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Ashford Borough Council

ASHFORD MILLENNIUM

COMMUNITY WOODLAND

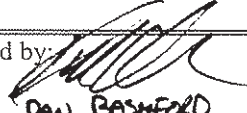
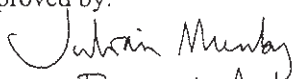
Archaeological Field Survey

Oxford Archaeological Unit
January 2000

Ashford Borough Council

ASHFORD MILLENNIUM

COMMUNITY WOODLAND

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Ashford & Millennium Community Woodland Archaeological Field Survey

1 Introduction:

- 1.1 The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by Ashford Borough Council to undertake a walkover survey and rapid fieldwalking / metal detector survey of an area of land to the south of Great Chart and to the south and east of Singleton, as marked upon Figure 1. The site is being considered for a Community Woodland and Recreational Area and will contain woodland, public access facilities such as car parking, cycleways and picnic areas. The site is divided into two detached areas: Area 1 lies to the north, and Area 2 to the south (see Figure 1). Neither area contains any previously recorded archaeological deposits although the specification for this work produced by the Heritage Conservation Group of Kent County Council (HCG January 2000) states that the Kent Sites and Monuments Record has recorded the projected line of a Roman Road across the southern edge of the site (ibid, 1). However recent work has cast some doubt upon this alignment and it is not now considered likely that the road follows this course (ibid).

2 Methodology and Conditions.

- 2.1 The field survey work forms an initial phase of archaeological work. The objective was to identify and record historic landscape features and any archaeological features visible on the surface of the study area. The work was carried to the level and standard dictated by the specification for the work as produced by Kent County Council (HCG January 2000). It has not involved any background research or desk-based assessment of the site. As stated in the specification the results are to be used to highlight any areas where planting trees might not be appropriate and to target areas and or sites which might be subject to a programme of archaeological monitoring (Watching Briefs) during groundworks.
- 2.2 Both areas were investigated for possible earthwork and landscape features. Identified features were sketched upon the base map at a scale of 1:1250, photographed and briefly described on a separate context sheet. This survey also comprised a hedgerow survey which was undertaken to identify the possibility of historic boundaries. These surveys were carried out by Daniel Bashford of the Oxford Archaeological Unit.
- 2.3 All open areas were subject to a rapid fieldwalking and metal detector survey except one small area to the north west of area 2 which had been subject to recent ploughing and could not be walked or metal detected due to a growing crop. The majority of the fields in area 2 still contained the stubble of the previous year's crop, and were suitable if not ideal, for fieldwalking and metal detecting. The larger western section of area 1, which has been recently drilled for grass, was not particularly conducive to fieldwalking, although the field condition offered no problems to the metal detectorist. The area of playing fields, which is under established grass, was not fieldwalked. The location of each of the objects located by metal detector survey was two-dimensionally recorded and the finds allocated an individual Small Finds reference number. The field collection survey was carried out by Robin Bashford of the OAU and the metal detector survey was carried out by a member of a local metal

detecting club (under the supervision of the two archaeologists from the OAU) The location of the finds are marked upon Figures 2 & 3.

- 2.4 The survey was carried out over two days (20th and 21st January 2000). The weather conditions were somewhat mixed: thick fog on the 20th resulted in poor visibility although this did not materially affect the results of the survey. The conditions on the 21st were bright and clear.
- 2.5 The results of these surveys are represented graphically as Figures 2 & 3 of this report.

3 Detailed Results of the Survey

3.1 Area 1 (see Figure 2)

3.1.1 Topography

The area falls into two distinct areas (see figure 2). The area to the north east is currently in use as a playing field, which has been levelled and therefore contains no earthwork features. The area is bounded to the east and south by roads, and to the north by a small stream fed by springs to the west. To the west is a modern wooden fence. This playing fields were inspected as part of the metal detector survey and produced a very high number of responses. Unfortunately it was not possible to investigate the nature of the metal finds buried in this area as this would have involved an unacceptable level of intrusion into the playing fields.

3.1.2 The area extending upslope to the west contains a number of earthwork features, particularly towards the higher ground to the west. The area is bounded by a ditch and hedge to the west and by a small stream to the north east. To the south is the embankment of the A68, and to the north west is an area of modern fencing.

3.1.3 The survey identified a number of features and areas of archaeological potential which are discussed in detail below. The location of these sites is marked upon Figure 2.

3.1.4 Features Within Area 1

OAU no	Description
1	Sunken track and probable Clay Pit. This feature comprises a shallow depression, sunken to a depth of c.0.5m which leads from the property boundaries of the houses of Great Chart towards a sub-circular depression c.0.6m in depth near the southern boundary of the field.
2	Bank extending from the fence line to the north for c. 45m then returning to the west for c. 25m back into the slope. It would appear unlikely to mark the site of a lynchet, and may mark a former property / field boundary, or possibly a large structure platform.
3	Small low mound of unclear function, which may be a natural rise within the field. The mound is c.10m in diameter and stands to a maximum height of c.0.4m.

OAU no	Description
4	Feature 4 is a shallow depression, probably natural,. It contains a concrete culvert, probably for a spring, where it borders the stream to the north
5	Site of a spring. No associated features.
6	Artificially levelled area of uncertain function.
7	Artificially levelled area of uncertain function.,
8	Trackway. Probably continuation of trackway noted within Area 2 (OAU no 11). Lies to the west of Area 1.

Table 1: Description of features within Area 1.

- 3.1.5 The site survey suggested that this area contained a mixture of earthworks of uncertain archaeological potential. The identification of the trackway and clay pit (OAU no 1) is fairly straightforward but the nature and date of the other remains on the site (OAU nos 2, 3, 6 & 7) is somewhat less clear. The banked feature (OAU no 2) would appear likely to represent the remains of a former field or property boundary., although it is possible that it marks the edge of a large structure platform. The nature of the low mound (OAU no 3) is uncertain. It was felt that it might be simply a natural rise in the field, although the possibility that it represents the much damaged remains of an archaeological feature cannot be discounted.
- 3.1.6 The crest of the hill contains two apparent deliberately levelled areas (OAU nos 6 & 7). The nature of these features is also uncertain, although the likelihood is that the represent former field / property boundaries and as such may be areas of moderate archaeological potential.
- 3.1.7 The field survey also identified the site of two natural springs (OAU nos 4 & 5) Although these sites contained no archaeological earthworks it would appear possible that these features acted as a focus for activity in the past, suggesting that their sites may represent areas of enhanced archaeological potential.

Hedgerows

- 3.1.8 All the hedgerows and field boundaries within Area 1 were inspected in order to provide an estimate of their age and possible historic significance. The location (and description) of these features is marked upon Figure 1. Only two of the boundaries are of any historic interest. Hedgerow A, which forms the western edge of the proposed planting site, consists of a ditch c. 0.65m in depth, with a sporadic hawthorn and hazel hedge in its western side. This shows evidence of old plashing (a process by which the branches of the trees and bushes within a hedge are cut and intertwined so that the whole forms a solid, but living, screen. The process is generally considered to have dropped out of fashion in the last fifty years and, although not a definitive sign, is often taken as a sign that the hedge is of a certain antiquity. It would appear that the ditch and hedge originally continued to the north, where it is visible as a slight depression, but this section of the boundary has now been largely backfilled. Hedgerow B consists of a ditch with sporadic hedge and trees which follows the flow of water (or was constructed to channel the water) downhill from the springs 4 and 5.

Finds from Area 1

3.1.9 Small Finds

The metal detector survey of this area located four small finds. The details of these objects are presented in Table 2. The small amount of finds located suggests that the area has been subjected to unrecorded metal detectorist activities which has significantly denuded the archaeological resource, in the process possibly removing material which would have been useful as an indication of the below ground archaeological potential of the site.

Small Find No	Description
7	Very worn and corroded coin. Inscription and portraiture is illegible. Metal detectorist expressed the opinion that it might date from the reign of George III.
8	Fragment of Copper Alloy Uncertain function.
9	Lead trivet foot (fragment). Probably post-medieval.
10	Small silver medallion. Well preserved. Obverse shows head of Charles I in profile, reverse depicts Royal coat of arms and inscription 'HONI SOIT OVI MAL Y PENSE' (<i>Evil to him who evil thinks</i>).

Table 2: Catalogue of Small Finds recovered from Area 1.

3.1.10 None of the finds would appear likely to have particular significance as an indication of the archaeological potential of the site. The 17th-century silver medallion is an intrinsically interesting and attractive piece but is neither significantly rare nor an indication of significant below ground potential.

Other Finds from Area 1.

3.1.11 The field was under grass and therefore not particularly well suited to fieldwalking. The fieldwalking survey did not locate any finds of a date prior to the post medieval period. A representative sample of finds (Finds Reference 105) was taken from the field,. The majority of these surface finds were of the late nineteenth / early twentieth century.

3.2. Area 2- (See Figure 3)

Topography

3.2.1 The area lies largely upon a hill top and is bisected by Bucksford lane. The area is partially wooded, with the majority lying under an old harvested crop. There is a large area of scrub, and a small area of cultivated land. The northernmost zone of area 2 (the area to the north of the area of current woodland), is a prominent and relatively flat hill top, commanding excellent views over the area to the east, north and west.

3.2.2 There is a band of woodland straddling Bucksford Lane running roughly north-west to south. To the east of the road the wood rises slightly following the contour of the hill

then slopes down following the slope of the hill to the east. To the west of the road again following the contour the woodland belt then bends to the south-west. The area to the south of the woodland and the east of the road slopes down at a relatively steep gradient towards Chart Road, the area is much pocked by old clay pits. .

- 3.2.3 The area to the west of the road, and to the south of the woodland belt is relatively flat to the south but slopes northward at a gradually increasing gradient to the north.
- 3.2.4 The field survey of this area identified a number of archaeological earthwork features. Details of these features are given in Table 3.

OAU no	Description
9	Lynchet corner. Earthwork formed by the junction of two hedged lynchet banks.
10	Old clay pits and associated trackway which runs south from the quarry. Trackway is visible as a hollow way running through the area of old crop.
11	Raised trackway running east-west. The feature runs from the site of the old clay pits towards the village of Great Chart. It is not visible to the east of the quarries, suggesting that it may terminate here.
12	A number of small clay pits
13	Strong grassmarks possibly marking the site of ditches/enclosures of uncertain date.
14	Curving Lynchet/old field boundary with its bank on the northern side.
15	Strong grassmarks possibly marking the site of ditches/enclosures of uncertain date.
16	Relatively flat hilltop with excellent views to north, east and west. No archaeological features identified although the excellent topographic position of the site may suggest that it has an enhanced archaeological potential.
17	Lynchet Bank. Apparently overlying trackway 11
18	Sunken Lane.

Table 3: Description of features within Area 2.

Features Within Area 2

- 3.2.5 The site survey suggested that this area contained a mixture of earthworks of local landscape interest but limited archaeological potential. The majority of the features represent evidence of the previous agricultural and quarrying activities which have occurred on the site. Features 9, 14 and 17 (and hedgerows B, C & D) are lynchets. These are earthwork banks which follow the boundaries of fields and are generally the result of ploughing activities. Examples of these features are known from the Bronze Age onwards although as a general rule they date to the medieval and post-medieval periods. Features 10 & 12 are undated clay pits. None of these features are easily dateable although the relationship between features 11 and 17 may suggest that the clay pits/are of medieval or possibly earlier date (see below).
- 3.2.6 Feature 11 is a probable raised trackway, apparently running from the quarries in this area towards the village of Great Chart. The trackway is clearly discernible

throughout the area (apart from within the western section of the woodland belt) and reappears again to the west of area 1, running between the cutting for the A68, and the houses opposite. It appears to be running towards the church and the core of the village. It was noted that this feature was overlain by lynchet 17, suggesting that this feature was produced after the trackway went out of use. Unfortunately the lynchet is undateable but it would appear reasonable to argue that it may be late medieval or post-medieval in date, suggesting that the trackway and, by inference, the clay pits may be of some antiquity.

- 3.2.7 The field survey also identified three areas of enhanced archaeological potential. Two of these (OAU nos 13 & 15) are groups of strong grassmarks within a field of old harvested arable. Grassmarks are areas of discernible differential crop or grass growth (in this case they are represented by particularly lush grass in an area of non-vigorous growth although sometimes the reserve may be true) which can sometimes indicate the below ground presence of features such as ditches, pits or walls. Feature 13 consists of an curving linear ditch and associated semi-circular feature situated at the edge of the field and disappearing underneath the field boundary. Feature 15 consists of a similar, but smaller feature, which also disappears beneath an existing field boundary. The exact significance of these features is impossible to estimate by field survey alone and it is possible that they may represent evidence of fairly recent agricultural activities. Nevertheless the possibility remains that they may provide evidence for the presence of sub-surface archaeological deposits.
- 3.2.8 Feature 16 represents an area of archaeological potential rather than an actual recognisable feature. The site occupies a prominent hill top with excellent views to the east, west and north. Although the area contains no recognised archaeological earthworks it was felt that the topographical situation of the site would make it an area extremely conducive to settlement, perhaps suggesting that it represents an area of enhanced archaeological potential. The area, which is covered in scrub and long grass, was unsuitable for field collection survey and was not conducive to either field survey or metal detecting and this can be considered to have considerably hampered the analysis of the archaeological potential of the site.

Hedgerows within Area 2 (see Figure 3)

- 3.2.9 All the hedgerows and field boundaries within Area 1 were inspected in order to provide an estimate of their age and possible historic significance. Field boundaries A, C, D & E, which are all constructed on lynchet banks, were found to be of some historical and landscape interest although the condition and interest of the hedgerows themselves was found to be more varied. The hedge on boundary A consisted of only very occasional hawthorn hedge with no obvious sign of management. Hedgerow C is a somewhat thin hawthorn hedge with occasional gaps. However it shows some evidence of old plashing. Hedgerow D which connects with hedgerow C to the south east corner of the site, grows within a ditch which is cut into the lynchet bank.

Finds From Area 2:

Small Finds

- 3.2.10 The metal detector survey of this area located a number of metal objects. These included modern coins, shrapnel from Second World War anti-aircraft guns and 2

musket balls. A number of small fragments of lead were also encountered. Six of these finds were considered to be of sufficient interest to be two-dimensionally located and retained. The details of these objects are presented in Table 4 and the location of their finding is shown on Figure 3.

Small Find No	Description
1	Roman Coin, very worn and barely legible. Probably mid 1 st to 2 nd Century AD.
2	Large piece of Copper slag.
3	19 th century lead soldier. Horseman (headless)
4	Decorative finial. Lead. Post-medieval.
5	Medieval pot sherd which has been mended by the addition of a copper rivet.
6	Copper thimble. Late medieval or early post-medieval.

Table 4: Catalogue of Small Finds recovered from Area 2

3.2.11 In general the collection of metal objects would appear to be of limited archaeological significance. The presence of the Roman coin, although of interest, does not, on its own, provide an indication of significant archaeological potential. The piece of mended (rivetted) medieval pot is an interesting and not common item but also cannot be said to act as an indication of significant archaeological potential. The remainder of the finds are of little intrinsic or archaeological interest beyond confirming that the development site and/or its general area can demonstrate a level of medieval and post-medieval activity.

Area 2 : Field Collection Survey results

3.2.12 For the purposes of the field collection survey the area was divided into three areas, each of which was given a separate finds reference number (see Figure 3). The areas consisted of:

- The area to the east of Bucksford Lane (Finds reference No 102)
- The projected line of the Roman Road (Finds reference No 103)
- The area to the west of Bucksford Lane (Finds reference No 104)

3.2.13 The area to the east of Bucksford Lane produced no finds earlier than the post-medieval period. A representative sample were collected. The area also produced a significant amount of post-medieval ceramic building material (bricks and tile). A representative sample of this material was also collected. No significant concentrations of either type of material were identified.

3.2.14 The projected (although now discredited) line of the Roman Road produced a general spread of post-medieval pottery but no finds earlier than this. No significant concentrations were identified.

3.2.15 The area to the west of Bucksford Lane also produced a general spread of post-medieval material. It also produced 1 sherd of medieval pot and a flint two possibly prehistoric flint flakes, although these were the only early finds located. This area

produced one concentration of post-medieval material, in the form of a concentration of post-medieval finds, some slag and some charcoal all of which was recovered from the bottom of one of the old clay pits (Feature 10.). This concentration, which probably represents evidence of post-medieval dumping in a disused clay pit, would not appear to be of great archaeological significance, although the presence of charcoal and slag (suggesting some evidence of metal working in the general vicinity of the site) is of some interest. It should be noted that the metal detector survey also identified a piece of slag (Small Find 2) from the field close to this clay pit

4 Conclusion.

4.1 Area 1

4.1.1 The site survey suggested that this area contained a number of earthworks of uncertain archaeological potential. These consisted of a trackway and clay pit (Feature 1), a banked feature (Feature 2), a low mound of uncertain function (Feature 3) and two areas of artificial levelling (Features 6 & 7). The survey also identified two areas of enhanced archaeological potential (Features 4 & 5). The nature and significance of these features is uncertain without further archaeological investigation. Two of the field boundaries were identified as being of historic interest.

4.1.2 The metal detector survey of this area did not identify any significant concentrations of material. It located four metal finds. These comprised a lead trivet foot, a fragment of bronze, an undated coin (which was suggested on its general shape and weight to be late 18th century) and a well preserved 17th-century silver medallion.

4.1.3 The field collection survey did not identify any significant concentrations of material. The area contained a general spread of post-medieval ceramic material but no earlier artefacts. However the area was under grass and therefore not particularly well suited to fieldwalking which may have been a contributory factor in the poor results of this section of the survey.

4.2 Area 2

4.2.1 The site survey suggested that this area contained a mixture of earthworks of local landscape interest but limited archaeological potential. These included seven lynchets (OAU nos 9, 14, 17 and hedgerows A, C, D & E), three trackways (OAU nos 10, 11 & 18) and a number of old clay pits (OAU nos 10 & 12). The relationship between these features suggested that at least one of the trackways and possibly also some of the clay pits are of medieval or possibly earlier date. The survey also identified three areas of enhanced archaeological potential. Two of these features are areas of grassmarks which may suggest the presence of sub-surface archaeological deposits. The third area of potential (Feature 16) is a relatively flat hill top, with excellent views to the north, east and west. Although this site contained no identified archaeological earthworks it was felt that its topographic position might suggest that it would have acted as a focus for earlier settlement activity.

4.2.2 The metal detector survey located a random spread of metal objects but did not record any significant concentrations of material. Finds included a Roman coin

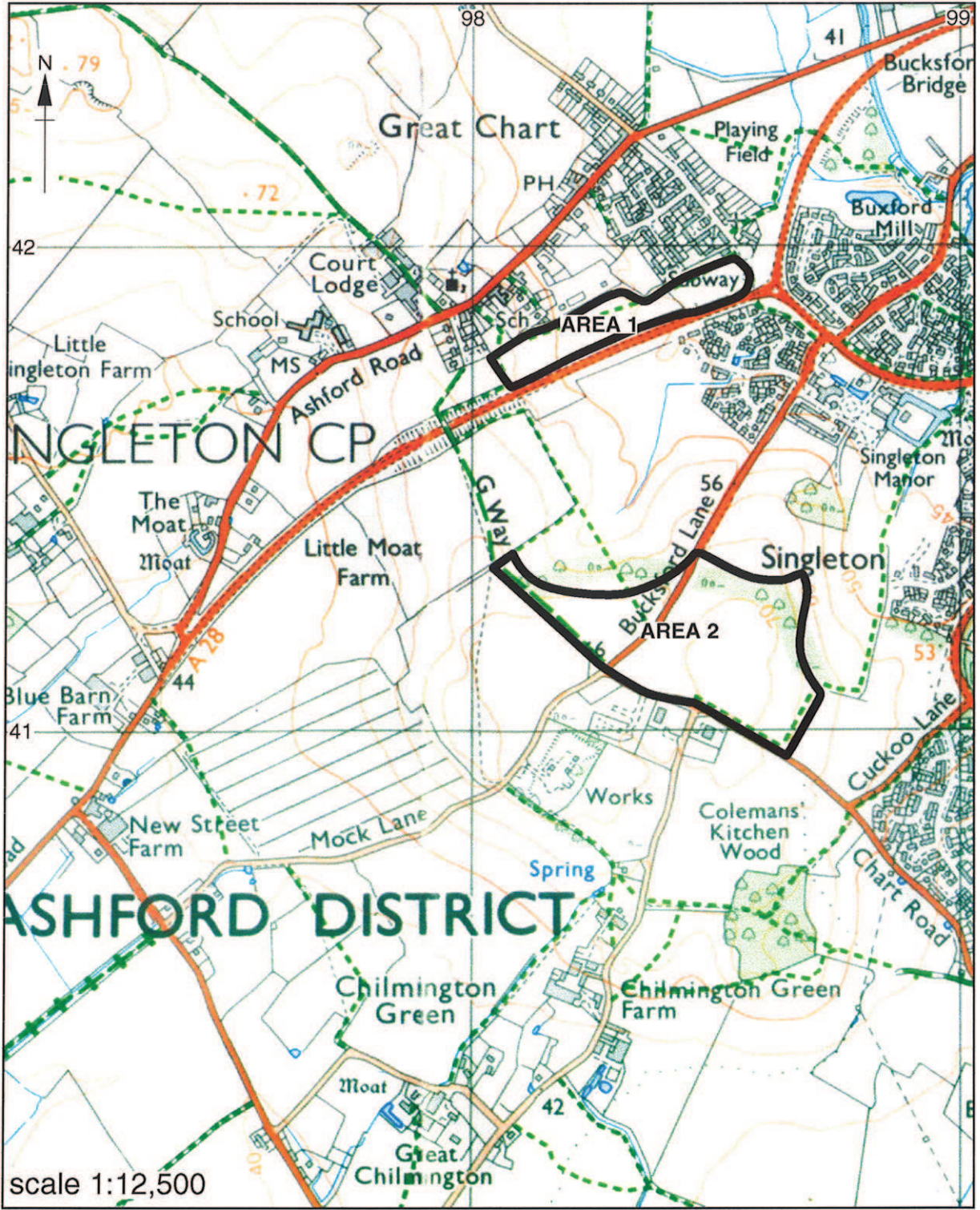
(provisionally dated to the mid 1st to 2nd century AD), a piece of medieval pottery which had been mended with a copper rivet, a late medieval or early post-medieval thimble and a piece of metal-working slag.

- 4.2.3 The field collection survey produced a general spread of post-medieval material and produced two prehistoric flint flakes and a medieval pot sherd. The survey identified one concentration of material: this consisted of a concentration of post-medieval pottery and a quantity of slag and charcoal, all of which was recovered from the bottom of one of the clay pits.(Feature 10.) The metal detector survey also produced one piece of slag from the field close to this clay pit This concentration, which probably represents evidence of post-medieval dumping in a disused clay pit would not appear to be of great archaeological significance, although the presence of charcoal and slag (suggesting some evidence of metal working in the general vicinity of the site) is of some interest.

General Conclusions

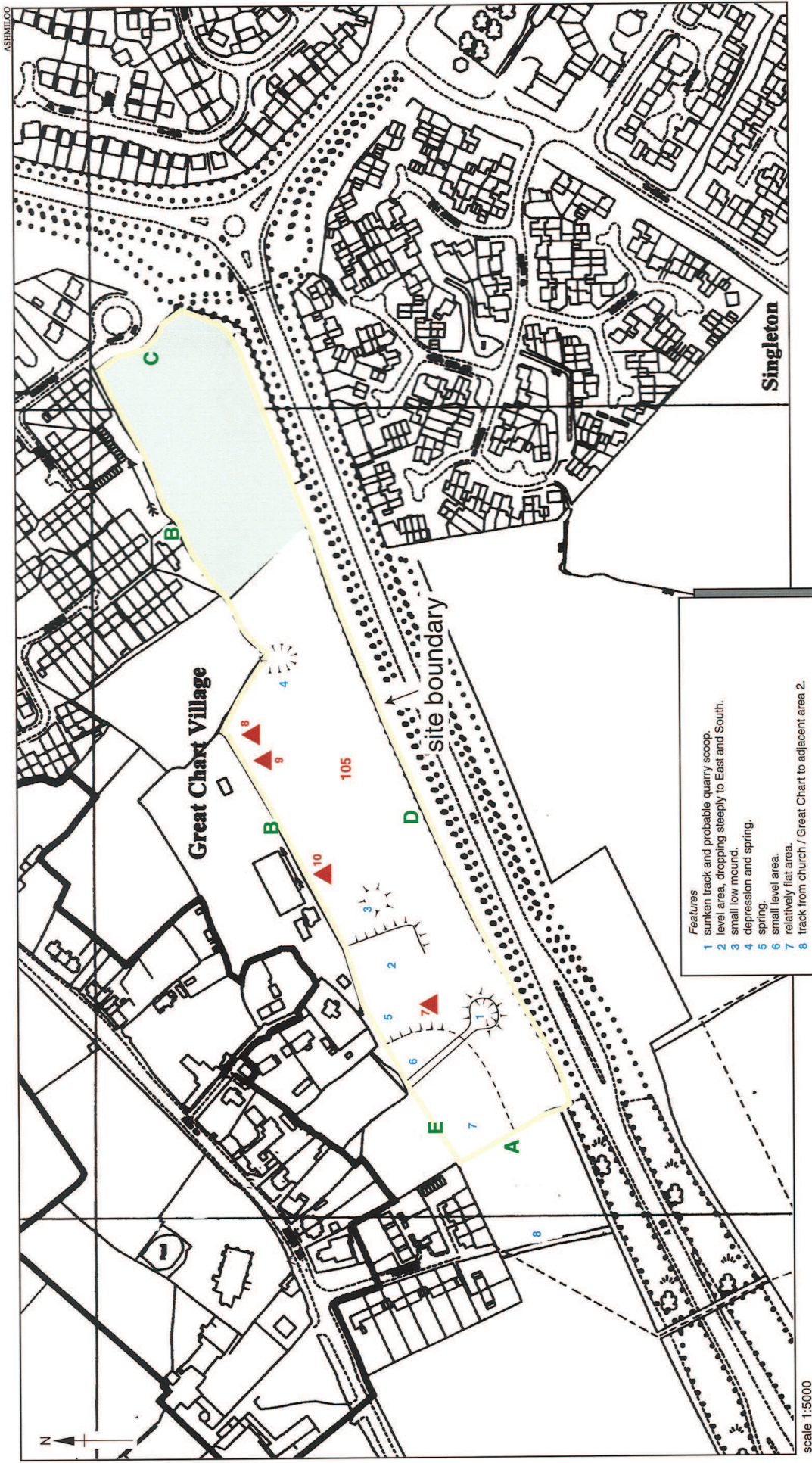
- 4.2.4 As defined by the brief the stated aims of the programme of field survey, surface collection and metal detection conducted across this site was to 'highlight areas where planting trees may not be appropriate and to target areas/sites for the Watching Brief'. The survey identified a number of earthwork features of historic interest but did not identify any areas of significant archaeological potential. It therefore did not identify any areas where it would seem inappropriate to plant trees. The survey did however identify some areas of uncertain, but perhaps enhanced archaeological potential. These comprised possible sites (such as Features 2, 3, 6 & 7 and grassmarks 13 & 15) and areas that were considered to be topographically suitable for early settlement activity (such as springs 4 & 5 and hilltop area 16). If these areas were to be selected as possible planting sites it is recommended that intrusive groundworks should therefore be archaeologically monitored in order to ensure that no archaeological deposits present within these areas are destroyed without record.

Oxford Archaeological Unit
January 2000



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Figure 1: Location Map



Features

- 1 sunken track and probable quarry scoop.
- 2 level area, dropping steeply to East and South.
- 3 small low mound.
- 4 depression and spring.
- 5 spring.
- 6 small level area.
- 7 relatively flat area.
- 8 track from church / Great Chart to adjacent area 2.

Hedges

- A ditch with hedge planted on Western side, evidence of old plashing, hedge now sporadic.
- B ditch containing water from springs 4 + 5, marked by sporadic hedge and young /relatively mature trees.
- C modern fence.
- D modern fence and young trees (c. 20 years).
- E modern fencing, playing field.

Small Finds

- 7 coin - (George III?) copper alloy.
- 8 bronze object.
- 9 lead trivet foot (fragment).
- 10 silver pendant - (Charles 1).
- 105 finds reference number.

Figure 2: Area 1

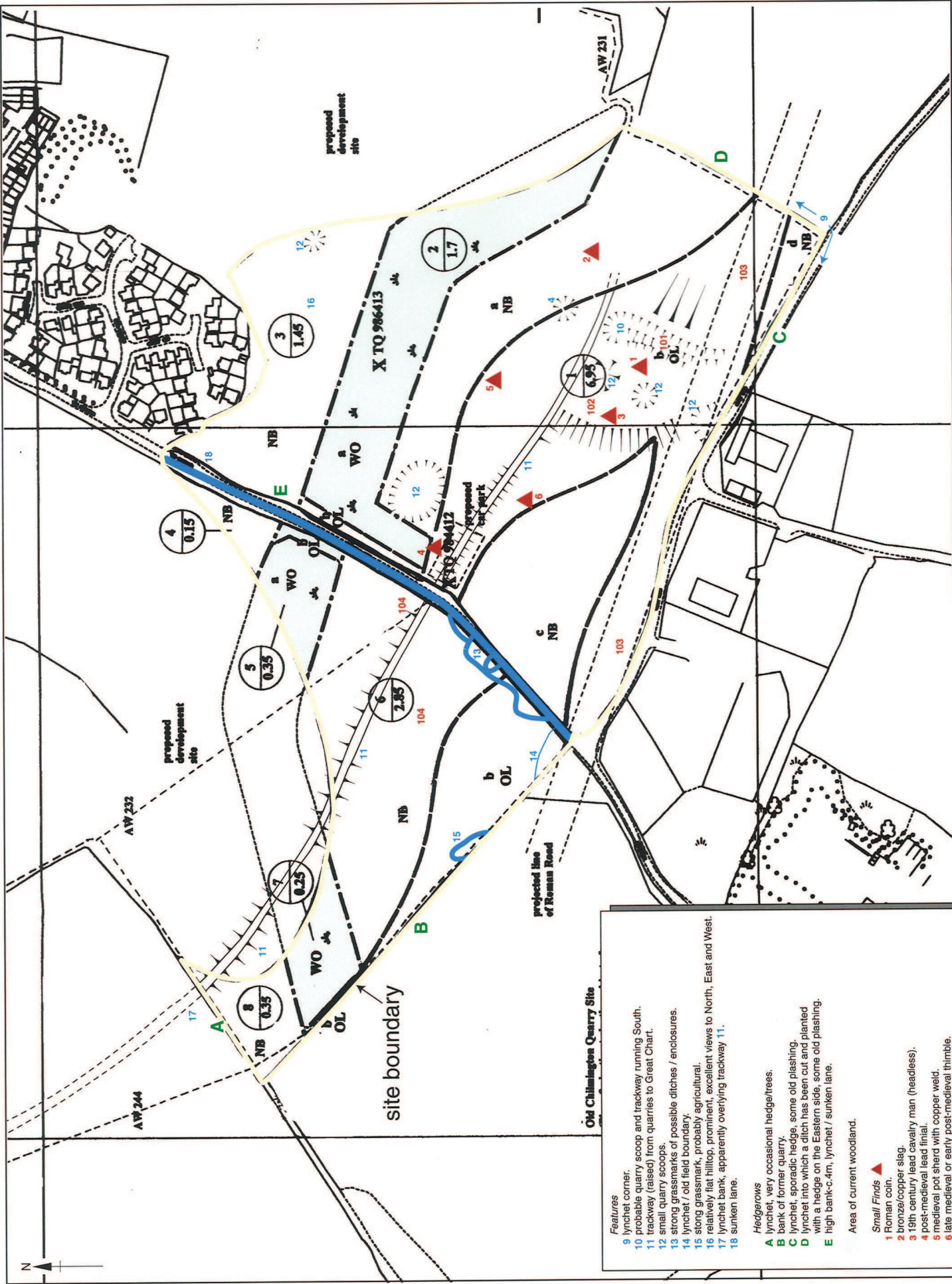


Figure 3: Area 2

Old Chilmington Quarry Site

Features

- 9 lynchet corner.
- 10 probable quarry scoop and trackway running South.
- 11 trackway (raised) from quarries to Great Chart.
- 12 small quarry scoops.
- 13 strong grassmarks of possible ditches / enclosures.
- 14 lynchet / old field boundary.
- 15 strong grassmark, probably agricultural.
- 16 relatively flat hilltop, prominent, excellent views to North, East and West.
- 17 lynchet bank, apparently overlying trackway 11.
- 18 sunken lane.

Hedgerows

- A lynchet, very occasional hedges/trees.
- B bank of former quarry.
- C lynchet, sporadic hedge, some old plashing.
- D lynchet into which a ditch has been cut and planted with a hedge on the Eastern side, some old plashing.
- E high bank-c.4m, lynchet / sunken lane.

Area of current woodland.

Small Finds

- 1 Roman coin.
- 2 bronze/copper slag.
- 3 19th century lead cavalry man (headless).
- 4 post-medieval lead finial.
- 5 medieval pot sherd with copper weld.
- 6 late medieval or early post-medieval thimble.
- 102: finds reference number.

scale 1:5000



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