

Poors Allotment, Ufton Nervet, Berkshire

Archaeological Assessment

**Oxford Archaeological Unit
May/June 1987**

Poors Allotment, Ufton Nervet, Berkshire

Archaeological Assessment May/June 1987

Introduction

At the request of ARC the Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out an archaeological assessment of the area known as Poors Allotment 1km south of Ufton Nervet village. The total area of the site is 13 ha.

The north-west corner of Poors Allotment contains a Bronze Age barrow, cut through by a pipeline. The area around this has been demarcated 'An Area of Archaeological Interest' by the Berkshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record because of its proximity to the barrow. Upstanding barrows are often the tip of the archaeological iceberg. At extensively excavated barrow cemeteries, such as Barrow Hills, Radley, flat burials, cremations and small barrows flattened by ploughing have been located close to larger monuments. The purpose of the assessment was to locate associated Bronze Age cemetery features or archaeological evidence of other periods.

The Assessment

Poors Allotment is a rectangular area of approximately 13 ha. consisting of four fields. It is ill-drained plateau gravel with standard birch and Scots pine around the edges. The central area was mostly covered with light birch scrub.

It was found to be possible to sample the site, using two JCB diggers, almost in the conventional way.

Because of the difficulties of surveying in boggy ground with poor sight lines the grid was based on visible field boundaries and placed where the scrub was least dense. The north-west area of the site was excluded from the sampling area because of the presence of a pipeline. The rest of the site was adequately sampled with the exception of some of the south-east and north-east fringes where tree cover was too dense to allow access.

A total of 35 trenches 1.5m. wide was excavated giving an area of 2,000 sq. m. (approximately 2% sample of the available area). The sample size was boosted in the area closest to the barrow where cemetery features were most likely to be found.

Results

Like College Piece, Mortimer, the trenches revealed a consistent, thin layer of humus (topsoil virtually absent) mostly less than 0.05m. thick over disturbed gravel. The natural gravel surface was pocked-marked with root disturbance and tree holes. These were filled with loose humic material and clearly not ancient.

The gravel surface was furrowed (see plan) as a result of mechanical ploughing for afforestation and further disturbance by the subsequent clearance of the plantation.

No archaeological features were located and no artifacts were found.

Conclusion

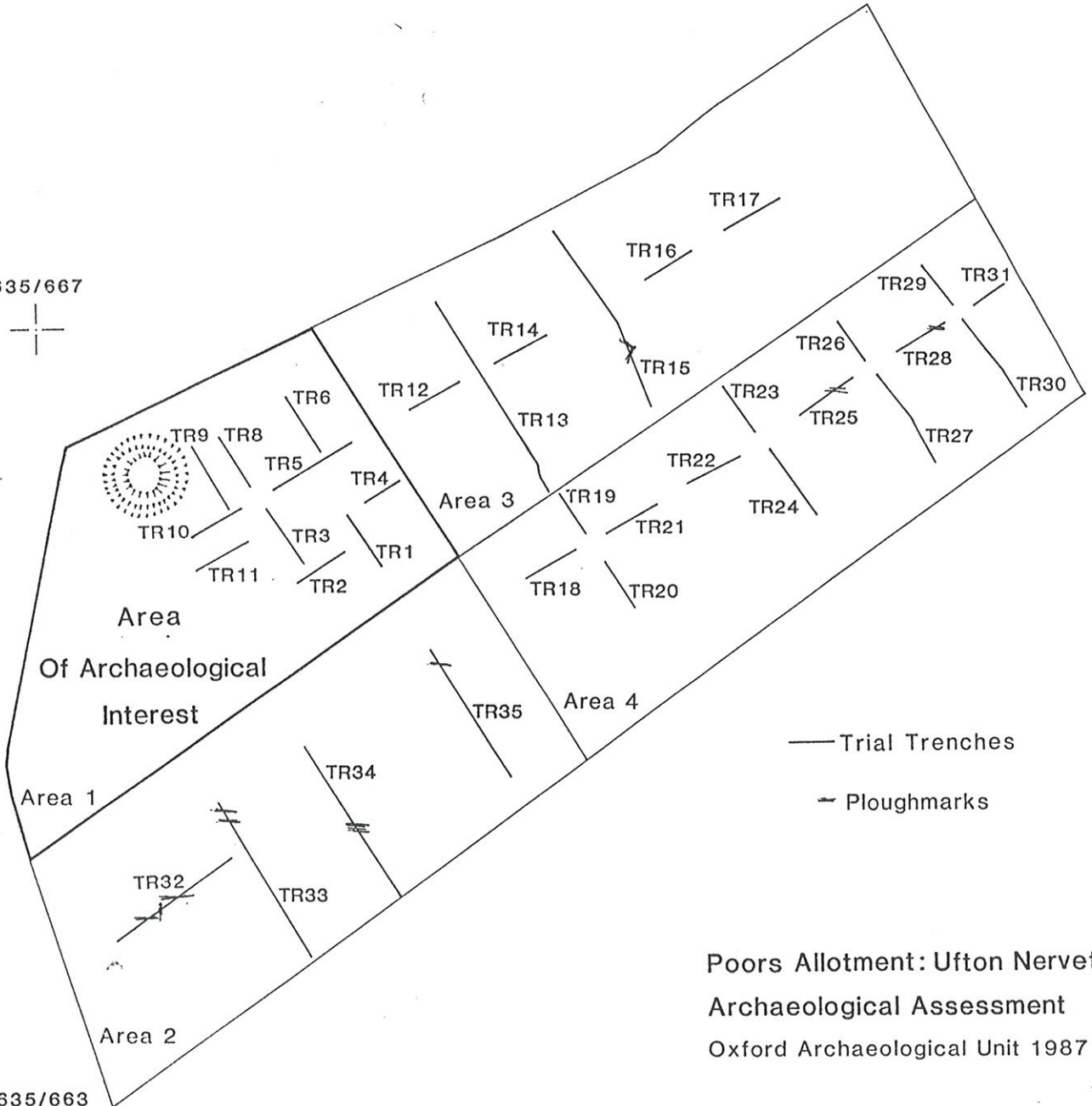
In spite of the difficulties of access the site was adequately sampled over most of its area. No archaeological evidence was located. The surface of the site and of the underlying gravel had been severely disturbed by forestry so that if shallow features and burials had been present in the past they may have been destroyed. However in spite of careful observation of the humic layer no artefacts were found.

Sampling was most intensive in the part of the site south-east of the barrow demarcated as 'Area of Archaeological Interest'; the results here were also negative.

With the exception of the barrow itself there seems to be no archaeological constraint to the development of this site.

David Miles and John Lange

635/667



Area
Of Archaeological
Interest

— Trial Trenches
 - Ploughmarks

Poors Allotment: Ufton Nervet
 Archaeological Assessment
 Oxford Archaeological Unit 1987

635/663



