



CCC AFU Report Number 854

Prehistoric Remains and Medieval Burials at Oxney Grange, near Eye, Peterborough

An Archaeological Evaluation

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Cover Images

Machine stripping, Soham	On-site surveying
Roman corn dryer, Duxford	Guided walk along Devil's Dyke
Bronze Age shaft, Fordham Bypass	Medieval well, Soham
Human burial, Barrington Anglo-Saxon Cemetery	Timbers from a medieval well, Soham
Blue enamelled bead, Barrington	Bed burial reconstruction, Barrington Anglo-Saxon Cemetery
Aethusa cynapium 'Fool's parsley'	Medieval tanning pits, Huntingdon Town Centre
Digging in the snow, Huntingdon Town Centre	Beaker vessel
Face painting at Hinchingbrooke Iron Age Farm	Environmental analysis
Research and publication	Monument Management, Bartlow Hills

Summary

Between 12th and 22nd of December 2005, Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) conducted an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at Oxney Grange, Peterborough (TF 224 009) in advance of the redevelopment of the area for dwellings.

The evaluation revealed postholes and a ditch dating to the Late Bronze Age / Early Iron Age. The character of the remains implies domestic activity. Given the location of the site – on a gravel promontory just to the north of Flag Fen – finding remains of this date in this position is not unexpected. The evaluation also discovered significant remains relating to the medieval monastic site of Oxney Grange. These included graves, pits and some very substantial ditches. The graves were on an east to west alignment and had no grave-goods. They were interpreted as Christian burials, presumably the graves of the monks living on the grange. The ditches were thought to be internal boundary ditches, and were dated to the 13th to the 14th century. They were presumably contemporary with the medieval *moat* that is still faintly visible in the fields surrounding the site. Also discovered was considerable post-medieval activity, in the form of landscaping / build-up layers, garden soils, demolition layers, a concrete path and a modern yard surface.

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Drawing Conventions

Sections		Plans	
Limit of Excavation		Limit of Excavation	
Cut		Deposit - Conjectured	
Cut-Conjectured		Natural Features	
Soil Horizon		Intrusion/Truncation	
Soil Horizon - Conjectured		Sondages/Machine Strip	
Intrusion/Truncation		Illustrated Section	
Top of Natural		Archaeological Deposit	
Top Surface		Excavated Slot	
Break in Section/ Limit of Section Drawing		Machined Level	
Grave		Grave Cut	
Drainage Ditch		Gravel Surface	
Cut Number		Pipe	
Deposit Number	117	Bone	
Ordinance Datum	 18.45m ODN	Small Find	
Stone		Cut Number	118
Pot			
Bone			
Limestone			
Shell			

1 Introduction

Between 12th and 22nd of December 2005, Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) conducted an archaeological evaluation at Oxney Grange, Peterborough (TF 2245 0135). The work was carried out at the request of Anthony Rickets Architects Ltd in order to fulfil a Brief for Archaeological Evaluation written by ULAS (University of Leicester Archaeological Services) following consultation with the planning authority (PCCAS).

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the Brief, supplemented by a Specification prepared by Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (CCC AFU).

The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed development area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by CCC AFU.

2 Geology and Topography

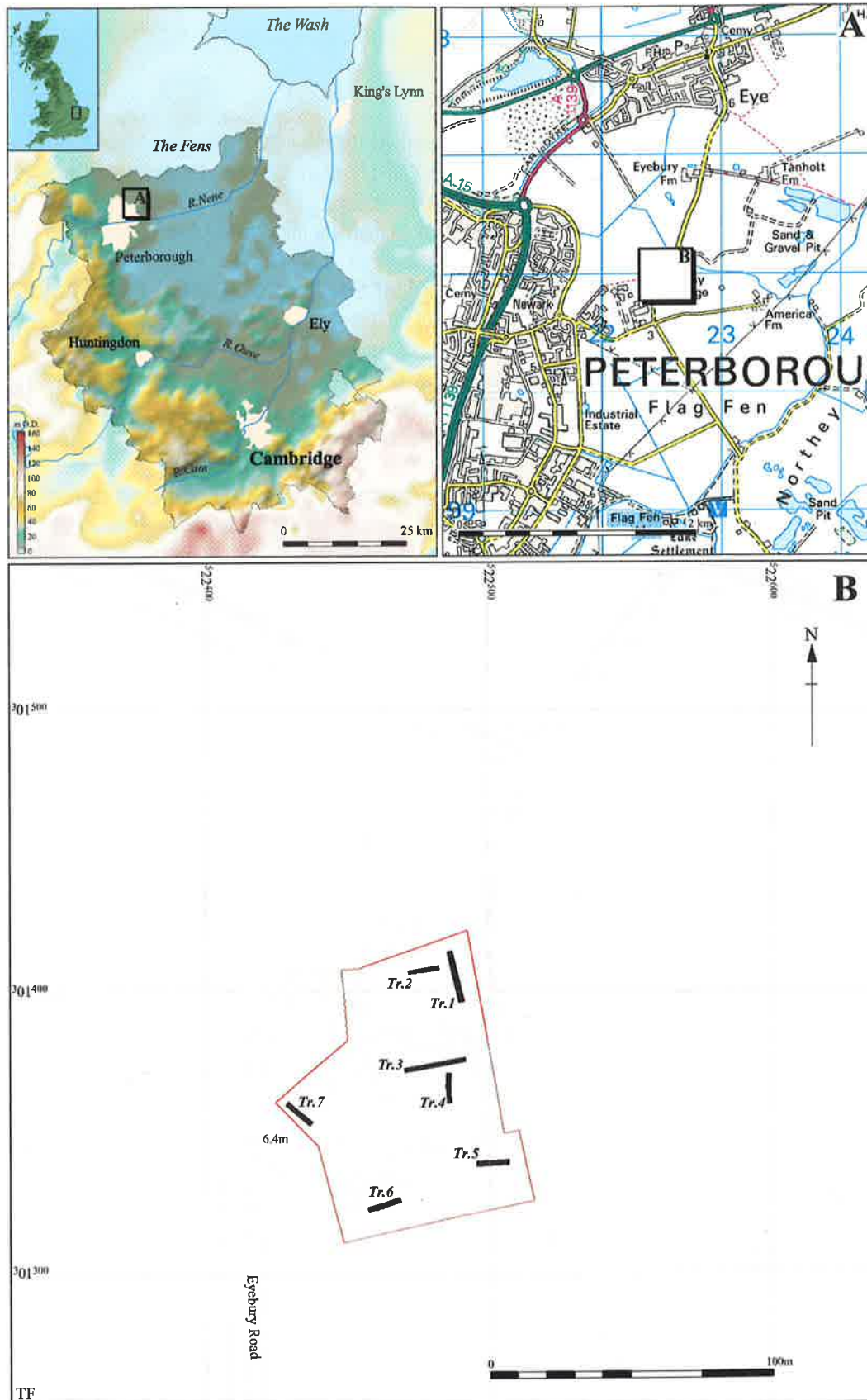
The site lies at around 7m AOD on the northern edge of Flag Fen, a low-lying area bisected by the partly canalised River Nene.

The geology on site is Second River Terrace gravels. The site is surrounded on all sides except in the southeast by Oxford clay, followed in the south by Nordelph peat. The geology to the southeast of the site is First River Terrace gravels (British Geological Survey, 1984).

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 General

Immediately to the west of the grange a series of enclosures were identified (PCC SMR 08376) from Aerial photographs. The enclosures have not been dated, but are likely to be later prehistoric or Romano-British. Also identified from Aerial photographs were an enclosure and



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Figure 1: Location of trenches (black) with the development area outlined (red)

a ring ditch (PCC SMR 08371) about 600m southeast of Oxney Grange, and a ring ditch (PCC SMR 08426) 200m southeast of the grange, all of uncertain date.

A cauldron of uncertain date was dug up in 1948, four feet below the ground, just west of Oxney Grange (PCC SMR 02964).

3.2 Prehistoric

Oxney Grange lies north of Flag Fen, itself well known for important survival of a well-investigated prehistoric fen-edge landscape, including Bronze Age settlement (PCC SMR 05576) (not shown on Figure 1).

There are known Bronze Age settlement remains and a cremation burial 400m southeast of Oxney Grange, discovered by G Wyman Abbott (PCC SMR 02963). Another Bronze Age cremation urn was discovered in 1936 c.550m southwest of the grange (PCC SMR 03012, apparently identical to 50204).

An excavation which was carried out in 2004 in a field c.500m to the northwest of Oxney Grange revealed Neolithic flints, and settlement activity (ditches, pits and postholes) from the later Bronze Age / Early Iron Age (Williams, and Webley, 2004) (PCC SMR 51298).

An excavation (PCC SMR 51199) on the same spot as an earlier evaluation (PCC SMR 51198) about 350m south of the grange, revealed Bronze age features (ditches, postholes, stake holes and pits), together with lithic implements from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age and Bronze Age pottery. A watching brief just to the south of this site (PCC SMR 51243) did not reveal any archaeology at all.

In addition, a flint arrowhead was found 1912 as a stray find c.650m to the southwest of the grange (PCC SMR 02995), and a Bronze Age dagger was found during gravel works in 1953, c.500m to the east of the grange (PCC SMR 03019).

3.3 Romano-British

Oxney Grange lies some distance north of the important east-west Roman canal / road known as the Fen Causeway and in addition the Roman canal known as the Car Dyke passes within a mile.

An excavation in 2004 to the west of Oxney Grange (PCC SMR 51298) found prehistoric features, as previously mentioned, and also yielded evidence of 2nd and 3rd century AD Romano-British occupation in this spot (pits, postholes, tiles, pottery).

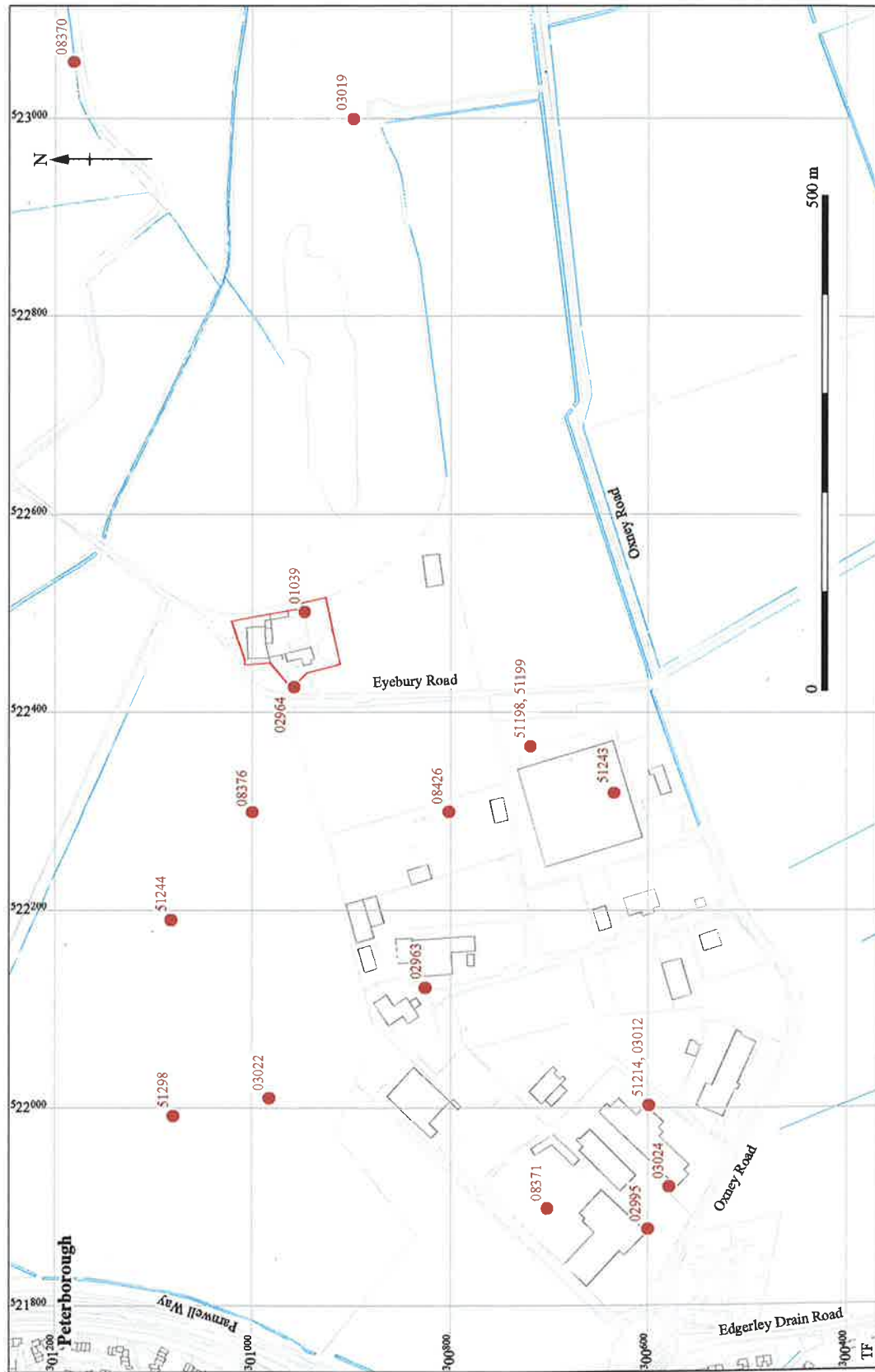


Figure 2: HER entries around the study area

The presence of a possible Romano-British temple site (PCC SMR 08370) was noted from Aerial photographs in 1990, c.500m to the east of Oxney Grange, comprising a small near square enclosure with an inner circle of eight pits surrounding a central amorphous feature.

In the field directly adjacent to the grange in the west, four Roman coins (two probable late third century bronze radiates, a pierced sestertius of Marcus Aurelius, and a pierced coin of Constantine I) were reported by metal detectorist Rod Blunt in 2001 (PCC SMR 51214).

3.4 Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

3.4.1 Oxney Grange

In the Saxon period Peada founded a monastery at Medehamstede (later Peterborough) around AD 655-656. This was later sacked by the Danes and it was re-founded, along with the nearby monastery of Thorney in about 966 AD. It seems that the estate of Oxney (PCC SMR 01039), or Oxnige, was purchased for Thorney at this time. In AD 972 or 973 it was acquired by Peterborough Abbey. It remained a possession of Peterborough until the dissolution.

Oxney does not seem to have been a particularly important estate up until the early 12th century, as in 1125 it was just a part of the abbey's *vaccary* (dairy farm) of nearby Eye, its only occupants being a cowherd and the 23 cattle in his care. There is a reference to a chapel at Oxney, implying that it was by then a more substantial settlement, in the second bull of Pope Eugenius to Abbot Martin in 1146, and its chancel was enlarged or rebuilt by Abbot Robert of Lindsey (1214-1222), when it was noted to have been dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

The increasing prosperity of Oxney was presumably related to the drainage and development of the surrounding fen. Much of the drainage of the Fens in the medieval period was undertaken by the great monastic houses in the area, including that of Peterborough. The Abbey was particularly busy in such work, both in the Fens and in the assarting of forests to the west, in the later 12th and early 13th century.

By a survey of 1231, Oxney was one of two buildings owned by the Abbey described as granges – indicating well-established outlying farms. In August 1249, Henry III granted the Abbot of Peterborough the right to hold an annual fair there in September. The fair was still being held in 1330 and the date it ceased is not known.

Further improvements and additions to the grange were apparently carried out in the late 13th and early 14th century, including the construction of a causeway, a building and subsequent rebuilding of a

cowshed (after it had been destroyed in a fire), and a bridge over a ditch for cattle. References at the time also mentions a brewhouse.

During this time Abbot Godfrey of Crowland built a new house just to the south of Eye and enclosed the land that became the abbot's park of Eyebury. This is just to the north of Oxney grange.

It has been suggested that prior to the reign of Edward I (in 1272), Oxney was a small priory, dedicated to St Mary, rather than a large grange or cell. Some of the remaining medieval elements of the present house do suggest a building of high status.

At some time, a *moat* was also dug around the site, though the date is not known.

The present farm buildings preserve exceptional medieval rib-vaulted rooms and other historic building elements (Moriss, 2004).

3.4.2 Other Medieval

In the field to the west of the Grange, where the previously mentioned medieval fair is supposed to have been located, medieval finds spanning the mid-thirteenth to later fifteenth centuries were reported by metal detector Rod Blunt in 2001 (PCC SMR 51214). These included at least six coins (pennies, cut halfpenny, farthing), a seal matrix, and belt fittings. The seal matrix depicts the bust of a tonsured figure.

Immediately to the west of this field, medieval ridge and furrow cultivation has been identified (PCC SMR 03022).

3.5 Post-medieval

3.5.1 Ownership of Oxney Grange

Peterborough Abbey was dissolved by Henry VIII 29th November 1539. Oxney Grange is said to have been granted to Roger Horton. It subsequently passed through a large number of owners.

In 1568 it was sold by his widow, Margaret Horton, to Sir William Cecil. He was still owner when, in 1612, he granted a Rent Charge to Clare College, Cambridge. At some point, ownership of the estate passed to Sir John Austen, who in his turn sold it to the Bevill family, who are recorded as owners c.1686-1705. In the late 18th century the Hotchkins family of Uppingham were owners of the estate. Since the male heir was declared a "lunatic", Charles Bowyer Adderley I took guardianship or control in 1806. In 1826, his grandnephew Charles Bowyer Adderley II inherited the estate. In 1871, he sold the estate to its sitting tenant, John Pank. He in his turn, in his Will, left Oxney in

trust for his daughter, Mary Ann. The trustees were effectively the owners until the late 1930's, when Mary Ann, her husband, and their only son were dead. Oxney Grange then was sold to Francis H Tucker, at some time between 1937 and 1940. In 1948, he sold the estate to Reginald Charles Murrells, who sold it on to William David Obee. He died in 1969: his widow and son remained owners until fairly recently (Hillier, 2005).

3.5.2 Standing remains

The historian John Bridges Esq., writing in the 18th century, described the standing buildings. The hall and dairy had arched stone roofs, with ribs crossing each other at the top, and supported with low pillars. In the dairy remained the old floor of Barnack stone. The wall between the hall and dairy was at least four feet thick. The walls and other marks of antiquity were below stairs. No vestiges of the chapel remained in Bridges' time. Four similarly arched rooms were pulled down by a member of the Bevill family (Whalley, 1791).

Oxney Grange became a II* listed building in February 1952. The barn to Oxney Grange is probably of 17th century origin, whereas the farmhouse, originally of 14th century origins, was much altered and renovated in the 19th century, according to the official list of listed buildings (Department of the Environment, no date).

Oxney Grange was burned to the ground in 2003. Arsonists dragged in rubbish dumped by flytippers and set it alight (Swift, 2003). Despite this, substantial remains of the post-medieval farmhouse are still preserved on site.



Plate 1 *Medieval ribbed vault*

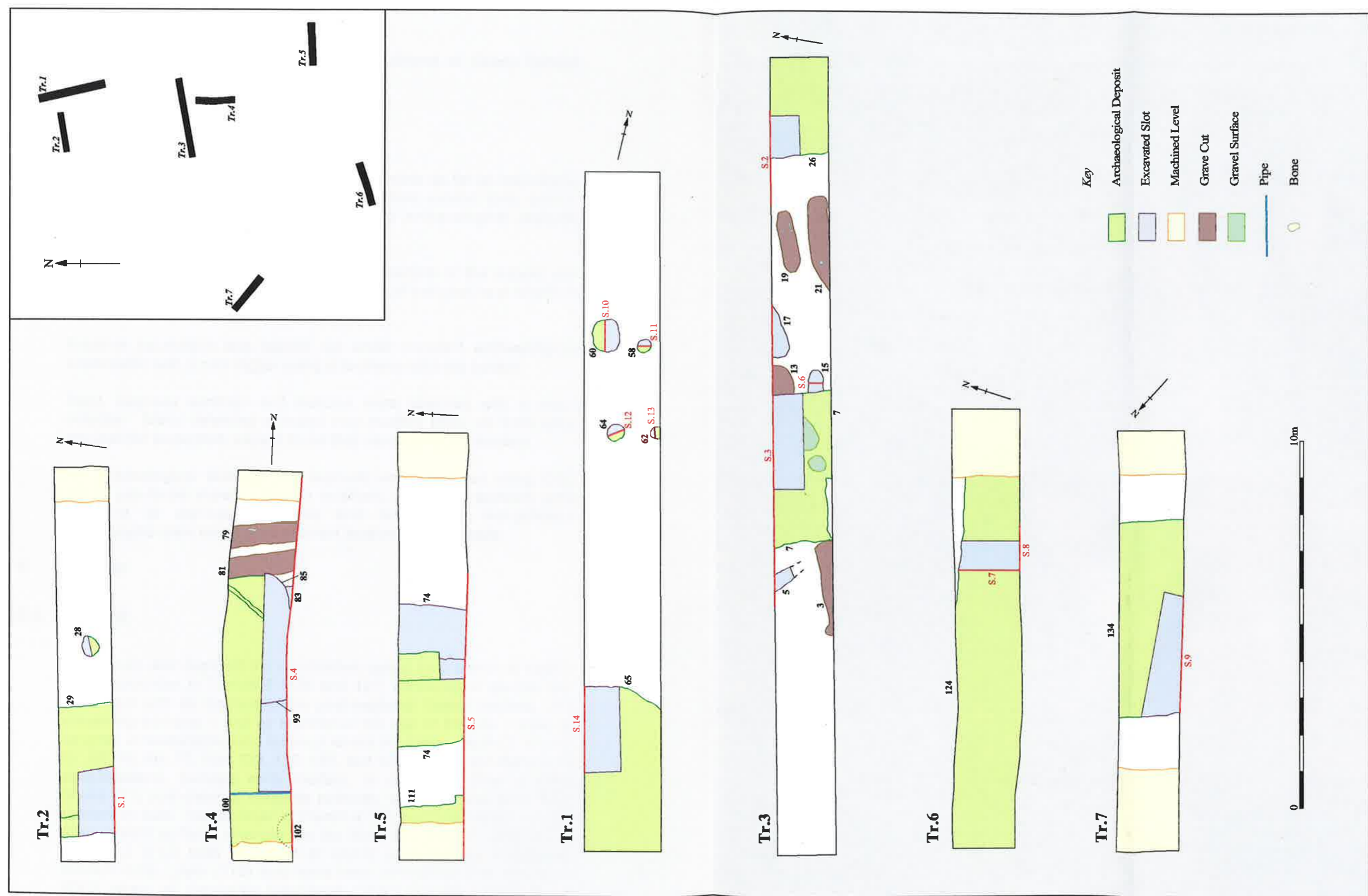


Figure 3: Trench plans

3.5.3 Other post-medieval

A gunflint factory was located c.650m southwest of Oxney Grange (PCC SMR 03024).

4 Methodology

The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

The Brief required that a minimum of 6% sample of the subject site should be examined, totalling c.150m length of trenches to a minimum of 1.50m width.

Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a mini digger using a toothless ditching bucket.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. Metal detecting revealed only modern finds. All finds were retained for inspection, except those that were obviously modern.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using CCC AFU's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

5 Results

5.1 General

The nature and depth of the overburden varied from trench to trench. The overburden in Trench 6 (128 and 127) consisted of garden soil, consistent with its location in the post-medieval formal gardens. The remaining trenches – and by implication the rest of the site – were all covered in landscaping and build-up layers of varying depth (1, 41, 66, 67, 68, 68, 69, 77, 106, 129, 130, 135, and 136). These are likely to be post-medieval, perhaps early modern, in character. One of those layers (41) post-dated a concrete pathway, so must have been fairly modern in date. The top layer in Trench 4 (76) consisted of the modern grange yard surface, whereas the top layer in Trench 2 (42) and in Trench 3 (113) both consisted of rubble or demolition material of modern date. Layer (113) may have been associated with the fire of 2003, when, as previously mentioned, Oxney Grange burned to the ground.

5.2 Trench 1

Trench 1 was 18.5m long, 0.70m deep and 2m wide and located on a north to south alignment in the northeast part of the site. In the northern part of the trench three postholes and a pit were discovered. Together they may represent some form of structural evidence. In the southern end of the trench a large ditch was uncovered. The features encountered are described from north to south.

Posthole 58 had concave sides and measured 0.30m wide and 0.25m deep. It contained a single dark brown silty sandy clay (57). To the south of posthole 58 was posthole 62, which had concave sides and measured 0.30m wide and 0.15m deep. The single fill (61) consisted of a brown sandy silty clay which contained no artefacts.

Posthole 64 measured 0.58m wide and 0.26m deep and had concave sides with a flattish base. It contained a single fill (63) consisting of brown silty clay sand.

To the west of post hole 58 was an oval pit (60) with concave sides and a sloping base. It measured 0.70m wide and 0.20m deep and contained single fill (59) which was a light brown sandy silt with occasional gravel. A single pottery sherd of Iron Age date was recovered from this fill.

In the southern end of the trench was a large ditch (65), which was 2.60m wide and 1.4m deep. It had steep concave sides and contained four fills (45, 44, 43 and 70). The earliest fill (45) was a greenish grey silty clay which was 0.20m deep and contained five sherds of Early Iron Age pottery. The finds from this fill also included modern mortar and asbestos. Presumably this represents material falling into the trench from the top during excavation and does not mean that fill 45 was modern in date. Fill 44 was 0.12m deep and consisted of a dark grey silty clay. This fill contained nine sherds of pottery, possibly of Middle Iron Age date. Fill 43 was a greyish silty clay which was 0.20m deep, and contained eight sherds of possibly Iron Age pottery. The uppermost fill (70) was a brownish grey sandy silty clay which was 1m deep.

5.3 Trench 2

Trench 2 was 10.75m long, 0.90m deep and 1.8m wide located on an east to west alignment in the northeast part of the site. A ditch and a posthole were discovered. The features encountered are described from west to east.

In the western part of the trench was a large ditch (29) which ran on a north to south alignment with concave sides and a sloping base. The excavated section measured 4m wide and 1.3m deep and contained eight fills (30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37). It should be noted that full extent of this ditch was not determined.

The earliest fill of the feature was 30, a 0.31m thick, dark grey silty clay, with chalk flecks, frequent charcoal, and very occasional subangular stones. The fill contained animal bone, and was thought by the excavator to possibly contain cess. Fill 31 was a 0.06m thick dark reddish brown silty sand, which was very similar to the natural geology and thought to possibly be re-deposited natural. Fill 32 was a brown clayey sand which was 0.20m deep and contained 13th century pottery and animal bone. Fill 33 was 0.28m deep and consisted of a dark grey silty clay, with frequent gravel, moderate limestone fragments, and rare charcoal. It also contained two sherds of late 10th century Stamford ware pottery. Fill 34 was a 0.3m thick, dark greyish brown clayey sand, with moderate gravel and occasional charcoal. Fill 35 consisted of mid-greyish brown sand with frequent gravel, and was 0.09m thick. Fill (36) was 0.27m thick and consisted of mid-grey brown clayey sand with moderate gravel, occasional limestone fragments, and occasional charcoal. The uppermost fill (37) was a dark greyish brown clayey sand, with moderate gravel, occasional charcoal, and rare limestone fragments.

In the centre of the trench was a posthole (28) which was 0.52m wide and 0.14m deep. It had concave sides and a sloping base. The single fill (27) was a dark brown sandy silt with frequent coarse gravel, moderate charcoal flecks and occasional flecks of chalk.

Also present in the trench was the 1.29m wide and 0.12m deep cut of a modern path (38) filled with a 0.03m thick layer of sand (39) at the base, overlain by a 0.09m thick layer of concrete (40).



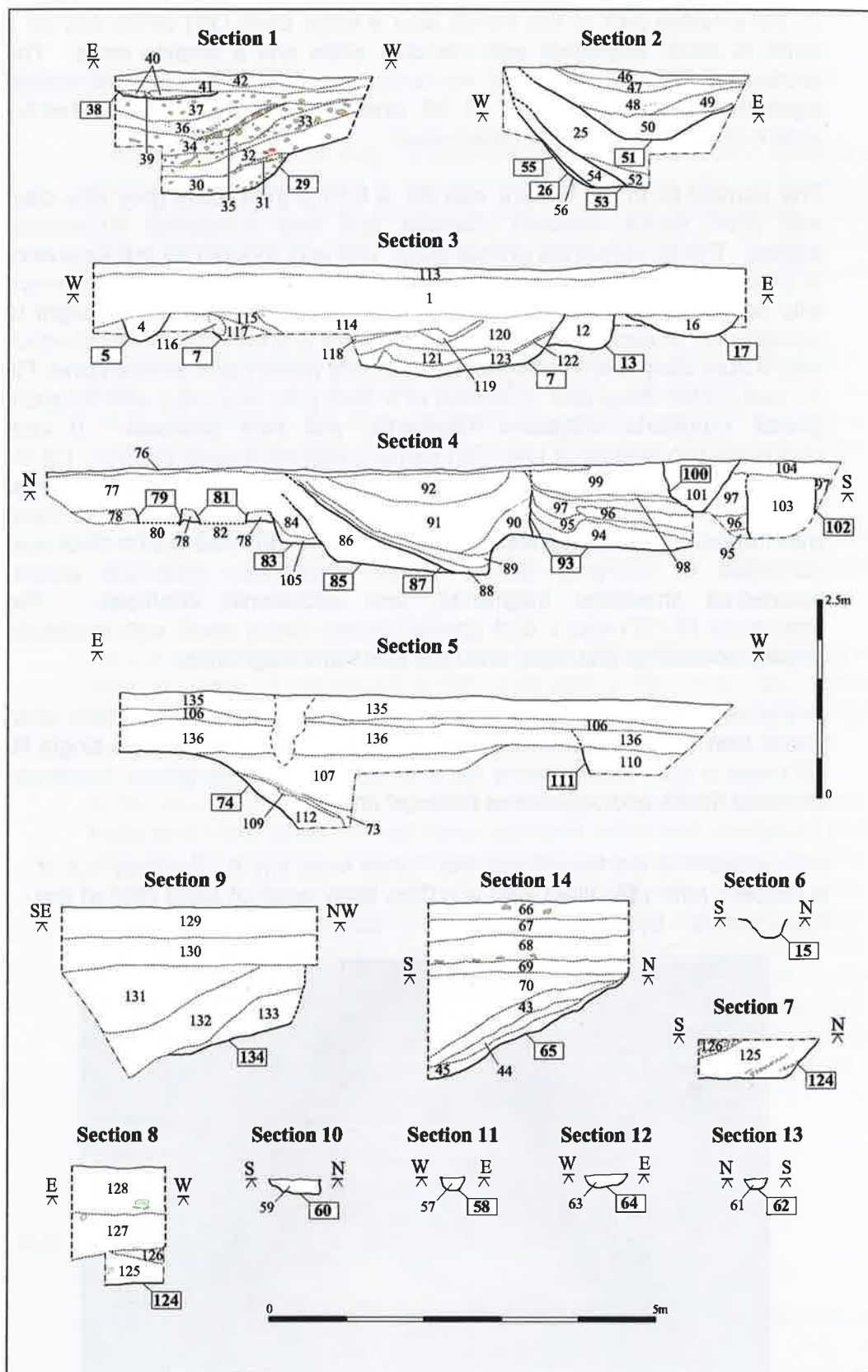


Figure 4: Section drawings

5.4 Trench 3

Trench 3 was 22m long, 0.9m deep and 1.6m wide, and located on an east to west alignment within the grange courtyard. Four burials, several ditches, one posthole, two pits, a quarry and a heavily truncated Iron Age feature were discovered. Three of the graves were identified as such during excavation, hence were not excavated but recorded *in situ*. The fourth grave was at first thought to be a pit, and was only identified as a human excavation in post-excavation. The features encountered are described from west to east.

Grave 3 was rectangular in plan with rounded corners and aligned roughly east to west with the head at the west end. It was 2.50m long and at least 0.50m wide. It was partly obscured by the southern edge of the trench. Skull fragments and a possible humerus were visible in the grave. The backfill of the grave (2) was a brownish mid-grey silty sand.

Ditch 5 was aligned roughly north-northwest to south-southeast. It was 0.60m wide, 0.32m deep and 0.50 m long. The northern extent of the feature was obscured by the northern edge of the trench, whereas in the south, the feature became shallow and eventually disappeared. It was filled by 4, a green silty sand with 10-20% inclusion of gravel which was very similar, and possibly identical, to Deposit 1.

Quarry 7 was 4m long, 0.8m deep and at least 1.60m wide (width of trench). The extent of the feature to the north and to the south was obscured by the trench edge. It contained ten layers (114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, and 123).

The earliest fill (123) was a 0.12m thick, dark grey sandy silt with 10-20% gravel. Fill 122 was a 0.04m thick orange sand layer with 10-20% gravel. Fill 121 was 0.20m thick and similar to 122. Fill 120 was a mid-grey clayey silt with 10-20% gravel and pebbles. This fill was between 0.10m and 0.40m thick. Fill 119 was a 0.15m thick, orange sandy silt with frequent gravel. Fill 118 was 0.05m thick and similar to 119. Fill 117 was a brownish mid-grey sandy silt with 10-20% gravel, at least 0.22m thick. Fill 115 was a 0.20m thick mid-grey sand. The uppermost fill of the feature (114) was a 0.25m thick, dark grey silty sand with frequent gravel, lumps of mortar, pebbles and soot particles. Also intruding into the feature was Fill 116, interpreted as re-deposited natural. This fill was 0.24m thick, and consisted entirely of orange sand, identical to the natural geology.

Grave 13 had presumably originally been rectangular in plan, but only a corner remained visible within the trench. It was 0.45m deep, at least 0.80m long, and at least 0.55m wide, and had steep sides. The single fill (12) consisted of brownish mid-grey sand with frequent gravel.

Some large bones were recovered from this fill, subsequently identified as human. The western part of fill 12 was cut away by quarry 7, and the northern extent of the feature was obscured by the trench edge.

Posthole 15 was oval in plan with steep sides. It was 0.50m wide and 0.25m deep. The length of the feature was at least 0.40m. The single fill (14) consisted of light grey sand with 10-20% gravel. The western part of fill 14 was cut away by quarry 7.

Pit 17 was oval in plan with gradual to steep sides. It was 1.40m long, 0.25m deep and at least 0.45m wide. The northern extent of the feature was obscured by the trench edge. The pit had a single fill (16) consisting of brownish mid-grey sand with 10-20% gravel.

Burial 19 was rectangular in plan with rounded corners, and aligned roughly east-northeast to west-southwest. The head was not visible, but it probably lay at the western end. It was 1.70m long and 0.40m wide. Two leg bones (tibia or femur) were visible in the grave, with the broken remains of two additional leg bones (also tibia or femur) scattered on the surface of the grave. The backfill of the grave (18) was a brownish mid-grey silty sand.

Burial 21 was rectangular in plan with rounded corners, and aligned roughly east-northeast to west-southwest with the head close to the western end. It was 0.50m wide and at least 2.40m long. It was partly obscured by the southern edge of the trench. Bone fragments of unclear origin were scattered on the surface of the eastern part of the grave. The backfill of the grave (20) was a brownish mid-grey silty sand.

Feature 26 was located in the easternmost part of trench 3. It was 0.12 deep and at least 0.70m wide. The feature was heavily truncated and only identified in section. The only fill (56) was a mid-grey/orange layer of sandy silt with occasional gravel. A single sherd of possible Iron Age pottery was recovered from the fill.

Fill 56 was cut by feature 55, a possible ditch which was at least 1.40m wide and at least 1m, possibly 1.50m deep. Filling the ditch was 54, a 0.60m thick dark grey layer of sandy silt, with 10-20% gravel.

Fill 54 was cut by ditch 53, which was at least 1.50m wide and at least 1m, possibly 1.50m deep. This feature was interpreted as a recut of ditch 55. Ditch 53 was roughly aligned with, and thought possibly to be identical to ditch 74 in Trench 5. Filling the ditch were two layers, 52 and 25.

Fill 52, which was a 0.40m thick greenish grey sandy silt, appeared to possibly be a layer of cess. Fill 25 was a 1.30m thick mid-grey layer of sandy silt, with occasional gravel. This layer contained mid-12th

century medieval pottery sherds, a number of which came from a single vessel.

Cutting 25 and 52 was ditch **51**. This feature was interpreted as the final recut of ditch **55 / 53**. Filling this cut were five layers (46, 47, 48, 49 and 50).

Fill 50 was a 0.80m thick, greenish grey clay / orange sandy silt with abundant gravel. Fill 49 was a 0.50m thick, dark grey sandy silt with less than 5% gravel. Fill 48 was a 0.65m thick, mid-grey sandy silt with less than 5% gravel. Fill 47 was 0.25m thick, and consisted of c. 80-90% gravel and 10-20% orange sandy silt with a mottling of green clay. The top fill (46) was 0.28m thick, and consisted of c. 90-95% gravel and 5-10% mid-grey sandy silt.



Plate 3 Graves **19** and **21**

5.5 Trench 4

Trench 4 was 10.6m long, 1m deep, and 1.80m wide. It was located on a north to south alignment within the grange courtyard. Two probable burials (**79** and **81**), a possible gravel pathway, and a series of intercutting pits were discovered. The burials were not excavated but recorded *in situ*. The features in this trench are presented in chronological order, from the earliest to the latest.

Burial **79** was aligned roughly east to west. It was 0.6m wide and at least 1.80m long. The eastern and western extent of the feature was

obscured by the trench edge. On the surface of the grave, a human bone was visible. The backfill of the grave (80) was a mid-greyish brown clayey sand with moderate gravel.

Burial 81 was aligned roughly east to west. It was 0.6m wide and at least 1.80m long. The eastern and western extent of the feature were obscured by the trench edge. The backfill of the grave (82) was a mid-greyish brown clayey sand with moderate gravel.

Pit 83 was 0.4m deep and at least 0.6m x 0.6m wide. It had a flat bottom, and the northern side was vertical. The west and south part of the feature were severely truncated by pit 85, and the eastern extent of the pit was obscured by the trench edge. The primary fill of the pit (105) was a mid-grey sandy clay with rare fine gravel. Overlying this was fill 84, a mid-greyish brown clayey sand with moderate gravel.

Pit 85 was 0.82m deep and at least 1.80m x 2.0m wide, and had a vertical north side and a concave base. The eastern and western extent of the feature were obscured by the edge of the trench, whereas the southern part of the pit was truncated by Pit 87. The only fill of the pit (86) was a mid-greyish brown clayey sand, with moderate gravel, occasional charcoal, and occasional limestone. The feature was interpreted as a quarry.

Pit 87 was 1.3m deep and 3.2m wide. The southern part of the pit was truncated by pit 93. The eastern extent of the feature was obscured by the trench edge, and the western extent of the feature was invisible on the surface, but excavated to a width of 0.6m. It contained five fills (88, 89, 90, 91 and 92).

The earliest fill (88) of the pit was a yellowy cream clayey sand with frequent gravel, which may have been re-deposited natural. Fill 89 was a black layer of ash with moderate gravel. Fill 90 was a pale brown clayey sand with rare gravel. Above this fill was 91, a pale olivey brown clayey sand with moderate to frequent gravel and occasional charcoal. The uppermost fill (92) was a mid-brown sandy clay with frequent gravel and limestone lumps, and occasional oyster shells.

Pit 93 was 1.15m deep and at least 3.90m wide, with vertical sides and flat base. The southern part of the feature was truncated by pit 102 and pipe trench 100, and its extent to the south was obscured by the edge of the trench. The feature could not be seen in plan and was only identified in the west-facing section of the baulk. It contained six fills (94, 95, 96, 97, 98 and 99).

The primary fill of the pit (94) was a 0.34m thick, pale olive brown clay sand, with frequent gravel. Fill 95 was a yellowy cream clayey sand with frequent gravel and rare limestone fragments, which was up to

0.18m thick. Fill 96 was a 0.18m thick, pale creamy brown clayey sand with frequent gravel. Fill 97 was a 0.2m thick, mid-grey clayey sand with moderate charcoal, rare gravel, occasional limestone and occasional patches of ash. Overlying this fill was 98, a 0.06m thick, mid-brown clayey sand with frequent limestone lumps. The top fill of the pit (99) was a 0.45m thick mid-brown clayey sand with frequent gravel and occasional limestone lumps.

Pit **102** was 0.9m wide and at least 0.8m deep, with vertical sides. It was not bottomed. The extent of the feature to the east was obscured by the edge of the trench. The pit could not be seen in plan and was only identified in the west-facing section of the baulk. It contained a single fill (103) that consisted entirely of limestone lumps. The pit was interpreted as a possible well, or soak-away.

Layer 104, which was interpreted as a possible path, was located on top of pit **102** in the southern end of Trench 4. It was 0.22m deep and at least 1.40m wide. It consisted entirely of yellow gravel. The extent of the layer to the south and to the east was obscured by the edge of the trench. To the north, the layer was truncated by pipe trench **100**. The feature was identified in the west-facing section of the baulk.

Present in the trench as well, was the modern pipe trench **100**, running on an east to west alignment in the southern part of Trench 4. It was 1.0m wide and 0.65m deep, had steep sides and a concave base. It contained a single fill (101) a dark brown clayey sand with frequent gravel, moderate tile and brick (modern 2½ inch) and occasional limestone. The pipe itself was made of cast iron.



Plate 4 Trench 4

5.6 Trench 5

Trench 5 was 12m long, 0.8m deep and 1.8m wide, and was located on an east to west alignment in the southeast corner of the site. One ditch and one pit were discovered. The features are described from west to east.

In the westernmost part of the trench was Pit 111. It was at least 1.20m wide and 1.80m long (width of trench), and at least 0.35m deep (excavated depth). The western, northern and southern extent of the feature were obscured by the edge of the trench. The only recorded fill of the pit (with the same dimensions) was fill 110. This fill was a dark brown clayey sand with moderate gravel, contained large amounts of cow bones (possibly a cow burial), and also contained one sherd of mid-15th century Midland Purple ware, along with apparently modern pottery.

In the centre of the trench Ditch 74 ran on a north to south alignment and had concave sides with a sloping base. This ditch measured 2.06m wide and 0.80m deep and contained four fills (73, 107, 109 and 112).



Plate 5 Ditch 74

The primary fill was 112, a mid-reddish brown clayey sand which was 0.34m deep and contained one sherd of mid-12th century Ely ware pottery. This fill was sealed by 109, a yellow cream sand which was 0.06m deep and contained no artefacts. Fill 73 was a 0.24m thick, dark brown sandy silt which contained sandy silty clay. A number of pottery sherds, all of 14th century date, were recovered from the fill. The fill also contained moderate charcoal, bone fragments, oyster shells, gravel and occasional snail shells. The upper fill (107) was a brown sandy silt which was 0.6m deep. One sherd of 10th century Stamford ware pottery was recovered from this deposit.

As previously mentioned, Ditch **74** was roughly aligned with, and thought possibly to be identical to, Ditch **53** in trench 3.



Plate 6 Trench 5 with Oxney Grange farmhouse in the background

5.7 Trench 6

Trench 6 was located in the southern part of the development within the area of the former post-medieval formal gardens. It was 12m long, 1m deep and 1.8m wide, and ran from east to west.

A single ditch (**124**) which ran on an east to west alignment in the eastern part of the trench was the only feature uncovered. Ditch **124** had concave sides with a flattish base and measured 1.8m wide and 1.50m deep. The ditch contained two fills (**125** and **126**).

The earliest fill (**125**) was 1.50m deep and consisted of dark brown sand, with moderate gravel, occasional charcoal and occasional oyster shell. The fill also contained considerable amounts of animal bone and a number of 13th century pottery sherds.

Fill **126** was 0.24m deep, and consisted of mid-orangey brown sand, identical to the natural geology and interpreted as re-deposited natural.



Plate 7 Trench 6

5.8 Trench 7

Trench 7 was 12m long, 0.8m deep and 1.8m wide, and ran from north east to south west in the eastern part of the site. The only feature encountered in the trench was a large ditch (**134**) located on a northeast to southwest alignment. This feature was 6m wide and at least 2.20m deep, and contained three fills (131, 132, and 133).

The earliest fill (133) was 0.44m deep and consisted of orangey brown sand with 10-20% gravel. Fill 132 was 0.6m deep, and was a brownish mid-grey sand with occasional gravel. The uppermost fill (131) was 0.85m thick and consisted of 70% gravel and 30% a mixture of blue clay and orange sand.

6 Discussion

6.1 Prehistory

A limited number of prehistoric features were encountered during the evaluation. The pottery could only date them within a broad timescale, but they are likely to be Late Bronze Age to Mid Iron Age in date. The features likely to be of this date included five postholes (**28, 58, 60, 62** and **64**), a ditch (**65**) and a heavily truncated feature of unknown

character (26). Four of the postholes (28,58,62 and 64) are only presumed to be of prehistoric date due to their association with other prehistoric features.

It is difficult to draw any far-reaching conclusions about the prehistoric archaeology of the site from the encountered evidence. The types of features and the substantial and unabraded fragments of pottery imply domestic activity. The findings are also consistent with the known character of the Bronze Age to Iron Age landscape in the area.

6.2 Graves

One of the most significant observations in the evaluation was a series of graves aligned east to west. It is interesting to note that graves were only encountered in trenches 3 and 4, which suggests that the cemetery was confined to the present day courtyard of Oxney Grange. All the burials in the cemetery were inhumations with no grave-goods present. Since they were not excavated, we have no firm dating for them, though the east to west orientation together with the lack of grave-goods suggest that we are dealing with medieval burials. Presumably, they are the graves of the monks living on the grange. Their presence supports the suggestion that the grange had its own chapel by the mid-12th century.

6.3 Ditches

A number of large ditches were identified in trenches 2,3,5,6 and 7. They are likely to be boundary ditches related to the monastic phase of the site. The function of these ditches might have been to divide the site internally into areas with different functions. Presumably, the moat may be contemporary with the ditches and could fulfil a similar function.

The dating evidence suggests activity on the site from the 10th century onwards. Careful analysis however, reveals the earliest pottery from the ditches to be residual. Mid-12th century pottery from ditches 53 and 74 may be a reliable indication of when they may have been constructed, whereas ditches 29 and 124 seem to be 13th century date. 14th century pottery in Ditch 74 indicates that the ditches were still in use by that date.

The construction of the ditches and of the moat is probably an indication of the relative importance of the site. The amount of work necessary to construct the ditches would have been quite substantial, and is likely only to have taken place on a high-status site or one that fulfilled important functions that required physical separation.

It is not clear when the ditches went out of use. It is possible that they only went out of use at some time after the Dissolution in 1539. There is however no firm evidence of the ditches still being in use at that time.

7 Conclusions

The aim of the project was to establish the character, date, state of preservation, and extent of any archaeological remains within the site.

The result of the evaluation have made a significant contribution to the understanding of the prehistoric landscape in the area south of Eye. A number of features of probable Late Bronze Age to Mid-Iron Age date were discovered. The remains suggest the presence of a domestic site.

The evaluation also uncovered substantial remains associated with the medieval Oxney Grange. The most important medieval features were the graves and the large boundary ditches associated with the medieval grange that suggest a high level of investment and management in the Abbey's grange, and support the 12th century documentary reference to a chapel on this site.

Also encountered on site were a significant number of layers and features of post-medieval and modern character.

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Appendix 1 Finds Summary

Context	Material	Object Name	Weight in kg
12	Ceramic	Tile	1.10
12	Bone		0.16
25	Ceramic	Vessel	0.43
25	Bone		0.10
32	Ceramic	Vessel	0.07
32	Bone		0.12
33	Ceramic	Vessel	0.05
43	Slate		0.00
43	Ceramic	Vessel	0.24
43	Bone		0.10
44	Ceramic	Vessel	0.25
44	Bone		0.04
45	Ceramic	Vessel	0.10
45	Asbestos Discarded	Asbestos Discarded	0.02
45	Mortar		0.03
45	Bone		0.05
56	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01
56	Flint		0.00
56	Bone		0.00
59	Ceramic	Vessel	0.00
59	Bone		0.01
71	Bone		0.18
73	Ceramic	Vessel	0.04
73	Organic		0.00
73	Bone		0.52
73	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01
73	Shell		0.03
86	Ceramic	Vessel	0.14
86	Bone		0.02
86	Stone	Roofing tile	0.07
89	Bone		0.04
94	Bone		0.05
103	Stone	Architectural fragment	3.61
107	Ceramic	Ceramic Building Material	0.03
107	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01
107	Slag	Hearth lining	0.01
107	Bone		0.26
107	Shell		0.04

Context	Material	Object Name	Weight in kg
107	Glass		0.00
110	Ceramic	Vessel	0.02
112	Ceramic	Vessel	0.02
114	Bone		0.11
125	Ceramic	Fired clay	0.03
125	Ceramic	Vessel	0.09
125	Bone		0.19
125	Shell		0.05

Appendix 2 The Pottery, by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 91 sherds with a total weight of 1,310g. It comprised a group of Iron Age material, and a range of post-roman wares which indicate that there was virtually unbroken activity at the site from the late Saxon to late medieval periods.

Prehistoric

The following fabrics were noted:

F1: Moderate to dense shelly limestone up to 5mm. 23 sherds, 567g

F2: Sparse sub-rounded calcareous material up to 1mm, sparse to rare sub-rounded black ironstone up to 1mm. 3 sherds, 23g.

Post Roman

The Post-roman pottery types were as follows:

Thetford-type ware, 10th – 12th century (Rogerson and Dallas 1984)
Range of reduced, wheel-thrown and hand-finished fabrics mainly comprising quartz sand up to 1mm. Produced at many centres in eastern England, although most of these appear to be the products of the eponymous Norfolk centre. 35 sherds, 434g.

Stamford Ware (Kilmurry 1980). c. AD900-1200. Wheel-thrown. White, pink, buff or grey fabric, usually with sparse to dense quartz up to 0.5mm, occasional black or red ironstone up to 1mm. Often glazed with yellow, pale or sage green glaze. Jars, bowls, Pegaux pitchers, cups, crucibles, candle sticks. 9 sherds, 96g

Lyveden/Stanion 'A' Ware (McCarthy 1979). c. AD1150-?1400. Handmade/Wheel finished. Moderate to dense, ill-sorted shelly limestone platelets up to 3mm, sparse to moderate red ironstone up to 10mm, occasional quartz, oolites, black ironstone. Produced at numerous kilns in the villages of Lyveden and Stanion in north-east Northants. 5 sherds, 55g.

Oolitic ware. ?L10th – L12thC. Moderate to dense limestone oolitic limestone fragments up to 0.5mm. Vessels with similar forms and fabrics have been noted in Peterborough (Spoerry and Hinman 1998). A kiln producing medieval pottery with an oolitic fabric is known from Colne in Cambridgeshire (Healey et al 1998), and wasters with fabric with a similar oolitic component have been noted at Ely in Cambridgeshire (ibid.). 3 sherds, 22g.

Ely Ware, mid 12th -15th century (Hall 2001): Generic name for a quartz sand and calcareous tempered group of pottery fabrics mainly manufactured in Ely, but also with a second possible source in the Hunts. Fenland. Jars, bowls and jugs dominate the assemblage. 5 sherds, 44g

Grimston Ware: 13th - 15th century (Leah 1994). Wheel-thrown. Dark grey sandy fabric, usually with grey surfaces, although orange-red and (less commonly) buff surfaces are known. Manufactured at the eponymous production centre near Kings Lynn, Norfolk. Mainly glazed jugs, plain or highly decorated, the former 13th century, the latter 14th. Face jugs a speciality, and the highly decorated vessels often have painted and applied strips and scales with iron slip. 7 sherds, 48g.

Midland Purple ware: Mid 15th – mid 17th century. Hard-purplish grey ware, purple to black glaze (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 427). 1 sherd, 21g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

Discussion

Prehistoric

The bulk of the prehistoric pottery assemblage comprises featureless bodysherds which are very difficult to date other than to within the broad period. Other than these, there are two sherds which offer some dating information. One from the rim of a large vessel, with a triangular profile and diagonal finger impressions along the top, whilst the other is a body sherd with fragments of two impressions. Pottery with finger impressions on the body, in shelly fabrics, is very typical of the late

Bronze Age/early Iron Age in the east midlands, and can be paralleled at many sites in the region, such as Fengate (Knight 2001, Fig. 12.3, no 16). The rimsherd is less easy to parallel, but fingertipped rims appear to be of a similar date to bodysherds (ibid). It seems likely therefore that at least part of the prehistoric assemblage is of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age date.

Post-Roman

The post-roman assemblage comprises a range of wares which indicate that there was activity at the site from the late Saxon to late medieval periods. The range of fabrics is fairly typical of sites in this region.

The late Saxon period is represented by Stamford and Thetford wares. In the case of the former, 10th and late 10th – 11th century types are present, but earlier 9th century types, such as small jars and red-painted wares, are not. The Thetford wares have a similar date range. Context 25 produced a large number of sherds of a single vessel. It's form and finish suggest that it belongs to the later part of the lifetime of the industry.

The medieval wares mainly date to the earlier part of the period. The presence of Lyveden/Stanton 'A' ware and small quantities of Ely and Grimston wares indicate that there was activity at the site between the mid-11th and 14th centuries, with the sherd of Midland Purple ware indicating that the end of occupation came most probably in the second half of the 15th century.

Overall, the sherds are in good condition and fairly large, and indicate that they were deposited more or less where they were used. There is no evidence of redeposition or transportation, although some of the late Saxon material does occur in medieval features suggesting that there was disturbance of earlier strata in the medieval period.

	IAF1		IAF2		Thet		Stam		Ool		Lyve A		Ely		Grim		MP		
Context	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
25					32	410					2	19							M12thC
32					1	3			3	22	2	34			1	10			13thC
33							2	52											L10thC
43	8	219	2	18															IA
44	9	247																	MIA?
45	5	100																	EIA
56			1	5															IA
59	1	1																	IA??
73											1	2			5	35			14thC
107							1	11											10thC
110																	1	21	M15thC
112													1	23					M12thC
125					2	21	6	33					4	21	1	3			13thC
Total	23	567	3	23	35	434	9	96	3	22	5	55	5	44	7	48	1	21	

Table 1 Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

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Appendix 3 The faunal remains, by Chris Faine

Introduction

The assemblage in question was obtained from an evaluation from Oxney Grange, Peterborough, with features ranging from the middle Iron Age to the 14th century. Fifteen contexts contained bone, with thirteen having elements identifiable to species. The assemblage contained 89 fragments, with 50 identifiable to species (56.1% of the total sample). All bones were recovered by hand, with preservation being generally good albeit frequently fragmented.

Recording

Initially all elements were assessed and catalogued in terms of siding (where appropriate), completeness, tooth wear stages (also where applicable) and epiphyseal fusion. In addition, any taphonomy i.e. burning, gnawing etc was recorded where necessary. All unidentifiable fragments were classed as being from large/medium sized mammals. Completeness was assessed by percentage and anatomical zones present (after Dobney & Reilly, 1988). Tooth wear was assessed using Grant (1982). All data was entered using MS Excel.

Assessment

In terms of species the assemblage is dominated by domestic species. The broad species distribution for the assemblage can be seen in figure 1. Cattle and Sheep/Goat dominate, making up 48% and 22% of the total sample respectively. Chicken and pig are the most prevalent of the other species, making up 16% and 8% of the sample. Although each individual context is too small to warrant an in depth analysis, several trends become apparent looking at the assemblage as a whole. The archaeology found during the evaluation can be broadly divided into contexts of Iron Age and later medieval date. Figure 3 shows the species distribution by context. What is immediately apparent is the presence of large proportions of domestic fowl in medieval deposits such as contexts 73, 125 and 32, the wider consumption of species such as chicken and goose being characteristic of the period in question.

In contrast Iron Age assemblages such as 43 and 44 consist largely of cattle and sheep/goat remains with proportionately lower levels of pig, a pattern characteristic of the middle to late Iron Age in the East of England (Hambelton, 1999 p.45-57).

The body part distribution for the entire assemblage can be seen in Figure 2. The prevalence of meat bearing elements in contexts of all periods, along with widespread evidence of cut and chop marks is indicative of butchery/industrial waste. This conclusion is also supported by the lack of juvenile and/or elderly animals in the assemblage. In addition Context 12 contained an adult human burial of indeterminate sex, consisting of a portion of distal tibia, ulna and 1st, 2nd and 3rd metatarsals.

Conclusions

In the confines of this assessment it was only possible to give a broad overview of the assemblage. Due to fragmentation and a lack of complete mandibles it was not feasible to attempt stature estimates or age the entire population (although in an assemblage of this size little further information would be gained). In terms of species there are clear differences between the Iron Age and medieval phases, most notably the expected increase in domestic fowl remains in the medieval contexts. The samples from both periods represent butchery waste, with waste elements such as skulls and pelvises being processed or deposited elsewhere.

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	NISP	NISP %	MNI	MNI %
Cattle (<i>Bos</i>)	24	48%	2	20%
Sheep (<i>Ovis aries</i>)	11	22%	2	20%
Chicken (<i>Gallus gallus</i>)	8	16%	2	20%
Pig (<i>Sus scrofa</i>)	4	8%	1	10%
Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>)	1	2%	1	10%
Red deer (<i>Cervus elaphus</i>)	1	2%	1	10%
Horse (<i>Equus</i>)	1	2%	1	10%
Total	50	100%	10	100%

Figure 1 Species distribution for the entire assemblage

	Cranial	Axial	Ribs	Pelvis	Front limbs	Hind limbs
Cattle (<i>Bos</i>)	1	2	8	0	3	8
Sheep (<i>Ovis aries</i>)	1	0	2	0	3	3
Chicken (<i>Gallus gallus</i>)	0	0	0	1	4	4
Pig (<i>Sus scrofa</i>)	3	0	0	0	0	0
Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>)	0	0	0	0	0	1
Red deer (<i>Cervus elaphus</i>)	0	0	0	0	0	1
Horse (<i>Equus</i>)	1	0	0	0	0	0

Figure 2 Body part distribution for entire assemblage (NISP)

	Cattle (<i>Bos</i>)	Sheep (<i>Ovis aries</i>)	Chicken (<i>Gallus gallus</i>)	Pig (<i>Sus scrofa</i>)	Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>)	Red deer (<i>Cervus elaphus</i>)	Horse (<i>Equus</i>)	Total
73	4 (50%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (25%)	-	-	-	8
125	3 (27.2%)	-	5 (45.4%)	1 (9%)	1 (9%)	-	1 (9%)	11
71	2 (100%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
107	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	-	-	-	-	-	5
25	2 (100%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
43	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	-	-	-	-	-	4
114	-	2 (66.6%)	-	-	-	1 (33.3%)	-	3
32	2 (28.5%)	2 (28.5%)	2 (28.5%)	1 (14.2%)	-	-	-	7
45	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	-	-	-	-	-	2
44	1 (33.3%)	2 (66.6%)	-	-	-	-	-	3
94	1 (100%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
89	1 (100%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
86	1 (100%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Figure 3 Species distribution by context (% of that context)



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