

Condicote Village Hall Re-building Sub-committee

Condicote Village Hall, Condicote, Gloucestershire

*ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT*

SP 1538 2842

Planning Ref: CD. 5318/A

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

August 1999

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Planning Ref: CD. 5318/A

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Date: 5/8/99

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Date: HEAD OF FIELDWORK  
6/8/1999

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

August 1999

# Condicote Village Hall, Condicote, Gloucestershire

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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## SUMMARY

*The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at the Village Hall in Condicote on behalf of the Condicote Village Hall Re-building Sub-committee. The evaluation revealed deposits used to backfill a quarry that had previously existed on the site.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

In July 1999 the Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at Condicote Village Hall on behalf of the Condicote Village Hall Re-building Sub-committee in respect of a planning application (Planning ref: CD.5318/A) for the re-building. The work was undertaken to a WSI agreed with the Senior Archaeological Officer for Gloucestershire County Council.

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

The site is located on the south-eastern edge of the village of Condicote, Gloucestershire (NGR SP 1538 2842), to the east of the village Green and church. The site is currently occupied by a wooden building used as the village hall. Immediately to the north of the building lies a Scheduled Ancient Monument comprising prehistoric earthworks. The village hall lies at *c.* 99 m AOD, while the car park area sits at *c.* 100 m AOD. The village of Condicote is situated at the centre of the parish on land sloping down from the north-west (Fig. 1). The solid geology is Great Oolitic Limestone.

#### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

The site has been the subject of a desk-based assessment (OAU August 1999) the results of which are summarised here. The development site lies in the centre of an area of highly recorded and extant multi-period archaeological features. The Condicote area can demonstrate settlement or activity which ranges from the Neolithic to the medieval, and is concentrated around the site of a spring (now the well beneath the cross on the village green), which must have attracted human occupation in a largely waterless neighbourhood.

The area is particularly rich in prehistoric monuments, most notably the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Condicote Camp, interpreted as the only example of a Neolithic henge currently known from Gloucestershire. This feature is now mostly ploughed down but it appears to comprise a bank set between a double ditch and only one entrance. Although the damaged state of the monument makes its exact layout impossible to determine, it is thought that this entrance may have been located on the southernmost edge of the feature at the point, just north of the village hall, where there appears to be an interruption in at least its inner ditch. If this axis is correct it would suggest that the village hall site lies just outside the entrance to the monument. The area is rich in burial monuments, which may have been deliberately sited around the henge.

Condicote village is traditionally the site of a Roman settlement, which may lie beneath the church and the possible site of a Roman building has been identified just to the north of the village. Condicote also appears to have been a focus for Anglo-Saxon settlement: the first

documentary reference to settlement in the parish comes from a charter dated c1055 where a settlement is identified at 'Codesbyrig', which has been interpreted as being situated around Fox Farm.

The early Ordnance Survey maps show the field now occupied by the village hall as an area of old quarry. The hachures and conventions shown on the maps appear to show that this area of quarrying is at its deepest at the south-eastern end of the field; the extent of quarrying at the northern end of the site is not clearly marked. The area of the current village hall and of the proposed new car park is shown as 'wasteland/rough pasture'. Between 1922 and 1976 the quarry was backfilled. The village hall was built in 1929-1930 and formally opened in March 1930.

## 2 EVALUATION AIMS

To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposal area, and in particular to establish whether post-medieval quarrying has destroyed any archaeological remains that may have been present.

To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.

To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.

To make available the results of the investigation.

## 3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Scope of fieldwork

The evaluation consisted of three trenches measuring 2 x 2 m and one trench measuring 1.5 x 1.5 m (Fig. 2). The overburden was removed by a mechanical excavator [JCB] under close archaeological supervision.

### 3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

The trenches were cleaned by hand, and photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. The trenches were planned at 1:200 and a 1:20 drawing was made of one of the sections in Trench 4. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

### 3.3 Finds

No finds were recovered.

### 3.4 Environmental data

No environmental samples were taken.

## 4 RESULTS: GENERAL

### 4.1 Soils and ground conditions

The general soil type was a silty loam which included a high proportion of limestone fragments. Ground conditions were dry.

## 5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

### 5.1 Description of deposits

#### 5.1.1 Trenches 1-3 (Fig. 2)

These trenches each measured 2 x 2 m and were excavated by mechanical excavator to a depth of 0.80 m. They were situated on a raised area to the east of the village hall. In each case, mixed soils were encountered (4, 5 and 6), containing high proportions of limestone rubble and modern domestic and agricultural waste such as tarmac, barbed wire and plastic hosepipe. No archaeological features were present.

#### 5.1.2 Trench 4 (Fig. 2)

Trench 4 measured 1.5 x 1.5 m and was excavated to a depth of 1 m. It was situated immediately to the east of the current village hall, at the bottom of the slope defining the western edge of the raised area. Three layers were observed: the earliest of these was a loose silty loam with up to 50% limestone fragments (3), which was at least 0.45 m thick and was tipping gradually from west to east. It was overlain by a similar deposit containing 10% limestone fragments (2) which was 0.30 m thick, which was in turn overlain by a loam containing 5% limestone fragments (1) and measuring 0.25 m thick.

## 6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

### 6.1 Reliability of field investigation

Each trench was excavated to a sufficient depth to allow reliable conclusions to be reached about the likely impact of the proposed development.

### 6.2 Overall interpretation

#### 6.2.1 Summary of Results

Trenches 1-3 revealed modern backfilling deposits throughout each trench. Trench 4 revealed deposits thought likely to be associated with the original quarrying, or possibly with an earlier episode of backfilling.

#### 6.2.2 Significance

The evaluation revealed that deposits associated with the quarry, known to have previously existed on the site, are present to a depth of at least 0.80 m below current ground level, which is thought to exceed the level of the maximum impact of the proposed development.



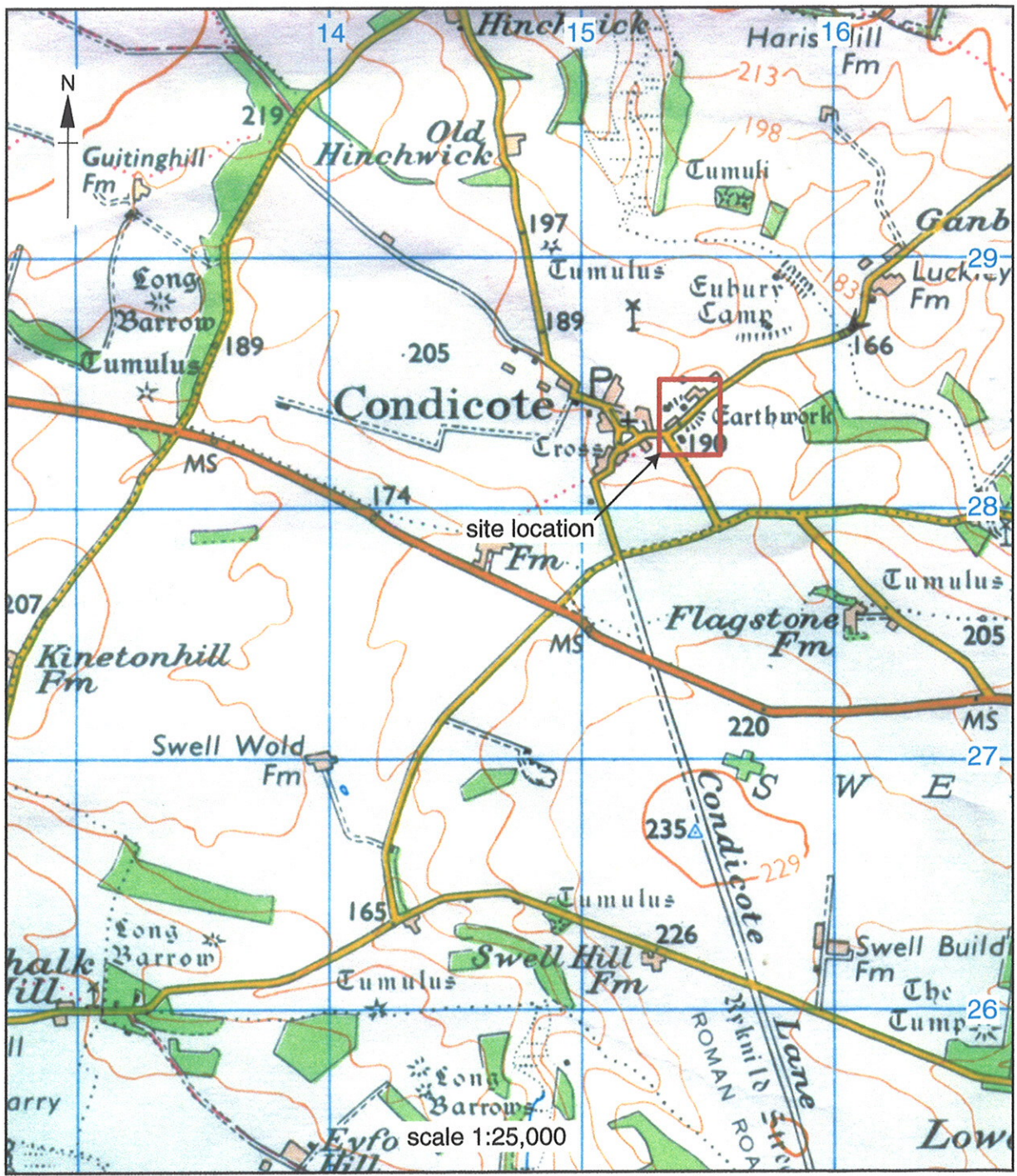
Bibliography and references

Oxford Archaeological Unit August 1998      Condicote      Village      Hall      Re-building-  
Archaeological      Desk-top      Assessment  
(unpublished client report)

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992      *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*, (First edition, August  
1992)

**Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory**

| Trench | Ctxt | Type  | width (m) | thick. (m) | Comment                | Finds | No. | Date |
|--------|------|-------|-----------|------------|------------------------|-------|-----|------|
| 001    |      |       |           |            |                        |       |     |      |
|        | 4    | layer |           | 0.80       | Modern quarry backfill |       |     |      |
| 002    |      |       |           |            |                        |       |     |      |
|        | 5    | layer |           | 0.80       | Modern quarry backfill |       |     |      |
| 003    |      |       |           |            |                        |       |     |      |
|        | 6    | layer |           | 0.80       | Modern quarry backfill |       |     |      |
| 004    |      |       |           |            |                        |       |     |      |
|        | 1    | layer |           | 0.25       | Topsoil                |       |     |      |
|        | 2    | layer |           | 0.30       | Quarry backfill        |       |     |      |
|        | 3    | layer |           | 0.45       | Quarry backfill        |       |     |      |



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figure 1: site location

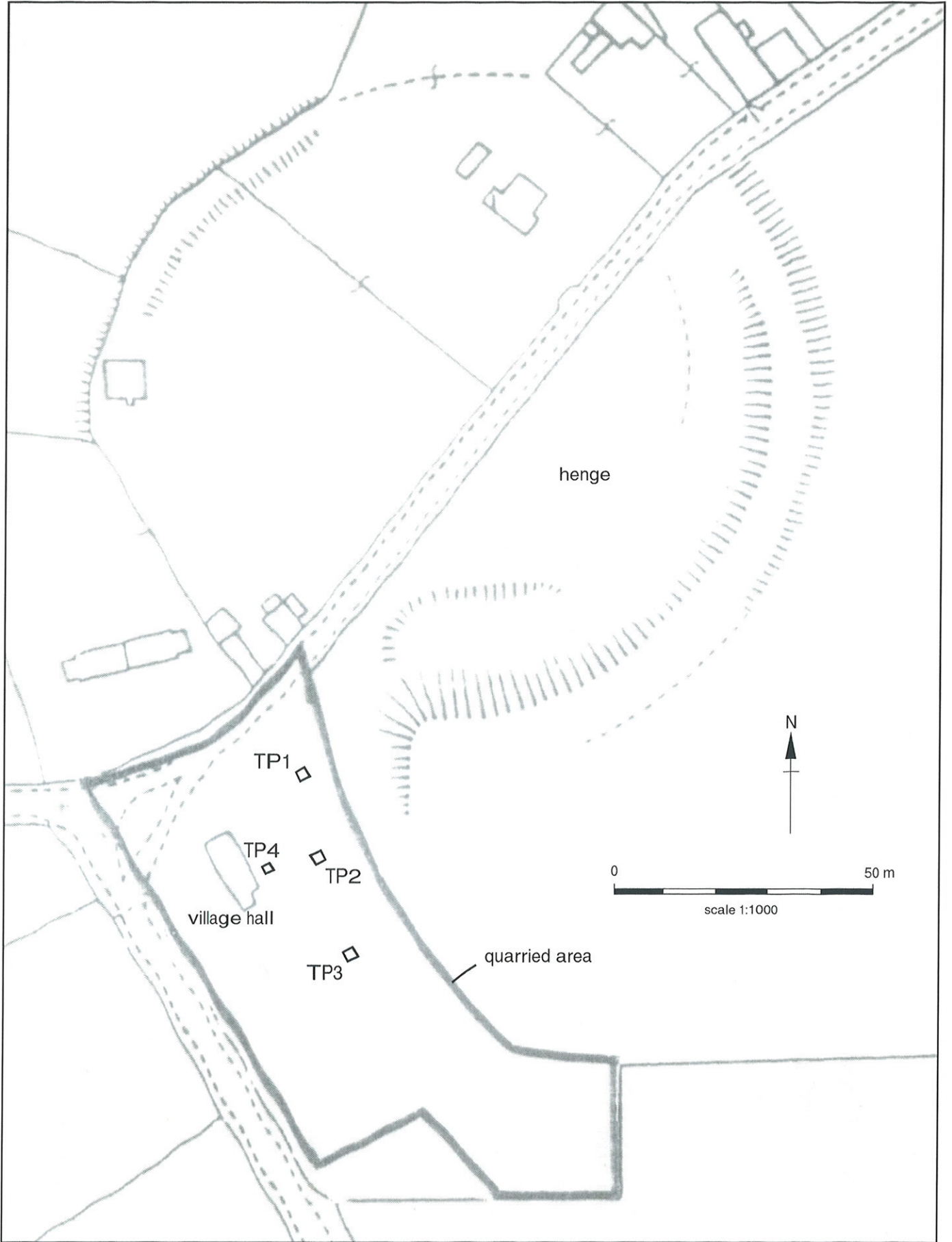


figure 2: trench locations

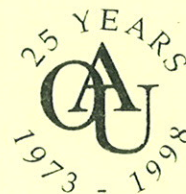


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