

# Excavations at Chester. The northern and eastern Roman extramural settlements

Excavations 1990-2019 and other  
investigations

Leigh Dodd

With contributions by  
Matthew Ball, Máiréad Ní Challanáin, Malin Holst, Elizabeth Huckerby,  
Claire Ingrem, David Mason, Dan Robinson and David Shotter



ARCHAEOPRESS PUBLISHING LTD

Summertown Pavilion

18-24 Middle Way

Summertown

Oxford OX2 7LG

[www.archaeopress.com](http://www.archaeopress.com)

ISBN 978-1-78969-627-1

ISBN 978-1-78969-628-8 (e-Pdf)

© the individual authors and Archaeopress 2020

Front cover: The area of Delamere Street (Site 3) during the excavations in 2009.

Bone toggle from the Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange (Site 6) excavations 2015-16

Back cover: Military fitting from the Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4) excavations

Iron knife, with bone handle plates, from the Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3) excavations

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright owners.

This book is available direct from Archaeopress or from our website [www.archaeopress.com](http://www.archaeopress.com)

# Contents

<b>Contents</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>List of Tables</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>xi</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Summary .....	1
The projects .....	2
History of Research and Publication .....	4
<b>Chapter 2: 51–57 Upper Northgate Street 2015 (Site 1)</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Introduction .....	5
The site .....	5
The project .....	5
Results of the Watching Brief .....	5
Area A .....	5
Description .....	5
Area B .....	5
Description .....	5
Interpretation and dating .....	6
<b>Chapter 3: Liverpool Road 2018 (Site 2)</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Introduction .....	8
The site .....	8
The project .....	8
Results .....	8
Description .....	8
Interpretation and dating .....	10
<b>Chapter 4: Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3)</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Introduction .....	11
The site .....	11
The project .....	11
The Excavation .....	11
Introduction .....	11
Phase 1: Linear gully .....	11
Description .....	11
Interpretation and dating .....	11
Phase 2: The stone quarry pits and other rock-cut features .....	13
Description .....	13
Interpretation and dating .....	16
Discussion .....	16
The Finds .....	18
Ceramic building materials .....	18
Pottery .....	19
Introduction .....	19
Phase 1 .....	19
Phase 2 .....	19
Catalogue of illustrated sherds (Phase 1: nos. 1–2; Phase 2: nos. 3–37) .....	21
Small Finds .....	24
Coins .....	24
Catalogue .....	25
Animal Remains .....	25

<b>Chapter 5: Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4)</b> .....	<b>26</b>
Introduction .....	26
The site .....	26
The project.....	26
The Excavation .....	26
Introduction .....	26
Phase 1: Clay quarry pits and other features c. late 1st to early 2nd centuries.....	26
Description .....	26
Interpretation and dating .....	27
Phase 2: Clay quarry pits and other features c. early to mid-/late 2nd century .....	29
Description .....	29
Interpretation and dating .....	30
Phase 3: Inhumation burial c. late 2nd to 3rd century .....	33
Description .....	33
Interpretation and dating .....	33
The Finds.....	34
Ceramic building materials .....	34
Pottery .....	34
Introduction .....	34
Phase 1.....	34
Phase 2.....	35
Phase 3.....	36
Discussion.....	36
Catalogue of illustrated sherds (Phase 1: nos. 1–2; Phase 2: nos. 3–42) .....	38
Small Finds.....	39
Coins.....	40
Catalogue .....	41
Vessel Glass .....	41
Human Osteological and Pathological Analysis.....	41
Introduction and methodology .....	41
Osteological analysis .....	41
Introduction .....	41
Preservation.....	41
Assessment of age.....	42
Sex determination .....	42
Metric analysis and non-metric traits.....	42
Conclusions.....	42
Pathological analysis.....	42
Dental health.....	42
Mortuary practice.....	42
Conclusions.....	42
<b>Chapter 6: George Street School 2013 (Site 5)</b> .....	<b>43</b>
Introduction .....	43
The site .....	43
The project.....	43
The Excavation .....	43
Introduction .....	43
Phase 1a .....	43
Early deposits, agricultural features, clay quarry pits, and other features c. late 1st to early 2nd centuries (Figure 6.2).....	43
Description .....	43
Occupation deposits, surfaces and structures .....	46
Description .....	46
Interpretation and dating .....	46
Phase 1b.....	46
Deposits sealing Phase 1a features, and other features c. mid-2nd century (Figure 6.2).....	46
Description .....	46

Re-cut ditch and other cut features.....	47
Description .....	47
Structural remains.....	47
Description .....	47
Interpretation and dating .....	47
Phase 1c .....	47
Inhumation cemetery c. early 3rd to mid-4th century .....	47
Description .....	47
Interpretation and dating .....	49
The Finds.....	51
Ceramic Building Materials.....	51
Introduction .....	51
Discussion.....	51
Phase 1a.....	51
Phase 1b.....	51
Phase 1c.....	52
Pottery.....	52
Introduction .....	52
Discussion.....	52
The Phase 1a Quarry Pits.....	52
Continental Imports.....	52
Regional Imports.....	52
Locally Produced Wares.....	53
Pottery from other Phase 1 deposits .....	54
Phase 1a.....	54
Phase 1b.....	55
Phase 1c.....	56
Small Finds .....	56
Introduction .....	56
Personal Ornaments.....	56
Fittings.....	56
Military.....	56
Textile-related.....	56
Coins.....	57
Glass and Beads .....	57
Introduction .....	57
Discussion.....	57
Phase 1a.....	57
Phase 1b.....	57
Phase 1c.....	58
Animal Remains .....	58
Introduction .....	58
Discussion.....	58
Human Osteological and Pathological Analysis.....	58
Introduction and methodology .....	58
Osteological analysis .....	58
Introduction .....	58
Preservation.....	58
Minimum number of individuals .....	59
Assessment of age.....	59
Sex determination .....	60
Metric analysis .....	60
Non-metric traits .....	60
Conclusion.....	61
Pathological analysis.....	61
Introduction .....	61
Pathological disease .....	61
Dental health .....	61

Dental calculus .....	61
Dental caries .....	62
Dental enamel hypoplasia .....	62
Dental abscesses.....	62
Ante-mortem tooth loss .....	62
Dental wear .....	62
Periodontal disease.....	62
Dental conclusions.....	62
Mortuary practice.....	62
Conclusions.....	63
<b>Chapter 7: Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6).....</b>	<b>64</b>
Introduction .....	64
The site .....	64
The project.....	64
The Excavation.....	64
Introduction .....	64
Phase 1: Early activity, structural features, gullies, and deposits c. late 1st century (Figure 7.2) .....	65
Description .....	65
Structure 1.....	65
External activity: gullies and deposit.....	65
Interpretation and dating .....	66
Phase 2: Establishment of roads and clay quarrying c. 90–120+ AD (Figure 7.3) .....	67
Description .....	67
Quarrying.....	67
Roads (Roads 1–3).....	69
Interpretation and dating .....	69
Phase 3: Continuation of quarrying and insertion of drain into Road 1 c. 120–150+ AD (Figure 7.6).....	70
Description .....	70
Quarrying continued.....	70
Drain cut into Road 1 .....	70
Stone spread.....	70
Interpretation and dating .....	70
Phase 4: Decreasing activity c. 150–200+ AD (Figure 7.8).....	70
Description .....	70
Abandonment of Road 1 .....	70
Gully.....	70
Interpretation and dating .....	70
Phase 5: Late Roman activity c. 250/290–370 AD (Figure 7.8).....	71
Description .....	71
Interpretation and dating .....	71
The Finds.....	72
Ceramic building materials .....	72
Pottery .....	73
Introduction .....	73
Discussion .....	73
Catalogue of illustrated sherds (Phase 2: nos. 1–12; Phase 3: nos. 13–18; Phase 5: nos. 19–20).....	73
Small Finds.....	75
Coin .....	76
Catalogue .....	76
Glass .....	76
<b>Chapter 8: 54–60 Foregate Street 2009 (Site 7) .....</b>	<b>77</b>
Introduction .....	77
The site .....	77
The project.....	77
Results.....	77
Description .....	77
Interpretation and dating .....	77

<b>Chapter 9: 83–89 Foregate Street 2017 (Site 8)</b> .....	<b>80</b>
Introduction .....	80
The site .....	80
The project .....	80
Results (Figure 9.1) .....	80
Description .....	80
Interpretation and dating .....	80
<b>Chapter 10: 105–109 Foregate Street 1992–93 (Site 9)</b> .....	<b>82</b>
Introduction .....	82
The site .....	82
The project .....	82
Results (Figure 10.1) .....	82
Description .....	82
Interpretation and dating .....	82
<b>Chapter 11: Grosvenor Park Road 2000–19 (Site 10)</b> .....	<b>84</b>
Introduction .....	84
The site .....	84
The project .....	84
Results 2001 .....	84
Description .....	84
Interpretation and dating .....	85
Results 2002 .....	85
Description .....	85
Interpretation and dating .....	85
Results 2017 .....	85
Description .....	85
Interpretation and dating .....	85
<b>Chapter 12: The Bars (south) 1990 and 1998 (Site 11)</b> .....	<b>88</b>
Introduction .....	88
The site .....	88
The project .....	88
Results: 1990 evaluation .....	88
Description .....	88
Interpretation and dating .....	88
Results: 1998–1999 evaluation and excavation .....	88
Description .....	88
Interpretation and dating .....	90
<b>Chapter 13: The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12)</b> .....	<b>91</b>
Introduction .....	91
The site .....	91
The project .....	91
The Excavation .....	91
Phase 1: Former stream channel .....	91
Description .....	91
Interpretation and dating .....	91
Phase 2: Masonry-lined drain and other features .....	93
Description .....	93
Interpretation and dating .....	95
Phase 3: Robbing of the drain masonry and backfilling of the drain channel .....	95
Description .....	95
Interpretation and dating .....	95
Phase 4: Road .....	97
Description .....	97
Interpretation and dating .....	97
The Finds .....	98
Ceramic building materials .....	98

Pottery.....	98
Introduction .....	98
Phase 2.....	98
Phase 3.....	98
Catalogue of illustrated sherds (Phase 3: context (33)).....	101
Coins .....	106
Group A: The Hoard (Phase 3: Context (33)).....	106
Catalogue .....	106
Group B: The ‘Casual Losses’ .....	107
Catalogue .....	107
Vessel glass.....	107
Small Finds.....	107
Lead.....	108
Inscribed Stone .....	108
Animal remains .....	109
Introduction .....	109
Methodology.....	109
Bone condition .....	109
The assemblage .....	110
General information .....	110
Discussion.....	111
Charred plant remains .....	111
Introduction .....	111
Methodology.....	111
Results.....	111
Discussion.....	111
<b>Chapter 14: The Bars (north) 2002 (Site 13).....</b>	<b>113</b>
Introduction .....	113
The site .....	113
The project.....	113
Results.....	113
Description .....	113
Interpretation and dating .....	113
<b>Chapter 15: Dee Hills Park 2002–03 (Site 14).....</b>	<b>116</b>
Introduction .....	116
The site .....	116
The project.....	116
Results.....	116
Description .....	116
Interpretation and dating .....	118
<b>Chapter 16: Boughton Retail Centre 2012–13 (Site 15).....</b>	<b>119</b>
Introduction .....	119
The site .....	119
The project.....	119
Results.....	120
Description .....	120
Interpretation and dating .....	120
<b>Chapter 17: Discussion .....</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>123</b>



## List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Map of Roman Chester showing the general extent of the <i>canabae</i> and location of the sites investigated .....	1
Figure 1.2 Location of the six sites investigated to the north of the fortress .....	2
Figure 1.3 Location of the nine sites investigated to the east of the fortress .....	3
Figure 2.1 51–57 Upper Northgate Street 2015 (Site 1): plan of the Roman features .....	6
Figure 2.2 51–57 Upper Northgate Street 2015 (Site 1): sections of the Roman ditch features.....	7
Figure 3.1 Liverpool Road 2018 (Site 2): plan of the Roman features .....	9
Figure 3.2 Liverpool Road 2018 (Site 2): sections of pit [606] (top), ditch [804] (lower left) and ditches [808] and [815] (lower right) .....	9
Figure 4.1 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): plan of the Roman features .....	12
Figure 4.2 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): section of Phase 1 gully [140=151] .....	12
Figure 4.3 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): section of Phase 2 quarry pit [18] .....	13
Figure 4.4 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): Fills of Phase 2 quarry pit [18], east facing.....	14
Figure 4.5 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): fill of Phase 2 quarry pit [21], west facing .....	14
Figure 4.6 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): section of Phase 2 quarry pit [130] .....	15
Figure 4.7 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): section of Phase 2 pit [153] .....	16
Figure 4.8 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): section of Phase 2 well [22].....	16
Figure 4.9 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): plan view of well [22] fully excavated.....	17
Figure 4.10 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): pit [72] fully excavated, view to north.....	17
Figure 4.11 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): section of Phase 2 pit [72] .....	18
Figure 4.12 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): section of Phase 2 pit [97] .....	18
Figure 4.13 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): pottery forms 1–19.....	22
Figure 4.14 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): pottery forms 20–37.....	23
Figure 4.15 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): iron knife with bone handle plates .....	24
Figure 5.1 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): plan of the Phase 1 Roman features .....	27
Figure 5.2 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): sections of Phase 1 pit [15] and Phase 2 pits [32=36] and [147], and their relationships with Phase 2 pits [24=28] and [145] respectively.....	28
Figure 5.3 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): plan of the Phase 2 and Phase 3 Roman features .....	29
Figure 5.4 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): sections of Phase 2 pits [17], [89], [91] and [176] .....	30
Figure 5.5 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): sections of Phase 2 pits [122], [128], [143], [182], [211] and gullies [184] and [193] .....	31
Figure 5.6 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): clay quarry pit [89], view to north.....	32
Figure 5.7 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): clay quarry pit [211], view to southeast.....	32
Figure 5.8 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): section of Phase 2 ditch [168] showing relationship with Phase 1 pit [206] .....	33
Figure 5.9 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): the Phase 3 inhumation burial (185) at Gorse Stacks, view to west .....	34
Figure 5.10 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): plan of Phase 3 inhumation burial (185) showing relationship with Phase 2 gully [184]..	34
Figure 5.11 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): pottery forms 1–22 .....	37
Figure 5.12 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): pottery forms 23–42 .....	38
Figure 5.13 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): small finds 1 and 2 .....	40
Figure 6.1 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): plan of the areas of excavation.....	44
Figure 6.2 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): plan of Phase 1a and Phase 1b Roman features .....	45
Figure 6.3 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): clay quarry pit [249], southeast facing .....	46
Figure 6.4 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): plan of Phase 1c Roman cemetery and features .....	48
Figure 6.5 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): detail plan of Phase 1c cemetery.....	49
Figure 6.6 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): the poorly preserved remains of skeleton (225) .....	50
Figure 6.7 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): the moderately preserved remains of skeleton (237) .....	50

Figure 7.1 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): plan of the areas of excavation .....	65
Figure 7.2 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): plan of Phase 1 Roman features in areas 1 and 3.....	66
Figure 7.3 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): plan of Phase 2 Roman features in areas 1 and 3.....	67
Figure 7.4 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): the fills to quarry pit [1122] in area 1.....	68
Figure 7.5 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): the surface of Phase 2 Road 2 in area 2.....	68
Figure 7.6 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): plan of Phase 3 Roman features in areas 1 and 3.....	69
Figure 7.7 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): the remains of the Phase 3 drain cut into the Phase 2 Road 1 surface in area 1 .....	70
Figure 7.8 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): plan of Phase 3 and Phase 4 Roman features in areas 1 and 3.....	71
Figure 7.9 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): pottery forms 1–12 .....	74
Figure 7.10 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): pottery forms 13–20.....	74
Figure 7.11 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): bone toggle from Gorse Stacks bus interchange (Site 6).....	75
Figure 8.1 54–60 Foregate Street 2009 (Site 7): plan of the Roman ditch feature [140] .....	78
Figure 8.2 54–60 Foregate Street 2009 (Site 7): section of ditch feature [140].....	79
Figure 9.1 83–89 Foregate Street 2017 (Site 8): plan showing location of Roman features .....	81
Figure 10.1 105–109 Foregate Street 1992–93 (Site 9): plan showing location of Roman features .....	83
Figure 11.1 Grosvenor Park Road 2000–19 (Site 10): plan showing location of Roman features along with date of investigation	86
Figure 11.2 Grosvenor Park Road 2000–19 (Site 10): section of ditch [7005] .....	87
Figure 12.1 The Bars (south) 1990 and 1998 (Site 11): plan showing location of Roman features .....	89
Figure 13.1 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): plan of Phase 1 and Phase 2 Roman features .....	92
Figure 13.2 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): section of Phase 1 channel and the Phase 2 drain encountered in Slot 2, south facing.....	93
Figure 13.3 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): view of Slot 2 excavated across the Phase 1 channel and showing the remains off the Phase 2 drain, view to west.....	94
Figure 13.4 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): the remains of the Phase 2 drain, view to north.....	94
Figure 13.5 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): plan of Phase 4 Roman surface.....	96
Figure 13.6 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): the Phase 4 Roman surface with associated ditch [140] in foreground, view to south.....	97
Figure 13.7 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): section of Phase 4 Roman surface and associated ditches [140] and [159] .....	98
Figure 13.8 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): pottery forms 1–24.....	102
Figure 13.9 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): pottery forms 25–38.....	103
Figure 13.10 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): pottery forms 39–51.....	104
Figure 13.11 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): pottery forms 52–67 .....	105
Figure 13.12 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): small finds 1 to 4.....	108
Figure 13.13 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): the fragment of inscribed stone slab recovered from Phase 3, context (33) .....	109
Figure 14.1 The Bars (north) 2002 (Site 13): plan of the Roman features .....	114
Figure 14.2 The Bars (north) 2002 (Site 13): section of ditch [5].....	115
Figure 15.1 Dee Hills Park 2002–03 (Site 14): plan of the Roman features .....	117
Figure 16.1 Boughton Retail Centre 2012–13 (Site 15): plan of the Roman ditch feature [29000] .....	119
Figure 16.2 Boughton Retail Centre 2012–13 (Site 15): Section of ditch [29000].....	120

# List of Tables

Table 1.1 Gazetteer of sites investigated .....	4
Table 4.1 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): pottery from Phase 1 quantified by ware, no of sherds and weight .....	19
Table 4.2 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): pottery from Phase 2 quantified by ware, no of sherds and weight .....	20
Table 4.3 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): samian ware forms from Phase 2 quantified by fabric and max no of vessels.....	21
Table 4.4 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): summary of the main pottery forms present by max no of vessels per phase (excluding samian).....	21
Table 4.5 Delamere Street 2009 (Site 3): summary of small finds by function, type, material, context and phase .....	24
Table 5.1 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): summary of Phase 1 pit features.....	27
Table 5.2 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): summary of Phase 2 pit features.....	30
Table 5.3 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): summary of ceramic building material assemblage.....	35
Table 5.4 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): pottery from Phase 1 quantified by ware, no of sherds and weight .....	35
Table 5.5 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): pottery from Phase 2 quantified by ware, no of sherds and weight .....	35
Table 5.6 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): pottery from Phase 3 quantified by ware, no of sherds and weight .....	36
Table 5.7 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): summary of the total Samian ware forms quantified by fabric and max no of vessels .....	36
Table 5.8 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): Summary of the main pottery forms present by max no of vessels per phase (excluding samian) .....	37
Table 5.9 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): summary of small finds by function, type, material, context and phase.....	39
Table 5.10 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): summary of vessel glass sherds by type and feature.....	41
Table 5.11 Gorse Stacks 2009 (Site 4): summary of human osteological and palaeopathological results.....	42
Table 6.1 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): summary of ceramic building material assemblage .....	51
Table 6.2 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): summary of pottery assemblage from quarry pit [249], quantified by no of sherds, weight and percentage .....	53
Table 6.3 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): samian ware, by form and fabric, from quarry pit [249].....	53
Table 6.4 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): summary of functionality of the main pottery forms (excluding samian table ware) from quarry pit [249] by Estimated Vessel Equivalents (EVEs) .....	53
Table 6.5 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): summary of pottery assemblage from quarry pit [584], quantified by no of sherds, weight and percentage .....	54
Table 6.6 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): samian ware, by form and fabric, from quarry pit [584].....	54
Table 6.7 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): summary of functionality of the main pottery forms (excluding samian table ware) from quarry pit [584] by Estimated Vessel Equivalents (EVEs) .....	54
Table 6.8 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): quantification of Roman pottery from deposits other than pits [249] and [584].....	55
Table 6.9 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): summary of small finds by sub-phase and function.....	56
Table 6.10 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): Roman coins by sub-phase, area, context, denomination and emperor .....	57
Table 6.11 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): quantification of Roman vessel glass by vessel type and sub-phase.....	57
Table 6.12 George Street School 2013 (Site 5): summary of human osteological and palaeopathological results.....	59
Table 7.1 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): dimensions and context details for Phase 2 pit features .....	67
Table: 7.2 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): dimensions and context details for Phase 3 pit features .....	69
Table 7.3 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): Roman CBM quantification of forms by total count and weight.....	72
Table 7.4 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): samian pottery quantification of forms (MNV) by fabric.....	72
Table 7.5 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): fine and coarse ware pottery quantification by sherd count, weight and MNV, by fabric.....	72
Table 7.6 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): small finds according to type, material and function .....	75
Table 7.7 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): nails and other ferrous metal objects .....	75
Table 7.8 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): lead offcuts and other waste/scrap.....	76
Table 7.9 Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange 2015–16 (Site 6): glass quantification.....	76
Table 13.1 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): summary of Phase 3, context (33), ceramic building material assemblage.....	99
Table 13.2 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): pottery from Phase 2 quantified by ware, no of sherds and weight .....	99
Table 13.3 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): samian ware forms from Phase 2, quantified by fabric and max no of vessels.....	99

Table 13.4 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): pottery from Phase 3, context (33), quantified by ware, no of sherds and weight....	100
Table 13.5 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): samian ware forms from Phase 3, context (33), quantified by fabric and max no of vessels .....	101
Table 13.6 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): summary of the main pottery forms from Phase 3, context (33), by max no of vessels (excluding samian) .....	101
Table 13.7 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): summary of small finds by function, type, material, context and phase.....	107
Table 13.8 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): lead from Phase 3, context (33), quantified by general form, no of fragments and weight .....	108
Table 13.9 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): condition of animal bone from Roman phases (number of bags) .....	110
Table 13.10 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): species representation (NISP) .....	110
Table 13.11 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): general information (NISP) .....	110
Table 13.12 The Bars (south) 2002 (Site 12): charred plant remains.....	112

## Acknowledgements

Particular thanks are due to Mark Leah, Development Management Archaeologist and Team Leader, Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service, Chester West and Chester Council, for his invaluable assistance with the formulation of this volume overall, and to his colleague Moya Watson whom provided access to the grey literature reports held by the Cheshire Historic Environment Record. Grateful thanks are expressed to David Mason for his invaluable input with the discussion chapter.

The projects summarised and discussed here involved several archaeological contracting organisations, their staff and volunteers both past and present, without whom this volume could not have been completed. These include: Chester Archaeology; Earthworks Archaeological Services; Gifford and Partners; LP: Archaeology; University of Manchester Archaeology Unit; Wardell Armstrong and Wessex Archaeology. These are all acknowledged here along with their clients, developers and other organisations who funded the projects.

Thanks are due to a number of specialists for their input into the site reports. These include: Matthew Ball (coins), Máiréad Ní Challanáin and Malin Holst (human remains), Elizabeth Huckerby (charred plant remains), Claire Ingrem (animal remains), Dan Robinson (inscribed stone) and David Shotter (coins). Many of the reports written by these individuals have by necessity been brought up-to-date and edited following examination of the project archives to which they relate. Any omissions, inconsistencies or errors in editing lie with the author of this volume.

Finally, the author would like to express his personal thanks and gratitude to Will Walker, colleague and friend with Earthworks Archaeological Services.



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Summary

The archaeological investigations and excavations reported on in this volume were all situated to the north or east of the Roman legionary fortress at Chester (*Deva*). Those to the north mostly along modern Upper Northgate Street or within the area between Gorse Stacks and St. Oswald's Way, whilst those to the east lay along either side of Foregate Street and The Bars, and along the route of the A51 Boughton road. The excavations were carried out by a number of archaeological contractors in response to planning proposals.

Those excavations located to the north of the legionary fortress were largely undertaken during the considerable urban redevelopment of this area of Chester during the first two decades of the current millennium. Development here was mostly in the form of residential apartments, student accommodation,

a hotel, and, in one instance, a new bus interchange. Those excavations to the east of the city centre began during the early 1990s and continued until recently in response to the more piecemeal manner in which redevelopment occurred in this area. Along Foregate Street, this took the form of the refurbishment of existing retail units, whereas, further east, residential and retail development took place. Fortunately, owing to the implementation of certain planning regulations, an outcome of this widespread urban redevelopment has been the completion of numerous developer-funded archaeological interventions, from watching briefs to field evaluation and, in certain instances, open-area excavations. These varied interventions form the subject of this volume and comprise fifteen separate sites. Taken together, the results from these sites form a substantial archaeological transect, aligned approximately northwest-southeast, through the zones of the extramural settlement, or *canabae*, located to the north and east of the Roman fortress (Figure 1.1).

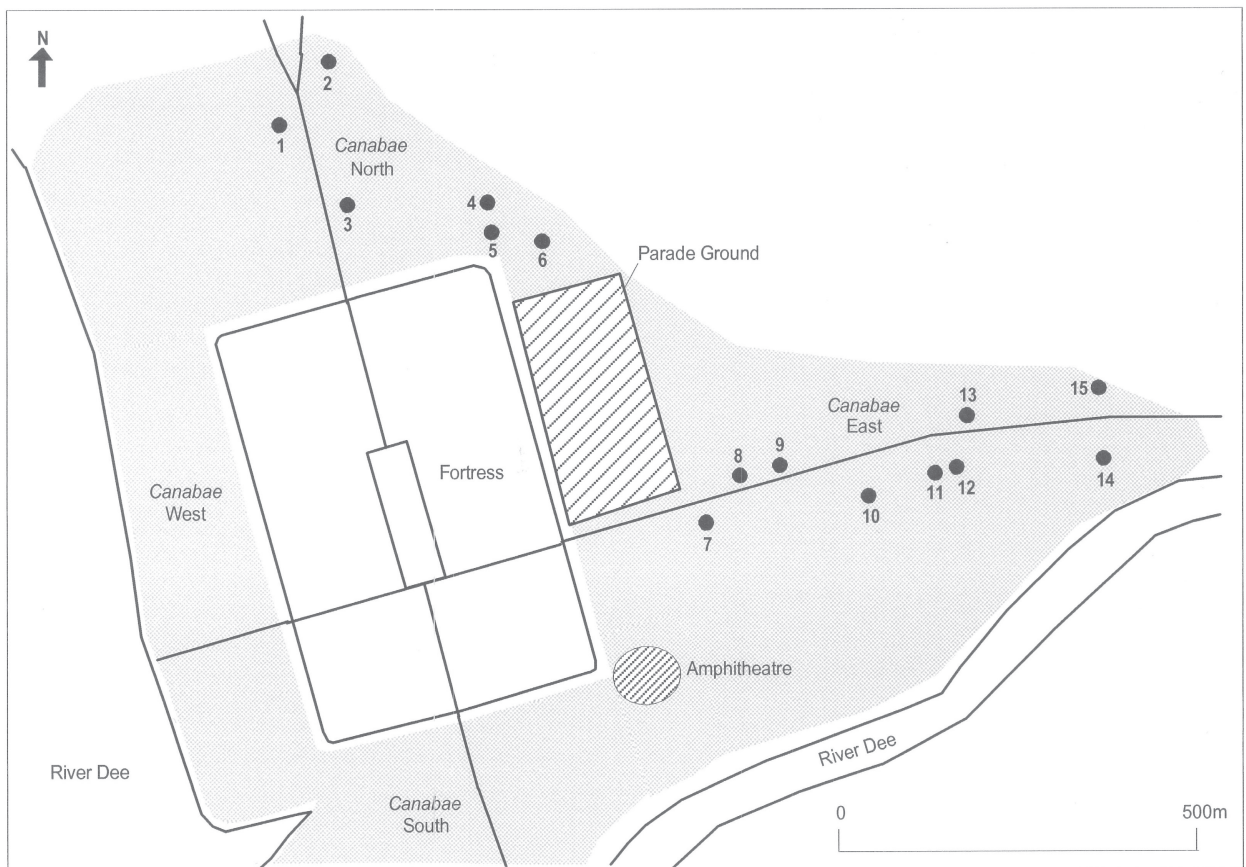


Figure 1.1 Map of Roman Chester showing the general extent of the *canabae* and location of the sites investigated

**The projects**

To the north of the legionary fortress the six sites investigated (Figure 1.2, Table 1.1) were located at 51–57 Upper Northgate Street (2015), Liverpool Road (2018), Delamere Street (2009), George Street School (2013), and two sites at Gorse Stacks (2009 and 2015–16), the latter of which would form the location for Chester’s new bus interchange. Much of this area contained little of surviving historical or architectural value, consisting mostly of modern retail units, whilst the area between Gorse Stacks and St. Oswald’s Way was dominated by car parks. Furthermore, during the post-medieval period, the area had also been extensively quarried for the local red sandstone. Consequently, for the most part, the conditions here could be considered suitable for large-scale open-area

archaeological excavations, where feasible, ahead of development. Such excavations began during 2005 with the site of Chester’s former bus terminus located on the south side of Delamere Street. Following archaeological evaluation, large-scale excavation ahead of redevelopment demonstrated that the stratigraphy in this area was generally quite slight and that the natural sandstone geology was located at a shallow depth below current ground level. Although the central area of the site had been extensively quarried for stone during the post-medieval period, evidence for activity during the Roman period was encountered in the form of a number of irregularly-shaped quarry pits and ditches, all cut directly into the bedrock, and from which large assemblages of finds were recovered. The results of this site were published in detail (Cutler *et al.* 2012) and hinted at the

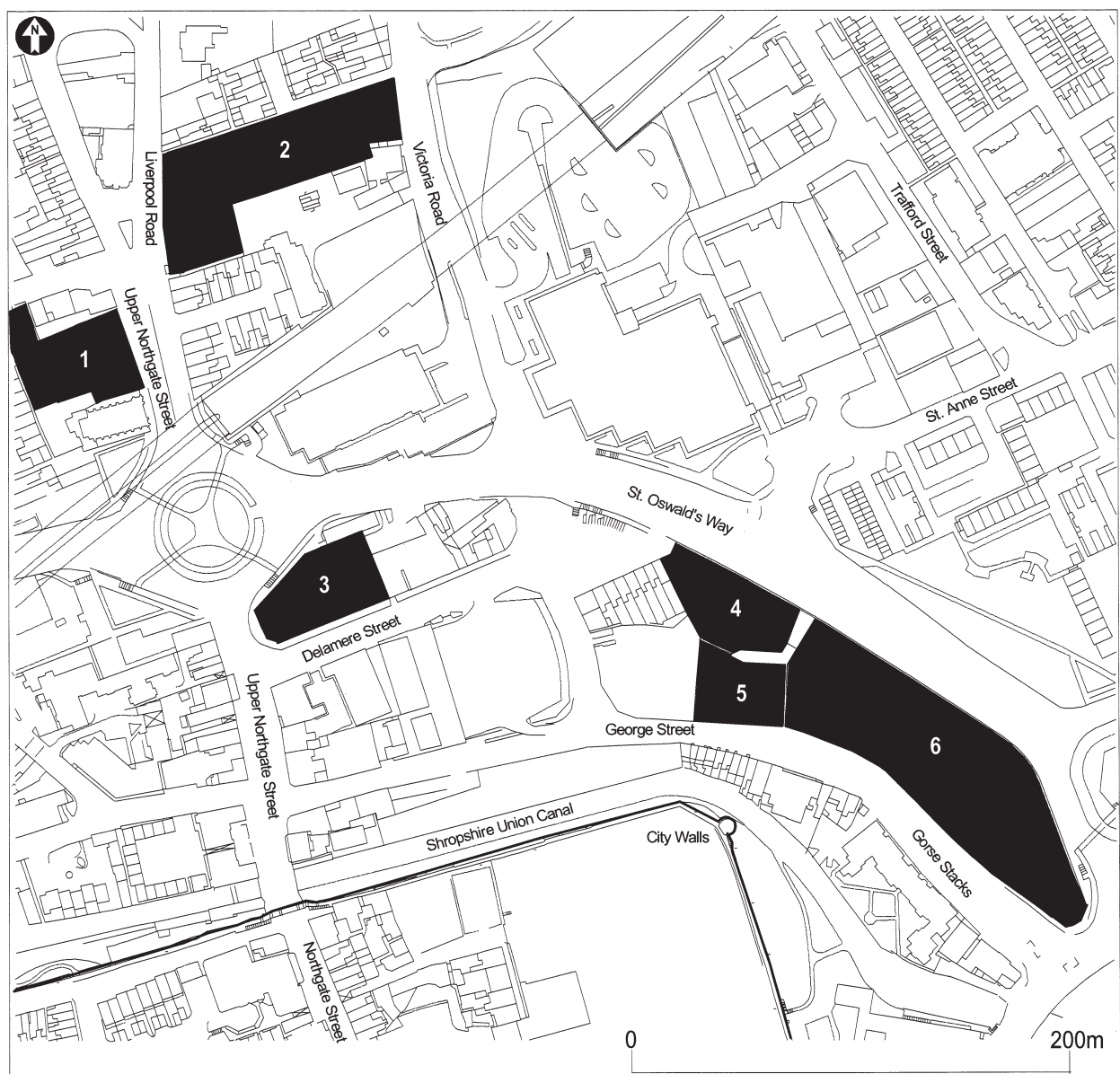


Figure 1.2 Location of the six sites investigated to the north of the fortress



character of the Roman archaeology that may be encountered during any future developments within the extramural settlement zone to the north of the legionary fortress. Indeed, these results were generally replicated during the subsequent excavation of a number of sites during the following years.

The nine sites to the east of the legionary fortress (Figure 1.3; Table 1.1) were located at 54–60 Foregate Street (2009), 83–89 Foregate Street (2017), 105–109 Foregate Street (1992–93), Grosvenor Park Road (2000–19), The Bars (south) (1990 and 1998), The Bars (north) (2002), Dee Hills Park (2002–03), and Boughton Retail Centre (2012–13). In contrast to the zone north of the fortress, the area along Foregate Street consisted mostly of densely-packed retail units, public houses and restaurants, and consequently had seen little in the way of large-scale redevelopment. This, together with the mitigation strategies often adopted to minimise the potential impact upon the archaeology resource within this zone, has meant that interventions have often been limited in both scale and scope. Where permitted, most such archaeological interventions have consisted of targeted excavation within specific, often confined, areas and to minimal depths of proposed intrusion wherever possible. Consequently, although the nature of the Roman occupation in this area has been previously characterised to some degree – the area contained buildings of probable commercial and industrial nature flanking the main route leading east from the fortress – the chronology of occupation and the plans of any buildings remain uncertain (Carrington 2008: 9; Mason 2012: 112). Heading east from the fortress, the sites investigated at The Bars and onwards along the A51 Boughton road were not subject to the same constraints as those along Foregate Street and, consequently, the areas of excavation were greater and the results somewhat clearer.

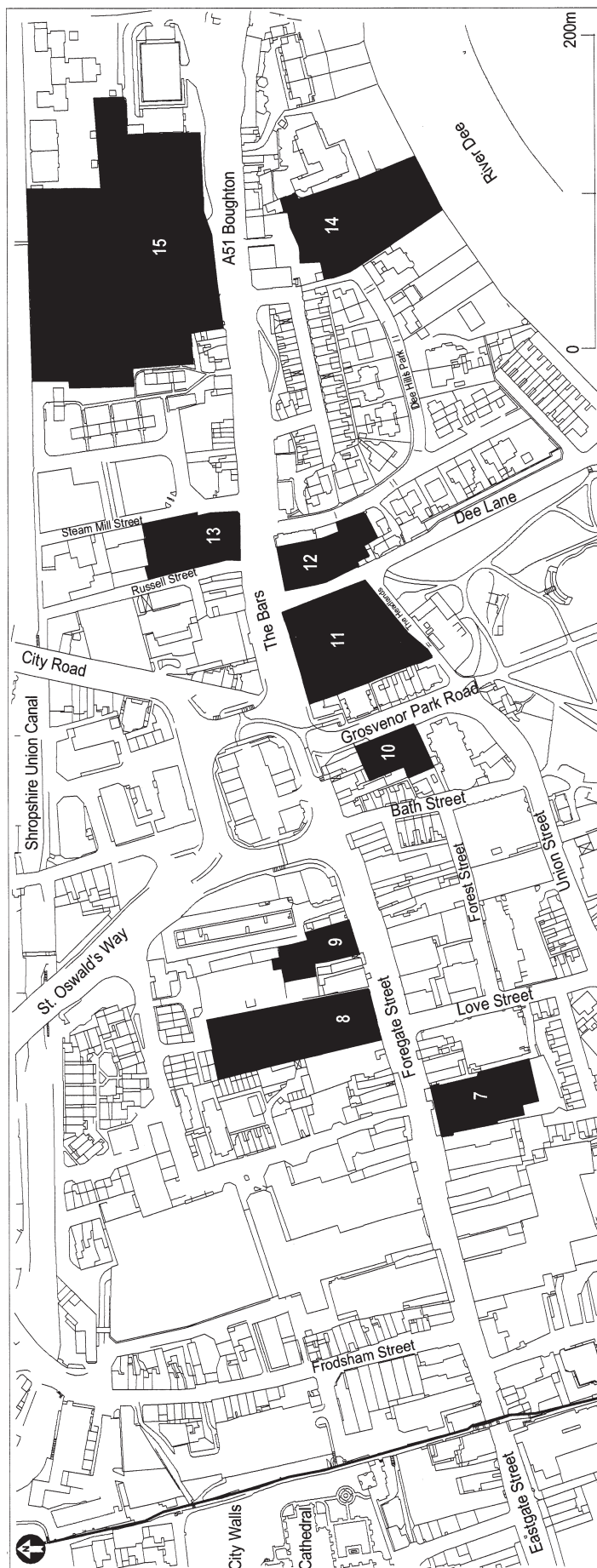


Figure 1.3 Location of the nine sites investigated to the east of the fortress

Table 1.1 Gazetteer of sites investigated

Site number	Site location	Year/s	Type of investigation/s
1	51–57 Upper Northgate Street	2015	Evaluation trenches and watching brief
2	Liverpool Road	2018	Evaluation trenches and watching brief
3	Delamere Street	2009	Evaluation trenches and area excavation
4	Gorse Stacks	2009	Evaluation trenches and area excavation
5	George Street School	2013	Evaluation trenches and limited area excavation
6	Gorse Stacks bus interchange	2015–16	Evaluation trenches and limited area excavation
7	54–60 Foregate Street	2009	Evaluation trenches
8	83–89 Foregate Street	2017	Evaluation trenches
9	105–109 Foregate Street	1992–93	Evaluation trenches and limited area excavation
10	Grosvenor Park Road	2000–19	Evaluation trenches and watching brief
11	The Bars (south)	1990 & 1998	Evaluation trenches and limited area excavation
12	The Bars (south)	2002	Evaluation trenches and limited area excavation
13	The Bars (north)	2002	Evaluation trenches
14	Dee Hills Park	2002–03	Evaluation trenches and watching brief
15	Boughton Retail Centre	2012–13	Evaluation trenches and area excavation

### History of Research and Publication

Whereas, following many years of delay, the detailed results of specific sites excavated within extramural zones to the west and south of the Roman legionary fortress between the 1960s and 1980s have been recently published in detail (Ward 2012), summary publications only have appeared for sites within the northern and eastern zones (*see* Carrington 2008; Mason 2012 for example). A gazetteer listing discoveries made in these zones up to the end of 2009 was included in Ward's 2012 volume but, not being the focus of that work, the information remained minimal. Where developer-funded projects have taken place since the 1990s, the resulting information has often remained confined to the pages of various unpublished 'client' or 'grey-literature' reports. Furthermore, it is often the case that more than one archaeological contracting unit may be involved with a single development site as the economic climate changes and the site passes through the ownership of several potential developers and the information generated can often become disparate, confused or inaccessible. Indeed, several of the sites herein prove no exception, and issues of funding and other unpredicted circumstances can dictate the priority and level of reporting adopted, this can often be particularly so with the analysis of ecofacts and artefacts. Ultimately such issues can force a project to stall during the post-excavation reporting stage or, indeed, fail to reach completion entirely. The present volume attempts to go some way in rectifying these issues and presents, where possible, detailed accounts of selected sites investigated between 1990

and 2019 within the northern and eastern Roman extramural settlement zones. Furthermore, it is hoped that this volume will form a companion to Ward's 2012 publication covering the western and southern extramural settlement zones and add detail to several of the sites summarised in Ward's 2012 gazetteer, along with the details of further sites excavated up to 2019.

The results obtained from the excavation of the sites within the northern extramural settlement zone (sites 1–6) are described first, followed by those in the eastern zone (sites 7–15). The sites are described in the northern zone running from north to east along modern Upper Northgate Street and Liverpool Road before heading eastwards along Delamere Street and Gorse Stacks. Those in the eastern zone are described from west to east. This approach was considered spatially and geographically logical and in preference to ordering the descriptive accounts by year, or years, of excavation.

An attempt has been made throughout the present volume to standardise, where possible, the terminology and conventions adopted by the various archaeological contractors and used within the individual reports that form the basis of the following site descriptions. Roman pottery fabric codes used throughout this volume relate, wherever possible, to those published in the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber and Dore 1998), supplemented by common descriptive fabric or ware names local to the Chester area and the North West in general (*see* Ward 2012: 5–12).