

Archaeological Field Unit

Post-medieval gravel quarrying
at Sweetings Road, Godmanchester

S P Macaulay

1994

OFFICE COPY

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No A31

Commissioned By Galliford Sears Homes Ltd

**Post-medieval gravel quarrying
at Sweetings Road, Godmanchester**

S P Macaulay M.Phil PIFA

1994

Editor T Malim BA
Illustrator S Ryan Stevens

Report No A31

Archaeological Field Unit
Cambridgeshire County Council
Fulbourn Community Centre
Haggis Gap, Fulbourn
Cambridgeshire CB2 5HD
Tel (0223) 881614
Fax (0223) 880946

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

In February-March 1994 Cambridgeshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological assessment at Sweetings Road, Godmanchester (TL 246 698) on behalf of Galliford Sears prior to a proposed housing development as part of the planning process.

The area was thought to be likely to hold archaeological deposits dating to the medieval period, cemeteries of the Roman period and possibly, prehistoric features. It transpired that the whole site has undergone extensive gravel pitting in the post-medieval period. This may have caused the destruction of previous archaeological deposits, however the paucity of background artefacts makes this unlikely.

Within the area of the brief there were some surviving deposits of possibly earlier features beneath an earthen bank to the south of the site. Importantly, to the north, in an area not covered within the scope of the present brief designated as 'open-space', modern gravel pitting for road construction, revealed graves and archaeological features of Roman date. These deposits were characteristic of 'Roman Godmanchester' and were unlike any other part of the site. The location of these deposits was recorded and they were reburied to prevent further damage.

Finally, an important stray find of a 128,000 year old Bout Coupe Palaeolithic hand-axe was made (*Figure 4*) within a Post-medieval quarry pit.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Non-Technical Summary	1
1 Introduction	3
2 Background	3
3 Aims and objectives	7
4 Geology and topography	7
5 Methodology	7
6 Results	8
7 Conclusions	17
8 Recommendations	18
9 Acknowledgements	19
10 Bibliography	19
Appendix	
A - List of contexts	20
List of illustrations	
Figure 1 - Location plan	4
Figure 2 - Plan of trench 1	9
Figure 3 - Plan of trench 2	10
Figure 4 - Bout Coupe` Palaeolithic hand axe	11
Figure 5 - Plans of trenches 3 and 4	12
Figure 6 - Plans of trenches 5 and 6	13
Figure 7 - Plan of trench 7	15
Figure 8 - Plan of trench 8	16

1 INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of February 1994, the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council were engaged by Galliford Sears Homes Ltd to conduct an archaeological assessment at Sweetings Road, Godmanchester (TL 246 698, *Figure 1*). The work was based on a County Archaeology Office (CAO) brief and the findings of a Desk Top Survey commissioned by Twigden Homes which was conducted by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (University of Cambridge).

The proximity of Sweetings Road to London Road, which is thought to follow the line of Roman Ermine Street running towards the Roman town of Godmanchester to the north, suggested the possibility of uncovering Roman burials. The known Roman cemetery of Porch Farm lies almost immediately to the north of the site and it was felt, therefore, that the site held significant archaeological potential. In addition the assessment area as a whole exhibited great potential for archaeology of other periods most notably the medieval period (Dickens 1993).

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The history and development of the town of Godmanchester is excellently reviewed in a booklet by H J M Green entitled *Godmanchester*, based upon over 40 years experience excavating and researching the town and its environs. Other information for this summary is derived from the Cambridgeshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).

3.2 Prehistoric and Early Historic Godmanchester to AD1100 **Dr Gerald A Wait**

Godmanchester is situated on the gravel terrace of the River Great Ouse which reveal a great variety and concentration of cropmarks dating to prehistoric and later times. Some of the most significant cropmark sites that have been excavated in the area are at Brampton and close by, at Rectory Farm, Godmanchester. River valleys were occupied early in prehistoric times as the rivers provided transport routes and the surrounding valleys had fertile soils which were easily cleared of vegetation for farming. Early prehistoric occupation around Godmanchester is indicated by flint tools in both Mesolithic and Neolithic forms. A Mesolithic camp, and a later, Neolithic farmstead, were located just east of the town by excavations in 1990 (Wait 1992). Contemporary with the latter is the extensive and obscure ritual complex of a giant enclosure and cursus recently excavated near Rectory Farm (McAvoy, interim report in CCC SMR). A mortuary enclosure at the end of a cursus has been excavated just west of Brampton (Malim 1991). Bronze Age barrows (or ring ditches) at Brampton (White 1966) and at Rectory Farm (McAvoy op. cit.) have also been excavated. Many other sites, probably farmsteads, are likely to have been scattered over the four by one kilometre gravel terrace upon which Godmanchester sits, exploiting the light, free draining soils so amenable to early farming technology. Such sites are known only through collections of flint tools.

Later prehistoric settlement is relatively better understood, not least because Iron Age pottery survives much better than earlier pottery. One such farmstead has been sample excavated just east of the town (Wait 1992) and others are known from under modern Godmanchester by the appearance of the typical roundhouses and ditched enclosures encountered below Roman occupation.

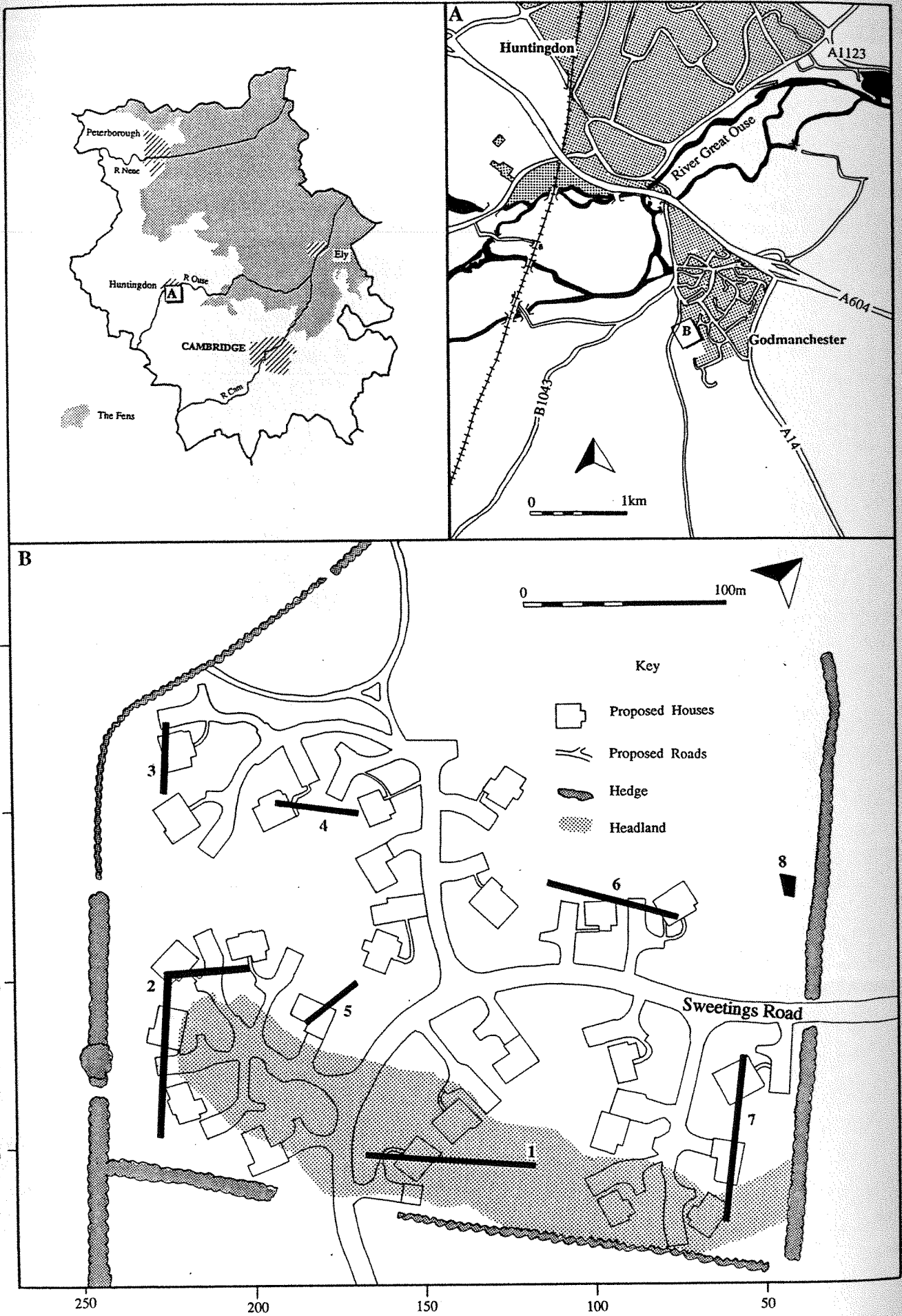


Figure 1 Location plan

3.2.1 Roman Godmanchester

The Roman conquest of East Anglia is represented in Godmanchester by a legionary fort built c. AD 44, to command the two new roads (Ermine Street and the Cambridge to Leicester Road) where they crossed the River Great Ouse. The fort was abandoned within a few years as the frontier moved north, but an associated civilian settlement or *vicus* survived. During the Flavian period the *vicus* expanded and flourished. By the Hadrianic period (ca 117-38) a *mansio* and baths were designed and built in the centre of the town, near the central crossroads. These were very large and elaborate buildings reflecting, in both their design and furnishings, the progressive Romanisation of the inhabitants. A *mansiones* were originally connected to the imperial postal service, providing overnight accommodation and fresh horses. This role later expanded to include facilities for other imperial travellers and later served as both a police post and a tax collection centre. The Godmanchester *mansio* as eventually built was one of the largest in Britain, at over 100 metres long, including stabling. The *mansio* was built around a colonnaded courtyard with bedrooms along two sides, along with kitchens, dining rooms, etc. Both *mansio* and baths were substantially built with masonry walls and were half-timbered above the ground floor. Floors were tessellated and walls were of painted plaster. Somewhat later (shortly after ca AD200) the town centre was redesigned and a formal *basilica* or town hall was built, indicating that Godmanchester may have achieved the formal status of *Vicus*, with a legal constitution and rights of self-government (possibly following an edict of Caracalla in AD214 which granted Roman citizenship to all free-born members of the community). The main building was of six bays, with an aisle on the east separated from the hall by an arcade. The new *basilica*, the *mansio* and the public baths were located in an *insulae* or small compound demarcated by ditched boundaries, and with them was a small temple apparently dedicated to a god named Abandinus, not known elsewhere and so possibly a local deity.

The general prosperity of the second century in Godmanchester was marred by a period of extensive flooding of land below about 10 metres OD. In the mid second century an extensive fire destroyed large tracts of the town and necessitated a massive rebuilding programme. This, plus continual resurfacing and up-grading of the principal Roman roads, required large supplies of gravel and sand, quarried locally from the underlying river terraces.

During the third century the town was enclosed within masonry walls some three metres thick, backed by a clay rampart, and pierced by gates where the roads entered the town. The wall was fronted by a ditch, reaching impressive dimensions where defending the gates. Later, during the fourth century, towers for defensive artillery were added at corners, and the external ditch re-cut. The *basilica* and *mansio* were demolished, apparently at this time and following a disastrous fire, possibly as a source of masonry for the refurbished defences. In apparent contradiction to the provision of such effective defences, Green believes the town was less prosperous during the third century.

Also during the third century the pan-Empire custom of inhumation burial was adopted at Godmanchester, and large cemeteries were established, in typical Roman fashion, outside the town walls and along the roads approaching the town. Cemeteries are known from the following areas: along both sides of Park Lane, just west and south of the parish church, between Cambridge Street and Linden Road, along the Cambridge road, and with possibly the largest stretching from the west end of Pipers Lane south and east to Ermine street near Porch Farm. Burials associated with this latter cemetery have recently been exposed at Sweetings Road, Godmanchester (Macaulay pers comm).

The *territorium* governed from Godmanchester as a *vicus* is unknown, but Green has speculated, on the basis of landscape features and artefact scatters, that it may have approximated to the modern parishes of Godmanchester and Offord Cluny. The town's

prosperity was based on agriculture, though Green's excavations do document the practice of essential crafts like iron smithing and pottery production.

A massive fire of the end of the third century may have been the result of an attack and sack of the town. Civic buildings were never rebuilt, and although the town was certainly rebuilt and reoccupied it was in less elaborate style and on a smaller scale. Some of the fourth and early fifth century occupation is associated with early Anglo-Saxon pottery. The last resurfacing of Ermine street was in the fourth century, and is virtually unworn and covered with fourth century rubbish. Side roads and private homes continued to be maintained within the town.

3.2.2 Anglo-Saxon Godmanchester

Fifth century occupation of Godmanchester is poorly documented; perhaps more a reflection of the state of archaeological excavation and interpretation than any true representation of the town's development. Coin issues and distinctive pottery styles cease ca AD400, and therefore ditches and pits which cut fourth century layers may date anytime from ca. 400 to 550 when more diagnostic pottery becomes common. However, stray finds of early and middle Saxon date do occur from many places within and around the town, and it is likely that the town continued to be inhabited. The late inhumation cemetery along Cambridge Road contains evidence of Saxon settlement. Middle Saxon pottery (eg Ipswich ware, dated ca. AD650-850) and settlement evidence appears to focus on the area around the Roman southgate.

3.2.3 The Danish Period

Between 865 and 879 the area suffered raids by roving Danish armies, culminating in permanent occupation by Guthrum after 879. The army was based at Huntingdon, and was responsible for administering the district later called Huntingdonshire. Danish occupation is known from Godmanchester, and Green speculates that this was focused on a district enclosed within large ditches appended to the Roman walled area on both sides of West Street and along the river. In 917 Edward the Elder recaptured Huntingdon and Godmanchester, and refortified both places as strong defensive points controlling the Ouse. It was Saxon policy to appropriate land under Danish ownership to the Saxon/English Crown. This would appear to have occurred in Godmanchester. During this period the old Roman road (Ermine St) was abandoned through the town and the hexagonal ring roads of East St (Cambridge St), the Causeway, London St and Earning St were laid out, as wall streets with internal lanes to aid in defence.

3.2.4 Early Norman Godmanchester

Godmanchester appears in the Domesday Book of 1086 as crown land held by Edward the Confessor, and it later became a self-governing manor responsible directly to the crown (chartered 1212). In 1086, Godmanchester had 80 villeins and 16 bordars with a total population of about 450 people. It also had three water mills - whose positions can still be plotted - based upon extensive water engineering works that may have originated in the Danish period.

2.3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

There are a number of policies that relate to archaeologically sensitive areas, these are:

Department of Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16)

Para. 6. Archaeological remains should be seen as a finite and non-renewable resource, in many cases highly fragile and vulnerable to damage and destruction.

Para. 8. Where nationally important remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, are affected by proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation.

Para. 13. If physical preservation *in situ* is not feasible, an archaeological excavation for the purposes of 'preservation by record' may be an acceptable alternative. From the archaeological point of view this should be regarded as a second best option.

Para. 25. Requires local planning authorities to request a prospective developer to arrange for an archaeological field evaluation before deciding upon a planning application on any site where important archaeological remains may exist. This evaluation may lead to requirements for preservation of all, or parts, of the site, or for further archaeological work.

Cambridgeshire County Council Structure Plan.

Policy P14/12 The local planning authorities will exercise their powers of development control to preserve scheduled ancient monuments and other important archaeological sites in the County.

Policy P14/13 Where there is no overriding case for the preservation of an archaeological site, opportunities will be sought prior to the granting of planning permission, for excavation and recording of the site.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

It was determined to locate, date, characterise and map the extent of surviving archaeological deposits threatened by the proposed development. The condition, significance and quality of remains would be similarly assessed. It was thought that particular attention should be given to the nature of buried deposits and their sequence. Artefactual and environmental samples were to be collected where appropriate.

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The geology of the area is based on the First and Second Terrace River Gravels of the Great Ouse valley and the land is presently under pasture. The River Gravels were overlain by varying degrees of alluvial deposition.

The site covers an area of approximately 2.7ha which is roughly square in shape. The relief rises towards the south-east, however this appears to be a man-made feature, with the general relief sloping away to the south.

5 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was based on machine-dug trenches to investigate c.2% of the area of the proposed development (2.7ha). It was felt that geophysical survey would not adequately locate potential burials and was not selected as an investigation technique.

A series of seven trenches (1-7) totalling 300m were located to bisect the arcs of planned housing foundations (Fig 1). The area of 'open space' to the north of the site, which potentially contained the most archaeology (proximity to Buttermel Meadows,

Porch Farm Roman cemetery and Ermine Street Roman Road), was not within the scope of the CAO brief and was thus not subject to assessment. However the presence of modern gravel extraction works resulted in the recording of some archaeological features. Which were uncovered by machine and this area was then widened and cleaned becoming Trench 8.

Trenching was undertaken using a JCB supplied by the developers utilising a toothless 1.6m wide ditching bucket and topsoil was removed to the level at which archaeological features should have been exposed. Trenches were then cleaned and selective hand excavation of features undertaken to sample for dating evidence and ecofacts. These were then planned and photographed and recorded using the Archaeology Field Unit's standard single context recording system. This follows the same methodology previously employed at AFU excavations in Godmanchester and allows for effective cross referencing and comparative analysis.

6 RESULTS

It was observed on the ground that the whole site was pitted and generally uneven, with no trace of surviving earthworks to the north, towards the known earthworks of Buttermel Meadow (Kemp 1992). However to the south-east a previously unrecorded 'headland' was identified which was trenched to see what archaeological features may have been present beneath its protective embankment

All planned trenches (1-7) exhibited a singular lack of regular identifiable archaeological features and there was a marked absence of artefacts of all periods recovered from topsoil during machine excavation. The topsoil, a dark brown silty/clay varied in depth across the site from 0.18-0.30m and underlying most of the site was a lower 'agricultural' horizon which extended to 0.72m below topsoil in places. The level of natural gravel differed wildly 0.25-0.84m+ below topsoil and there were pockets of redeposited gravel occurring at random around the site.

All trenches revealed series of intercutting irregular pits which produced post-medieval pot (eg Copeland China C.19th and Salt Glaze C.17th), metal objects and moulded clay pipe stems C.18th. This has been interpreted as gravel extraction by large areas of pit quarrying and linear strip quarrying. Artefacts relating to earlier periods are almost non-existent. The fills of the gravel pitting have exhibited a uniform character throughout the site and have resulted in many pits being visible in plan but not section. Similarly this also suggests that the whole area was opened on a large scale and was infilled both deliberately and simultaneously.

Trench 1 (*Figure 2*) measured 50m long and was located over the headland to the south of the site, along its south-west/north-east axis. Depth of topsoil was 0.20m with subsoil depth ranging from 0.20m to 0.72m, however the raised height of gravel natural is the result of anthropogenic activity. The bank appears to have been construed as a result of gravel quarrying, being the deposition of topsoil and gravels mounded during extraction and is thus not a 'headland'. As a result there does seem to be some survival of earlier deposits beneath the bank to a depth of 1.7m+, a possible Roman ditch [125]. However there has also been gravel extraction beneath the bank and the survival of any deposits will have been compromised, Post-medieval gravel pitting being represented by four features [90, 131, 173 and 175]. These features produced Post-medieval tile, brick and pottery. A possible pit or ditch [90], filled by a dark yellow-brown silt/clay produced both Post-medieval artefacts and Roman pottery (AD 2nd-3rd century reduced coarse ware), however the abraded nature of the pottery supports the hypothesis of residual intrusion.

TRENCH 1

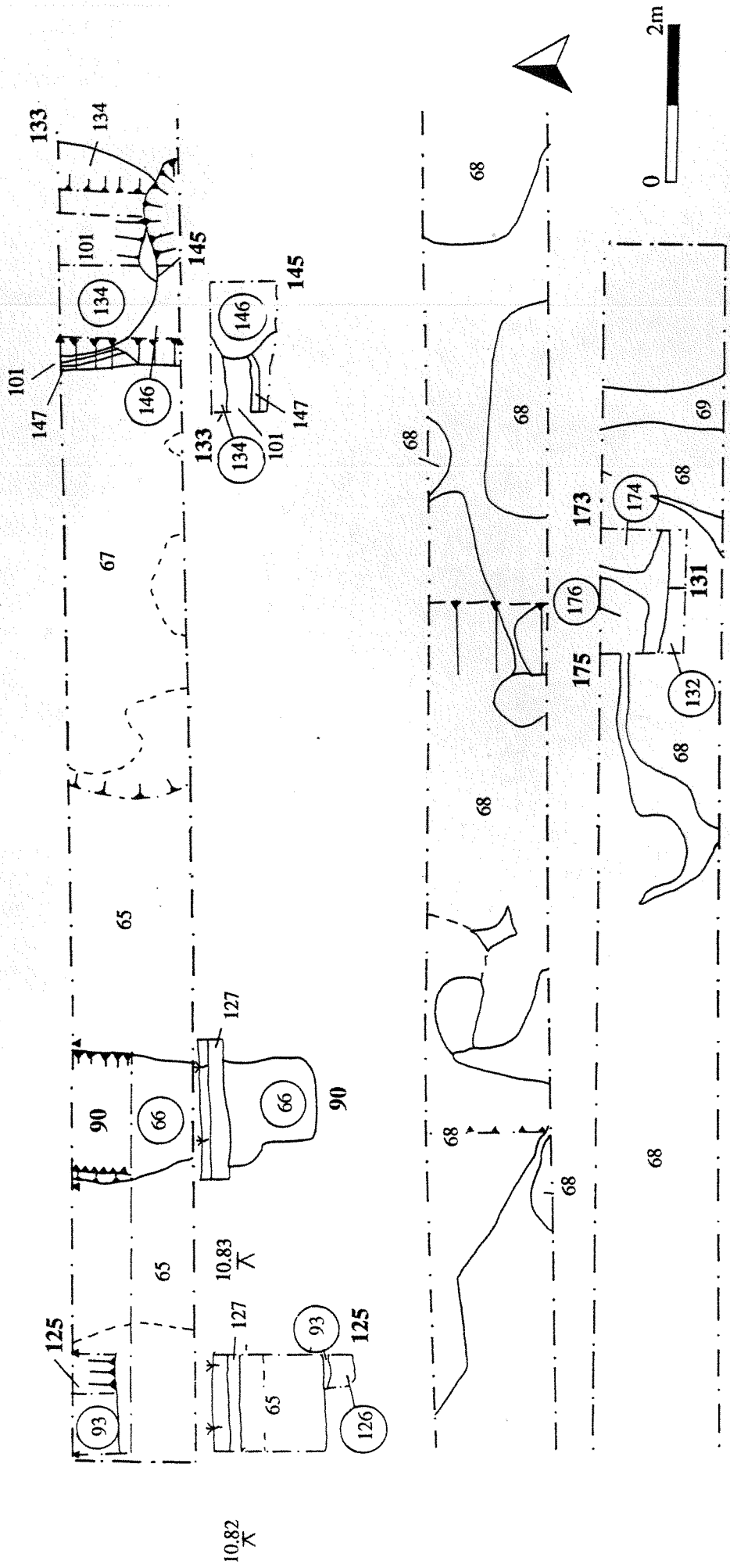
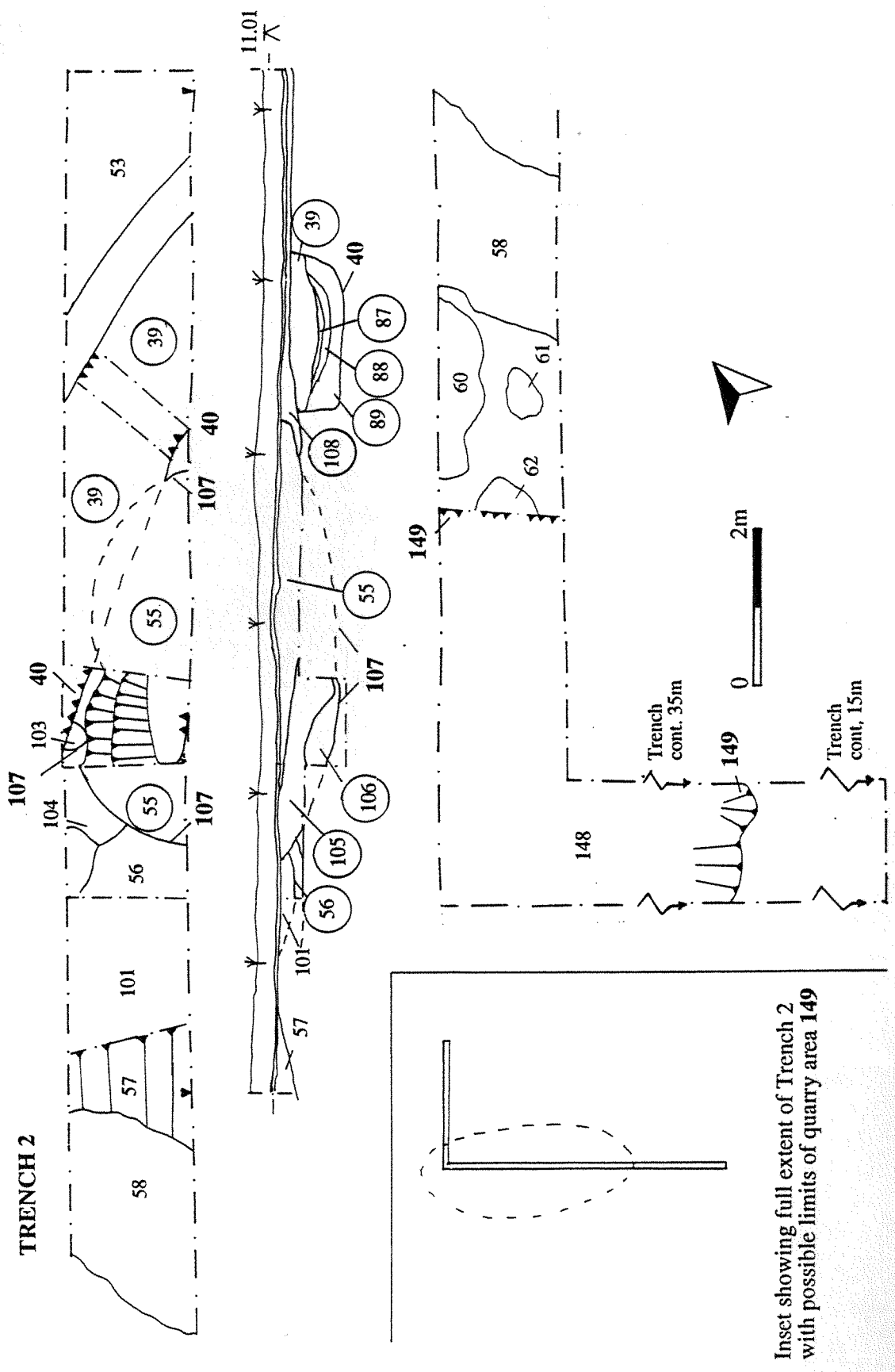


Figure 2 Plan of trench 1 including sections of excavated features



Inset showing full extent of Trench 2 with possible limits of quarry area 149

Figure 3 Plan of trench 2 including sections of excavated features

While back filling the opportunity was taken to extend the trench across the bank. Again features were identified at a depth of 1.6m+ and these produced some human bone, however it is not known if there was an associated grave cut. It is just possible that the raised headland has aided the survival of deposits. It is unfortunate that it was not possible to fully identify the scope of survival, however evidence from the trenches suggests that there is not likely to be substantial archaeological deposits.

Trench 2 (*Figure 3*) was originally 50m north-west/south-east long but was extended 25m to the north-east to check for further archaeology. Topsoil depth varied from 0.18-0.25m, with gravel appearing around 0.47m below ground surface. In the long arm of the trench gravel natural did not appear down to 2m where excavation was ceased. Initially it appeared to be located over a large pond or flooded area, however it now became apparent that this was a very large area of gravel extraction [149], possibly for the construction of the farm house immediately to the west.

The extended area of Trench 2 to the north-east picked up the edge of the large quarry and identified several other Post-medieval quarry pits. A possible ditch was revealed [40] and this contained a single piece of abraded residual Roman pottery (2nd-3rd century). This feature along with (53), is part of the Post-medieval strip quarrying and is common within the rest of the site. This feature is cut by later gravel pitting to the south-west [107], which in turn post-dates 18th-19th century quarrying (56) below a redeposited gravel bank (101).

Trench 3 (*Figure 5*) was a short 25m stretch, orientated north-west/south-east and again revealed evidence of extensive Post-medieval gravel pitting. Topsoil depth was 0.18m but the depth of gravel varied from 0.45m to 0.70m, even within this small area. The gravel pitting was tested and showed inter-cutting and deliberate in-filling. Of particular interest were two linear features [199 and 102] which while appearing to be ditches were part of linear strip quarrying. This was not an uncommon practice and dating evidence from these features (a brown sand/clay (50) within [199] and (51) a yellow-brown sand/clay within [102], which both overlay olive brown sand/clay's (135, 136) in [199 and 102]) produced Post-medieval tile, pot, brick and nails. All of these features seem to be cut from immediately below topsoil. Of great interest was a Bout Coupé hand axe, dated to 128,000 B.P. (*Figure 4*) which was recovered as a redeposited find within (51).

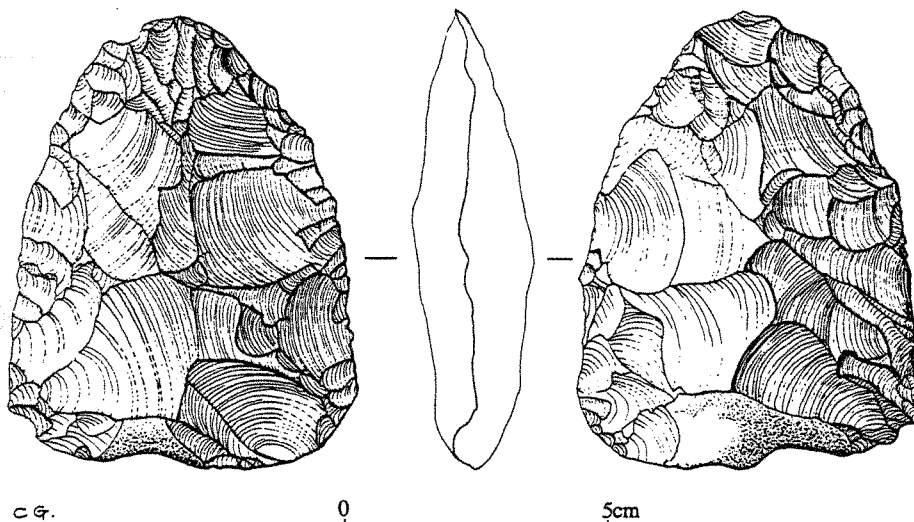
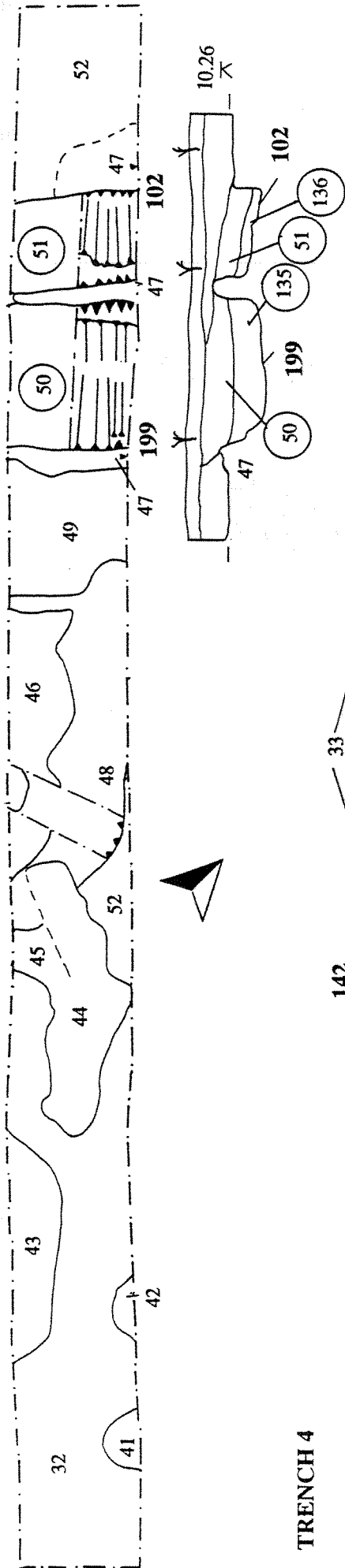


Figure 4 Bout Coupe Palaeolithic hand axe

Trench 4 (*Figure 5*) ran south-west to north-east 25m in length and continued to support the premise that the Post-medieval gravel quarrying extended over most of the

TRENCH 3



TRENCH 4

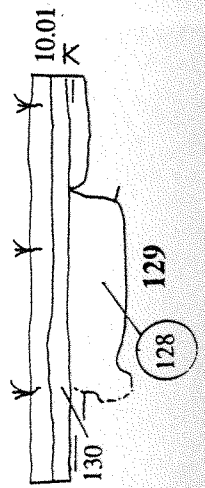
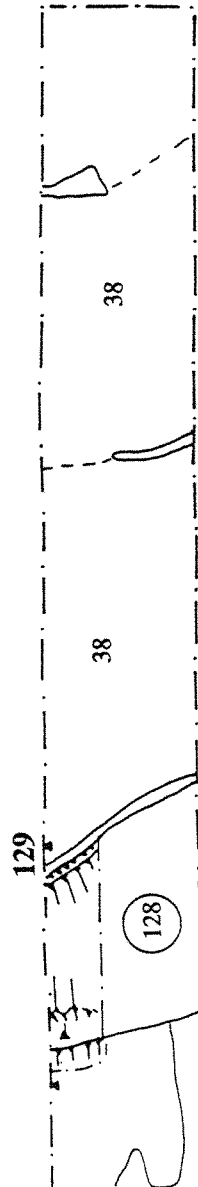
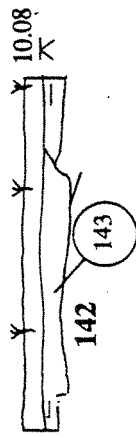
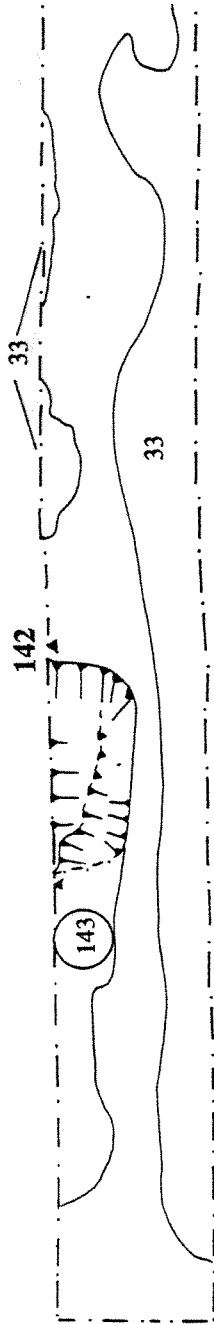
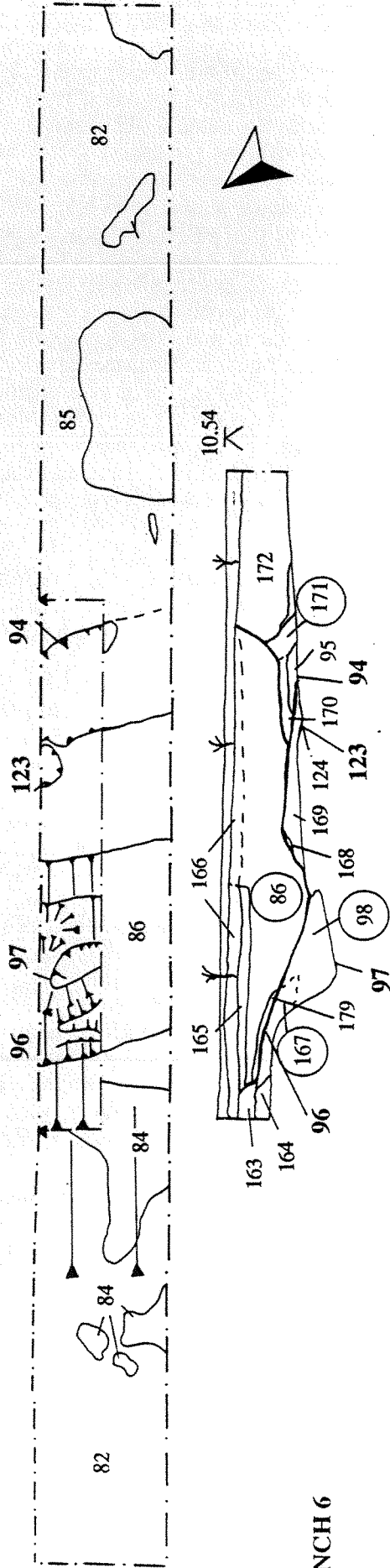


Figure 5 Plans of trenches 3 & 4 including sections of excavated features

TRENCH 5



TRENCH 6

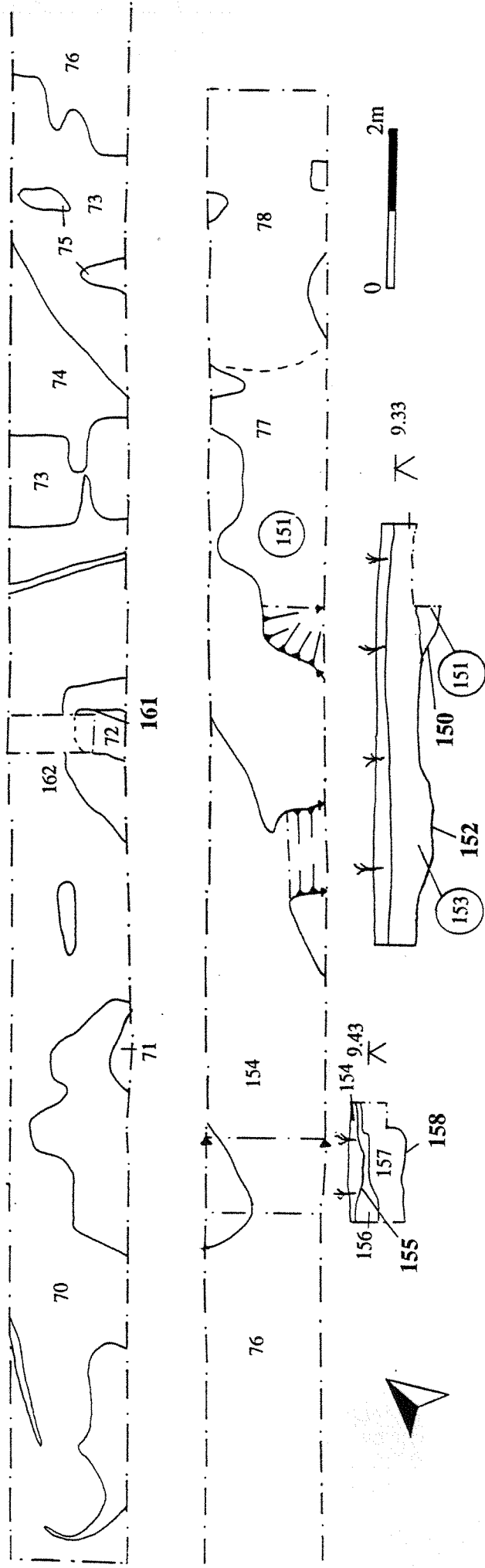


Figure 6 Plans of trenches 5 & 6 including sections of excavated features

site. Again no other archaeological features were identified, which pre-dated the quarrying. Topsoil extended to 0.20m and again gravel depth fluctuated from 0.45m down to 0.74m. Probable gravel pits were sampled and excavated, [142] again revealed the inter-cutting of these features, over large areas, with the pits being cut from just below topsoil. Another linear gravel extraction trench was identified (similar to [40] in trench 2 and [102,199] in trench 3), [129] the north side of which had collapsed. The fill of this feature (128) produced both Post-medieval pottery and a single sherd of residual Roman pottery (2nd-3rd century).

Trench 5 (*Figure 6*) ran 25m north-south and revealed relatively complex stratigraphy exposed in section. However again below all of the sequence Post-medieval gravel pitting was identified. Observed in the machine cut section was a Post-medieval (c.117-18th century) drainage ditch [96] which cuts the upper fills of earlier gravel pitting [94, 97, 123]. All lower fills (98, 168, 169, 170,, 171) from the gravel pits had similar dark grey-brown clay/silt fills, again indicating the gravel pitting was opened over large areas and probably back filled deliberately. Similarly redeposited compacted gravel (167) was present, a feature of the sites' quarrying activity. These layers were over lain by the lighter brown sand/silts (86) of the ditch [96].

Trench 6 (*Figure 6*) was situated closest to the area of proposed 'open space' and the area of most probable archaeological activity. The trench was 50m long and orientated west to east with the eastern end nearest to the site of Porch Farm Roman cemetery. The trench revealed only extensive Post-medieval gravel quarrying along its entire length. Four areas were tested and these revealed inter cutting pits down to the water table [150, 151, 155, 158 and 161]. No earlier archaeology was present beneath these Post-medieval features, even with the proximity to the burials exposed in trench 8. The far eastern end of the trench was disturbed by 20th century activity.

To the north and east of the trench, the developers tested suitability of deposits for gravel extraction. The area to the north was unsuitable for gravel extraction as a result of Post-medieval quarrying. Gravel was extracted to the east, and this was observed and no archaeology seen and in particular no evidence of Roman burials were indicated. This does suggest that the limit of the cemetery or burials in trench 8 are confined to extending north-west, north and north-east.

Trench 7 (*Figure 7*) ran for 50m north-west to south-east, perpendicular to the existing hedgerow. Topsoil depth was between 0.15-0.20m, however depth of gravel was disparate, being very shallow towards the north-west, only 0.25m but extending to over 1.00m at the south-eastern end. Where the depth of gravel is greatest coincides with the crossing of the headland (*Figure 1*). Along the length of the trench gravel pitting was identified. Investigation revealed that these were again Post-medieval in date. Features produced brown to grey-brown clay/silts (9, 32, 79 and 92) which contained Post-medieval tile, brick and pottery. Quarrying took the form of pitting [8, 91] and some linear extraction [31], this feature may have been a ditch, however this was not revealed within the trench and the profile was similar to other features on the site eg [40] in trench 2.

Finally, there was no Trench 8 scheduled in the original specification, however a burial was uncovered during the gravel extraction being carried out by the developers for road construction. It seemed appropriate to investigate the area despite being beyond the CAO brief, and therefore the area was widened, cleaned and recorded (*Figure 8*).

The original burial [140] was aligned east-west with the head at the western end which is characteristic of the Roman burials previously recorded in Godmanchester (Reynolds 1992). Although none of the graves or features were excavated, some artefacts were recovered during cleaning. No grave goods could be associated with the skeleton however close to the fill (140), a dark brown sand/silt, sherds of reduced Roman coarse ware (c. 2nd-3rd Century) were recovered.

TRENCH 7

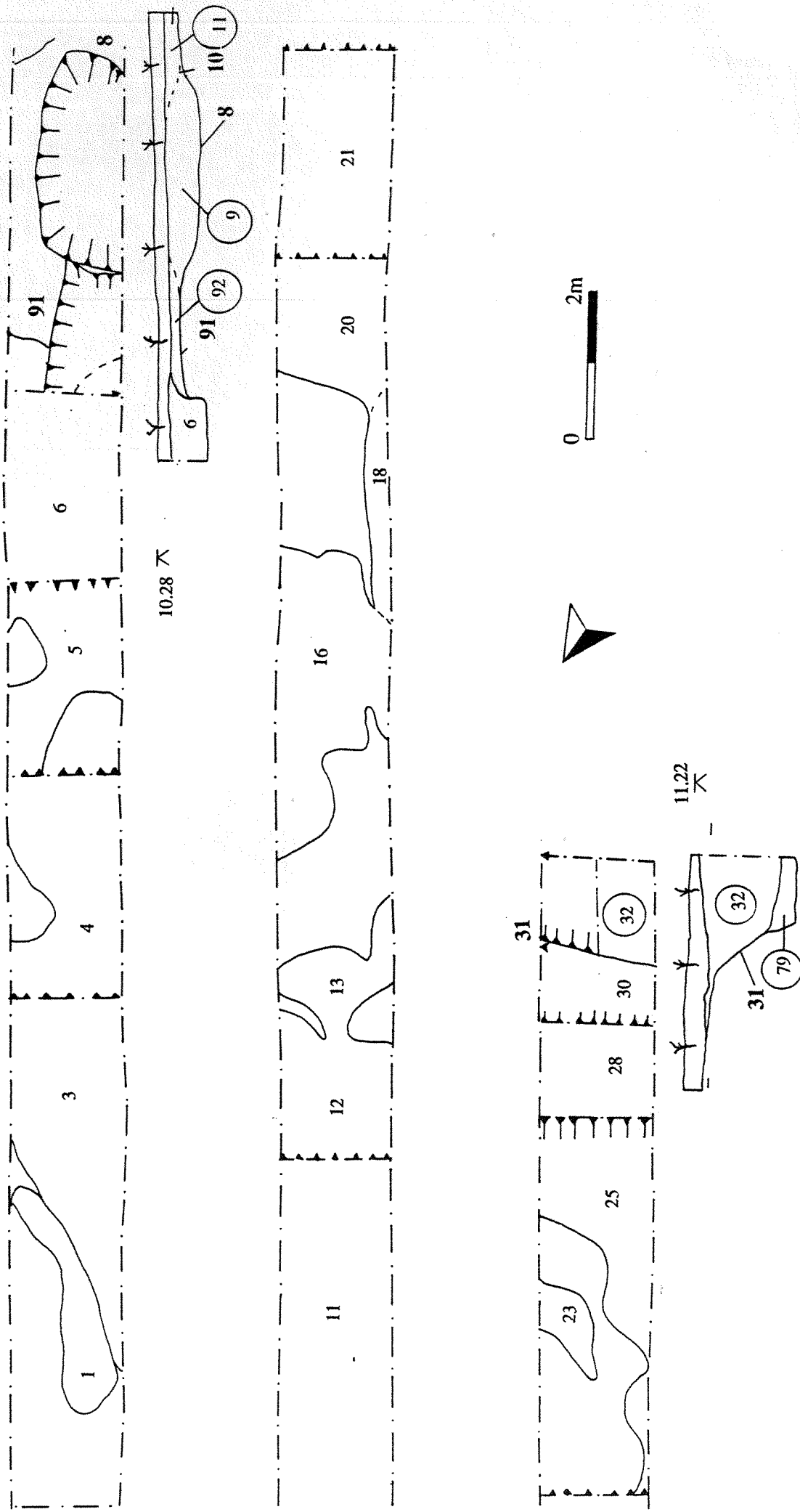


Figure 7 Plan of trench 7 including sections of excavated features

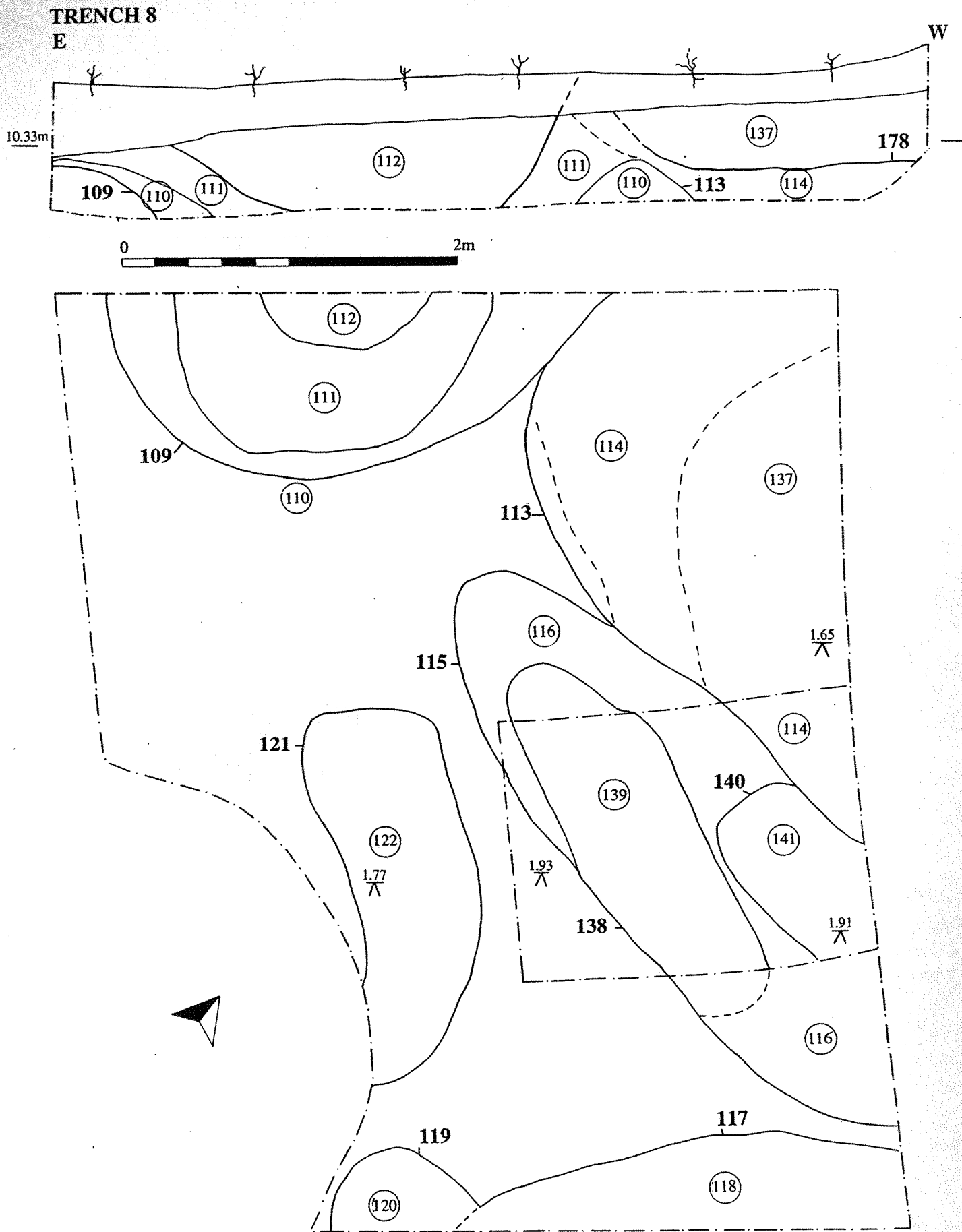


Figure 8 Plan of trench 8 including sections of excavated features

At least three more burials were identified in plan, [119, 121 and 138] all aligned east-west (*Figure 8*). The fills were a mix of brown to yellow-brown sand/silts (120, 122 and 139). As *Figure 8* shows there was also a series of inter cutting pits of a regular sub-circular shape. As the east-west section shows the pits are cut from 0.20-0.40m below ground surface. These features produced Roman pottery (not residual) and the fills are unlike the fills associated with the Post-medieval quarrying characteristic of the site.

7 CONCLUSIONS

It is apparent that the site has undergone extensive gravel quarrying in the Post-medieval period (c.17th-19th Centuries). The lack of artefactual recovery from all periods is interesting. However there is definitive data (in-situ pot, tile, brick and clay pipe) which dates the gravel pitting to post 16th Century. Moreover, throughout the site the 'uniform' irregular characteristics of this gravel pitting is consistent. All trenches, except trench 8, have extensive Post-medieval quarrying. Indeed it appears that large areas of the site were open at any one time during the gravel pitting and that these were infilled deliberately. This seems to have resulted in very uniform fills for the gravel pits (see Appendix A), with the extent of many only visible in plan, where the pits cut the natural, not in section. There is some evidence of large quarry pits [149] in Trench 2, however this may have been specifically quarried for the construction of the farmhouse immediately to the south-west.

There were some tentative Roman or medieval field ditches, however the recovery of single sherds of heavily abraded Roman pottery, seems now to be the result of residual deposition from manuring (Chris Going pers comm.). The linear cuts are more likely to be part of strip gravel extraction, evidence for this occurs in Trenches 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7. In addition the profiles of these supposed field ditches would not suggest such a function (eg [40] in Trench 2 see *Figure 3*).

It seems increasingly unlikely that there has been destruction of extensive archaeological deposits at Sweetings Road. What is more likely is that the field has always been outside the successive settlements at Godmanchester and has remained in agricultural use up until the 17th Century since when the land has been subject to widespread gravel quarrying. There is no evidence to link any gravel extraction to earlier periods, for example during the construction of nearby Roman roads.

There appears to have been some potential for survival of archaeological deposits beneath the bank (itself created as a result of gravel extraction), however the extent of this is questionable, no where else of the site has there been any evidence to suggest that there has been archaeological activity on the site. Lying outside the urban centre of Godmanchester, the field has remained under agricultural before being subject to extensive gravel quarrying over the last three hundred years.

The one area of extensive archaeological remains was within Trench 8. As stated before this fell outside the area of investigation suggested by the County Archaeology Office brief, but the area became necessary to assess due to the unforeseen impact of modern gravel extraction.

This area produced the typical archaeological remains expected for Roman Godmanchester (Reynolds pers comm.), including burials and Roman activity. The proximity to the known cemetery at Porch Farm to the north-east suggests that these burials may be a continuation of this cemetery.

Beyond recording the location and observed nature of these remains, no further work was implemented. Dating material recovered suggests a date of 2nd-3rd Century for the deposits and this would fit well with the existing knowledge for the burial in the vicinity (Hoyland and Wait 1992, Reynolds 1993).

The work at Sweetings Road, Godmanchester has shown that the site had been quarried extensively for gravel during the Post-medieval period. To the north-east remains of Roman burials were recorded and these were not unexpected given the proximity to the known cemetery at Porch Farm. There does not appear to be extensive survival of archaeological deposits outside the area designated as 'open-space'. Indeed within this area there is only evidence of archaeology to the north-east near to the existing housing. There is limited evidence of Roman remains pre-dating the gravel pitting features to the south-east beneath the headland, however even these have been damaged by gravel extraction and cannot be expected to yield substantial data.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

In accordance with the brief set by the County Archaeology Office, recommendations have been outlined based on the effect of the proposed housing development at Sweetings Road, Godmanchester.

It would seem that the whole site has been subject to extensive gravel quarrying from the c.17th Century. Additionally this does not appear to have destroyed any remains of substantial archaeological features, however this cannot be totally discounted.

Only two areas within the proposed development site have produced any evidence of archaeology.

Firstly, beneath the 'headland' or bank there may be some traces of Roman features. The chances for survival may have been enhanced by the raised landsurface covering deposits. However, this presupposes that there may have been such archaeological deposits over the rest of the site and that these have been destroyed. We have no evidence of archaeological remains and the area would definitely be extra mural to the Roman Town. Therefore there is no reason to suppose there was any archaeology present.

A watching brief to be carried out during the excavation of housing foundations should suffice for any potential archaeological features which would be disturbed beneath the headland.

Of greater importance is the impact of any development over the burials exposed in Trench 8 (*Figure 8*). The area proposed for public 'open-space' (to the north of the housing development on *Figure 1*) was not included in the brief from the County Archaeology Office, when assessing the impact of development.

Indeed the archaeology in Trench 8 represents the only surviving archaeology on the site pre-dating the Post-medieval quarrying. The remains of at least four burials of Roman date and associated archaeological features, are quite possibly the extension of Porch Farm cemetery to the north-east. Even if this is not the case, the site may represent a cemetery in its own right. By law, cemeteries were to be placed outside towns during the Roman period, and it was common practice for burials to be situated alongside the approaches to a town.

The limits of the burials are known to the south-east, south and south-west, this is as a result of existing modern gravel extraction. However, the other limits of a possible cemetery are not known.

To prevent any disturbance of burials, and therefore avoid the need to excavate, there should be no ground disturbing activities on the public 'open space'. This should include the foundations for play equipment, as well as any further gravel extraction or ground levelling (it has been proved that some features are only 0.20m below ground surface, see Results Section 6).

Similarly, the proposed development requires the raising of the land to meet flood plain specifications. This in itself is excellent for the archaeology as it will increase the protective layers above deposits. However, the soil must be imported and no levelling or pushing of land within the 'open space' area should occur. Stripping of turf soil should not occur, if at all possible, during the raising of land levels as this would run the risk of exposing some of the archaeology.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Galliford Sears Homes Ltd for commissioning and funding this project, and to the Chief Engineer Gary Seagger for his co-operation. I would also like to thank Conroy Construction, for their help and flexibility and specifically Martin Conroy and site Kevin the site Foreman. Thanks are due to Tony Hurley of the County Archaeology Office for producing the brief and comments on-site; to Tim Reynolds, the Project Manager; to Simon Cox, Jennifer Goode, Sarah Hinds, Marlon Holst and Ken Welsh, the archaeological site staff; to Steve Kemp for conducting the Total Station Survey; to Sarah Ryan Stevens for report illustration; and to Caroline Gait for illustration of the Palaeolithic hand axe.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cambridgeshire County Council, Sites and Monuments Record

Dickens, A 1993 An Archaeological Desk-Top Study of Land South of Duck End Farm, Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire. Cambridge Archaeological Unit, University of Cambridge

Green, H J M, 1977 Godmanchester, Oleander Press, Cambridge

Hoylan, L, and Kemp, S K, 1991 Buttermel Meadow, Godmanchester, Earthworks Survey. Cambridgeshire County Council Report 35

Hoyland, L, and Wait, G A, 1992 Roman Burials at London Street, Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire County Council Report 55

Reynolds, T, 1992 Roman Burials and Settlement Remains at 'The Parks', Godmanchester, 1992, Cambridgeshire County Council Report 63

Wait, G A, 1992 Archaeological Excavations at Godmanchester (A14/A604 Junction), *Proc Cambridge Antiq Soc*, 80

White, D A, 1969 Excavations at Brampton, Huntingdonshire, 1966, *Proc Cambridge Antiq Soc*, 62

Appendix A - Context List GODSW 94

General

Cntxt	Description	Nature
00	Topsoil/turfsoil	Dark brown (10YR 3/3) silt/clay
100	Natural Gravel	Grey/yellow/red gravels
101	Redeposited gravel	

Trench 1

Cntxt	Description	Nature	Finds	Above	Below
65	Bank make-up (headland)	Mottled brown (10YR 4/3)-strong brown (7.5YR 4/6) sandy/clay (40%/60%)	P/med brick	93	127
66	Fill of P/med ditch [90]	Dark yellow-brown (10YR 4/4) silt/clay (40%/60%)	P/med brick clay pipe	[90]	127
[90]	Cut of P/med ditch?	May be linear gravel pitting	-	65	66
93	Fill of pit? [125]	Dark grey-brown (10YR 4/2) silt/clay (40%/60%)	Tile, glass pot (Roman?)	126	65
[125]	Cut of poss. Roman pit	May be gravel pitting with residual abraded pot	-	100	93,126
126	Fill of pit? [125]	Yellow-brown (10YR 5/4) silt/clay (40%/60%)	None	125	93
127	P/med lower topsoil (Agricultural)	Brown (10YR 4/3) sand/clay (30%/70%)	None	66	Topsoil
131	Cut of P/med quarry pit	Straight sided pit visible in plan	-	174	132
132	Fill of P/med pit [131]	Brown (10YR 4/5)	Ro.+P/med pot animal bone	131	
[133]	Cut of P/med quarry pit	Irregular pit	-	146	134
134	Fill of P/med pit [133]	Dark yellow-brown (10YR 4/4)	P/med brick	133	Topsoil
[145]	Cut of P/med? quarry pit	Large irregular pit	-	101	146
146	Fill of P/med ?pit [145]	Dark yellow-brown (10YR 4/4)	None	145	133
147	Layer/buried soil	Brown (10YR 4/3) silt/clay (40%/60%)	None	100(Nat gravel)	101
[173]	Cut of P/med? quarry pit	Visible only in plan	None	176	174
174	Fill of P/med? pit [173]	Brown (10YR 4/3) Sand/clay (30%/70%)	None	173	131
[175]	Cut of P/med? quarry pit	Straight sided pit only visible in plan	None	100(Nat gravel)	176
176	Fill of P/med? pit [175]	Brown (10YR 4/3) Sand/clay (30%/70%)	None	175	173
177	P/med lower topsoil (Agricultural)	Brown (10YR 4/3) Sand/clay (30%/70%)	-	132	Topsoil
NOT EXCAVATED					
67	P/med gravel pitting	Dark grey-brown silt/clay	n/a		
68	P/med gravel pitting	Mid-brown sand/clay	n/a		
69	Gravel pit/linear?	Light orange-brown sand/clay	n/a		

Trench 2

Cntxt	Description	Nature	Findings	Above	Below
39	Fill of P/med linear [40]	Mid-brown (7.5YR 4/4) slightly clay/sand/silt (20%/75%)	Ro.Pot(residual)	87	107
[40]	Cut of P/med graveling	Linear, straight sided gravel ext.	-	100(Nat. gravel)	89
55	Fill of P/med pit [107]	Mid brown-yellow (10YR 4/4) clay/silt (40%/60%)	P/med pot + tile bone	105	Topsoil
56	Gravel pit below re-deposited gravel	Dark yellow-brown (10YR 4/4) clay/silt (40%/60%)	P/med tile	?	101
87	Fill of [40]	Yellow-red brown (5YR 4/6) clay/sand/silt	None	88	39
88	Fill of [40]	Brown (7.5 YR 4/3) clay/sand/silt (10%/20%/70%)	None	89	87
89	Fill of [40]	Red-brown (5YR 4/4) sand/silt (35%/65%)	None	40	88
103	Truncated Post Hole	Dark yellow-brown (10YR 4/4) slightly clayey sand/silt (30%/70%)	None	100(Nat. gravel)	107
105	Fill of P/med pit [107]	Brown (10YR 4/3) slightly clayey sand/silt (40%/60%)	None	106	Topsoil
106	Fill of P/med pit [107]	Orange-brown (10YR 4/4) clay/silt (40%/60%)	None	107	105
[107]	Cut of P/med quarry pit	Large pit cuts ditch [40]	-	39,103,56	106
108	Layer below topsoil (Agricultural)	Yellow-brown (10YR 4/4) clay/silt (40%/60%)	None	107	topsoil
148	Generic fill no. for [149]	Series of infilling of very large gravel pit (Not Excavated)	P/med tile, bone	n/a	n/a
[149]	Cut of v.large P/med 'pit'	Quarry pit to SW of site deliberate infilling	-	n/a	n/a

NOT EXCAVATED

53	P/med linear gravel pit (similar to 39?)	Mid-brown clay/sand/silt			
57	Alluvium built up on gravel bank	Red/brown alluvium			
58	Linear gravel pitting	Brown sand/clay/silt	n/a		
60-62	Gravel pits	Red brown clay/silt	n/a		

Trench 3

Cntxt	Description	Nature	Findings	Above	Below
50	Fill of linear gravel ext. [102]	Brown (10YR 4/3) sand/clay	P/med pot, tile brick, FE nails, clay pipe	135	Topsoil
51	Fill of linear gravel ext. [99]	Dark yellow-brown (10YR 4/4) sand/clay	P/med pot	136	Topsoil
[99]	Cut of linear gravel ext.	Poss. ditch or linear gravel pitting	-	100(Nat gravel)	136
[102]	Cut of linear gravel ext.	Poss. ditch or linear gravel pitting	-	100(Nat gravel)	135
135	Fill of [102]	Olive brown (2.5YR 4/3) sand/clay	P/med brick, FE nails, clay pipe, charcoal	102	50
136	Fill of [99]	Olive brown (2.5YR 4/3) sand/clay	-	99	51
[144]	V. irregular P/med pitting	Vertical sided disturbed feature	None	100(Nat gravel)	Topsoil

NOT EXCAVATED

41-45	P/med gravel pits	Dark grey-brown silt/clay	P/med pot		
46	Poss. gravel pit	Mid red-brown silt/clay	n/a		
47	Natural (not gravel)	Bright yellow sand (silt?)			
48	Same as 41-45				
49	Linear gravel pit?	Mix dark grey-orange-brown sand/gravel/clay	n/a		
52	Gravel pitting?	Mix orange-brown sand/gravel			

Trench 4

Cntxt	Description	Nature	Finds	Above	Below
128	Back fill of pit [129]	Mid brown sand/clay (30%/70%)	P/med pot Ro. pot (resid?)	129	130
[129]	Cut of linear gravel pit	Collapsed edge, intentionally back filled	-	100(Nat gravel)	128
130	Dumped layer from quarrying	Brown (10YR 5/3) sand/clay (40%/60%)	None	128	Topsoil
[142]	Cut of gravel pit	Irregular shaped pit	clay pipe, P/med pot	100(Nat gravel)	142
143	Fill of gravel pit [142]	Dark brown (7.5YR 3/3) sand/silt	clay pipe,	142	Topsoil

NOT EXCAVATED

33	Area of gravel pits	Dark brown silt/sand	n/a		
38	Gravel pitting	Dark/mid-brown silt/sand	n/a		

Trench 5

Cntxt	Description	Nature	Finds	Above	Below
86	Fill of P/med ditch [96]	Brown (7.5YR 4/2) slightly clay sand/silt (15/20/65)	P/med pot & tile clay pipe, bone	179	165
[94]	Cut of P/med gravel pit	V. shallow ditch	P/med pot clay pipe	100(Nat. gravel)	95
95	Fill of P/med pit [94]	Compacted gravel layer	P/med pot, bone	94	170
[96]	Cut of P/med ditch	Drainage ditch which cuts P/med gravel pitting [94, 97, 1243]	-	171,167,168	179
[97]	Cut of P/med gravel pit	Truncated gravel pit (by[96])	-	100(Nat. gravel)	98
98	Fill of P/med pit [97]	Dark grey-brown (10YR 4/2) clay/silt (40%/60%)	P/med pot clay pipe	97	167
[123]	Cut of P/med gravel pit	V. shallow pit, prob. truncated	-	100(Nat. gravel)	124
124	Fill of P/med pit [123]	Dark grey-brown (10YR 4/2) clay/silt (40%/60%)	Clay pipe	123	168
163	Unexcavated layer cut by [96]	Mid-brown (7.5YR 4/3) silt/sand (50%/50%)	n/a	167	96
164	Unexcavated layer cut by [97]?	Brown (7.5YR 4/4) slightly clay sand/silt (20/20/60)	n/a	n/a	167
165	Unexcavated layer poss. fill of [96]	Yellow-brown (10YR 5/6) slightly clay sand/silt (10/30/60)	n/a	86	166
166	Unexcavated layer, agri horizon	Brown (7.5YR 4/3) sand/silt (30%/70%)	n/a	165	Topsoil
167	Redeposited gravel nat	Light yellow-brown (10YR 6/4) silt/sand	None	98	96
168	Fill/inclusion of P/med gravel pit	Dark yellow-brown (10YR 4/6) clay/silt (30%/70%)	None	169	96
169	Unexcavated fill of P/med gravel pit cut by [96]	Dark grey-brown (10YR 4/2) clay/silt (40%/60%)	n/a	124	168,96
170	Unexcavated fill poss. of [94]	Brown (7.5YR 4/2) sand/silt (30%/70%)	n/a	95	171
171	Unexcavated fill of gravel pit [94]	Mid-brown (10YR 4/3) clay/silt 30%/70%	n/a	170	96
172	Unexcavated fill of poss. P/med pit cut by [96]	Dark grey-brown (10YR 4/2) clay/silt (40%/60%)	n/a	171	96
179	Unexcavated lower fill of [96]	Brown (10YR 4/3) clay/sand/silt (20%/20%/60%)	n/a	96	86

NOT EXCAVATED

82	Area of gravel pitting	Mid brown silt/clay			
85	Gravel pitting	Mid brown silt/clay			
84	Gravel pitting	Yellow-brown silt/sand			

Trench 6

Cntxt	Description	Nature	Finds	Above	Below
[150]	Cut of P/med gravel pit	One of series of gravel pits	None	100(Nat gravel)	151
151	Fill of P/med pit [151]	Brown (10YR 3/3) sand/silt	None	152	Topsoil
[152]	Cut of P/med gravel pit	Shallow float bottomed pit, one of a series opened & infilled together	-	100(Nat gravel)	153
153	Fill of P/med pit [152]	Brown (10YR 3/3) sand/silt	P/med pot	152	Topsoil
154	Fill of P/med pit [155]	V. dark grey-brown (10YR 3/2) sand/silt	P/med pot	155	Topsoil
[155]	Cut of P/med gravel pit	Shallow, cuts redeposited gravel (156)	-	156	154
156	Redeposited gravel	Deposited from quarrying Lt yellow-brown (10YR 6/4)	None	157	155
157	Fill of deep quarry pit [158]	Dark grey-brown (10YR 4/2) clay/silt	P/med pot	158	156
[158]	Cut of P/med gravel pit	Only visible below [155], sealed by later pitting	-	100(Nat gravel)	157
[159]	Cut of P/med gravel pit	Shallow scoop above another gravel pit (Not fully excavated)	None	162	160
160	Fill of modern feature	Mid-brown sand/silt	None	159	Topsoil
[161]	Cut of P/med gravel pit	Irregular pitting	None	100(Nat gravel)	162
162	Fill of P/med gravel pit	Dark brown (10YR 3/3) sand/silt	None	161	159

NOT EXCAVATED

70-71	P/med gravel pitting	Dark red-brown gravelly sand/clay
72	Gravel pitting	Dark grey-brown sand/clay
73	Feature related to P/med gravel pitting	Lt brown sand/gravel
74-75	P/med gravel pitting	Dark red-brown clay fill
76-77	P/med gravel pitting	Dark brown sand/clay
78	Modern disturbance	

Trench 7

Cntxt	Description	Nature	Finds	Above	Below
[8]	Cut of P/med gravel pit	Shallow pit, intercut by other quarrying	-	100(Nat gravel)	9
9	Fill of P/med pit [8]	Dark grey-brown (10YR 4/2) sand/silt	P/med tile & pot	8	91
[31]	Cut of P/med linear quarrying?	Linear gravel extraction	-	100(Nat gravel)	79
32	Fill of P/med ditch [31]	Brown (10YR 4/3) sand/silt	P/med brick FE nail	79	Topsoil
79	Fill of P/med ditch [31]	Dark grey-brown (2.5YR 4/2) sand/silt	None	31	32
[91]	Cut of P/med gravel pit	Very shallow cut prob. part of open area quarrying	-	9	92
92	Fill of P/med pit [92]	Mid grey-brown (10YR 4/3) sand/silt	None	91	Topsoil

NOT EXCAVATED

1	Poss. P/med gravel pit	Mottled orange sand/gravel	n/a		
3	Area of gravel pitting	Mid-brown sand/silt/gravel	P/med pot		
4	Gravel pitting (=3?)	Mid brown-grey (below 3?)	n/a		3?
5	Area of gravel pitting	Same as 4	n/a		
6	Gravel pitting	Same as 4 or 5	n/a		
[10]	Cut of gravel pit	Pit cuts 9/[8] seen in section	n/a		11,12
11	Fill of P/med pit [10]	Mid-brown sand/silt	n/a	12	
12	Fill of P/med pit [10]	Mid-brown sand/silt/gravel	n/a		11
13	Poss. P/med gravel pit	Same as 12 but cutting it	n/a		
16	Series of gravel pits	Mid grey-brown clay/silt	n/a		

18	Poss. P/med gravel pit	Mid-brown sand/silt	n/a	
20	Poss. P/med gravel pit	Mid brown clay/silt	n/a	21
21	Gravel pitting (=20)	Mid-brown clay/silt	n/a	
23	Gravel pit below 21	Mid grey-brown clay/silt	n/a	
25	Poss. gravel pitting	Mid grey-brown clay/silt	n/a	
28	Poss. gravel pitting	Mid brown-orange mottle	n/a	25
30	Poss. gravel pitting	Mid grey-brown clay/silt	n/a	

Trench 8

(Not excavated only recorded in plan and section as a result of modern gravel extraction)

Cntxt	Description	Nature	Finds	Above	Below
[109]	Unexcavated Ro. pit	Typical Roman Godmanchester rounded pit	-	?	110
110	Lower fill of [109]	Dark yellow-brown (10YR 4/6) sand/silt	None	109	111
111	Fill of [109]	Dark yellow-brown (10YR 3/6) sand/silt	None	110	112
112	Fill of Roman pit [109]	Dark brown (7.5YR 3/2) sand/silt	Ro. pot & glass animal bone	111	Topsoil
[113]	Unexcavated Ro. pit	Prob. circular pit	-	100(Nat gravel)	114
114	Fill of Roman pit [113]	Dark yellow-brown (10YR 3/4) sand/silt	None	113	178
[115]	Unexcavated Ro. feature (Possible grave)	Oval shaped grave?	-	100(Nat gravel)	116
116	Fill of [115]	Dark yellow-brown (10YR 3/4)	None	115	113,138,14
[117]	Unexcavated Ro. pit?	Rectangular feature	-	100(Nat gravel)	118
118	Fill of [117]	Dark brown (10YR 3/3) sand/silt	Ro. pot	117	?
[119]	Unexcavated Ro. feature	Only partially visible	None	100(Nat gravel)	120
120	Fill of [119]	Dark yellow-brown (10YR 4/4) sand/silt	None	119	117
[121]	Unexcavated Ro. feature	Only exposed in gravel pitting	-	100(Nat gravel)	122
122	Fill of [121]	Dark yellow-brown (10YR 3/4) sand/silt	Ro. pot, bone	121	?
137	Fill of [178]	Brown (10YR 4/3) sand/silt	None	178	Topsoil
[138]	Unexcavated Ro. grave	Sub-rectangular E-W grave	-	116	139
139	Fill of grave [138]	Dark brown (10YR 3/3) sand/silt	Ro. pot FE nail	138	?
[140]	Unexcavated Ro. grave	Sub-rectangular E-W grave	-	116	141
141	Fill of Ro. grave [140]	Dark brown (10YR 3/3) sand/silt	Human cranium Ro. pot	140	?
[178]	Unexcavated Ro. pit?	Seen in section, re-cut	None	114	137



Archaeological Field Unit
Pulbourn Community Centre
Haggis Gap
Pulbourn
Cambridge CB1 5HD
Tel (0223) 881614
Fax (0223) 881678



Cambridgeshire
County Council
Archaeology

The Archaeology Office
Rural Management
Department of Property
Shire Hall, Castle Hill
Cambridge CB3 0AP
Tel (0223) 317312
Fax (0223) 317341