Unipart

Bicester Park: Land South of London - Banbury Railway Line, Bicester

Archaeological Evaluation Report

NGR SP 599 222

96/00255/F and 96/00321/F

Oxford Archaeological Unit

August 1997

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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SUMMARY

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at Bicester Park, Bicester, Oxon on behalf of Unipart. The evaluation revealed a generally low density of archaeological features, mostly undated ditches, across the proposed development area. In the north-west corner of the site a probable enclosure ditch and other features were found. These were associated with Roman pottery and probably indicate a low-status settlement of 2nd century AD date. Such sites are still relatively scarce in the Bicester area. A small number of sherds of Anglo-Saxon pottery are also important in indicating activity of that date in the vicinity. The upstanding traces of medieval fields were also recorded.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

In March and April 1996 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation at Bicester Park, Bicester, Oxon on behalf of Unipart in respect of a planning application for a car body (Body in White) plant (Planning Application Nos. 96/00255/F and 96/00321/F) and a brief set by and a WSI agreed with the County Archaeologist for Oxfordshire. The development site lay on land south of the London-Banbury railway line in Bicester Park South (Fig. 1), on the east side of Bicester (centre SP 599222) and is c 6.7 hectares in area. The site code for the fieldwork component of the project was BIUNI 96 and the archive resulting from the evaluation will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service under the accession number 1996.28.

1.2 Geology and topography

The site is located in the Oxford Clay Vale, south of its junction with the East Cherwell Uplands and lies on superficial deposits above Oxford Clay. The superficial deposits encountered across the site were slightly silty orange-brown to blue-grey clays. The site is generally flat, at about 65 m OD. The site consists of well-established pasture, divided into fairly small fields by a rectilinear pattern of hedged field boundaries and narrow lanes, overlaid on well-preserved ridge and furrow on the same general alignment.

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The archaeological background to the evaluation was the subject of a separate preliminary study (OAU 1996), prepared as part of a wider survey of the environmental aspects of the development impact, compiled by EPCAD (Environmental Planning Coordination and Design) Consultants. This has been expanded and is incorporated in the summary presented below.

Prior to the evaluation the site itself had produced no archaeological evidence, with the exception of the extant remains of ridge and furrow. There are no known archaeological finds from the immediate surroundings, but it lies in an area of considerable interest. Evidence for

prehistoric activity is slight but growing. Generally undated cropmarks to the south-west of Bicester include two probable Bronze Age ring ditches (County Sites and Monuments Record PRNs 5633 and 5634) and further ring ditches (now destroyed) lay c 1 km north of the present site. Work by the OAU on the A421 north of Alchester revealed a middle Bronze Age cremation adjacent to the Gagle Brook and Beaker flint and pottery and dispersed middle Iron Age settlement at Chesterton Lane. A probable middle Iron Age settlement site is known from the air at the south-west corner of the walled Roman town. Late Iron Age to early Roman settlement is now known from two locations in the area, one on the A421 and the other excavated at the Bicester Village shopping centre, some 2 km west-south-west of the present site. The principal Roman settlement of the area is the small town of Alchester, lying astride the north-south road from Dorchester to Towcester just south of its junction with Akeman Street, the major east-west Roman road in the region. Extensive Roman activity, possibly indicating two villa complexes, is known at Kings End Farm (SP 573227, Chambers 1979) and South Farm (SP 585237, Chambers 1989), neither extensively examined and both now beneath housing estates on the west side of Bicester. Bicester itself developed from two separate manors in the late Anglo-Saxon period, though archaeological evidence for this period is confined to parts of the fabric of the parish church (which was a minster) and early Anglo-Saxon material is only known from the northern extramural settlement area of Alchester. The medieval town retained the two foci; it was a market centre and also had a small priory, founded in 1180.

The site itself lies principally in Launton parish. The notable straight north-west - south-east aligned boundary of the parish forms the south-western edge of most of the site, with a small part in Bicester parish further south-west. To the south-east is Ambrosden parish, within which lies the deserted medieval village of Wretchwick, situated c 1 km south-west of the present site. The medieval village centre of Launton lies a similar distance away to the north-east.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the presence/absence, extent, condition, character and date of any archaeological deposits within the development area in order to provide sufficient information for the archaeological potential of the site to be judged in relation to the planning application. These aims were established in the Brief for the work, set by the County Archaeologist in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, Planning and Archaeology (PPG16, DoE 1990).

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation had four main components. The first was a review of the available documentary evidence for the site in the light of its important ownership history. This was supplemented by examination of the present condition of the site, reflecting its medieval and post-medieval use, in the form of a rapid survey of the existing ridge and furrow and any other earthworks, and a survey of samples of the hedgerows. The latter was carried out by Dominic Woodfield of EPCAD (see further below). The fourth component of the evaluation was the excavation of trenches to examine the below-ground archaeology.

3.1 Documentary survey

Research into the documentary record for the historic landscape of Launton focused on examination of the historic map evidence for the area. The sources consulted were: Davis's Map of Oxfordshire 1790, the Tithe Map and Award 1850, the Ordnance Survey Drawings and the Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6 inch map of 1885, all consulted at the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies. The Centre's card index on Launton was also checked for any further references, but none of these produced significant additional information.

The original of an important map of the parish drawn up in 1607 is privately held in Stratton Ardley House, although the book associated with this map is held by the Oxford County Record Office. Correspondence with Pat Turner of the Launton Local History Society, who holds a copy of the map, proved very useful in establishing what kind of evidence was contained on this map for the development area (see below).

The Victoria County History (Oxon, Vol 6 1959 Ploughley Hundred) constitutes the principal secondary source for the history of the parish. This provides a valuable summary, especially in its detailed coverage of the history of the manor. It is clear from this account, however, that while extensive primary documentary evidence for some aspects of the history of the manor survives in the Westminster Abbey Muniments and elsewhere, this material is of little value for topographical aspects of the area. It was therefore felt that extensive consultation of these primary sources could not be justified in the context of the project as a whole.

3.2 Hedgerow survey

The hedgerow survey was carried out by Dominic Woodfield of EPCAD on April 4th 1996, with the objective of providing approximate dating for the hedges present. As age (and species diversity) is irrespective of total length a standard sample of two 30 yard stretches was taken for each hedgerow on the site. The number of species was then totalled and divided by two. The resulting figures give an approximate date for the hedges on the basis of Hooper's rule, in which the number of woody species present is broadly equivalent to the age of the hedge in centuries.

3.3 Earthwork survey

The surviving earthworks, principally ridge and furrow, were measured from points established in relation to the current field boundaries and the points were correlated with the OS base map and plotted at a scale of 1:500. Each of the modern fields was treated as a separate unit (Fields 1-7), within each of which three lines of points were measured, with values recorded for the tops of ridges and the bottoms of furrows, to the nearest 10 cm. All the fields within the proposed development area were measured in this way, except for Field 7 (OS land parcel 0917), at the north-east corner of the site, where a combination of recent ground disturbance and localised flooding rendered attempts at survey meaningless. The earthwork survey results were checked against aerial photographic evidence, but the latter, while confirming the general pattern revealed by the survey, did not provide sufficient detail to enable very detailed correlation with the survey.

3.4 Excavation sample size

The evaluation was based upon a 2% sample of the development area, and consisted of 19 trenches usually measuring 30 m long and 2 m wide (Fig. 2). Slight variations from the originally proposed trench layout resulted from the need to avoid areas of standing water, to reduce damage to existing field boundaries and to avoid endangering an identified colony of great crested newts. Trench 13 was relocated slightly to avoid a recently emplaced site office, and Trench 17 was moved through 90° to avoid machining close to an overhead power line. The overburden was removed by a 360° excavator under close archaeological supervision.

3.5 Fieldwork methods and recording

The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated their sections drawn at a scale of 1:20. General trench plans and sections were drawn at 1:50. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992). Finds recovery followed standard procedures. Bulk samples were taken from selected ditch fills to assess the potential for recovery of carbonised plant remains.

4 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

4.1 Documentary Survey

4.1.1 Historical Development

The development site lies mainly within the ancient parish of Launton, with a small section in what is now part of Ambrosden but was once Bicester parish. The fields in question lie approximately 850 m to the south of the Church at Launton, and are bounded to the south by the Ambrosden/Launton parish boundary. This boundary follows one of the tributaries of the Ray.

The village of Launton itself lies within the south-west corner of the parish, on a low ridge between two further tributaries of the Ray and grew up round the cross roads and the church. Its Saxon name means the 'long tun' and the original settlement was probably along the line of Back Lanes, which ran to the north-east and south-west of the church. It was a large village in the Middle Ages, and was still relatively large in the 17th century, since as many as 46 houses appear in the hearth-tax list. The 18th-century village, as shown on Davis's map of 1797, lay on the south side of the Caversfield Road, formerly known as Skimmingdishlane, and on a road crossing at right angles, which ran from the town green lying to the south of the Caversfield Road north-eastwards to Launton Field. The only outlying farm in the 18th century was Hareleys, Hoar Leys in 1738 and Whore Leys in 1797 (Davis). A windmill stood in Great Stone Field in the 17th century and a water-mill stood on the brook which crosses Church Lane in the 19th century.

The manor stands near the church and forms an isolated group, which includes the church,

manor and rectory, a quarter of a mile from the cross roads of the village. A church is thought to have stood here in circa 1057, although the present one dates from the 12th century. The church and the associated Saxon village which existed here, probably influenced the positioning of the manor in this area. Edward the Confessor, who was born at Islip, gave the manor of Launton to his Abbey of St. Peter at Westminster in 1065 and it passed to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster after the dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century.

Little is known about the topography of pre-enclosure Launton, although the manor is very well recorded in the Westminster Muniments and there is a detailed account of its history in the V.C.H, on which much of the following is based. A West Field and an East Field are mentioned in the 14th century and Clay Field, Little and Great Stone Fields, Middle Field and Wake Field are mentioned in the 17th century terriers. There are indications that a two field system persisted until the end of the 16th century, when a limited amount of enclosure took place. The common meadows are named in the 17th century as Debden, Padons, Corn Slade and Quadies. The common cow pastures are named in the 18th century as Wetherell, Drannel, Peasebridge, Town Slade and the Stone Pits.

Small enclosures for pasture appear to have been allowed to the individual customary in the 14th century, but the first extensive enclosure of pasture was made in 1582 by agreement between the copyholders of the manor and Ralph Heydon, farmer of the demesne. The 19th century parliamentary enclosure however, shows that enclosure for arable land had made little progress before this date. At the enclosure in 1814 there remained about 1,650 acres of open field arable and waste, principally to the north of the village and along the Poundon Road, i.e. the area marked on Davis's Map as being Launton Field. There were about 1,080 acres of old enclosures, of which some were redistributed under the Award.

4.1.2 Topographical and Historic Map Evidence

The earliest map of the area dates to 1607 and is in private ownership. The map shows the area covered by the development area but shows no details within it as it had already by this time been enclosed. That this area was possibly at one time part of the open field system, and certainly arable, is attested by the fact that it contains ridge and furrow. Given the early origin of its enclosure it is possible that it was enclosed by agreement as part of the 1582 scheme of enclosure. It could represent the creation of a demesne farm associated with the manor to the north.

The field boundaries, ditches and hedges which divide the landscape are shown as boundaries on the 1607 map, with the exception of one north-south boundary added in the 19th century. These earlier boundaries, present on the 1607 map, run over the ridge and furrow and were obviously established during or after the field was enclosed, but before 1607. The boundary which forms the western extent of the development area runs along the headland of the ridge and furrow with a marked drop in ground level to the west. This boundary could be contemporary with the laying out of the open fields, however it is unlikely that the open field would have stopped one field short of the parish boundary to the west and therefore this boundary could also date to when the field was enclosed. The parish boundary to the south is marked by a hedge, bank and ditch which may date back to the creation of the parish in the Saxon period.

Davis's Map of 1790, although not as accurate as later maps, shows the enclosed fields within the development area. It shows the extent of the East Field, known then as Launton Field, the open field to the north east of Launton, which had still not been enclosed by this time. It also shows the extent of Launton Common to the east of the development area. It is therefore reasonable to assume from this map that the fields within the development area, before they were enclosed, were probably part of the West Field open field of Launton as referred to in the 14th century.

The remaining open fields were enclosed in 1814, the map of which is too badly damaged to be microfilmed. The Tithe Map is accessible and this shows that tithes were paid on a small number of fields within the parish. Tithes were not relevant for the rest of the parish as the majority of the land was still held by Westminster Abbey. The fields on which tithes were collected include some of those within the development area. The field names associated with the Tithe Map indicate that this land was still being used as pasture; relevant names include 'Close' and 'Little Close' being listed as Pasture and Meadow respectively. The naming of these fields probably goes back to when they were formed, after their enclosure, when they probably passed out of Westminster estate's control.

The first edition Ordnance Survey 6-inch map (1885) represents the first accurately surveyed plan of the area. It shows the field boundaries within the development area as being practically identical to those surviving today. It also shows accurately the position of the two green lanes. The lane running east-west seems to go nowhere, it is not shown as a lane on the Tithe Map, just a field boundary. It is possible therefore that what appears to be a green lane is just a relic field boundary. The green lane running north-south, runs from the parish boundary to the south and to the church and manor to the north. It does appear along its present alignment on the Tithe Map (1850) and the fact that it runs over the ridge and furrow implies that it dates to after the field was enclosed and would have linked the manor to its possible fields.

In conclusion the fields within the development area were once part of the medieval open field system, probably once the West Field. The area was enclosed before 1607, probably in 1582, and the field boundaries seen today are probably contemporary with the enclosure. The Tithe Map indicates that the fields had certainly passed out of the control of the Westminster Estate by the 19th century and this may have been the case since enclosure. They were probably enclosed to create a Manor or Demesne Farm. The parish boundary delimiting the southern edge of the development area may date to the formation of the parish itself, while the one to the west may have been established at the same time as the enclosure boundaries.

4.2 **Earthwork Survey** (Fig. 3)

4.2.1 The whole site (including the unsurveyed north-east field, now too badly damaged to permit survey) was covered with ridge and furrow aligned approximately north-west - south-east. This arrangement was overlaid by a later system of rectilinear fields and trackways on the same alignment. This system was generally defined by hedges associated with relatively slight earthworks and the relationship between these and the ridge and furrow was generally quite clear. There are three components to the earthworks on the site; the parish boundary feature to the south, the ridge and furrow and the rectilinear field and track system.

4.2.2 The parish boundary, which runs in a straight line (roughly north-west - south-east) through the southern part of the site and partly forms its southern edge, consists of a slight bank topped with a hedge to the south-west with a ditch on its north-eastern side. The ditch was partly examined in evaluation Trench 4 (see below). Both bank and ditch were partly overgrown and difficult to examine in detail.

4.2.3 The ridge and furrow itself was relatively uncomplicated. It was on the same alignment as the parish boundary and appeared to respect that feature, though definition of the ridge and furrow at the south end of Field 1 adjacent to the boundary was poor. There is some uncertainty about the alignment of the most southerly recorded furrow in that field, and the corresponding alignments in Field 2 suggest that there should have been a further furrow in Field 1 closer to the boundary feature. This may have become obscured by material derived from cleaning out of the boundary ditch.

4.2.4 The ridge and furrow formed part of two groups of furlongs, presumably lying within a single open field, divided by a slight north-east - south-west aligned headland subsequently followed by one of the hedges of the rectilinear field system. Fields 1-4 lay within the western group and Fields 5-7 in the eastern group. In the western group some variation was noted in the spacing of ridges, particularly in the southern half of the site. Most commonly the ridges were some 8-9 m apart, a spacing which was observed across Fields 3 and 4, but in Fields 1 and 2 to the south this spacing was interrupted by groups of more closely set furrows, between 5 and 6 m apart. The significance of this variation is uncertain. It was also observable, though to a lesser extent, in the eastern group of furlongs, particularly at the southern end of Field 6, where three quite closely-spaced furrows corresponded with similar ones to the west. Elsewhere in the eastern group the average furrow spacing was slightly wider than to the west, generally in a range from 8 m up to 11 m. As far as could be detected on the ground there were slight traces of the classic 'reverse-S' furrow shape on both sides of the headland running through the centre of the site. This has been represented slightly schematically on the ridge and furrow plan - precise rendering would have required either an impracticably large number of measurements or more detailed aerial photographic evidence than is available.

4.2.5 The earthworks associated with the rectilinear field system were not examined in detail. Where present, slight hedge banks were clearly later than the ridge and furrow and in places, for example on the hedge lines dividing Fields 1 and 2 and at the south-eastern margin of Field 2, these were associated with shallow ditches which cut the ridge and furrow. The system of trackways associated with the rectilinear field system, which now survive as green lanes, may have utilised furrows and headlands where possible. This appears clear in the case of the trackway along the headland dividing the eastern and western groups of furlongs. In the case of the north-west - south-east aligned trackway dividing Fields 3 and 4 the spacing of the adjacent furrows would suggest that the trackway itself originally occupied the site of a furrow, but the present profile of the trackway is level. This probably resulted from erosion of the furrow over time, but it is just possible that the trackway originated earlier as part of an arrangement of accesses to the open field system. The north-east - south-west aligned trackway forming part of the north-western boundary of the site appears to have been laid out over the ridge and furrow, however.

4.3 **Hedgerow Survey** by Dominic Woodfield

4.3.1 A standard sample of two 30 yard stretches was taken for each hedgerow on the site. The number of species was then totalled and divided by two. Each hedgerow is discussed below using the numbering shown on Figure 2.

H1 Double hedge and ditch along ancient Parish Boundary. Structurally rather gappy which may be a result of competitive overshading by the nine mature Oaks along its length. It contains Midland Hawthorn which is indicative of more ancient hedgerows. **Average number of species in a 30 yard stretch: 4.5**

H2 Locally dense hedge along green lane with ditch and some rather large gaps and few mature trees. Elm has invaded some sections reducing species diversity. **Average number of species: 4.5**

H3 Similar to H2 and also running along green lane. Again locally dominated by suckering Elm with few mature trees. Hooper's rule gives an estimated age of approximately contemporary with enclosure; the actual age is likely to be significantly older due to the suppressing effect of the Elm on other species. The age of this hedge should also be similar to that of H2. **Average number of species: 3**

H4 Locally quite dense hedgerow with mature Oaks. It also contains Blackthorn, Elm, Hawthorn and Dog Rose. The structure deteriorates towards the Bicester Eastern Perimeter Road. **Average number of species: 3.**

H5 Dense hedgerow with one mature Ash and semi-mature Field Maple. Other species include Elm, Hawthorn and Dog Rose. **Average number of species: 3**

H6 Northern hedgerow of two which make up an attractive shaded greenway. Essentially a double hedgerow on banks either side of a shallow ditch. The structure is poor with most woody species tall but flimsy. There are numerous mature or semi-mature trees of Ash and Oak, some Field Maple and Hawthorn are also fairly large. The hedge also contains Midland Hawthorn which is indicative of more ancient hedgerows. Some sections support Elm. Other species present include Holly saplings and Goat Willow. **Average number of species: 4**

H7 Very similar to H6 but rather more dense in places. **Average number of species: 5**

H8 Fairly dense with a good complement of species including Crack Willow. Elm becomes locally dominant. **Average number of species: 4.5**

H9 Locally dense hedge with two fine Ash in its northern section. Blackthorn and Elm are locally prevalent. **Average number of species: 4**

H10 Structurally defunct hedgerow with extensive gaps which make survey of a defined length difficult. **Average number of species: 3**

H11 Fairly dense at eastern end with Blackthorn prevalent. **Average number of species: 4**

4.3.2 Hedgerow survey data

Species		H1	H1	H2	H2	H3	H3
Acer Campestre	Field maple	*			*	*	
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	*	*	*	*	*	*
Crataegus laevigata	Midland Hawthorn		*		*		
Fraxinus excelsior	Ash		*				
Ilex aquifolium	Holly						
Malus sylvestris	Crab Apple						
Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn	*	*		*		
Quercus robur	Oak	*					
Rosa arvensis	Field Rose	*					
Rosa canina	Dog Rose			*	*		*
Salix caprea	Goat Willow						
Sambucus nigra	Elder						
Ulmus procera	Elm			*	*	*	*

	H4	H4	H5	H5	H6	H6	H7	H7
Acer Campestre		*		*	*	*	*	*
Crataegus monogyna	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Crataegus laevigata					*		*	
Fraxinus excelsior		*		*		*	*	*
Ilex aquifolium						*		
Malus sylvestris								
Prunus spinosa								
Quercus robur								*
Rosa arvensis								
Rosa canina								*
Salix caprea						*		
Sambucus nigra								
Ulmus procera	*	*	*	*			*	

	H8	H8	H9	H9	H10	H10	H11	H11
Acer campestre	*	*					*	
Crataegus monogyna	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Crataegus laevigata				*				
Fraxinus excelsior	*		*					*
Ilex aquifolium								
Malus sylvestris						*		
Prunus spinosa		*	*	*		*	*	*
Quercus robur						*		
Rosa arvensis								
Rosa canina	*			*			*	*
Salix caprea								
Sambucus nigra				*		*		
Ulmus procera	*	*			*			

4.3.3 Sources of bias: Structurally the hedges on the site vary greatly. While obvious gaps (e.g. H2, H4, H10) were ignored (30 yards of actual hedgerow vegetation was surveyed), rather sparse or thinning hedgerows (e.g. H1, H6, H7) may produce less species than structurally dense ones. This is obviously more reflective of management and possibly other factors such as stress from changes in soil conditions (e.g. waterlogging) or competitive overshading, than it is of age. A number of hedges have also been invaded by suckering Elm, or regenerating Elm spreading from where a mature Elm has been lost. The vigorous and sometimes dense growth appears to have reduced diversity in some sections (notably western end of hedge H8).

4.3.4 Overall Conclusions: In conjunction with documentary evidence this survey serves to confirm that the majority of the hedges are at least of Tudor or late medieval age. Those which more obviously overly the remnant open strip fields of medieval agriculture appear to be younger than those which are more harmonious with it. For example hedgerows H6 and H7 which enclose a shaded greenway, run parallel to the strip field pattern and are bordered by a double bank and ditch system which appears to be contemporary with the strip farming as it fits in with it quite neatly. Together with the presence of mature trees and woodland species such as Midland Hawthorn and Honeysuckle (although the latter is not a species used in the dating survey) this implies a hedgerow of considerable antiquity.

In conclusion the oldest hedgerows on the site most obviously appear to be H1 and H6/H7 with the remainder probably of slightly less antiquity. The age of hedgerows such as H1 and H2, which enclose a green lane, and H8 which is quite species rich, is difficult to determine. H1 and H2 are possibly later than the underlying field system (although this is by no means certain). In addition all three have been affected by Elm regenerating from mature trees killed by Dutch Elm Disease which is spreading along some sections and may be suppressing other species.

Overall, the dating exercise does no more than support the documentary evidence uncovered in the initial archaeological assessment - namely that the hedgerows on the site date at least to the late 16th/early 17th century, with some evidence that at least some may be significantly older. Following the species/age correlation strictly, much of the hedgerow system on the site may actually date from the Tudor or late Medieval period, although a more precise estimation than this cannot realistically be attempted.

4.4 Excavated Trenches: General

4.4.1 Soils and ground conditions

The general soil type was a silty clay which was slightly acidic, contributing to poor bone survival. The orange-brown to blue-grey subsoil was generally overlaid by a bluish-grey silty clay with orange mottles which was up to 0.4 m deep. This deposit, sealed by the present topsoil, is interpreted as a medieval ploughsoil. Unless specifically mentioned otherwise, all trenches had this sequence. Ground conditions at the time of the evaluation were quite wet, with a high water table and areas of standing surface water in places. Most features filled with water upon excavation. Despite the low-lying nature of the site and the wet conditions no waterlogged deposits were encountered.

4.4.2 Distribution of Archaeological Deposits

Relatively few archaeological features were revealed in the trenches. Those that were found were mainly linear features, ditches or gullies, which were for the most part undated. The only significant concentration of features associated with dating material was in Trench 16 in the north-western corner of the site.

4.4.3 Presentation of Results

A summary description of the evaluation is presented in Trench sequence and is then discussed in wider terms, relating it to the other types of evidence considered in the evaluation. Trenches 10, 11, 14 and 15, containing no archaeological features, are not described in detail below. Trench orientations and maximum depth of machining are given in the trench headings. All features were sealed beneath the probable medieval ploughsoil unless specified otherwise. Only trenches containing significant features are illustrated here.

4.5 Excavated Trenches: Description of deposits

4.5.1 Trench 1: aligned SW-NE, maximum depth c 0.75 m

A layer of light brown silty clay with orange mottling (1/3) up to 0.10 m thick overlay the natural subsoil (1/4) and was cut towards the north-east end of the trench by a rounded feature (1/5). This was up to 1.2 m across and 0.25 m deep, with a shallow, slightly irregular profile. The single fill (1/5), of clay very similar to layer 1/3, contained no finds. The feature could have been a shallow pit or ditch terminal. The fill of 1/6 was sealed by the probable medieval ploughsoil 1/2. At the extreme south-west end of the trench this deposit was cut by a recent north-west - south-east aligned drainage ditch c 0.5 m deep with 45° sloping sides (1/8). The fill of this feature (1/7) was effectively indistinguishable from the topsoil.

A flint flake was recovered from layer 1/3. Other finds from the trench were from the topsoil. These were mainly post-medieval brick/tile, pottery and glass, but one probable Anglo-Saxon sherd and one possible medieval sherd also came from this layer.

4.5.2 Trench 2: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth c 0.4 m (Fig. 4)

Four discrete, shallow anomalies may have been features cutting the natural subsoil 2/3). From south-east to north-west these were 2/4, 2/6, 2/9 and 2/7. 2/4 was c 0.13 m deep, 1.65 m wide and 1.6 m + in length, with very shallow sides. The fill (2/5) was a grey, charcoal flecked, silty clay which produced a single pottery sherd probably of Anglo-Saxon date. Adjacent to 2/4 was a 0.02 m thick spread (2/6) of very similar material. An irregular shaped cut 2/9, with one straight north-east - south-west aligned edge, running across the trench, was interpreted as a possible tree disturbance. At the extreme north-west end of the trench a better-defined feature, 2/7, appeared to be a ditch turning within the end of the trench. This feature was up to c 0.85 m across and 0.24 m deep, with fairly steep sloping sides and a flat base. The single fill (2/8) was of grey silty clay which contained some burnt stone but no other finds.

There were no finds from this trench apart from the sherd in 2/5.

4.5.3 Trench 3: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth c 0.45 m (Fig. 4)

Two probable features were examined in this trench. A probable ditch 3/6, with a total width of 1.42 m ran across the centre of the trench at right angles to its alignment. The south-east edge of this ditch was well-defined and sloped at c 45° to a flat base, the feature having its maximum depth of 0.36 m here. The bottom was then stepped, the north-western side of the feature being only c 0.16-0.18 m deep. Only a single fill (3/5), of mottled silty clay (3/5) was noted. This was overlaid by a similar deposit up to 0.12 m thick (3/4) which extended beyond the confines of the ditch. South-east of the ditch was a discrete feature (3/7) c 1.56 m long, 0.82 m wide and 0.10 m deep with rounded ends and a shallow profile aligned roughly east-west. The fill (3/7) contained two small fragments of brick or tile of uncertain date. The feature could have been an isolated ditch fragment or possibly even a grave, but there was no evidence beyond the plan that the latter was the case.

The only finds from this trench were the tile fragments from 3/7 noted above.

4.5.4 Trench 4: aligned NE-SW, maximum depth c 0.7 m (Fig. 4)

This trench was positioned so that its south-west end cut the line of the present boundary between Launton and Ambrosden and Bicester parishes, which forms the southern boundary of much of the site.

A layer of yellowish orange silty clay some 0.15-0.2 m thick (4/3) lay immediately above the natural subsoil. The extent to which this deposit was genuinely distinct from the subsoil is uncertain. A small circular feature (4/5), possibly a pit, 0.7 m across and 0.06 m deep, was located at the extreme north-east end of the trench. The fill (4/6) may have been sealed by 4/3, but this was not certain. Further south-west a round-ended feature (4/7), up to 1.6 m across and 0.3 m deep, extended c 1 m from the south-east side of the trench. This could have been a pit or a ditch terminal. The single fill was of orange brown silty clay with no finds.

The line of the parish boundary was marked by an extant ditch and hedge. The ditch (4/9) was c 2.2 m wide and 0.75 m deep with a gently rounded profile. Only a single modern fill (4/10) was observed in the base of the cut. Extensive root disturbance made it impossible to be certain if earlier cuts were present on the same alignment, but this seems unlikely.

There were no finds from this trench.

4.5.5 Trench 5: aligned NE-SW, maximum depth 0.65 m

A very shallow and rather irregular hollow (5/6) up to 0.58 m across may have been a natural feature. It was truncated by 5/4, one of a pair of close set field drains aligned roughly ENE-WSW. These cut the medieval ploughsoil (5/2) and were sealed by topsoil. No other features were observed and no finds were recovered.

4.5.6 Trench 6: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth 0.53 m

The sole feature observed in this trench was a roughly north-east - south-west aligned ditch

(6/5) 0.9 m wide and 0.35 m deep with an asymmetrical profile. The single fill (6/4), of grey clay with orange mottling and very small charcoal flecks, was sealed by the probable medieval ploughsoil 6/2.

There were no finds from this trench.

4.5.7 Trench 7: aligned NE-SW, maximum depth 0.53 m (Fig. 5)

Three possible features were found in this trench. At the north-east end a circular feature (7/9) projected from the north-west baulk. It was c 1 m across and 0.3 m deep and had a brownish grey silty clay fill (7/8) with no finds. Some 16 m distant was a less regular feature, up to 1.35 m by 1 m and 0.35 m deep (7/5). This also had a single fill (7/4) very similar to 7/8, from which came a very abraded tiny fragment of medieval pottery. Further south still was a narrow linear feature (7/7), c 0.3 m across and up to 0.18 m deep with an irregular profile. While the interpretation of this feature is uncertain it was thought that the other two features could have been of natural origin.

The only finds were the abraded medieval sherd from 7/4 and a single post-medieval pottery sherd from the topsoil.

4.5.8 Trench 8: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth 0.7 m

This trench produced a single linear feature (8/5), some 0.7 m wide and 0.15 m deep, running c north-east - south-west across the trench. The single mid grey sandy clay fill (8/4) contained no finds. Three post-medieval pottery sherds were recovered from the topsoil.

4.5.9 Trench 9: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth 0.55 m

Only one definite feature was identified in this trench. This was a narrow V-shaped gully (9/4), 0.36 m wide and 0.39 m deep, running at right angles across the trench towards its south-eastern end. The fill, of grey silty clay (9/5) contained no finds. A number of less regular anomalies (9/6, 9/8 and 9/10) were filled with orange-brown sandy clay which also formed localised patches on the surface of the natural orange-grey clay subsoil (9/3). These were all interpreted as natural features.

There were no finds from this trench.

4.5.10 Trench 10: aligned NE-SW, maximum depth 0.8 m

No archaeological features were present in this trench. One pottery sherd, possibly of medieval date, came from the medieval ploughsoil 10/2.

4.5.11 Trench 11: aligned NE-SW, maximum depth 1 m

No archaeological features or finds were recovered from this trench.

4.5.12 Trench 12: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth 0.8 m

The natural subsoil (12/4), a yellowish brown silty clay, was cut by a V-shaped ditch (12/6) 0.61 m wide and 0.36 m deep, filled with a homogeneous grey clay (12/5). The ditch fill was overlaid by a substantial layer of yellowish-grey silty clay (12/3) ranging from c 0.15-0.4 m in thickness. This in turn was overlaid by the probable medieval ploughsoil (12/2) and topsoil (12/1). It may itself have been a further ploughsoil, but this is not certain.

A possible medieval pottery sherd and a post-medieval sherd were recovered from the topsoil.

4.5.13 Trench 13: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth 0.7 m (Fig. 5)

At the north-west end of the trench was the terminus of a slightly curvilinear ditch (13/4) some 1.12 m wide and 0.32 m deep. Both sides of this feature were shallow with a break in slope steepening to a rounded base. The cut was quite heavily disturbed by probable root action. Its fill (13/5) was of grey to orange-grey silty clay. Roughly in the centre of the trench was a smaller ditch or gully 0.5 m wide and 0.32 m deep (13/8) with a similar profile to 13/4, filled with dark greyish brown silty clay (13/9). Close to the north-west side of 13/8 was a shallow oval pit 0.66 by 0.56 m in plan and 0.12 m deep (13/6), with a light orange-grey sandy clay fill. A comparable but larger feature (13/10) projected from the south-west baulk of the trench near its south-east end. This was up to 1.7 m across and 0.15 m deep and was filled with orange silty clay.

No finds were recovered from this trench.

4.5.14 Trench 14: aligned NE-SW, maximum depth 0.6 m

No archaeological features or finds were recorded in this trench.

4.5.15 Trench 15: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth 0.75 m

There were no archaeological features in this trench. A single sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from the topsoil.

4.5.16 Trench 16: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth 0.6 m (Fig. 6)

This was the only trench to produce a significant concentration of dated archaeological features. It was extended at the south-eastern end to recover more evidence for a Roman ditch and therefore had a total length of 37 m. At the north-west end of the trench was a group of features apparently of very irregular plan, extending under both baulks of the trench, the understanding of which was hampered by the very wet conditions of the excavation. These were features 16/13, 16/7, 16/9 and 16/11, respectively 0.30, 0.21, 0.12 and 0.1 m deep with varying profiles. Fills 16/6 and 16/12, of features 16/13 and 16/7 respectively, were very similar, of light blueish grey silty clay with orange brown mottling; both contained 2nd century pottery. The fill of 16/9 (16/8) was a very heavily mottled blueish grey silty clay and that of 16/11 (16/10) an orange brown silty clay with mottling, both containing high proportions of iron panning. It was uncertain if these features were of anthropomorphic or natural origin, but a Roman sherd and tile fragment and three sherds of Anglo-Saxon pottery

were recovered from the surface of 16/8.

Further south-east were two lengths of curving gully both projecting from the north-east baulk of the trench and returning towards it. The first, (16/23), was 3.25 m long, c 0.65 m wide and 0.28 m deep with a U-shaped profile. The second, (16/25), was 2.1 m long, 0.5 m wide and 0.15 m deep. Both had similar fills of blueish-grey silty clay, neither of which produced finds. Further south-east were more irregular features, 16/15 (a possible pit or even a length of ditch 0.18 m deep), 16/17 and 16/21 (possible pits or hollows) and an adjacent probable post hole (16/19), the relationship of which to 16/20 was unclear. The fills of 16/15, 16/17 and 16/21, as well as that of the smaller curving gully 16/25, were all cut by the principal Roman feature in the trench, a ditch (16/5) which ran from about the midpoint of the trench roughly south-eastwards along its alignment before turning to the north-east. Ditch 16/5 had an average width of c 1 m and was up to 0.35 m deep with a roughly rounded profile. Its single fill (16/4) was of mid to dark blueish grey silty clay and contained pottery of 2nd century or perhaps slightly later date.

All the feature fills were overlaid by the probable medieval ploughsoil (16/2), here ranging from 0.26 to 0.4 m in thickness, which was in turn sealed by the topsoil.

The finds from this trench consisted of 19 sherds of Roman pottery and three fragments of Roman tile, plus the three Anglo-Saxon sherds from 16/8. There were no other Roman finds and no animal bone.

4.5.17 Trench 17: aligned NE-SW, maximum depth 0.6 m

A single feature was seen towards the north-east end of the trench. This was a possible pit or ditch terminal (17/6) projecting up to c 1.5 m into the trench from the north-west baulk. The feature was up to 1.3 m across but only 0.15 m deep. Its fill was of grey sandy clay (17/5). There were no finds from this trench.

4.5.18 Trench 18: aligned NE-SW, maximum depth 0.7 m

A well-defined small ditch or gully 0.55 m wide and 0.2 m deep (18/8) ran across the north-east end of the trench on a roughly north-west - south-east alignment. It was filled with dark grey-brown silty clay loam (18/7). Towards the south-west end of the trench was a probable shallow pit (18/6), 1 m across and 0.25 m deep with a gently rounded profile. Its fill (18/5) was identical to 18/7.

The natural grey clay subsoil (18/4) was overlaid by a blue grey silty clay with orange mottles (18/3) up to 0.15 m thick. There was some uncertainty as to whether this deposit overlay or was cut by features 18/8 and 18/6. Although the former relationship was recorded in the section it was subsequently thought that this was mistaken and that the features were more likely to have cut 18/3.

Two medieval pottery sherds dated to the 14th-15th centuries came from the ploughsoil layer 18/2.

4.5.19 Trench 19: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth 0.6 m (Fig. 6)

Two parallel linear features 0.3 m apart (19/7 and 19/9) ran at right angles to the trench alignment close to its north-west end. Their cuts were similar in profile with their north-western sides sloping fairly uniformly at 20° to 30° to meet almost vertical south-eastern edges, the cut of 19/9 being 0.4 m wide and 0.25 m deep and that of 19/7 0.76 m wide and 0.45 m deep. Both features were filled with blue grey silty clay.

Further south-east a parallel feature (19/5), perhaps another small ditch or gully, appeared to terminate within the trench c 1.3 m from the north-east baulk. This feature was 0.95 m wide and only 0.1 m deep. Its fill, of mottled blue-grey silty clay, was almost indistinguishable from the overlying layer (19/3). In the extreme south-east corner of the trench was an irregular hollow (19/11) up to 0.2 m deep, filled with orange-grey silty clay. This may have been a tree-hole.

A probable ploughsoil (19/3) generally 0.2-0.25 m thick overlay all the feature fills in the trench. This varied in colour from blueish-grey at the north-western end of the trench to a more orange-brown at the south-eastern end. The more grey coloration may have been a consequence of waterlogging. 19/3 was overlaid by a further possible ploughsoil (19/2) and topsoil. Layer 19/2 produced a piece of tile and two sherds of pottery of 19th-20th century date.

4.6 Finds

Finds from the evaluation were generally scarce. The only significant pieces were of ceramic material (pottery and tile). Other finds, a few fragments of glass, clay pipe and coal, were all of recent date and from topsoil contexts and are not described or discussed further here.

Pottery

Thirty-one sherds of pottery were recovered, excluding post-medieval/modern material. These were examined briefly, principally to determine the date of the features or deposits from which they derived. There was insufficient material to shed any light on functional aspects of the evaluated areas.

The breakdown of the material by period was as follows:

Roman	20 sherds (contexts 15/1 and widespread in Trench 16)
Anglo-Saxon	5 sherds (contexts 1/1, 2/5 and 16/8)
Medieval	6 sherds (contexts 1/1, 7/4, 10/2, 12/1 and 18/2)

The Roman pottery, with the exception of a single sherd in 15/1, was all from Trench 16. Two further small sherds, in a grey-black sandy fabric, from 10/2 and 12/1, were assigned a medieval date, though it is just possible that these were also Roman.

The Roman sherds were assigned to major ware groups, and in some cases individual fabrics, as follows:

M22, Oxford white ware mortarium fabric, 1 sherd.
O20, coarse sandy oxidised ware (local?), 1 sherd.
O81, pink grogged ware (Northants/Bucks), 1 sherd.
O/R, indeterminate coarse ware (local?), 1 sherd.
R10, fine reduced ware (local/Oxford), 1 sherd.
R30, moderately sandy reduced ware (local/Oxford), 10 sherds.
R37, moderately sandy reduced ware, source uncertain but north-west of Oxford, 4 sherds.
B11, black-burnished ware (BB1, Dorset), 1 sherd.

The range of material and sources is unremarkable. Only two rim sherds were present, of a flanged bowl in fabric R30 and a jar in fabric R37. Neither of these is closely datable but both are more likely to be of the 2nd century than later. This could apply to the Roman material as a whole, though fabric O81 is more common in the 3rd-4th centuries than earlier, and might possibly indicate a later Roman date for context 16/4 in which it occurred. A 2nd century date even for this feature is still most likely, however. All the Roman material could fall in a late 1st-2nd century date range, but none of the fabrics is necessarily very chronologically specific, and in an assemblage of this size arguments based on the absence of diagnostic late Roman material are meaningless.

The five sherds of Anglo-Saxon pottery are of interest since such material is generally rare in the area. All were in sand and organic tempered fabric, which contrasts with the early Saxon material recovered from the A421 sites, which was entirely sand tempered. It is possible that the presence of organic tempering indicates a slightly later date in the Saxon period (perhaps not before the 6th century, whereas the A421 material may be of 5th century date), but this is speculative.

The medieval pottery consisted of two small fragments of a sandy coarse ware (see above), a tiny fragments in a fabric containing sand, flint and occasional irregular voids, probably originating in North Wiltshire/West Oxfordshire and of 10th-12th century date, and three sherds probably from the Brill/Boarstall industry of 13th-15th century date. None of these sherds occurred in significant features dated to the period.

Three fragments of Roman tile, one a tegula flange, came from contexts in Trench 16.

4.7 Environmental data

Four samples, from ditch contexts in Trenches 3, 7 and 8 and from a pit/posthole in Trench 16, were taken to assess the potential of deposits on the site to contain carbonised plant remains. These were examined using standard procedures but none contained suitable material. Sample 1, from Trench 8 feature 4, was slightly waterlogged, but this had not preserved any ancient environmental material.

5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Prehistoric and Roman

There was almost no direct evidence for prehistoric activity of any kind on the site. A single undiagnostic flint flake from layer 3 in Trench 1 was the only indicator. It is always possible that some of the undated linear and other features were prehistoric, but this seems unlikely.

A number of trenches contained undated shallow hollows and other irregular features which may have been of natural rather than human origin - for example tree holes. In some trenches a 'subsoil' layer of uncertain date was detected. This was generally cut by archaeological features but in a few cases was though to overlie cut features. The latter were always undated and these relationships do not appear to have been secure.

The first certainly dated activity which is archaeologically detectable was of the Roman period. This consisted principally of a number of rather amorphous features located in Trench 16 in the north-west corner of the site, some of which were cut by a fairly substantial Roman ditch. The associated pottery was sufficient in quantity to indicate that these features belonged to a closely adjacent settlement, with the bulk of the material consistent with a 2nd century AD date. The evidence is insufficient to demonstrate if the ditch was later than all the other features in the trench, but this is possible. The curving corner of the ditch located within Trench 16 suggests that this was an enclosure feature. Again there is insufficient evidence to show that a phase of unenclosed settlement was succeeded by an enclosed settlement, but this is one possible model for the development of this part of the site. Local rural settlement in the Roman period (see section 1.3 above) includes two sites which were apparently abandoned in the first half of the 2nd century AD. The present site appears to be complementary to this pattern in that the late Iron Age and early Roman pottery characteristic of the early settlements is absent here. While the bulk of the present material may be of 2nd century date there are hints that some of it could be later, and there are very few if any rural settlements in the region originating in the 2nd century which did not then continue to be occupied up to the late Roman period. That this may have been the pattern here is supported by the presence of a small number of Anglo-Saxon sherds in Trench 16. While Saxon settlement in the region is not unknown on previously unoccupied sites, many such sites appear initially to be associated with Roman settlement, as is the case with the nearest known Anglo-Saxon material, from the margins of the Roman extra-mural settlement at Alchester.

5.2 Linear features of uncertain date

The linear features (See Fig. 7), which are effectively undated, are perhaps best considered here since it is possible and perhaps likely that some of them were contemporary with the Roman settlement. Most of not all the linear features observed were recorded as underlying deposits interpreted as medieval ploughsoil. Only some 13 features, including the probable enclosure ditch in Trench 16, were considered reasonably certain to be linear man-made features. For the most part it was assumed that features which terminated within the trenches were discrete features such as pits, even though some were recorded as possible ditch terminals. Two principal ditch alignments were observed:

Alignment 1 was roughly ENE-WSW or at right angles to it. The possible enclosure ditch

16/5 was on this alignment, as were features 6/5, 8/5 and 12/6. The possible ditch angle 2/7 could also have been on this alignment, but this is uncertain.

Alignment 2 was roughly north-east - south-west, at right angles to the alignment of the trenches in which it was observed, and was represented by features 3/6, 9/4, 13/8, 19/7, 19/9 and perhaps also by the terminal 19/5. Feature 7/7, a very small gully, was the only one at right angles to this alignment and thus parallel with the orientation of the ridge and furrow.

The only feature which did not readily conform to either of these alignments was gully 18/8, aligned almost exactly east-west.

Evidence from the A421 (1991) excavations north of Alchester suggested that a fairly regular pattern of rectilinear field boundaries was established there in the 2nd century AD. The extent of such an arrangement is unknown, but it is at least possible that extensive reorganisation was taking place in other parts of the regional landscape at about the same time, and that this might have been connected with the demise of some settlement sites in the early 2nd century, as already discussed. If this is accepted it could follow that one or even both the principal ditch alignments observed on the present site was of Roman date. In view of its correspondence with the orientation of the probable enclosure ditch 16/5 it is suggested that alignment 1 was probably of this date. There is no evidence for the relative sequence of alignments 1 and 2, always assuming that all the features sharing these alignments were broadly contemporary with each other, which cannot be demonstrated conclusively on present evidence. The correspondence of alignment 2 with the axis of the ridge and furrow might suggest an association between the two, although as already noted the features on this alignment appear to predate the medieval ploughsoils.

5.3 Anglo-Saxon and medieval

Anglo-Saxon activity in the area is indicated by small quantities of pottery from Trenches 1, 2 and 16, though only in the last of these is the material likely to be reliably stratified. The sherds in Trench 1 were from topsoil and that in Trench 2, a very abraded fragment from the fill of a shallow hollow, may have been residual or, perhaps more likely, have been introduced as a result of plough disturbance. Feature 16/9 in Trench 16 was in fact a rather similar context to 2/4, but the sherds were in better condition and even if they were redeposited here had probably not travelled far. Early or early-middle Saxon settlement in the area seems certain, and as already mentioned it is quite likely to have originated in the vicinity of the Roman settlement in the north-west corner of the site. All the Saxon sherds may have derived from such a settlement, but Trench 1 was some 250 m distant from Trench 16, so it is possible that more than one focus of settlement is indicated in this period.

The origins of the parish boundary which forms the southern margin of most of the site may lie in the late Saxon period and therefore presumably predated the establishment of the ridge and furrow. Examination of the associated ditch produced no useful evidence. The ditch fills were heavily root disturbed but in any case appeared to be of relatively recent date. The obscurity of the ridge and furrow at the south end of Field 1 suggested that material derived from cleaning out the ditch may have been dumped here. If so, this activity was presumably later than the medieval period. The hedge dating survey indicated that the hedge associated with the parish boundary was one of the oldest on the site, and potentially as early as the late

medieval period, but precise dating was not possible. It is unlikely, however, that this indicates the date of the establishment of the boundary, and the physical form now evident, of bank and ditch, may itself have been in place for some centuries before the development of a hedge upon it.

The medieval earthworks formed part of a much more widespread arrangement of ridge and furrow evident on aerial photographs, much of which has now disappeared under the rapidly developing eastern side of Bicester. The physical characteristics of the ridge and furrow have been described above and are consistent with other observations from the region (Sutton 1966). A probable headland came to be utilised as an access, apparently the principal one in this area, to the village of Launton. This access was retained when the railway embankment, now forming the northern boundary of the site, was built. A further green lane, running at right angles to the headland, is bordered by two of the oldest hedgerows on the site, which may mean no more than that it was established early in the post-medieval period but may also indicate that this access was contemporary with at least some of the use of the fields, as was suggested above (section 5.2.5).

A layer interpreted as the medieval ploughsoil was encountered throughout the site in the evaluation trenches, in which it was usually layer 2. Where the trenches were cut across the line of the ridge and furrow the layer varied in thickness corresponding to the positions of the ridges and furrows. It consistently sealed other archaeological features. In Trenches 10 and 18 the layer contained medieval pottery sherds and in Trenches 1 and 12 such sherds occurred in the topsoil. The only other medieval sherd was a very small fragment from 7/4, the fill of a possible natural feature directly underlying the ploughsoil layer. No other features were assigned to the medieval period. The medieval ploughing appears to have caused some truncation of underlying features, judging by the general depth of these.

5.4 Post-medieval

Hedgerow elements of the rectilinear field system apart from those already discussed were of lesser antiquity, but even these were probably at least of late 16th-early 17th century date. These elements probably indicate the date of the establishment of the rectilinear field pattern in the early post-medieval period, incorporating elements (such as some of the green lanes) which may already have been in existence for some time.

There is little direct evidence for more recent use of the site. Agricultural use may have been of relatively low intensity and in the recent survey the grassland is categorised as 'semi-improved'. There was no indication of extensive campaigns of drainage, for example. The only land drain trenches noted, in Trench 5, were curiously at right angles to the ridge and furrow and might have related to drainage adjacent to the south-eastern boundary of the field in which this trench was located.

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Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory

Trench	Ctxt	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
001								
	1/1	layer		0.2	modern topsoil	pottery pottery pottery tile/brick clay pipe coal animal bone	1 1 21 19 5 2 2	Saxon medieval post-med. ?post-med.
	1/2	layer		0.2	?medieval ploughsoil			
	1/3	layer		0.1	subsoil	flint flake	1	Neo/BA
	1/4	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	1/5	fill		0.3	fill of 1/6			
	1/6	cut	1.1	0.3	possible ditch terminal			
	1/7	fill		0.5	fill of 1/8			
	1/8	cut	1.3	0.5	recent drainage ditch			
002								
	2/1	layer		0.2	modern topsoil			
	2/2	layer		0.22	?medieval ploughsoil			
	2/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	2/4	cut	1.65	0.13	hollow/?truncated pit			
	2/5	fill		0.13	fill of 2/4	pottery	1	Saxon
	2/6	?layer	0.8	0.02	?fill of natural hollow			
	2/7	cut	0.85	0.24	corner of ditch			
	2/8	fill		0.24	fill of 2/7			
	2/9	?cut	2.4	0.1	possible tree disturbance			
	2/10	fill		0.1	fill of 2/9			
003								
	3/1	layer		0.22	modern topsoil			
	3/2	layer		0.2	?medieval ploughsoil			
	3/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	3/4	fill		0.13	upper fill of 3/6			
	3/5	fill		0.37	lower fill of 3/6			
	3/6	cut	1.4	0.5	ditch			

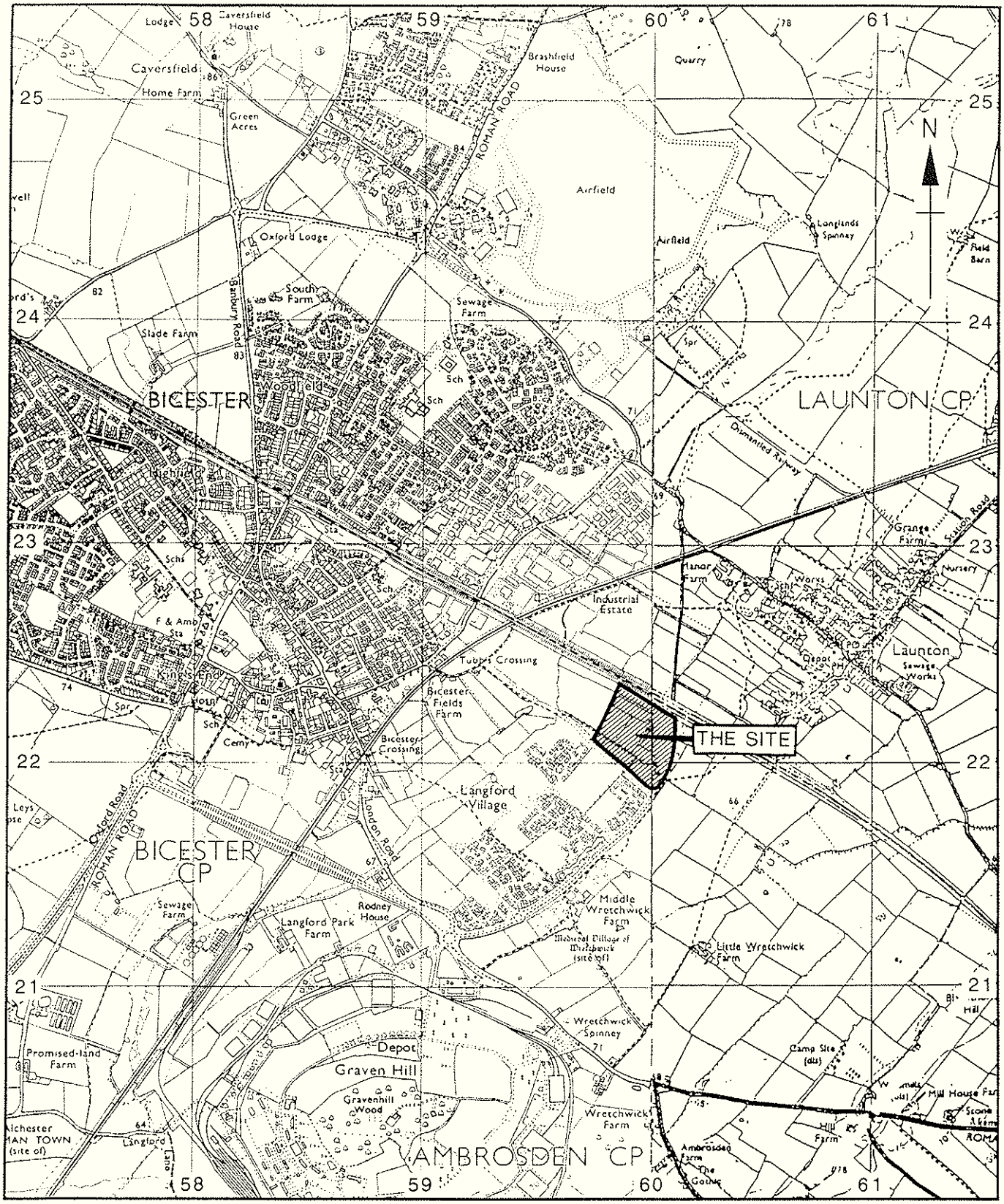
	3/7	fill		0.1	fill of 3/8	?brick/tile	2	uncertain
	3/8	cut	0.4	0.1	elongated pit 1.5 m long			
004								
	4/1	layer		0.2	modern topsoil			
	4/2	layer		0.3	?medieval ploughsoil			
	4/3	layer		0.2	?subsoil			
	4/4	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	4/5	cut	0.7	0.06	shallow pit			
	4/6	fill		0.06	fill of 4/5			
	4/7	cut	1.7	0.3	?pit or ditch terminal			
	4/8	fill		0.3	fill of 4/7			
	4/9	cut	3.0	1.0	modern ditch on line of parish boundary			
	4/10	fill		0.25	base fill of 4/9			
005								
	5/1	layer		0.25	modern topsoil			
	5/2	layer		0.3	?medieval ploughsoil			
	5/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	5/4	cut	0.1	?	field drain not fully excavated			
	5/5	fill		?	fill of 5/5			
	5/6	?cut	0.58	0.05	hollow or truncated feature			
	5/7	fill		0.05	fill of 5/6			
006								
	6/1	layer		0.25	modern topsoil			
	6/2	layer		0.2	?medieval ploughsoil			
	6/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	6/4	fill		0.25	fill of 6/5			
	6/5	cut	0.9	0.25	ditch/gully			
007								
	7/1	layer		0.23	modern topsoil	pottery	1	post-med.
	7/2	layer		0.4	?medieval ploughsoil			
	7/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			

	7/4	fill		0.23	fill of 7/5	pottery	1	medieval
	7/5	?cut	0.7	0.23	irregular pit or ?natural feature			
	7/6	fill		0.18	fill of 7/7			
	7/7	cut	0.3	0.18	small gully			
	7/8	fill		0.15	fill of 7/9			
	7/9	cut	1.0	0.15	possible pit			
008								
	8/1	layer		0.2	modern topsoil	pottery	3	post-med.
	8/2	layer		0.4	?medieval ploughsoil			
	8/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	8/4	fill		0.15	fill of 8/5			
	8/5	cut	0.75	0.15	ditch/gully			
009								
	9/1	layer		0.23	modern topsoil			
	9/2	layer		0.3	?medieval ploughsoil			
	9/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	9/4	cut	0.36	0.39	gully			
	9/5	fill		0.39	fill of 9/4			
	9/6	?cut	1.25	0.21	possible natural feature			
	9/7	fill		0.21	fill of 9/6			
	9/8	?cut	1.03	0.16	possible natural feature			
	9/9	fill		0.16	fill of 9/8			
	9/10	?cut	0.3	0.18	possible natural feature			
	9/11	?fill		0.18	'fill' of 9/10, possible variation in subsoil strata			
010								
	10/1	layer		0.26	modern topsoil			
	10/2	layer		0.3	?medieval ploughsoil	pottery	1	?medieval
	10/3	layer		0.28	?natural subsoil			
	10/4	layer		?	natural subsoil			
011								
	11/1	layer		0.27	modern topsoil			

	11/2	layer		0.35	?medieval ploughsoil			
	11/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
012								
	12/1	layer		0.25	modern topsoil	pottery pottery	1 1	?medieval post-med.
	12/2	layer		0.28	?medieval ploughsoil			
	12/3	layer		0.16	possibly natural subsoil			
	12/4	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	12/5	fill		0.36	fill of 12/6			
	12/6	cut	0.61	0.36	ditch/gully			
013								
	13/1	layer		0.22	modern topsoil			
	13/2	layer		0.58	?medieval ploughsoil			
	13/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	13/4	cut	1.12	0.32	curving ?ditch terminal			
	13/5	fill		0.32	fill of 13/4			
	13/6	cut	0.66	0.12	shallow pit			
	13/7	fill		0.12	fill of 13/6			
	13/8	cut	0.5	0.32	ditch/gully			
	13/9	fill		0.32	fill of 13/8			
	13/10	?cut	1.7	0.15	?natural hollow			
	13/11	fill		0.15	fill of 13/10			
014								
	14/1	layer		0.32	modern topsoil			
	14/2	layer		0.28	?medieval ploughsoil			
	14/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
015								
	15/1	layer		0.2	modern topsoil	pottery	1	Roman
	15/2	layer		0.35	?medieval ploughsoil			
	15/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
016								
	16/1	layer		0.13	modern topsoil			
	16/2	layer		0.4	?medieval ploughsoil			

	16/3	layer		?	natural subsoil	pottery	1	Roman
	16/4	fill		0.35	fill of 16/5	pottery tile	7 2	Roman Roman
	16/5	cut	1.0	0.35	ditch			
	16/6	fill		0.15	fill of 16/7	pottery	1	Roman
	16/7	?cut	?3.75	0.15	irregular pit(s) or hollow			
	16/8	fill		0.08	fill of 16/9	pottery pottery tile	1 3 1	Roman Saxon Roman
	16/9	?cut	**1.05** +	0.08	irregular feature			
	16/10	fill		0.12	fill of 16/11			
	16/11	cut	1.1+	0.12	irregular ?pit			
	16/12	fill		0.35	fill of 16/13	pottery	7	Roman
	16/13	cut	3.7	0.35	pit or pits			
	16/14	fill		0.18	fill of 16/15			
	16/15	cut	?2.5	0.18	?shallow pit or hollow			
	16/16	fill		0.16	fill of 16/17			
	16/17	cut	0.8	0.16	?shallow pit			
	16/18	fill		0.1	fill of 16/19			
	16/19	cut	0.2	0.1	?posthole			
	16/20	fill		0.08	fill of 16/21			
	16/21	?cut	0.9	0.08	shallow pit or hollow			
	16/22	fill		0.28	fill of 16/23			
	16/23	cut	0.65	0.28	curving gully			
	16/24	fill		0.15	fill of 16/25			
	16/25	cut	0.5	0.15	curving gully			
017								
	17/1	layer		0.25	modern topsoil			
	17/2	layer		0.25	?medieval ploughsoil			
	17/3	layer		0.4	?natural subsoil			
	17/4	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	17/5	fill		0.15	fill of 17/6			
	17/6	cut	1.5	0.15	shallow pit or ditch/gully terminal			

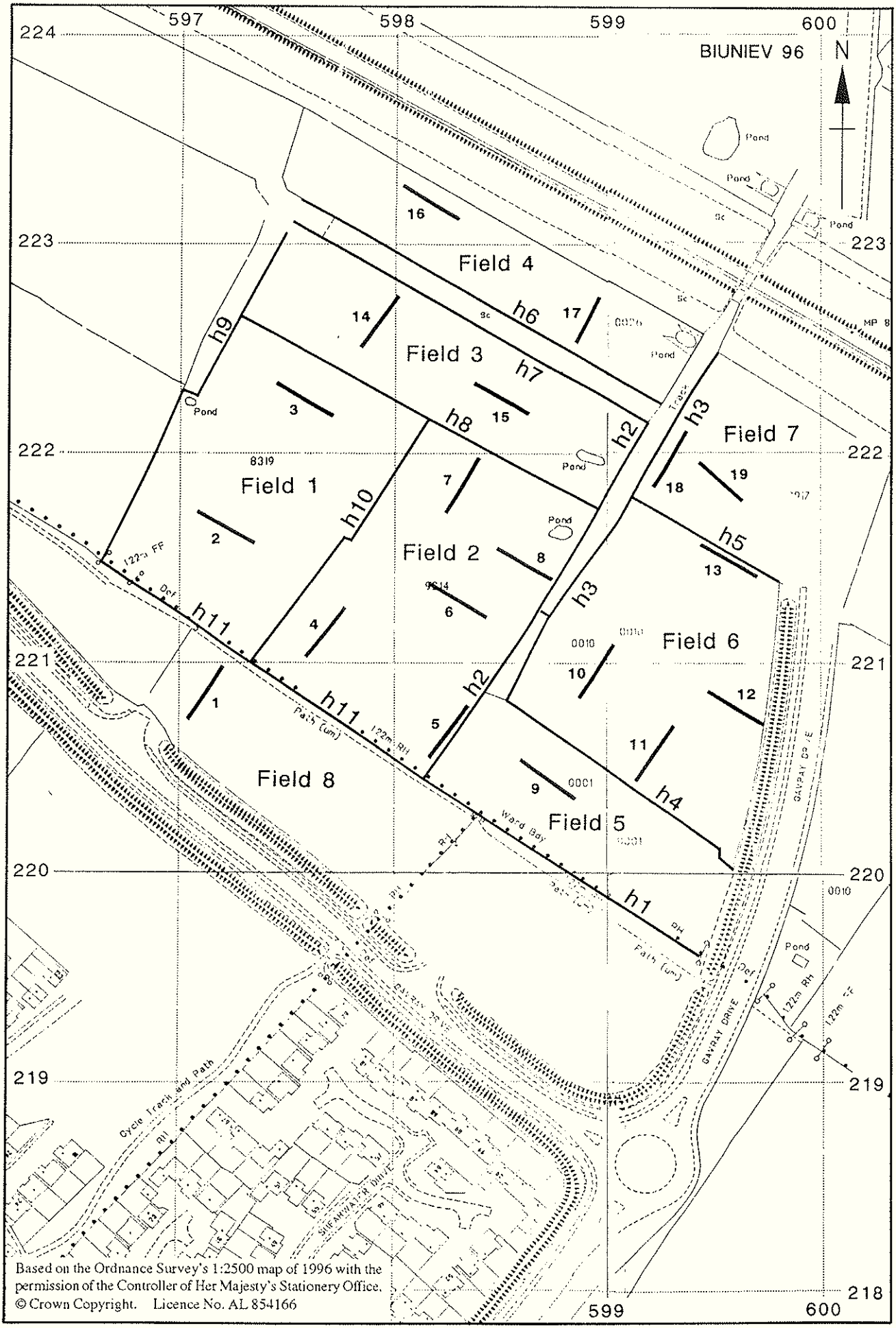
018								
	18/1	layer		0.2	modern topsoil			
	18/2	layer		0.32	?medieval ploughsoil	pottery	2	medieval
	18/3	layer		0.2	?subsoil			
	18/4	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	18/5	fill		0.2	fill of 18/6, ?sealed by 18/3			
	18/6	cut	1.0	0.2	possible pit			
	18/7	fill		0.2	fill of 18/8			
	18/8	cut	0.55	0.2	gully			
019								
	19/1	layer		0.3	modern topsoil			
	19/2	layer		0.2	?medieval ploughsoil	pottery brick/tile	2 1	post-med. ?post-med.
	19/3	layer		0.25	?subsoil			
	19/4	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	19/5	fill		0.1	fill of 19/6			
	19/6	cut	0.95	0.1	?ditch/gully terminal			
	19/7	cut	0.76	0.45	ditch/gully with asymmetrical profile			
	19/8	fill		0.45	fill of 19/7			
	19/9	cut	0.4	0.25	gully with asymmetrical profile			
	19/10	fill		0.25	fill of 19/9			
	19/11	?cut	1.8+	0.2	shallow hollow, ?natural			
	19/12	fill		0.2	fill of 19/11			



Site Location

Scale 1:25000

Figure 1



scale 1:2500

Evaluation trench and hedgerow location

Figure 2

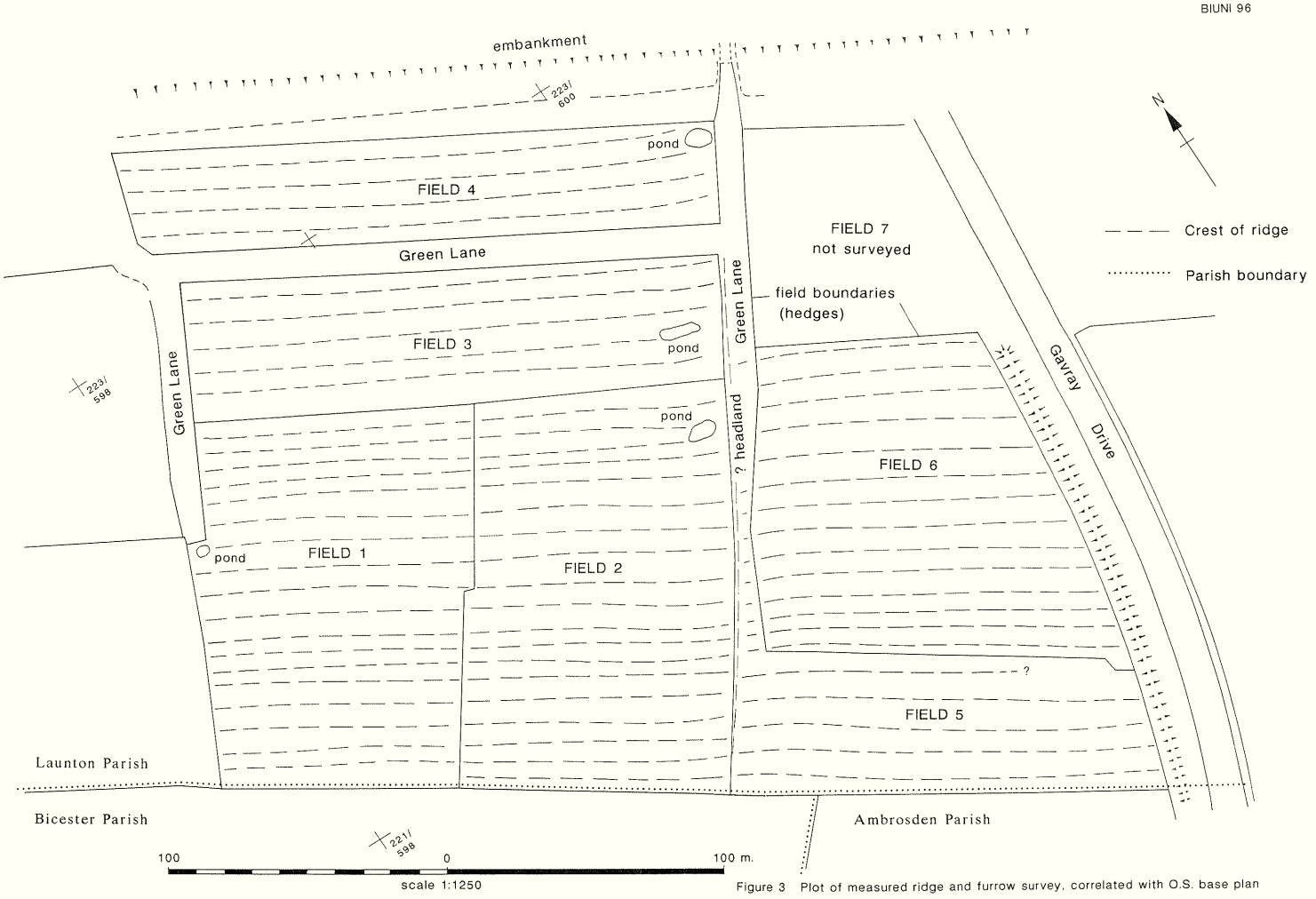


Figure 3 Plot of measured ridge and furrow survey, correlated with O.S. base plan

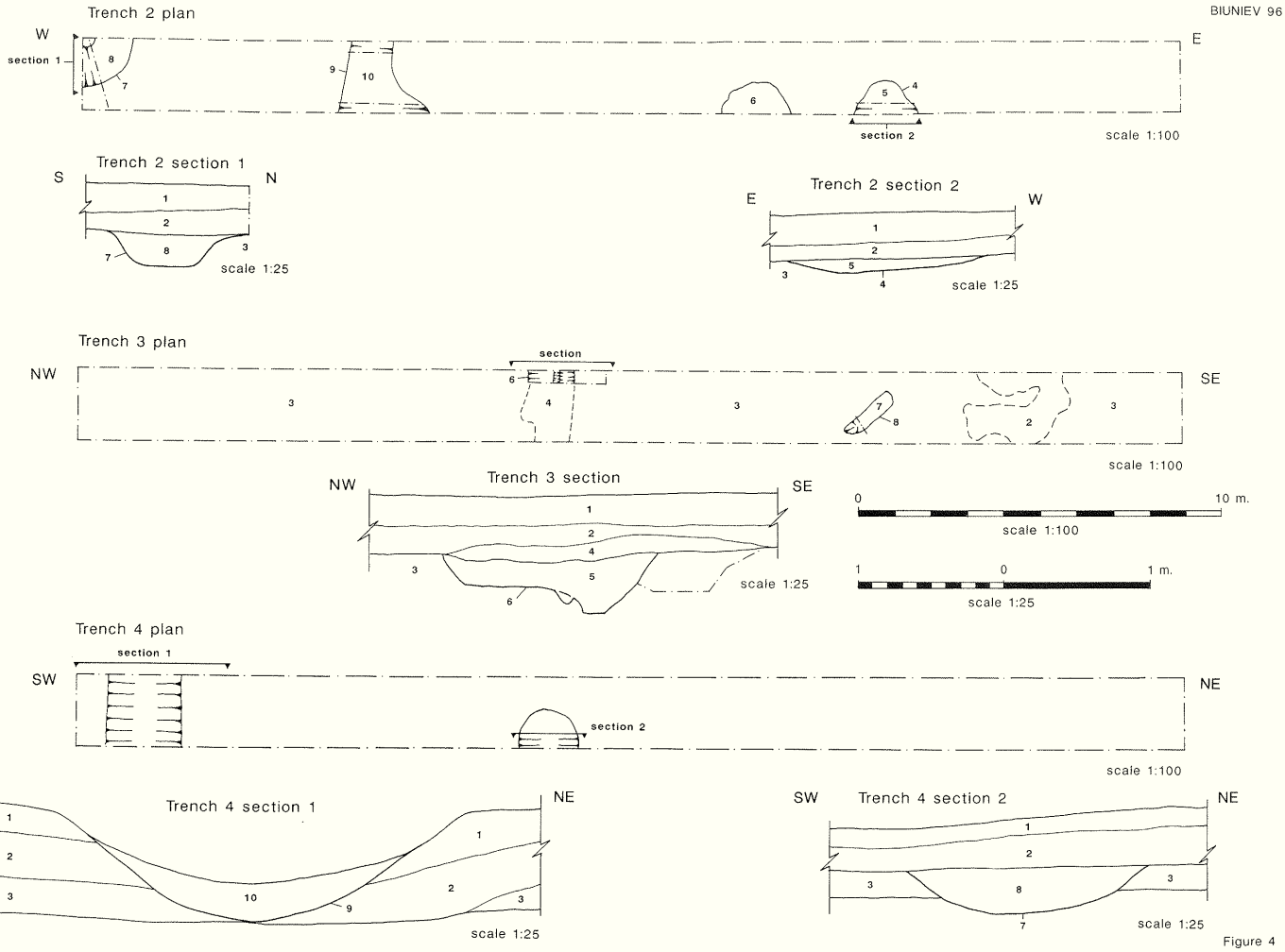

Trench 2 plan
W
E
section 1
section 2
scale 1:100
Trench 2 section 1
S
N
scale 1:25
Trench 2 section 2
E
W
scale 1:25
Trench 3 plan
NW
SE
section
scale 1:100
Trench 3 section
NW
SE
scale 1:25
0
10 m.
scale 1:100
1
0
1 m.
scale 1:25
Trench 4 plan
section 1
SW
NE
section 2
scale 1:100
SW
Trench 4 section 1
NE
scale 1:25
SW
Trench 4 section 2
NE
scale 1:25

Figure 4

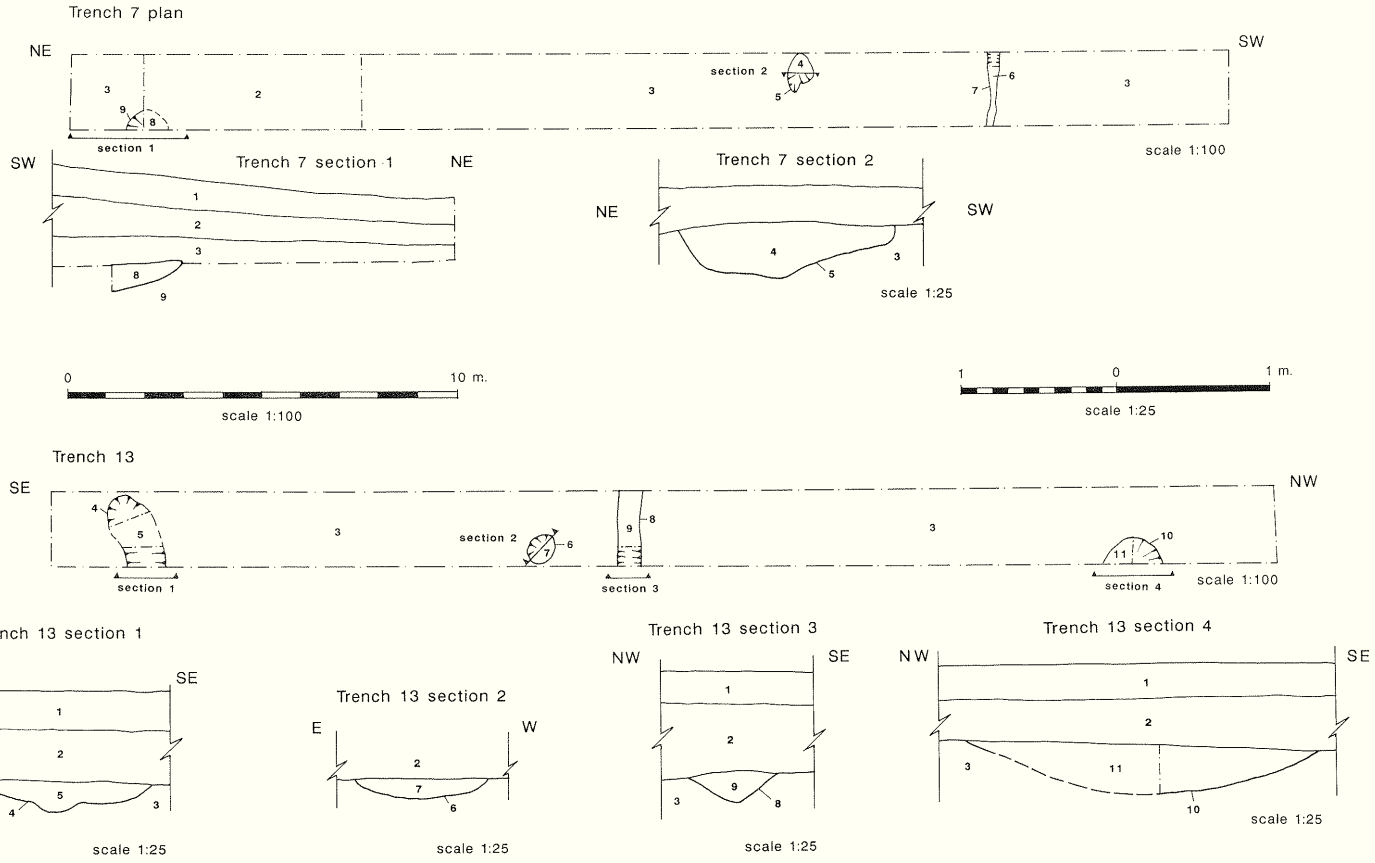

Trench 7 plan
NE
SW
section 1
section 2
scale 1:100
Trench 7 section 1
SW
NE
Trench 7 section 2
NE
SW
scale 1:25
0
10 m.
scale 1:100
1
0
1 m.
scale 1:25
Trench 13
SE
NW
section 1
section 2
section 3
section 4
scale 1:100
Trench 13 section 1
NW
SE
scale 1:25
Trench 13 section 2
E
W
scale 1:25
Trench 13 section 3
NW
SE
scale 1:25
Trench 13 section 4
NW
SE
scale 1:25

Figure 5

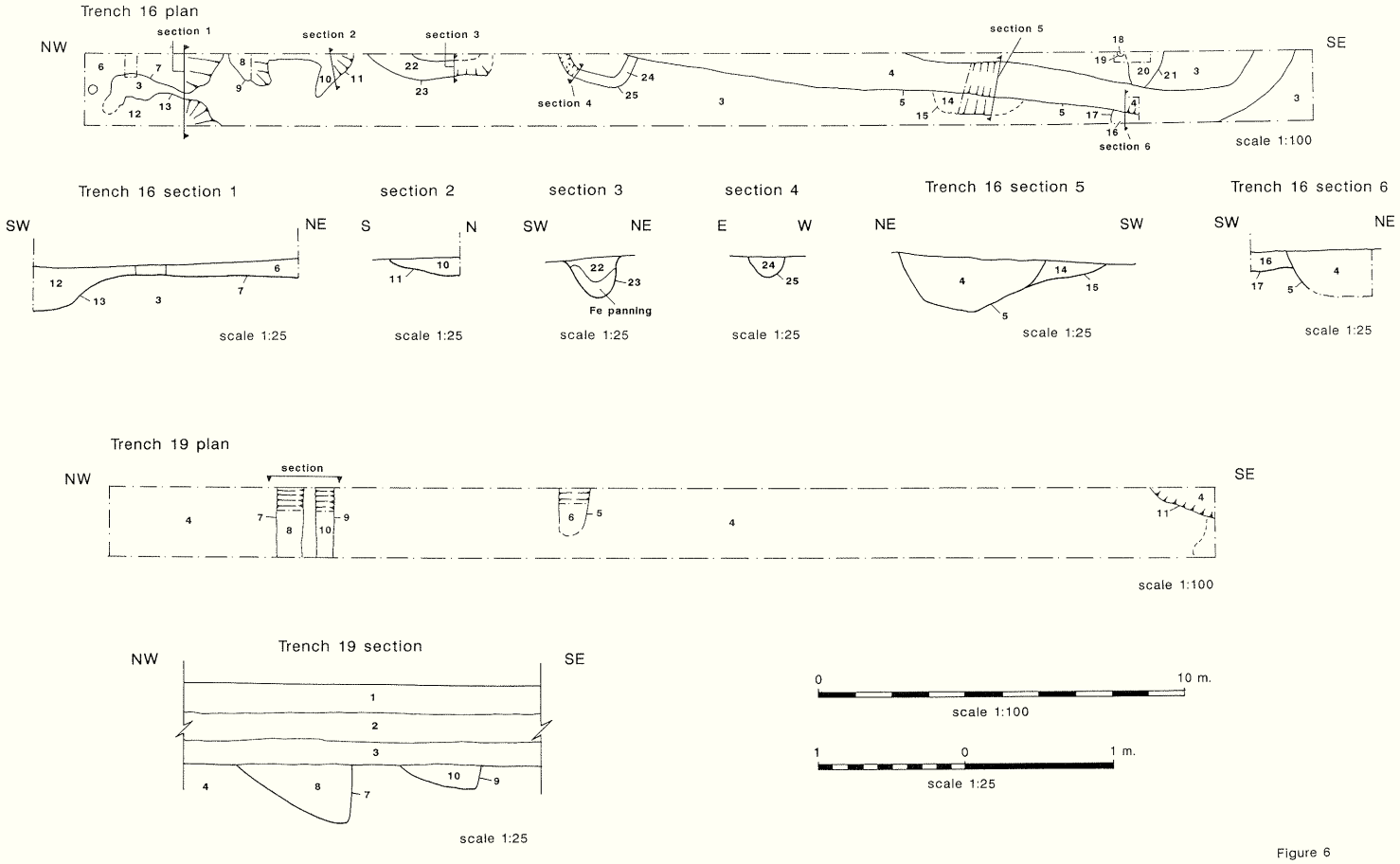
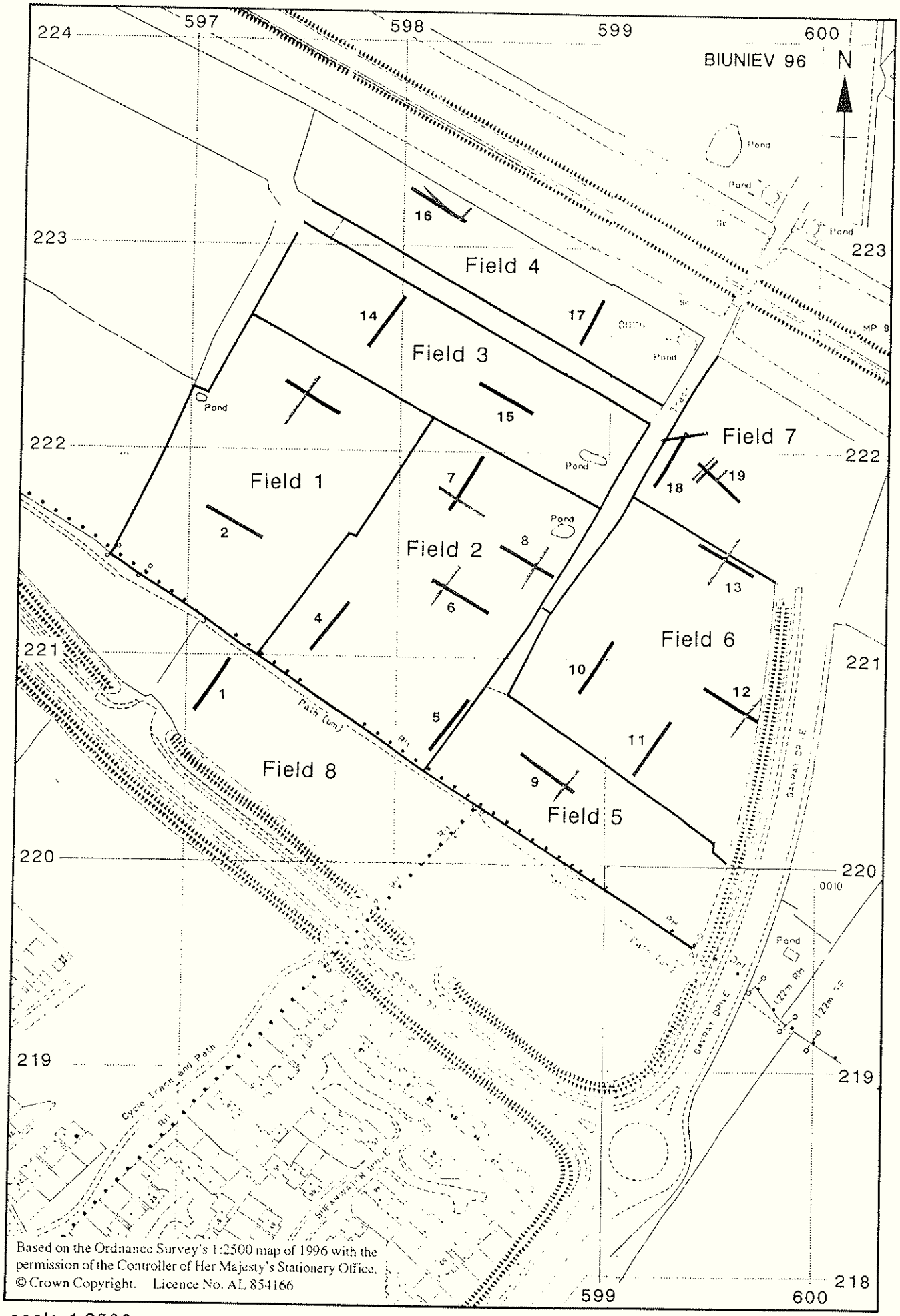

Trench 16 plan
NW
SE
section 1
section 2
section 3
section 4
section 5
section 6
scale 1:100
Trench 16 section 1
SW
NE
scale 1:25
section 2
S
N
scale 1:25
section 3
SW
NE
Fe panning
scale 1:25
section 4
E
W
scale 1:25
Trench 16 section 5
NE
SW
scale 1:25
Trench 16 section 6
SW
NE
scale 1:25
Trench 19 plan
NW
SE
section
scale 1:100
Trench 19 section
NW
SE
scale 1:25
0
10 m.
scale 1:100
1
0
1 m.
scale 1:25

Figure 6



scale 1:2500

Linear feature alignment

Figure 7

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