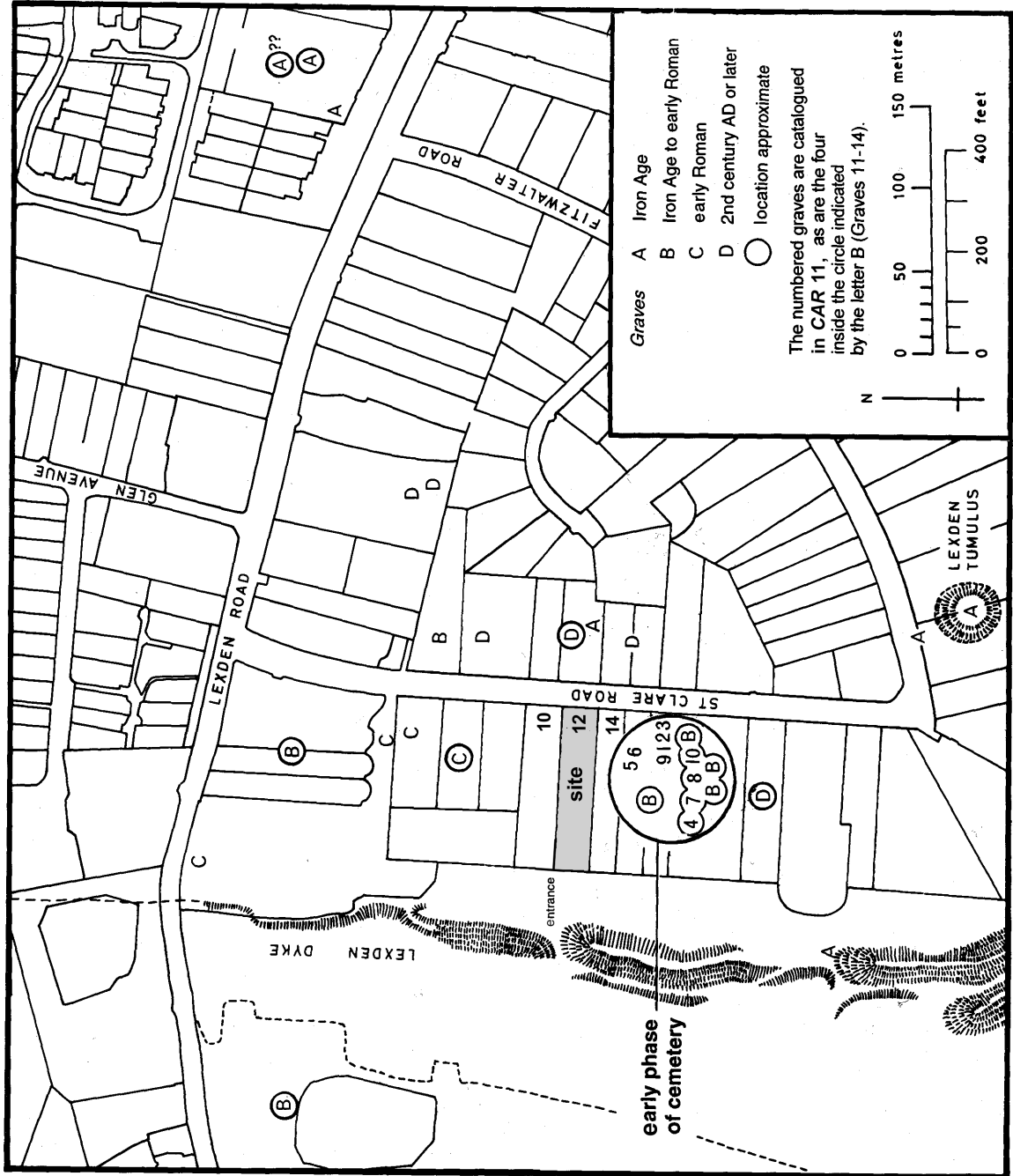


Fig 1 Site location, showing the Lexden cemetery area (taken from CAR 11; see pp 164-9).

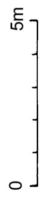
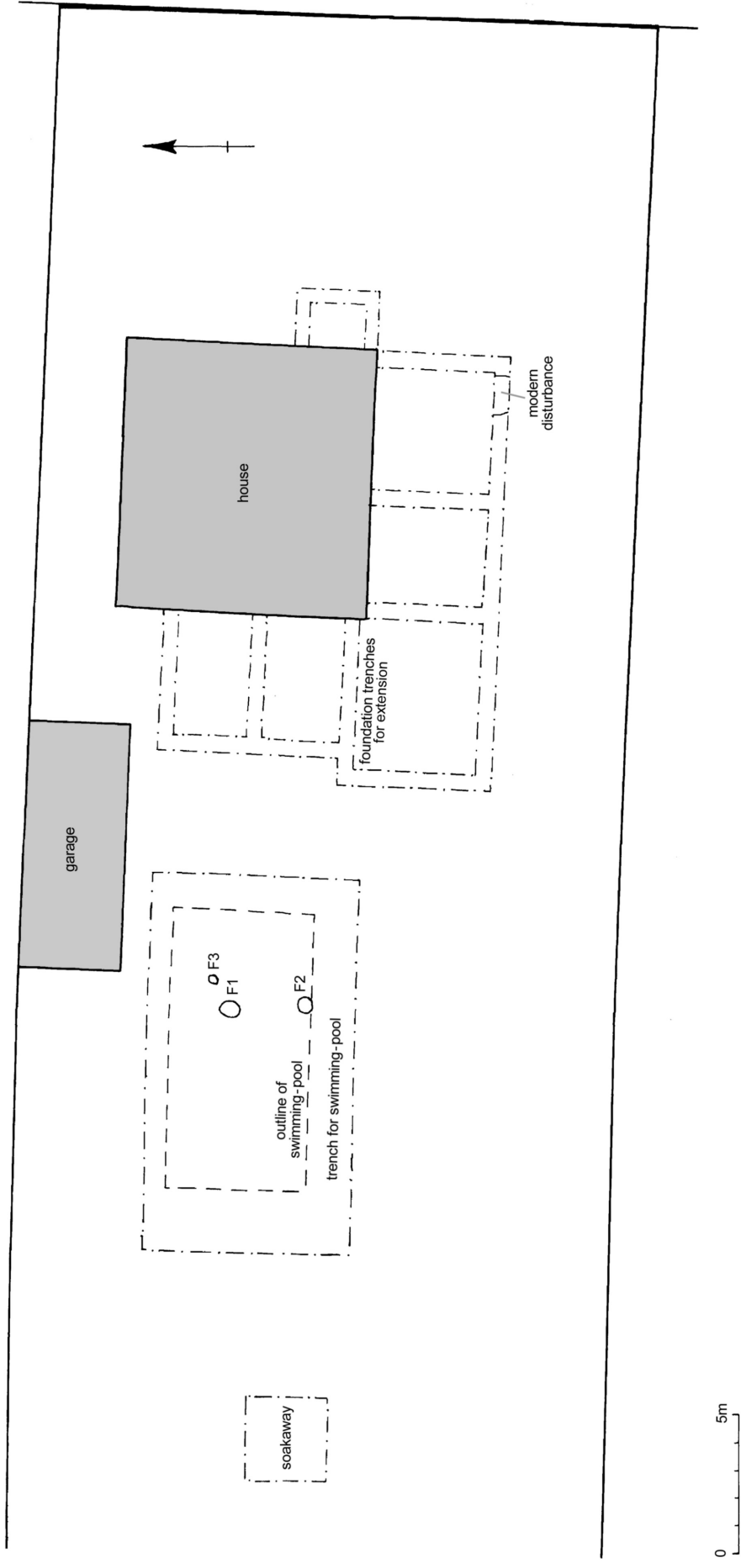


Fig 2 Site plan.

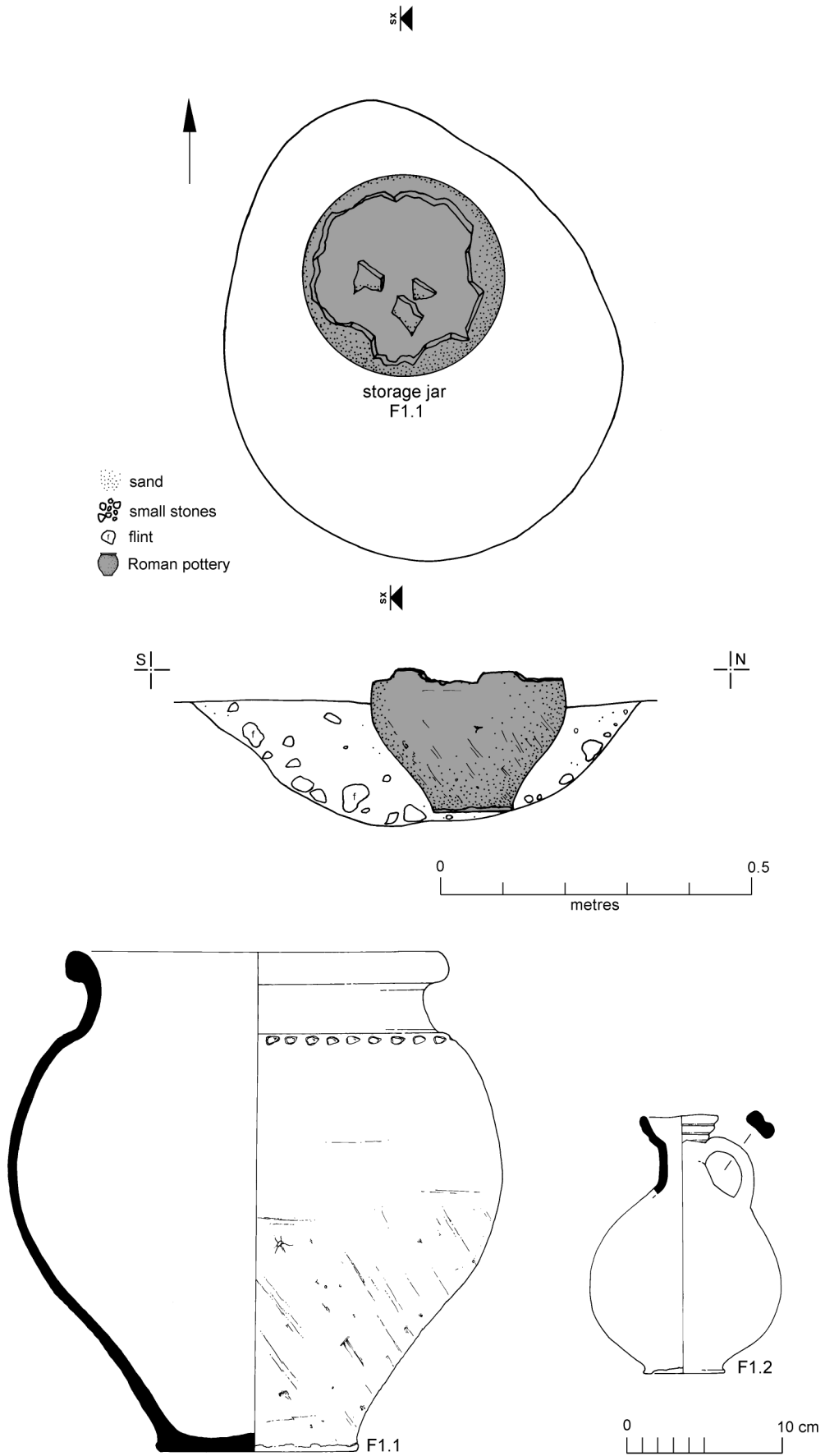


Fig 3 Burial F1: plan, section and pottery.

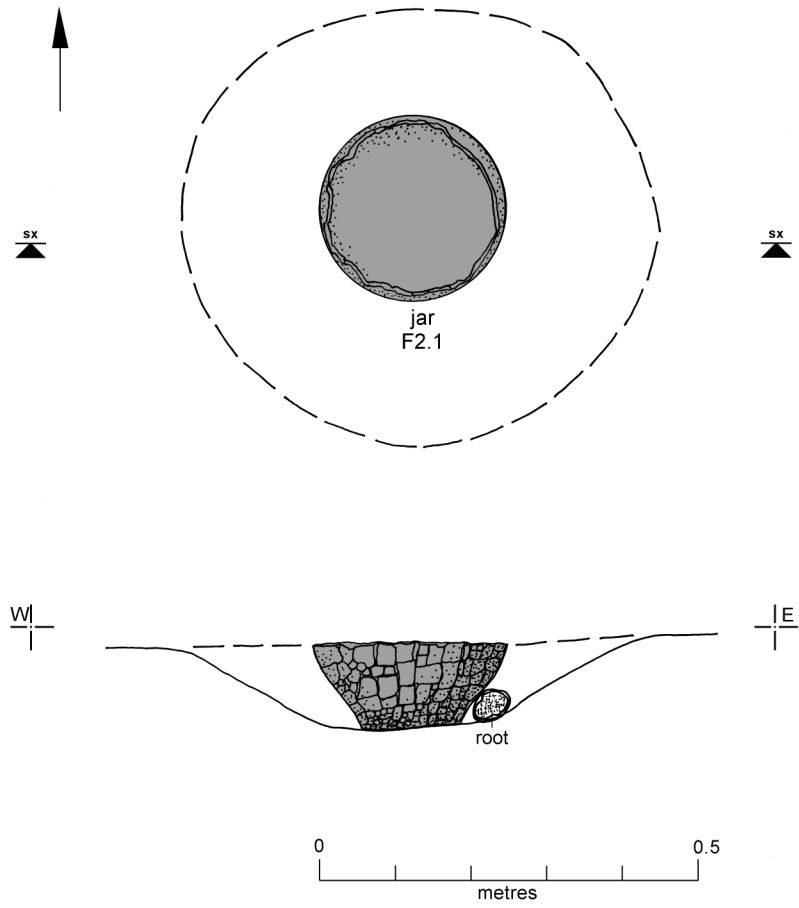


Fig 4 Burial F2: plan and profile.

# Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

## Summary sheet

<b>Site address:</b> 12 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Colchester	<b>District:</b> Colchester Borough
<b>NGR:</b> TL 9745 2496	<b>Site codes:</b> CAT project - 10/11a Museum accession - COLEM 2010.83
<b>Type of work:</b> Watching brief	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> November 2010	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 145 sq m
<b>Location of finds/curating museum:</b> Colchester and Ipswich Museums	<b>Funding source:</b> Mr R Carbiner
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHER and UAD nos:</b> -
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 582 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Roman	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> <i>During an archaeological watching brief at 12 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex, two Roman urned cremation burials were uncovered. One of the burials had an accompanying flagon within the urn. Among the other finds recovered from the site was a quantity of prehistoric and Roman pottery. The two cremation burials are part of the Late Iron Age/Roman Lexden cemetery area.</i>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> None	
<b>Keywords:</b> Roman, cremation, burial, cremated, human bone, Lexden Dyke	<b>Significance:</b> *
<b>Author of summary:</b> Donald Shimmin	<b>Date of summary:</b> September 2011