

Abingdon Abbey Gardens and Abbey Meadows

Heritage Restoration Management Plan

APPENDIX 4

Trial trenching

Oxford Archaeological Unit

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Contents	Page
1 Introduction	3
2 Geological and Archaeological Background	3
3 Aims and general approaches	4
4 Desktop research	5
5 Survey and trenching in Abbey Meadows	5
6 Survey and trenching in the Thames-side strip	6
7 Finds and Environmental reports	14
8 Discussion of the results	26
9 Conclusions	28
10 Archive	28
11 Bibliography	29

List of Figures

- 1 Plan showing area of the Feasibility Study, areas to be investigated in the current programme and methods to be employed.
- 2 Extract from Tithe map of the Parish of St.Helen, 1841.
- 3 Aerial photograph of the site showing the extent of the gravel terrace in the Thames-side strip, and the positions of the evaluation trenches.
- 4 Plan and section of Trench 1
- 5 Plan and sections of Trench 2
- 6 Plan and section of Trench 4

List of Tables

- 1 Number and weight of potsherds by context
- 2 Number and type of stone by context
- 3 Number and type of flint by context
- 4 Number of animal bones by context and species
- 5 The Waterlogged Remains from Trench 1
- 6 The Waterlogged Remains from Trench 4
- 7 Molluscs from Trench 4 context 503.
- 8 Molluscs from Trench 3 context 403.
- 9 Charred plant remains from Trench 2.
- 10 Table of contexts, their finds and environmental samples

1 Introduction

1.1 The Vale of White Horse District Council is currently considering improving the riverside park (centred at SU 502 972) comprising the Abbey Gardens, the Abbey Meadows and a long strip of land east of this alongside the River Thames and the Abbey Millstream (hereafter referred to as the Thames-side strip) (Figure 1 Areas A, B and C). The Council approached the Heritage Lottery Fund for assistance, and this has resulted in the commissioning of a Feasibility Study of the area funded jointly by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Vale of White Horse Council, which is being carried out by Scott Wilson Resource Consultants Ltd

1.2 Because of the historic importance of this area and the Oxford Archaeological Unit's intimate knowledge of the archaeology of the town centre, the Oxford Archaeological Unit (hereafter OAU) was asked to write the early history of the site and to advise on the archaeological impact of any proposals.

1.3 The archaeological part of the Feasibility Study is designed both to assess the impact of any proposed changes upon underlying archaeological deposits, and the possibility of enhancing our present understanding of the history of the park area with a view to displaying this more effectively to the public.

1.4 With these aims in mind, the OAU recommended a programme of limited evaluation, the results of which are presented below.

2 Geological and Archaeological background

2.1 The geological map of Drift deposits for Abingdon (1971, Map 253) shows the area of the park as consisting of two types of deposit. The area of the Abbey Gardens and Car Park overlies First Terrace gravel deposits of type 1B, the rest of the site as alluvium. In contrast the Soil Survey map of the same date shows part of the Thames-side strip as brownearths of the Sutton series, which are described as overlying calcareous gravel terrace deposit, and the soils of the Abbey Meadows and the palaeochannel area alongside the river as calcareous alluvial groundwater gleys of the Thames series. The soils of the Abbey Grounds are included with the built-up area of Abingdon, and are not categorised.

2.2 The park includes much of the site of Abingdon Abbey (Scheduled Ancient Monument 218) and its Late Saxon millstream. The site of the Abbey Church was investigated by Clapham and Peers in 1922, but was not written up by the original excavators, and was only published in 1968. In the intervening period much of the information and many of the finds were lost, but a plan of the church and its Late Saxon predecessor was reconstructed by Martin Biddle (Biddle 1968).

2.3 The plan of the Abbey Buildings was reconstructed from documentary evidence by Mrs H.T. Lambrick (Lambrick 1968). Limited evaluation was carried out south-east of the site of the abbey church around the Children's Playground in 1994, and this found both human burials and medieval walls at shallow depth (Roberts 1995; OAU client report). These can be linked to the Infirmary and the monk's graveyard identified by Mrs Lambrick.

2.4 Extensive Roman material was found under the whole of the church by Clapham and Peers (Biddle 1968), and both Iron Age and Roman buildings and other features were found just north of the park during excavations undertaken by the OAU in advance of the redevelopment of the Vineyard between 1988 and 1997 (Chambers and Moore 1988, Allen 1989; 1990; 1994; 1996). Surrounding the Late Iron Age and Early Roman phases of settlement were three parallel defensive ditches date, which have been traced on the west and north sides of the town centre (Allen 1991; 1993; 1997). These must either return south through the park area, or one of these may have been reused as the eastern part of the Late Saxon Abbey Millstream.

2.5 Just north of the Thames-side strip Roman finds were made in the 19th century on the site of the Abbey Barton, and a Roman coin was recovered in 1962 (marked on O.S. map). Excavation south of Audlett Drive on the site of the Abbey Day Centre by OAU in 1991 revealed further Iron Age features, a pagan Saxon settlement and Late Saxon ditches containing occupation debris (Keevill 1992). Pagan Anglo-Saxon buildings and other features were also found in the Vineyard redevelopment just north of the Abbey Gardens (Allen 1990). In addition, the excavation of the Abbey Day Centre site also produced a small assemblage of struck flint of earlier prehistoric date (including a knife) and scraps of Beaker pottery.

2.6 The area alongside the Thames east of the Thames-side strip has been quarried, and little is known of this area.

3 Aims and general approaches (Figure 1)

3.1 The Abbey Meadows. The ground level of the eastern part of this area was raised by rubbish dumping in 1963-4. The western area containing the Paddling Pool was not, but this is very flat, and may instead have been reduced in level. The aim in this area was to establish whether archaeological features are present in the Paddling Pool area (and by implication beneath the modern dumping), and to establish a sensitive impact level by testing the depth of modern dumping. This was to be achieved by studying aerial photographs, borehole data, by magnetometer survey and by machine-dug test pits.

3.2 The Thames-side strip. This area is the least known, and there is a conflict between the geological information provided by the Drift and Soil Survey maps. The aims were to clarify the extent of gravel terrace and alluvial floodplain deposits, to establish whether the Saxon settlement to the north extends into this area, whether there are prehistoric, Roman or medieval features in this area, whether there are buried palaeochannel deposits of the Thames containing preserved environmental remains, and to establish the depth and character of any buried archaeological deposits or horizons. This was to be carried out through study of aerial photographs, documentary and map search, magnetometer survey and trial trenching.

3.4 The geophysical survey was carried out by Bartlett-Clark Geophysical Consultancy and A Boucher of the Hereford Archaeological Unit (see Appendix 2).

3.5 The fieldwork was carried out under the direction of Tim Allen, and was monitored by Grant Audley-Miller for the VOWHDC and by Hugh Coddington, Oxfordshire Deputy County Archaeologist, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigations.

4 Desktop research (see also Appendix 2)

4.1 Aerial photographs

4.1.1 A search was made both for cropmarks, earthwork features and for evidence of geological changes on aerial photographs. The details of this are reported in Appendix 2 section 2. No cropmarks or earthworks were found within the area of the study. Vertical photographs of the Thames-side strip did however show the edge of the gravel terrace north of the Thames, confirming evidence both from the Soil Survey map and from a change in levels on the ground that the gravel terrace does extend into this area, and that south of this there is a wide floodplain north of the modern Thames (Figure 3). Aerial photographs also showed that the stream running from the north-east into the Abbey Mill Stream and across the east end of the Abbey Meadows was also formerly a large channel.

4.2 Documents and maps

4.2.1 The earliest map to show the field divisions within the Thames-side strip is Rocque's map of Berkshire of 1761 (Appendix 2 Figure 2), but otherwise this map is not detailed. The Tithe Maps of the parishes of St. Helen's and St. Nicholas of AD 1841 are more informative. The St. Helen's map (Figure 2) shows the same field divisions, which are still visible on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map published in 1874, and survived almost to the present day

4.2.2 The St. Helen's Tithe map also shows the former course of the stream which runs in from the north-east east of the Abbey Day Centre, before it was diverted and canalised when the Abingdon Railway was built. West of this several ditched watercourses are shown defining two rectangular moated enclosures on the north side of the Abbey Millstream. These were later obliterated by the railway.

5 Survey and trenching in the Abbey Meadows

5.1 Borehole survey.

A survey carried out by Exploration Associates Ltd for the Vale of White Horse District Council was assessed in an attempt to establish the profile of the buried ground surface beneath modern dumping, to look for evidence of former palaeochannels or alluviation, and to inform any subsequent test-trenching. Four trial-pits were dug in the western part of the Abbey Meadows, and all showed more than 1 m of alluvial clay overlying what were described as terrace deposits. The trial pits also appeared to indicate a falling off of the level of the top of the terrace north to south. The borehole survey therefore suggests that the whole of the Abbey Meadows consists of alluvial floodplain. The trench immediately adjacent to the Paddling Pool was similar, but here the survey also identified made ground including occasional cobbles of sandstone or brick to a depth of 1.6 m, suggesting an infilled excavation of recent date. The depth of alluvial deposits was also greater here, perhaps indicating a deeper palaeochannel.

5.2 Magnetometer survey.

This was carried out over almost all of the Paddling Pool area to look for buried features (see Appendix 3). The survey showed considerable disturbance in the southern part of the Paddling Pool area, where underground pipes ran through, and

also along the north edge. Around the Pool itself the construction fills had also produced significant anomalies of recent date. No archaeological features were clearly distinguished by the survey (Appendix 3 Figures 4-5).

5.3 Excavation.

5.3.1 Test-pits were dug by machine along the eastern edge of the Paddling Pool area to examine the character of the stratigraphy (partly as a check upon the borehole information) and to look for evidence of archaeological activity. Because of the considerable disturbance indicated by the magnetometer survey trenching along the edge of the area was limited to two test-pits (Trenches 5 and 6), each approximately 3 m long x 1.2 m wide, which were dug rather to avoid modern disturbance indicated by the survey than to locate and investigate magnetic anomalies.

5.3.2 The test-pits were dug into the edge of the 1960s dumping, which was 0.55 m deep on the east side of Trench 5 and 0.9 m deep on the east side of Trench 6. Both trenches were dug by machine under archaeological supervision, and the spoil was monitored for finds. The exposed sections of the trenches were then cleaned by hand and recorded. Limited excavation was carried out by hand at the bottom of both trenches to retrieve finds and expose layers 706 and 716.

5.3.3 Both trenches showed the same sequence of deposits. Below the 1960s dumping was the previous ground surface, preserved as a thin organic band overlying grey-brown clayey silt. Below this were three successive deposits of silty clay, 706, 705 and 704, all with heavy red-brown mineral staining.

5.3.4 Layer 706 was blue-grey, as this layer lay just below the water table. Both layer 706 and 705 which overlay it contained charcoal flecks and lumps and pieces of limestone up to 120 mm square; one of the fragments from layer 705 had one flat worked edge. There were also animal bones, a sherd of Roman amphora possibly reused as a tile and fragments of fired clay. A small sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from the uppermost layer 704, which did not contain charcoal but did contain small pebbles.

6 Survey and trenching in the Thames-side strip.

6.1 A study of aerial photographs (section 4.1) suggested that less than half of this area sits upon gravel terrace deposits at shallow depth, the remainder consisting of floodplain or palaeochannel deposits (Figure 3). This was supported by the topography of the ground; a contour survey of the land surface carried out for the Vale of White Horse District Council shows a distinct slope from north to south corresponding approximately with the change on the aerial photograph.

6.2 Magnetometer survey

6.2.1 This was carried out over an area of approximately 1 hectare at the western end of the area closest to the known Saxon settlement to the north. This included the west end of the gravel terrace shown on aerial photographs, and also the lower-lying floodplain of a tributary stream channel running into the Thames from the north (Appendix 3 Figures 2-3).

6.2.2 The survey produced linear anomalies on north-north-west and west-south-west alignments, very similar to the alignments of excavated Late Saxon ditches at the Abbey Centre just north-west of the site. The survey also suggested several discrete anomalies interpreted as pits or possibly sunken-featured buildings and a diffuse area of higher readings at the south end provisionally interpreted as a curving ditch or possibly a former channel (for details see Appendix 2).

6.3 Excavation.

6.3.1 Four trenches, all aligned approximately north-south, were dug by machine under archaeological supervision (see Figure 3):

Trench 1 was aligned north-south towards the east side of the Thames-side strip to run from the gravel terrace into the alluvial or fluvial palaeochannel deposits, in order to establish the character and if possible the date of these deposits.

Two trenches were laid out to test the results of the magnetometer survey. Trench 2 ran north-south across the line of one of the linear anomalies and several of the discrete ones, and was carried down the slope at the south end of the area into a lower-lying area (which the aerial photograph suggested lay on the floodplain).

Trench 4 was oriented north-west to south-east in order to cut across a strong linear running west-south-west and to investigate the diffuse curving response.

A fourth trench (Trench 3, dug in two parts) was placed north of the Abbey Mill Stream at the west end of the area to establish whether the Saxon ditches found in the Abbey Day Centre excavation continue down to the Mill stream, and to look for the continuation of the Late Iron Age prehistoric defences of the town.

6.3.2 Trench 1 (Figure 4)

6.3.2.1 The trench was 95.5 m long, and ran from the level gravel terrace at the north end down a shelving slope marking the transition to floodplain and into shallow palaeochannels at the south end. Where the trench lay upon the Pleistocene gravel terrace the trench was 1.8-1.9 m wide; where the trench ran down the slope and into the floodplain of the Thames, the trench was stepped at a depth of 1.2 m on the east and west and was 4.5-4.6 m wide overall, with a deeper central trench 1.8-2.0 m wide and up to 2.4 m deep.

6.3.2.2 The trench was excavated by machine under archaeological supervision to the top of the natural gravel where possible, and failing that to the limits permitted by both considerations of safety and the water table. Archaeological features were cleaned and excavated by hand; the sections through the palaeochannel deposits were cleaned by hand and recorded. Finds were recovered from the deposits during machining and during cleaning, with only very limited excavation by hand. Environmental samples were taken from the sections.

6.3.2.3 The lower part of the trench comprised a succession of palaeochannel deposits from several phases of the river Thames. Not all of these were stratigraphically linked and many were undated, so the sequence described below is an interpretation.

6.3.2.4 At the north edge of the former channel was sterile clays (21, 41 and 44) overlain by yellow sandy clay (39) and then pinkish-grey silty sand (37). These non-organic deposits appear to have been deposited in a dry channel bed during the Late Pleistocene or very Early Holocene, before much soil cover developed on the gravel terrace.

6.3.2.5 At the very south end of the trench a peak of Pleistocene gravel (which included some cold climate snails observed by Dr Robinson on his visit) was cut away both south and north by former channels. Despite use of pumps the proximity of the Thames meant that these channels were not fully bottomed, though probing below water by hand established the top of gravelly deposits along most of the length of the trench.

6.3.2.6 The channel on the south (9), of which only 4 m lay within the trench, had a steep side and flattish bottom. It was filled with tenacious silty clays (8 and 7). The main fill was not organic, but included woodland snails typical of mid-Holocene channel deposits in the Upper Thames.

6.3.2.7 North of the gravel peak was the south edge of another channel (47 = 38), which was shallow and c. 40 m wide. This was dry during the earlier part of the Holocene, when inorganic deposits 39 and 37 were deposited on its north side, but was reactivated by a rise in water table. At the bottom was a silty sand with some gravel (layer 40), containing shells from a time when slow-moving water was present. Above this were organic silts forming in backswamp conditions. The lowest organic sediments (36) included hazelnut shells (seen by Dr Robinson), indicating a likely Bronze Age or Early Iron Age date.

6.3.2.8 These are overlain by clays (45, 6 and 5) from periods of greater sedimentation, evident mainly on the south side of the channel and thinning out towards the north. These clays have the appearance of levee deposits deposited by flooding from the main channel of the Thames further south. Dr Robinson believes that these date from the Roman period, on the evidence of the general alluvial sequence in the Upper Thames, and of another sequence from Thrupp some 2 km to the east, where similar clays overlie a causeway of Early Iron Age date (Robinson pers. comm.).

6.3.2.9 Interspersed with the upper clays and overlying them were further organic deposits, deepest in the backswamp but eventually overlying the levee as well (layers 35, 34 and 4+26). These showed the gradual choking of the backswamp behind the levee, where reedswamp formed (context 35, see Environmental Assessment section 7.9.3). Layer 4+26 contained the most visible organic horizons, but these are mainly wood fragments, and organic preservation of plants is poor.

6.3.2.10 No pottery or other diagnostic artefacts were recovered from any of these fills. Fragments of an unidentifiable animal skull were found in layer 5. Two fragments of worked wood (nos 42 and 43) were recovered from layer 35, and two wooden stakes (nos 30 and 31) from layer 26, lying flat on the surface of layer 34 and accompanied by a large pebble (see Figure 4 and Wood Report section 7.4). Above layer 26 was a further organic silt (25). Samples from these deposits indicated muddy ground close to a river, the vegetation being either damp grass or meadow.

6.3.2.11. Above this was a further clay layer 32, representing a later phase of high sedimentation, which Dr Robinson believes is of medieval date. This was overlain by further organic alluvial silts, one of which (layer 23) contained numerous snails indicating haymeadow (see Environmental Assessment section 7.9.3).

6.3.2.12 On the gravel terrace there were few features. All of these were linear ditches running east-west approximately parallel to the edge of the terrace, probably acting as boundaries between the dry ground and floodplain or stream at various dates. The earliest of these was ditch 28, which was 1.8 m wide and 0.5 m deep,

and lay on the shelving slope of the gravel some 15 m from the edge of the gravel terrace proper, cutting through Early Holocene silts 44 and 21. This was filled with a dark silty clay which contained sherds of Middle Iron Age pottery and several burnt quartz pebbles. Although waterlogged the fill did not contain preserved environmental remains. This ditch was sealed by alluvial deposits, first a clay (layer 29) and then a silt (layer 20). Both layers were confined to the northern edge of the floodplain. Layer 20 contained a sherd of Middle Iron Age pottery, but this may well have been residual.

6.3.2.13 Layer 20 was cut by another boundary ditch 19, which ran along the edge of the terrace proper some 0.6 m above the level from which ditch 28 had been cut. Ditch 19 was 1.7 m wide and survived 0.7 m deep; the bottom fill 18 was waterlogged, and this was overlain by another clayey silt (layer 17) which may have been alluvial in origin. Above this the upper fills of the ditch were sandy silts, possibly derived from erosion or ploughing of the subsoil on the gravel. There were no finds from the ditch, which was sealed and truncated by further ploughing (layer 14).

6.3.2.14 Layer 14, which contained evidence of liming in the presence of decayed chalk and flint, only survived in a band along the edge of the gravel terrace. Further north, where the gravel rose slightly, it was overlain by post-medieval ploughsoil (layer 2), which was up to 0.4 m deep and contained both brick and ceramic tile fragments. This ploughsoil also sealed two further ditches 12 and 10. Ditch 12 survived 0.95 m wide but only 0.2 m deep, ditch 10 survived 0.35 m wide and 0.2 m deep, and both had clearly been truncated by the ploughing, though the fill of ditch 10 (layer 11) was so similar to the overlying ploughsoil as to suggest that it was open when this phase of ploughing began. Layer 11 contained one fragment of residual pottery of either Iron Age or Saxon date.

6.3.3 Trench 2 (Figure 5)

6.3.3.1 This trench was 61 m long, and ran north-south across the widest part of the gravel terrace, continuing off the edge of the terrace onto the floodplain at the south end. The trench was positioned to cross one of the linear anomalies identified as ditches by the geophysical survey and to pick up several discrete anomalies thought to represent pits or Saxon grubenhauser. On the gravel terrace the trench was 1.8 m wide; where it ran onto the floodplain the trench was stepped at a depth of 1.2 m on the east and west and was 4.35 m wide overall, with a deeper central trench 1.8 m wide and up to 1.7 m deep.

6.3.3.2 The trench was excavated by machine under archaeological supervision to the top of the natural gravel, and at the south end of the trench to a level consistent with both safety considerations and the level of the water table. Detailed investigation of the palaeochannel deposits on the floodplain was not carried out, since the sequence was better represented in Trench 1. Archaeological features on the gravel terrace were cleaned, and a sample of these was excavated, by hand. The sections through the palaeochannel deposits were cleaned by hand and recorded.

6.3.3.3 On the gravel terrace all of the archaeological features were cut into gravel and were sealed by a sandy silt ploughsoil (201) 0.2 m deep overlain by a topsoil (200) of similar depth. No finds were recovered to date the ploughing, but this was probably a continuation of the post-medieval ploughing seen in Trench 1.

6.3.3.4 The ploughing had truncated all of the archaeological features, and over most of the trench had reworked all of the prehistoric subsoil over the gravel, but at the

north end of the trench thin deposits of subsoil survived (layers 229 and 230, respectively 0.15 m and 0.10 m deep). The northernmost archaeological features were a group of circular soilmarks probably belonging to a circular posthole building (group 205). These were only recognised after the prehistoric subsoils had been removed to the top of the gravel, and their relationship with it was not established. Four of the six soilmarks were half-excavated; posthole 220 survived 0.4 m deep, 214 and 218 were 0.12 m deep, and 216 was only 0.06 m deep, but all shared a very similar red-brown fill probably resulting from silting of the postholes after the posts had decayed. There was no dating from any of the postholes, but the arc described by the postholes suggests a building between 6 and 7 m in diameter, well within the normal range of Iron Age roundhouses.

6.3.3.5 Immediately adjacent to the postholes on the south-west was a linear boundary represented by two parallel ditches, the earlier and larger (ditch 204=228) recut on the south-west side (ditch 225). The fill of the earlier ditch (layer 203=227) included much domestic debris of Middle Iron Age date, and the later ditch fill (layer 226) more pottery and fired clay fragments including one with wattle impressions, which may have come from the building adjacent. Charred plant remains from 203 include barley and hulled wheat grains and arable weeds. These ditches correspond to the linear anomaly identified from the magnetometer survey.

6.3.3.6 South of ditch 225 was a cluster of large intercutting soilmarks, one of which (206) was excavated, and proved to be a Middle Iron Age pit 2 m across and surviving 0.32 m deep. The primary fills of this pit (224 and 223) were sterile, but the uppermost fill (207) contained much domestic debris, including charred cereal grains. Some of the other soilmarks were similar to the prehistoric subsoil in colour, and may have been patches of this surviving in hollows in the gravel, but others had similar dark fill to the excavated pit, and were probably further pits (see Figure 5). South of this smaller oval patches in the gravel were not investigated, but were almost certainly of natural origin.

6.3.3.7 A second ditch on a north-north-west alignment lay south of this. This was 1.2m wide but only 0.07 m deep. The primary fill, which was probably natural silting from the sides, contained one Roman and one Anglo-Saxon sherd. South-west of this, and running on a south-west alignment, was a narrow gully 212, whose fill (213) contained a single sherd of Middle Iron Age pottery. No relationship between the gully and the ditch was established, as they intersected just beyond the limits of the trench.

6.3.3.8 Another large Middle Iron Age pit 210 lay south of 212. Both fills contained pottery and other domestic debris, including charred grains of hulled wheat.

6.3.3.9 At the southern end of the trench the gravel dipped away, and was overlain by a series of fluvial and alluvial deposits. These were not investigated in detail. The earliest (layer 231=236) was similar to the Early Pleistocene sands seen against the terrace edge in Trench 1. Above this was a grey clay possibly of fluvial origin. Layer 231 was overlain by a bank or mound of silty clay with 20% gravel (layer 232), 2.4 m wide and surviving 0.3 m high. This may have been a naturally formed levee at the edge of the floodplain, but contained limestone fragments, suggesting rather that it was deliberately dumped, perhaps as a protection against flooding.

6.3.3.10 Running down onto the floodplain from the bank was a layer of silt containing gravel which may have been derived from erosion or ploughing of the bank. Above this were several layers of organic silt, none of them dated, and above

these further alluvial clays. No finds were recovered either from the bank or the sequence on the floodplain, but the number of deposits postdating the bank suggests that it was not of recent origin.

6.3.3.11 Behind this bank was a shallow linear feature 234 cut through layer 231=236. This was possibly a gully, but was irregular in plan, and may simply have been a treehole. It was filled with silty clay 235, and this was overlain by ploughsoil 201, which abutted the full surviving height of the bank. The bank was overlain by topsoil 200.

6.3.4 Trench 4 (Figure 6)

6.3.4.1 This trench was 47 m long and 3.6 m wide. It was positioned due south of the prehistoric and Saxon settlement found under the Abbey Day Centre, within the lower-lying area west of the edge of the gravel terrace as shown on aerial photographs, and was oriented north-west to south-east in order to cut across a strong linear anomaly identified by the magnetometer survey running west-south-west, and to investigate a more diffuse curving anomaly south-east of this.

6.3.4.2 The trench was excavated by machine under archaeological supervision to the top of the natural gravel where possible, and failing that to the limits permitted by both considerations of safety and the water table. The north-west end of the trench proved to overlie gravel deposits at shallow depth, but further south-east the gravel was cut away by a palaeochannel, which continued beyond the south-east end of the trench. Where it cut into the palaeochannel the trench was stepped in on either side at a depth of just over 1 m, and the central 1.8 m was dug down to a maximum depth of 2 m.

6.3.4.3 Archaeological features were cleaned and excavated by hand; the sections through the palaeochannel deposits were cleaned by hand and recorded. Finds were recovered from the deposits during machining and during cleaning, with only very limited excavation by hand. Environmental samples were taken from the sections.

6.3.4.4 The earliest deposits were a series of horizontal layers infilling a wide channel (whose north edge was numbered 511) at the south end of the trench. Despite the use of pumps the bottom of this channel was not reached due to the water table, but a very similar sequence of fills was found in Trench 3 further west (see below), and the lowest layer exposed in Trench 4, a grey organic silt with some sand (layer 513), is probably equivalent to layer 414 which directly overlay sand and gravel in Trench 3. This deposit was assessed for environmental remains, and was deposited by fluvial action in a slow-moving river or stream (Environmental Assessment section 7.9.4). It was overlain by organic silty clay 507, formed in reedswamp conditions, and this was followed by alluvial clays (506 and 505). These deposits were interrupted by the cut of a later reactivation of the stream coming in from the north-east, but layer 507 probably continued as 512, 506 as 509 and 505 as layer 508. At the very north edge of the channel cut was a yellow clayey silt 524, incorporating material from the gravel terrace deposits adjacent. No finds were recovered from any of these fills.

6.3.4.5 The upper alluvial deposits were cut through by a shallow channel 504 running south-west. This was 7-8 m wide but only 0.45 m deep, and was filled with organic clay layers 503 and 502. Layer 503 contained a rich snail assemblage indicative of slow-flowing water, and the environmental evidence from both shows a sluggish stream surrounded by damp grassland. One sherd of Roman pottery was

found in layer 503, and layer 502 contained three pieces of worked wood including a stake (Worked wood, section 7.4)

6.3.4.6 The channel sediments were partly overlain on the south side by an alluvial clay layer 501, presumably derived from the main Thames. This deposit was cut through by another active phase of the stream, which silted up with further organic silty clay 500 (=521), again indicative of sluggish flow and damp grassland. Part of a morticed oak plank (sample 35) was recovered from layer 500. Layer 521 was a thick deposit, the upper part of which was numbered 520 because of a slight change in colour evident in section. The organic sediments filling in this channel appear to have formed a slight positive feature, possibly indicating that plant growth was more active along the line of the stream (see Figure 6). On the south side the organic deposits were abutted by alluvial silt 528.

6.3.4.7 The silting of this channel was cut through on the north side by yet another phase of active stream flow, creating channel 518, which was filled with clay 519. This channel ran very close to the gravel terrace along the edge of the floodplain. Like 504, this channel was 7 m wide, but in common with 500 before it was only 0.3 m deep.

6.3.4.8 Further alluvial clays 517 and 516 overlay the previous stream channel fills, and extended north-west almost to the end of the trench. At the north end a linear soilmark 526 was visible running east-west, expanding on the east into a larger irregular soilmark. A section across this suggested that a gully (numbered 530) had cut through a treehole 525. A single flint flake was recovered from the gully fill 526, but may have been derived from the fill of the treehole (527). A number of unworked limestone fragments was found in the top of the gully, but there were no other finds. Both features were overlain by layer 516, but layer 517 petered out before reaching them.

6.3.4.9 A single layer of limestones (100 x 80 x 40 mm), pebbles and gravel was laid in a band 2.5 m wide and 0.08 m thick running south-west along the top of layer 516 some 2 m south of the line of former channel 518. This was perhaps a causeway. Two joining sherds of a late 13th or 14th century jug were found within this layer, suggesting a late medieval date for its construction. The line of the causeway was marked by a concentration of iron mineral staining, and it is likely that this was the feature identified on the magnetometer survey. The causeway was overlain by further alluvial silty clay (layer 531), very similar to layer 516 beneath.

6.3.4.10 Approximately 5 m north of the causeway layers 531 and 516, which were indistinguishable at this point, were cut through by a large bowl-profiled cut 522, which ran south-west across the trench. This was 4 m wide and 0.7 m deep, and was largely filled with one homogeneous dump of clayey loam with fine sand, small gravel, occasional pebbles and charcoal flecks (layer 523). At the sides was a darker and more clayey primary fill. The main fill contained sherds of 19th century pottery and post-medieval tile, and is interpreted as deliberate backfill. The feature is interpreted as a man-made cut, probably a ditch to take the stream, perhaps dug during the construction of the railway line, which was soon backfilled.

6.3.4.11 Further alluviation followed, layer 515 covering the whole length of the trench. Flooding appears to have been sufficiently forceful to have eroded layers 517, 516 and 531 south of the causeway down to the surface of layer 528, the added compaction of the soils beneath the causeway preventing these from being eroded.

Layer 515 accumulated more deeply south of the causeway, resulting in a level ground surface upon which topsoil 514 formed.

6.3.5 Trench 3. (not illustrated in detail)

6.3.5.1 Two trenches were dug on a north-south orientation within the overgrown area north of the Abbey Millstream to see if the Saxon ditches found beneath the Abbey Day Centre continued into this area, and to look for evidence of the Late Iron Age defensive ditches found in the Vineyard further west (Figure 3).

6.3.5.2 Trench 3 was planned as a single north-south trench, but was divided to avoid existing trees. The northern trench was 14 m long and 1.8 m wide, and was dug by machine under archaeological supervision to a depth of 1.2 m, with a sondage at the north end to natural sand and gravel at 1.47 m. The southern trench was 9.7 m long and 1.8 m wide, and was dug to a depth of 1.2 m under archaeological supervision, with a sondage at the south end to 1.36 m, which did not reach natural gravel. The southern half of the trench ran south-north, but was realigned in the northern half to run parallel to the northern trench. The sections of both trenches were cleaned by hand, and the deposit sequence recorded. Environmental samples were taken from the exposed sections; there was no excavation by hand.

6.3.5.3 Except for the southern end of the southern trench, the deposit sequence was the same as that seen in the southern end of Trench 4. Natural sand and gravel (numbered 415) was overlain by a grey organic silt with some sand and gravel (414=409), probably equivalent to layer 513 (see Trench 4 above). This was overlain by a brown organic silt (413=408=507), and this in turn by grey silty clay (412=407=506). These horizontal layers were overlain by a mottled grey-yellow clay (411=406), which may be equivalent to layer 505, though 505 was not mottled. Environmental samples were taken from layers 408 and 409, but were not assessed, as samples 32 and 33 from equivalent deposits in Trench 4 were examined (see Environmental Assessment, section 7.9.4).

6.3.5.4 This sequence was cut at the south by 404, the north-east edge of another channel or feature running north-west, whose edge sloped down at 45 degrees. The cut was disturbed by a tree root, but appeared to be at least 0.8 m deep and was not bottomed. It was filled with a thick dark grey clayey silt containing lenses of shells (layer 403), molluscs from which were recorded (Environmental Assessment, section 7.9.6). This layer was laid down by overbank alluviation, and was overlain by a dark brown organic silt (402). Both layer 402 and layer 406 were overlain by a sticky brown-grey silty clay. This was numbered 401 over 402, where it infilled a slight hollow in the top of the later channel, but was numbered 405 over 406, as it was discontinuous and thinner, and faded out before it reached the northern trench. Both trenches had a layer of dark brown humic silty topsoil (400=410).

6.3.5.5. There were no finds from any of the deposits.

7 Finds and environmental reports

7.1 Assessment of the pottery by Kayt Smith

7.1.1 The evaluation recovered 71 sherds weighing 580 g from 15 contexts. The sherds were relatively well-preserved, although most sherds were small (including sieved material from three environmental samples), and there were few sherds diagnostic of form.

7.1.2 Based solely on fabrics therefore, the pottery can be assigned to the Middle Iron Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval and Post-medieval periods. Of this material, 62 sherds (427 g) appear to be Middle Iron Age in date. The fabrics represented are tempered either with shell, sand or ferruginous pellets with calcareous grit, with this latter fabric typical of the Middle Iron Age in the Upper Thames area. As well as the coarse shell temper, also common was the use of an alluvial clay containing aquatic freshwater mollusc fragments.

7.1.3 The Roman material comprises two sherds (including one rim sherd) in a sandy grey fabric, dating from the 2nd century onwards, and a sherd of a thin-walled amphora (provenance unknown) reused as a tile. The rim sherd was redeposited in an Anglo-Saxon context, which also produced a single chaff-tempered Anglo-Saxon sherd. The remaining material comprised 4 sherds (27 g) of medieval pottery, including part of a Brill-Boarstall glazed jug of the late 13th or 14th century from context 529, and a single sherd (2 g) dated to the post-medieval period.

Table 1 Number and weight of potsherds by context

Context	Nosh	Wt (g)	Context date
11	1	2	Middle Iron Age?
20	1	4	Middle Iron Age
27	4	10	Middle Iron Age
203	35	229	Middle Iron Age
207	12	94	Middle Iron Age
209	2	22	Anglo-Saxon
211	4	60	Middle Iron Age
213	1	4	Middle Iron Age
222	3	8	Middle Iron Age
226	1	17	Middle Iron Age
503	1	25	Roman
523	2	8	Post-Medieval
529	2	16	Medieval
705	1	77	Roman
Total	71	580	

7.2 Fired clay by Tim Allen

7.2.1 Fragments were recovered from Middle Iron Age contexts 203, 211 and 226. Those from 226 included one with two parallel wattle impressions; the other fragments were all abraded and uninformative.

7.3 Other ceramic building materials

by Tim Allen

7.3.1 A fragment of ceramic roof tile of post-medieval date was recovered from context 523 in Trench 4, and a fragment of brick from layer 2 in Trench 1.

7.4 Worked Wood

by Nick Mitchell

7.4.1 Eleven pieces of wood were recovered from palaeochannel contexts. Seven of these pieces are certainly worked, one is possibly worked and three are unworked. The unworked pieces will not be commented upon further.

7.4.2 Methodology

7.4.2.1 Oak is readily identifiable with the naked eye, but worked wood of other species needs to be examined with the aid of a low-power microscope for identification. In this assessment the oak was distinguished from non-oak, but no further species identification was undertaken. All of the wood was cleaned using tap water, and examined to see whether bark, sapwood or simply heartwood was present. The number of rings was estimated to see if any pieces might be suitable for tree-ring dating.

7.4.2.2 The general preservation of the wood was assessed, and the presence of cut marks and their character was noted and is commented upon. Where possible the function of the worked wood is stated.

7.4.3 Trench 1

7.4.3.1 There are four worked pieces from this trench, all of which come from waterlogged context 35, dated to the Iron Age or Roman period. Two, nos 30 and 31, are roundwood stakes of medium-fast grown oak both with bark present, and were found in close proximity to one another, suggesting that they may have derived from a single structure. Stake 30 is complete, 1.682 m long, with the diameter increasing from 55mm at the top to 70mm towards the point, both ends being well-preserved. The point is shaped by regular axe-marks to a slender tip, 250mm long, while the top is axed flat across the grain. There are no signs of joints or fixings at the top. The preservation of a complete stake is unusual, and is due to the fact that the stake had fallen flat rather than standing upright. Stake 31 was not complete in length, 450mm, x 41mm diameter but has a slight curve towards the tip. In conjunction with the growth-rings which show rapid initial growth, this may indicate that the stake was cut from a coppiced pole. The presence of only two faces of tooling on the point show minimal preparation of the stake.

7.4.3.2 One other worked, non-oak piece, 42, which is small (165 x 23 mm) and is cut and split, may have been used as a peg. The fourth piece is a small piece of non-oak roundwood of 12 mm diameter, with a small angled cut at one end which may have been made in antiquity.

7.4.4 Trench 4

7.4.4.1 There are four worked pieces of wood from this trench. All of the worked wood came from the waterlogged fills of a Roman reactivation of the stream channel. Part of an oak morticed plank (sample no. 35), measuring 290 x 165 x 73mm, was found in context 500, broken across the mortice hole. It was roughly shaped by

splitting with the upper surface flat and the underside thicker in the middle. Only a small length of the mortice is present, 37mm wide, but shows a smooth, rounded end-face and no tool-marks, and may have been worn smooth by movement of the tenon in the mortice hole. It is therefore not possible to tell if the mortice was drilled out or made with an axe or chisel. The wood is slow-grown heartwood with up to 80 growth-rings present and may be datable by dendrochronology. There are no associated pieces of worked wood, and the surfaces of the plank are not very well preserved, perhaps indicating that this piece had been rolled in the water, and have drifted down the channel from a structure further upstream.

7.4.4.2 A non-oak stake (sample no. 34) was found upright in Roman context 502. The top has rotted away but remains 605mm long and 31mm in diameter with bark present only at the top half of the stake. Two other pieces from the same context, one oak and one non-oak, also show axe-marks. It is possible that one of these (sample no. 44) is part of the stake since it is axed at an oblique angle, inappropriate for a stake point while a lopped branch-point shows this is not merely an off-cut. The other piece (sample no. 43) is roundwood with three axe-marks on one side but it is not possible to speculate on its function since both ends are missing.

7.5 Glass

by Tim Allen

7.5.1 Two fragments of glass were recovered. Part of the indented base of a cylindrical bottle in olive-green glass came from context 2. This probably dates to the later 18th or 19th century. A sliver of glass of similar type was recovered from Iron Age pit fill 203, and in this context appears to be intrusive.

7.6 Stone

by Tim Allen

7.6.1 A table of the fragments of stone found and retrieved during the trenching is given below (Table 2). All of the stone could have been obtained locally. The concreted gravel probably derives from the site itself, and the quartzite pebbles may have been found in the river or adjacent gravels, or may have been collected from outcrops of Glacial Drift. The sandstone is probably Lower Greensand, which is found on Boars Hill north of Abingdon and at Didcot to the south. Limestone also outcrops on Boars Hill and Cumnor Hearst north of Abingdon.

7.6.2 Burnt limestone is almost ubiquitous on Iron Age settlements in the Upper Thames valley, though its purpose is still unclear. Possibly the reduced grey colour indicates that it was placed into water after heating. The burnt pebbles may also have been used to heat water or to keep food warm. The lumps of concreted gravel were also heated, and it has been suggested that ferruginously concreted gravel was heated to extract the iron for metalworking (C. Salter pers comm.). Any of these stones may however simply have been used as hearthstones. The fragments of sandstone may have come from querns, though they are now very friable. Alternatively they may have been broken up for sand tempering for pottery manufacture. Lumps of unburnt limestone were common in Trenches 5 and 6 on Abbey Meadows, and one fragment from a dressed block was also recovered. Limestone was used both in Roman and Medieval buildings on the site.

Table 2. Number and type of stone by context

Context Number	Type	Comments	
26	1	Quartzite pebble	Complete, no sign of use
27	4	Quartzite pebble	Fragments, burnt
40	1	Limestone	Large block, no working
203	1	Quartzite	Broken pebble
	1	Sandstone	No surfaces
207	4	Concreted gravel	3 burnt
	2	Limestone	Burnt
	4	Quartzite pebbles	1 burnt
211	6	Limestone	Burnt
	1	Sandstone	No surfaces
519	4	Limestone	(None kept)
526	5+	Limestone	(None kept)
529	10+	Limestone	(None kept)
705	1	Limestone	Flat worked edges
	10+	Limestone	Unworked (none kept)

7.7 Flint by Theresa Durden

7.7.1 Six pieces of struck flint and one piece of burnt unworked flint were recovered (see Table 3 below). The piece from context 526 had a thick chalky cortex, and probably derived from the chalk to the south of the site; the origin of the other pieces is uncertain. The struck pieces consisted of one blade and five flakes, and of the five flakes, four bore dorsal blade scars. No retouched pieces were present. Although dating such a small assemblage is difficult, the characteristics of the struck material would suggest an earlier Neolithic date.

Table 3. Number and type of flint by context

Context	Description
27	3 flakes (all broken, 1 burnt)
203	1 flake
203	1 piece burnt unworked flint
207	1 flake (broken), possible edge damage LHS
526	1 blade

7.8 Animal Bone Assessment

by N Scott

7.8.1 A total of 119 bone fragments was found. Five skull fragments from context 5 in Trench 1 broke up on washing, and are not commented upon further. The bones were rapidly scanned for identification and to assess their condition. Of these approximately 15% could be identified to species and anatomical part; vertebrae and ribs were not identified. A table showing the breakdown of identifiable bones by context is given below.

Table 4 Number of animal bones by context and species

	203	207	211	213	226	508	523	704	705	715
Sheep/ goat	3	4					1		2	
Cow	1	1				1				
Pig		1	1							
Horse							2			
No. unidentified frags.	31	17	5	1	4	1	35	1	1	1

7.8.2 Sheep/goat was the predominant species represented although pig, cow and horse were also present. In general the bones were in a good state of preservation. The bones from context 523 and from context 5 however were highly fragmented and poorly preserved. No butchery or gnawing marks were observed.

7.8.3 A single oyster shell was recovered from context 705 in Trench 5.

7.9 Assessment of the charred and waterlogged environmental remains
by Ruth Pelling and Mark Robinson

7.9.1 Introduction

7.9.1.1 Four evaluation trenches were dug on the north side of the River Thames and Abbey Millstream to investigate palaeochannels identified both on the ground and by aerial photographs, and to assess both their potential for environmental evidence and the character of human settlement in and adjacent to them. The following palaeochannel sequences were found: a wide sequence of channels belonging to the Thames itself in Trench 1 (the edge of which was also found in Trench 2), a sequence of widespread alluvial deposits in Trenches 3 and 4, several phases of the former course of a tributary running in from the north in Trench 4, and a later channel cut of unknown age north of the Abbey Millstream in Trench 3. Dr M. Robinson visited the site while Trenches 1, 2 and 4 were open, and assisted in determining the environmental sampling strategy and in the interpretation of the exposed sections.

7.9.1.2 Fourteen bulk samples were taken from Trench 1 and twelve from Trench 4, while five smaller 1 or 2 kg samples were also taken from deposits in Trench 3. Column samples for pollen and sediment analyses were also taken, two from Trench 1 and one from Trench 4. Limited resources made it impossible to assess all of the samples. Fourteen samples, eight from Trench 1 and six from Trench 4, have been assessed for macroscopic plant remains, invertebrate and molluscan remains (see Tables 5 and 6). One further sample from Trench 4 (context 503) was also examined for molluscs by Dr R Eeles, and the results are shown in Table 7. Because the main sequence in Trench 3 was the same as that in Trench 4 the samples from Trench 3 have not been included in this assessment. A mollusc sample from context 403 has however been identified by Dr R Eeles, and the results are shown in Table 8.

7.9.1.3 Three samples were also taken from two pits and a ditch on the gravel terrace in Trench 2 for the recovery of charred plant remains. Samples of 40 litres were processed by the Oxford Archaeology Unit using bulk flotation and the flots collected onto a 500µm mesh. Dried flots were assessed (see Table 9).

7.9.2 Assessment Methods

7.9.2.1 A sub-sample of 200g was taken from each waterlogged sample. The sub-sample was broken down by gentle agitation in warm water. Any organic material held in suspension in the water was washed over onto a 250µm mesh. The resulting flot was washed through a 1mm, 500µm and 250µm mesh. Each fraction held within the upper two sieves was kept wet and was scanned under a binocular microscope at x10 to x20 magnification. Any plant remains present were provisionally identified and the abundance estimated. Dr. M. Robinson made provisional identifications and comments on the insects and molluscs where appropriate. Quantification is recorded as present (+) or abundant (++).

7.9.2.2. Charred flots were scanned under a binocular microscope in the same manner as above. Cereal products (grain and chaff), weed seeds and charcoal were provisionally identified and estimates of abundance made. Remains are recorded on a 2 point scale (+ = 1-10 items, ++ = > 11 items).

7.9.3 Results for Trench One (Table 5)

7.9.3.1 A possible mid-Holocene channel was identified at the bottom of the sequence at the south end of the trench on the basis of woodland molluscs (including *Discus rotundatus*, which does not appear in the Early Holocene) identified by Dr M Robinson during his site visit. The channel contained only two fills, the main fill being a clayey silt deposit (layer 7), and was overlain by later alluvial sediments that also extended over the wider floodplain to the north. Sample 11 from layer 7 was assessed, as was sample 14 from overlying alluvial deposit 4. Both of these samples were lacking in any organic remains other than possible *Phragmites* type (reed) rhizomes which have presumably entered the deposits from reeds growing at a higher level. No further molluscs were seen, and the preservation of molluscs within this early channel appears to be uneven.

7.9.3.2 At the northern end of the trench the lower deposits derive from a secondary channel, whose fills also extended over the mid-Holocene channel further south. Samples from contexts 40, 36 and 35 were assessed (respectively Samples 22, 24 and 25), and context 4 (see Sample 14 above) is equivalent to context 26 higher in the same sequence. Sample 22 was derived from sandy alluvial deposits which included some gravel. Occasional poorly preserved seeds were recognised including *Ranunculus repens* (creeping buttercup), *R. subgen Batrachium* (crowfoot), *Carex* sp. (sedges) and *Eleocharis palustris* (common spike rush), all damp ground or semi-aquatic species. A single mollusc, a *Valvata* sp. is suggestive of slow flowing water. Samples 24 and 23 produced badly preserved peat and frequent woody fragments. Samples 23 also contained large quantities of *Phragmites* type rhizomes. The limited flora represented by sample 24 (notably *Polygonum lapathifolium* and *Alisma plantago-aquatica*) was derived from the banks or muddy shallow slow-flowing water at the edge of a river or stream. Sample 23 is more possibly derived from reed swamp vegetation at the edge of a stream with a background of marsh or damp grassland species (*Ranunculus repens*, *Potentilla anserina*, *Lycopus europaeus*, *Eleocharis palustris*, *Sonchus asper*, *Carex* sp.).

7.9.3.3 At the top of this sequence were further alluvial deposits containing poorly preserved, degraded peats. Two samples were assessed from the top and bottom of layer 25 (samples 17 and 20). The limited flora was generally indicative of muddy banks of a stream or river (eg. *Lycopus europeus* and *Thalictrum flavum*), with some indication of damp grass or meadow (*Ranunculus repens*, *Potentilla anserina*).

7.9.3.4 Alluvial deposits 24 and 23 (samples 18 and 19) lay above these deposits, but since these lie above the level of permanent waterlogging sample 18 contained no organic remains. There were occasional coal fragments. Sample 19 was not available for assessment, although Dr Robinson's visit indicate that it contained a rich molluscan fauna including *Succinea* or *Oxyloma* sp., *Vallonia pulchella* and *Trichia hispida* gp with small quantites of shells from aquatic species. This fauna is indicative of alluvial hay meadows in the Upper Thames Valley (Robinson 1988).

7.9.4 Results for Trench Four (Table 6)

7.9.4.1 The lower deposits in the southern end of Trench Four produced generally silty alluvial deposits with limited organic remains. Context 513 (sample 33) contained mostly roots, while layer 507 above it (sample 32) had a slightly greater organic element. The floras are indicative of slow-flowing or stagnant water through which *Oenanthe aquatica* gp. (water dropwort) was growing with *Ranunculus* subgen *Batrachium* (crowfoot), *Schoenoplectus* sp. (club-rush) and *Alisma plantago-aquatica* (water plantain) growing on the muddy banks of the river or stream. Same damp grassland or marsh ground is suggested in sample 32 by *Ranunculus repens* (creeping buttercup), cf. *Apium graveolens* (wild celery) and *Lycopus europeus* (gipsywort). A small insect fauna was also recognised in sample 32 within which reed swamp type species were noted (*Donacia* or *Plateumaris* sp.).

7.9.4.2 Samples from contexts 503, 502 and 500 in a secondary channel (respectively samples 31, 30 and 27) indicate the presence of, generally, somewhat degraded peats, all suggesting a damp grassland or meadow component, including both a wetter riverside or semi-aquatic and a drier grassland element. Species present from damper grassland include *Caltha palustris* (kingcup, marsh marigold), *Ranunculus* cf. *acris* (meadow buttercup), *R. repens* (creeping buttercup), *Potentilla anserina* (silverweed), *Rumex maritimus* (golden dock), *Eleocharis palustris* (common spike-rush) and *Carex* sp. (sedges). Slightly drier grassland species include *Aphanes arvensis* (parsley-piert), *Daucus carota* (wild carrot), *Prunella vulgaris* (selfheal), *Carduus* sp. (thistle) and *Leontodon* sp. (hawkbit). Several grass seeds were also present. Muddy slow-flowing water is suggested by *Ranunculus* subgen *Batrachium* (crowfoot), *Oenanthe aquatica* (water-dropwort), *Apium nodiflorum* (fool's watercress), and *Alisma plantago-aquatica* (water plantain). Some more open water is possibly suggested by *Potamogeton* sp. (pondweed) in the lowest sediment 503 (sample 31). The muddy streamside flora includes *Schoenoplectus* sp. (club-rush) in addition to the other aquatics. All three samples also include occasional insects, notably suggesting reed swamp vegetation (*Donacia*/*Plateumaris* sp., *Notaris* sp.), stagnant water species (*Hydrobius* sp., *Helophorus* sp.) with some bank side flora and a dung beetle of the genus *Aphodius*. The molluscs include a slow flowing element (eg. *Bithynia* and *Valvata christata*) and species characteristic of slow moving water at the edge of the channel (*Lymnaea truncatula* and *Planorbis planorbis*).

7.9.4.3 The organic channel deposits are sealed by fairly sterile alluvial silts. Similar deposits also appear to have sealed deposits 502 (sample 30) before being partly

eroded by deposit 500 (sample 27). Sample 36 was taken from the overlying alluvial deposits. Organic material was almost totally absent.

7.9.5 Charred plant remains (Table 9)

7.9.5.1 The three features sampled produced a limited range of charred items. Barley (*Hordeum* sp.) and free-threshing and hulled wheats (*Triticum* sp.) were present in layer 207 from pit 206 (sample 7). Grain is most frequently identified, while occasional wheat glume bases were also present. Preservation was not sufficient to enable identification of the hulled wheats as either spelt or emmer. Weed seeds include *Chenopodium album* (fat hen), *Vicia/Lathyrus* sp. (vetch/tare), *Anthemis cotula* (Stinking Mayweed) and *Bromus* subsect *Eubromus* (brome grass). *Anthemis cotula* is characteristic of heavier clay soils and is generally regarded as a Roman introduction. The other weeds are common arable species and are all native to southern Britain.

7.9.5.2 Context 222 from pit 210 (sample 8) also contains a hulled wheat, identified on the basis of glume bases, and indeterminate grain. Context 203 from ditch 204 (sample 9) produced indeterminate wheat and barley grain.

7.9.5.3 Occasional modern weed seeds were present in both sample 7 and 8, while all three samples produced numerous modern roots. It is likely, therefore that a certain amount of mixing and contamination has occurred within the deposits. Given the paucity of remains and the likelihood of mixing, there is no potential for further analysis of these samples.

7.9.6 Molluscs from contexts 503 and 403 by Dr R Eeles.

7.9.6.1 Samples of 1 kg were taken from layers 503 in Trench 4 and 403 in Trench 3. The samples were washed through a 1 mm sieve and the snails were counted. Results are given in Tables 7 and 8.

7.9.6.2 The snail assemblage from context 503 includes many riverine species, and is probably derived largely from overbank flooding, though it also includes some species of slow-moving water or ponds, which may have been living in the stream itself. The assemblage from context 403 contains a similar mixture of riverine and sluggish water species, but contains fewer large shells, and may have derived from numerous overbank events, though the composition of the assemblage would not rule out a mixed river edge community which was not redeposited.

Table 5: The Waterlogged Remains from Trench One

	Trench	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Sample	11	14	17	20	18	22	23	24
	Context	7	4	25	32	24	40	35	36
	Volume (g)	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Waterlogged Seeds									
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Kingcup, Marsh Marigold	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Ranunculus</i> cf. <i>Acris</i>	cf. Meadow Buttercup	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	-	-	+	++	-	+	++	+
<i>Ranunculus sceleratus</i>	Celery-leaved Crowfoot	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Ranunculus</i> subgen <i>Batrachium</i>	Crowfoot	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>Thalictrum flavum</i>	Common Meadow Rue	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Cerastium</i> spp.	Mouse-ear Chickweed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Stellaria media</i> agg.	Chickweed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	Fat Hen	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Atriplex</i> spp.	Orache	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	+
<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Silverweed	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	-
<i>Aphanes arvensis</i>	Parsley-piert	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Oenanthe aquatica</i> gp.	Water-Dropwort	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Daucus carota</i>	Wild carrot	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Aethusa cynapium</i>	Fool's Parsley	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
Cf. <i>Apium graveolens</i>	Wild Celery	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Apium nodiflorum</i>	Fool's Watercress	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Umbelliferae		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Polygonum lapathifolium</i>	Pale persicaria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Rumex maritimus</i>	Golden Dock	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Rumex</i> spp.	Docks	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Urtica urens</i>	Small Nettle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Lycopus europaeus</i>	Gipsywort	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cf. <i>Mentha</i> sp.	Mint	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Carduus</i> sp.	Thistle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Leontodon</i> sp.	Hawkbit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Spiny Milk- or Sow- Thistle	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i>	Water Plantain	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Potamogeton</i> sp.	Pondweed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Iris</i> sp.	Iris/Yellow Flag	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>	Common Spike-rush	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-
<i>Schoenoplectus</i> sp.	Club-Rush	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Carex</i> spp.	Sedges	-	-	+	++	-	+	+	+
Gramineae	Grass, small seeded	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Phragmites</i> type	Reed, rhizomes	-	+	+	-	-	-	++	-
Other Remains									
Insect Fragments		-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+
Caddis fly pupare		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Molluscs		+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-

Table 6: The Waterlogged Remains from Trench Four

	Trench	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Sample	33	32	30	27	36	31
	Context	513	507	502	500	516	503
	Volume (g)	200	200	200	200	200	200
Waterlogged Seeds							
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Kingcup, Marsh Marigold	-	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Ranunculus cf. Acris</i>	cf. Meadow Buttercup	-	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	-	++	++	+	-	+
<i>Ranunculus sceleratus</i>	Celery-leaved Crowfoot	-	-	+	-	-	-
<i>Ranunculus subgen Batrachium</i>	Crowfoot	-	+	+	-	-	-
<i>Thalictrum flavum</i>	Common Meadow Rue	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Cerastium spp.</i>	Mouse-ear Chickweed	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>Stellaria media agg.</i>	Chickweed	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>Atriplex spp.</i>	Orache	-	-	+	-	-	-
<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Silverweed	-	-	+	-	-	+
<i>Aphanes arvensis</i>	Parsley-piert	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>Oenanthe aquatica gp.</i>	Water-Dropwort	++	-	+	-	-	++
<i>Daucus carota</i>	Wild Carrot	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>Cf. Apium graveolens</i>	Wild Celery	-	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Apium nodiflorum</i>	Fool's Watercress	-	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Umbelliferae</i>		-	+	+	+	-	-
<i>Polygonum lapathifolium</i>	Pale persicaria	-	-	-	+	-	+
<i>Rumex maritimus</i>	Golden Dock	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>Rumex spp.</i>	Docks	-	+	+	-	+	+
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle	-	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Urtica urens</i>	Small Nettle	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>Lycopus europaeus</i>	Gipsywort	-	+	+	-	-	-
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal	-	-	+	-	-	-
<i>Cf. Mentha sp.</i>	Mint	-	+	+	+	-	-
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	-	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Carduus sp.</i>	Thistle	-	-	-	+	-	+
<i>Leontodon sp.</i>	Hawkbit	-	-	+	-	-	-
<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i>	Water Plantain	+	+	+	+	-	++
<i>Potamogeton sp.</i>	Pondweed	-	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Iris sp.</i>	Iris/Yellow Flag	-	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>	Common Spike-rush	-	-	++	+	-	-
<i>Schoenoplectus sp.</i>	Club-Rush	++	++	+	+	-	++
<i>Carex spp.</i>	Sedges	+	+	+	+	-	++
<i>Gramineae</i>	Grass, small seeded	-	-	+	+	-	+
<i>Phragmites type</i>	Reed, rhizomes	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Remains							
Indet wood fragments		-	+	-	-	-	-
Insect Fragments		+	+	++	+	-	-
Caddis fly pupare		-	-	-	+	-	-
Molluscs		-	-	+	-	-	-

Table 7. Molluscs from Trench 4 context 503.

	SPECIES	Number of individuals	%
1	Theodoxus fluviatilis	3	0.18
2	Valvata cristata	4	0.24
3	Valvata piscinalis	66	3.88
4	Valvata macrostoma (?)	3	0.18
5	Bithynia tentaculata	396	23.28
6	Bithynia leachi	29	1.70
6	Bithynia spp.	49	2.88
7	Physa fontinalis	1	0.06
8	Acroloxus lacustris	13	0.76
9	Ancylus fluviatilis	2	0.12
#	Lymnaea stagnalis	12	0.71
#	Lymnaea palustris	27	1.59
#	Lymnaea truncatula	17	1.00
#	Lymnaea peregra	38	2.23
#	Lymnaea spp.	3	0.18
#	Planorbarius corneus	6	0.35
#	Armiger crista	1	0.06
#	Planorbis contortus	17	1.00
#	Planorbis planorbis	89	5.23
#	Planorbis carinatus	9	0.53
#	Anisus leucostoma	286	16.81
#	Anisus vortex	5	0.29
#	Gyraulus albus	26	1.53
#	Gyraulus laevis	114	6.70
#	Gyraulus spp.	1	0.06
#	Sphaerium corneum	8	0.47
#	Pisidium amnicum	15	0.88
#	Pisidium spp.	375	22.05
#	Succinea/Oxyloma spp.	63	3.70
#	Vallonia pulchella	4	0.24
#	Trichia spp.	19	1.12
	Total	1701	

Table 8: Molluscs from Trench 3, context 403.

	SPECIES	NUMBER	%
1	Valvata piscinalis	54	11.32
2	Bithynia tentaculata	177	37.11
3	Bithynia leachi	6	1.26
4	Acroloxus lacustris	5	1.05
5	Physa fontinalis	1	0.21
6	Lymnaea peregra	23	4.82
7	Lymnaea stagnalis	1	0.21
8	Planorbis corneus	2	0.42
9	Planorbis contortus	1	0.21
#	Planorbis planorbis	11	2.31
#	Planorbis carinatus	8	1.68
#	Anisus leucostoma	10	2.10
#	Gyraulus albus	6	1.26
#	Sphaerium corneum	18	3.77
#	Pisidium amnicum	47	9.85
#	Pisidium spp.	93	19.50
#	Succinea/Oxyloma spp.	14	2.94
	Total	477	

Table 9. Charred plant remains.

	Sample	7	8	9
	Context	206	222	203
	Sample Volume	40L	40L	40L
	Feature type	Pit	pit	Ditch
	Date	Iron Age	Iron Age	Iron Age
Charred Remains				
Triticum sp. free-threshing	Wheat, free-threshing grain	+	-	-
Triticum spelta/dicoccum	Spelt/Emmer wheat grain	+	-	-
Triticum spelta/dicoccum	Spelt/Emmer wheat glume base	+	+	-
Triticum sp.	Wheat grain	+	-	+
Hordeum sp.	Barley grain	++	-	+
Cerealia indet	Indeterminate grain	+	+	+
Chenopodium album	Fat Hen	+	-	-
Vicia/Lathyrus sp.	Vetch/Tare	+	-	-
Anthemis cotula	Stinking Mayweed	+	-	-
Bromus subsect Eubromus	Brome grass	+	-	+
Querucs sp.	Oak charcoal	+	+	-

8 Discussion of the results

8.1 The Abbey Meadows

8.1.1 The origin and date of the alluvial deposits is uncertain. The only sherd from the lower alluvial deposits was Roman, and there was certainly a significant Roman presence on the gravel terraces just north of the Abbey Meadows, but this sherd had been cut into a rectangle and reused, and the deposits could therefore have been later. Layer 704 contained a medieval sherd, but this again could have been residual.

8.1.2 All three alluvial deposits have the same red-brown staining as the upper alluvial material found in boreholes T3-T5. This is probably a secondary chemical effect rather than an indication that the deposits in the boreholes were the same, though in broad terms they occupy the same stratigraphic position.

8.1.3 The finds, and particularly the limestones found within the alluvial deposits, show that these deposits are very unlikely to be of natural origin. The force generated by flooding on the Thames in the late prehistoric and historic period has not been sufficient to carry stones of this size any distance. It is possible that the presence of the weir upstream might in extreme flood conditions have created a greater flow when the weir was breached, but in either case the stones would have to have derived from a building within the Abbey Meadows area upriver of the test pits. The lack of mortar on any of the limestones however did not suggest that the limestones were derived from the robbing of a building.

8.1.4 Alternatively the deposits could have been dumped from elsewhere, perhaps to create a more solid surface on parts of the floodplain. Against this, the stones did not form a clear horizon or surface, and the matrix in which the finds occurred appeared to be uniformly clay, and was the same in both test-pits 30 m apart, suggesting either very widespread dumping or that the clay was indeed alluvial. The dumping of stones and other material on this area could have taken place at any time during or after the Roman period.

8.2 Discussion of the results from the Thames-side strip.

8.2.1 One of the incidental aims of the archaeological evaluation was to assess the accuracy of the geological maps, as previous work in the Vineyard immediately north of the Park has shown that clays within man-made features have been misinterpreted as geological deposits, and these have resulted in the mapping of non-existent bands of Kimmeridge clay. Evaluation has shown that the Soil Survey map reflects much more accurately the outline of the gravel terrace (both from aerial photographic evidence and from trial-trenching) than does the map of Drift deposits. Together with the borehole data, the evaluation has confirmed that the deposits both within the Abbey Meadows and north of the eastern arm of the Abbey Millstream are alluvial deposits on an extensive floodplain. The ground radar survey also appears to confirm that a narrow zone of floodplain deposits also lies north of the western arm of the Abbey Millstream in the area of the Abbey Car Park. These deposits are not dated, but the environmental evidence indicates an open landscape, which is likely to be either of Early Holocene or Later Prehistoric date.

8.2.2 While the aerial photographs did not show any archaeological features within the Thames-side strip, Trench 2 revealed a high density of archaeological activity. A group of Iron Age pits was found, with an arc of postholes just to the north which

probably indicates a roundhouse, and another large Iron Age pit further south. Although the postholes were undated, they are very similar to circular structures found under the Abbey Day Centre just to the north-west (Keevill 1992, Fig. 7), though the excavator made little of the Iron Age aspects of his discoveries, preferring to concentrate upon the Saxon features and finds. Iron Age roundhouses of very similar type have also been found locally at Ashville Trading Estate on the west of Abingdon (Parrington 1978, Fig.17).

8.2.3 The evaluation has established that there was Iron Age settlement within the Thames-side strip. The ditches in Trench 1 include a boundary of the same period, showing that there were associated fields or enclosures some way to the west. It is not possible to estimate the extent of activity from a single evaluation trench, but the density of features within Trench 2, and other magnetic anomalies either side of it, suggest that it may have been considerable. This has prompted a re-evaluation of the evidence from beneath the Abbey Day Centre, which together with this newly discovered site was clearly an extensive Iron Age settlement either side of the stream that appears in the Roman period in Trench 4. Since Iron Age roundhouse gullies were found extending into the Victorian garden (Allen 1990), there is now evidence for Iron Age settlement both at the west and east ends of the Park.

8.2.4 Initial interpretation of the magnetometer survey had suggested that there were linear features both parallel to the Late Saxon ditches under the Abbey Day Centre (see Trench 4) and at right angles to them (Trench 2 ditches 204 and 225). The former however proved to be a limestone path or causeway of late Medieval date, and the finds from ditches 204 and 225 suggest an Iron Age date. It is possible that the finds from these ditches are residual, since there were plenty of Iron Age features in the area, and the ditches cut through soilmarks that could represent Iron Age pits. There were however no Late Saxon finds at all, and ditch fill 203 contained the largest assemblage of Iron Age finds from the evaluation. It is therefore more likely that these were Iron Age ditches associated with the other settlement features. The only good evidence of Saxon activity is ditch 208, on a different alignment to 204/225, which may have been part of a field or enclosure system, but was clearly remote from contemporary settlement. Gully 530 in Trench 4 is undated.

8.2.5 The small assemblage of struck flint from Trenches 1, 2 and 4 indicates Neolithic activity at various points along the terrace edge. These finds supplement a small assemblage recovered from beneath the Abbey Day Centre (Keevill 1992, 67) and a larger group of struck flint of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Early Bronze Age date found during excavations in the Vineyard immediately north of the Abbey Gardens. While there were no concentrations, and all of the material was found in residual contexts, Neolithic activity in this area may not have been inconsiderable given the limited scale of evaluation, and in particular the small amount of excavation carried out by hand. Work elsewhere along the Thames at Yarnton and Dorney has shown that low numbers of struck flints are often the background to activity areas occurring at intervals, with much greater concentrations of finds.

8.2.6 Eight worked wooden objects were retrieved from the exposed sections of the palaeochannel peat deposits in Trenches 1 and 4. These include part of a morticed oak plank, oak and non-oak stakes, a peg and roundwood rods suitable for wattles. One of the stakes shows evidence of coppicing. Those from Trench 4 are of Roman date, those from Trench 1 are undated, though Mark Robinson believes the deposits to be Saxon. The recovery of this number of worked wooden objects from a very limited evaluation suggests that a large collection of worked wood of varied character exists within the palaeochannels in the Thames-side strip. One of the

stakes in Trench 4 was found in situ driven vertically into the stream deposits, and wooden structures may therefore survive within this area. This material has potential not only in itself but also for the study of woodland management in later prehistory.

8.2.7 The environmental evidence from the palaeochannels is of considerable potential. Dr Robinson believes that the deposits in Trench 1 represent the main Thames alluvial sequence, which has rarely been observed in its entirety elsewhere. While many of the samples assessed from this trench were not of good quality, he has commented that he observed better preservation on site, and believes that the limited assessment possible in this study has not done full justice to the potential of the deposits. The deposits from Trench 4 are clearly of good quality for environmental remains, and have already provided more detail. Taken together, the deposits have provided valuable evidence for several past environments on the floodplain, including reedswamp, damp grassland and hay meadow.

9 Conclusions

9.1 The Abbey Meadows

9.1.1 Trenching has shown that the ground surface of the paddling pool area was not significantly truncated by the landscaping in 1963-4. The area is clearly part of the alluvial floodplain of the Thames, and contains both Roman and medieval finds.

9.1.2. It is possible that a Roman or medieval building stood upriver of the test-pits, and that debris from this was redistributed by flooding. Alternatively, the gradual build-up of alluvium was supplemented by deliberate dumping of stones and other cultural material at some stage to firm up the ground.

9.1.3 A sensitive impact level has been established for any proposed alterations to this part of the Park. Significant archaeological deposits are sealed by only 0.2 m of topsoil in the Paddling Pool area, but in the area dumped upon in the 1960s appear to occur at a depth varying between 0.7 m and 1.1 m from the modern ground surface.

9.2 The Thames-side strip

9.2.1 The evaluation has established a sensitive impact level for any alterations proposed for the Thames-side strip. On the gravel terrace significant archaeological deposits are overlain by c. 0.4 m of ploughsoil and topsoil. In the palaeochannels a crude Medieval causeway was found only 0.35 m below ground level, but in general significant archaeology (in the form of worked wooden artefacts) lies nearly 1 m below ground.

10 Archive

10.1 The records of the excavation are being microfilmed, and a copy deposited with the National Monuments Record.

10.2 The archive, comprising a copy of the report, the paper records and the finds, will be deposited with the Oxfordshire County Museums Service.

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Table 10. Contexts and Finds

Trench 1

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation	Flint and stone	Pottery	Bone	Worked wood	Other	Sample	Date
1	Layer	Brown silty loam	Topsoil							
2	Layer	Yell-brown silty loam + gravel	Ploughsoil					Brick, glass		
3	Layer (=22)	Calcareous gravel	Natural gravel							
4	Layer (=26)	Dark grey-brown silty clay	Alluvium						S14*	
5	Layer	Brownish-grey silty clay	Levee deposit			5?			S13	
6	Layer	Dark grey silty clay	Levee deposit						S12	
7	Fill of 9	Blue-grey silty clay	Channel fill						S11*	Meso/Neo
8	Fill of 9	Orange-brown silty clay + gravel	Channel fill							Meso/Neo
9	Cut	Linear, steep side and flat base	Palaeochannel							
10	Cut	Linear, V-profiled	Gully/ditch							
11	Fill of 10	Yell-brown silty loam + gravel	Gully fill		1 ?IA ?S					IA or Saxon
12	Cut	Linear, sloping sides flat base	Ditch/gully							
13	Fill of 12	Grey-brown silty loam + gravel	Ditch fill							
14	Layer	Orange-grey silty loam + gravel	Ploughsoil							
15	Fill of 19	Brown-orange sandy silt + gravel	Ditch fill							
16	Fill of 19	Orange-grey sandy silt + gravel	Ditch fill							
17	Fill of 19	Grey clayey silt	Alluvial ditch fill							
18	Fill of 19	Grey-black organic clayey silt	Primary ditch fill						S15	
19	Cut	Linear steep sides rounded base	Boundary ditch							
20	Layer	Brown sandy silt	Alluvium		1 MIA					MIA
21	Layer	Yellow-grey silty clay + gravel	Primary channel fill							
22	Layer (=3)	Light brown sand and gravel	Natural gravel							
23	Layer	V dark brown clay loam + sand	Alluvial topsoil						S19	
24	Layer	Orange-brown silty clay	Alluvium						S18*	
25	Layer	Blackish-brown organic silt	Alluvium						S17*	
26	Layer (=4)	Grey-brown organic clayey silt	Alluvium	3 fl, 1 qtz pebble			Stakes 30 and 31		S16	
27	Fill of 28	Dark grey silty clay	Alluvial ditch fill	4 bnt qtz pebble	4 MIA					MIA
28	Cut	Linear sloping sides flat base	Boundary ditch							
29	Layer	Grey-brown-blue mottled clay	Alluvium							
30	Object	Wooden stake (see report)								
31	Object	Wooden stake (see report)								
32	Layer	White-grey clayey silt + iron pan	Clayey alluvium						S20*	
33	Layer	Reddish-brown organic silt	Alluvium							
34	Layer	Lt brownish-grey silty clay	Alluvium							
35	Fill of 38=47	Dk red-brown organic silty clay	Backswamp deposit				Peg 42, wattle 43		S23*	
36	Fill of 38=47	Dk brown/black organic silt	Backswamp deposit						S24*	
37	Layer	Pinkish-grey silty sand	Early channel fill							
38	Cut (?=47)	Linear shelving side flat base	Palaeochannel							

Table10. Contexts and Finds

Context	Type	Description	Flint and stone	Pottery	Bone	Worked wood	Other	Sample	Date
39	Layer	Light orange silty sand + gravel	Early channel fill						
40	Fill of 38=47	Orange-grey silty sand + gravel	Backswamp deposit	1 1st				S22*, S25	
41	Layer	Pale brown-grey sandy clay	Early channel fill						
42	Object	Wooden peg? (see report)							
43	Object	Wooden wattle rod? (see report)							
44	Layer	Sticky blue-yellow mottled clay	Early channel fill						
45	Fill of 38=47	Blue-grey/or-brown mottled clay	Levee deposit						
46	Fill of 38=47	Orange-brown silty clay + gravel	Early channel fill						
47	Cut (?=38)	Linear shelving side flat base	Palaeochannel						
<i>Trench 2</i>									
200	Layer	Grey-brown silty loam + gravel	Topsoil						
201	Layer	Or-brown sandy silt + gravel	Ploughsoil						
202	Layer	Grey/orange/yellow sand/gravel	Natural gravel						
203	Fill of 204	Grey-brown sandy silt + gravel	Rubbish deposit in ditch	2 fl, 2 bnt 1st, 1qtz, 1sst	35 MIA	4id, 31?	Charcoal, FC	S9*	MIA
204	Cut	Linear steep sides rounded base	Ditch						
205	Group of PHs	Semicircle of 6 postholes	Roundhouse?						
206	Cut	Circle concave sides flat base	Pit						
207	Fill of 206	Dark brown silty clay (+ gravel)	Rubbish deposit in pit	1 fl, 4 gr, 2 bnt 1st, 4qtz	12 MIA	6id, 17?		S7*	MIA
208	Cut	Linear sloping sides flat base	Ditch/gully						
209	Fill of 208	Yellow-brown silty sand + gravel	Ditch fill		1 RB, 1 S				Roman
210	Cut	Sub-rectangular bowl-profiled	Pit or ditch terminal						
211	Fill of 210	Yellow-brown silty clay (+gravel)	Rubbish deposit in pit	6 bnt 1st, 1sst.	4 MIA	1id, 5?	FC		MIA
212	Cut	Linear bowl-profiled	Gully						
213	Fill of 212	Brown sandy silt + gravel	Gully fill		1 MIA	1?			MIA
214	Cut	Circle steep sides cupped base	Posthole						
215	Fill of 214	Red-brown silty loam + gravel	Silting up of posthole						
216	Cut	circle sloping sides flat base	Posthole						
217	Fill of 216	Red-brown silty loam	Silting up of posthole						
218	Cut	circle sloping sides flat base	Posthole						
219	Fill of 218	Red-brown silty loam + gravel	Silting up of posthole						
220	Cut	Circle vertical sides flat base	Posthole						
221	Fill of 220	Red-brown silty loam	Silting up of posthole						
222	Fill of 210	Grey clayey silt + gravel	Primary pit fill		3 MIA		Charcoal	S8*	MIA
223	Fill of 206	Or-brown sandy loam + gravel	Erosion spill in pit						
224	Fill of 206	Dark brown sandy loam + gravel	Primary pit fill						
225	Cut	Linear steep sides rounded base	Ditch						
226	Fill of 225	Grey-brown sandy silt + gravel	Ditch fill		1 MIA	4?	FC (wattle)		MIA
227	Fill (=203)	Grey-brown clay silt + gravel	Rubbish deposit in ditch				Charcoal		

Table 10. Contexts and Finds

Context	Type	Description	Flint and stone	Pottery	Bone	Worked wood	Other	Sample	Date
228	Cut (=204)	Linear sloping sides flat base	Ditch						
229	Layer	Orange-brown sandy silt	Prehistoric subsoil						
230	Layer	Orange-brown sandy silt (+gravel)	Prehistoric subsoil						
231	Layer	Brown-grey clay silt + sand/gravel	Primary channel fill						
232	Layer (=236)	Yellow-brown silty clay + gravel	Upcast or bank	Small 1st frags					
233	Layer	Red-brown clay + iron pan	Alluvial channel fill						
234	Cut	Linear sloping sides cupped base	Gully or treehole						
235	Fill of 234	Brown-grey clay silt + iron pan	Gully or treehole fill						
236	Layer (=231)	Brown-grey sandy silt + gravel	Primary channel fill						
<i>Trench 3 South</i>									
400	Layer	Dark brown humic silt + roots	Alluvial topsoil						
401	Fill of 404	Sticky brown-grey silty clay	Alluvial channel fill						
402	Fill of 404	Dark brown organic silt	Channel fill					S42	
403	Fill of 404	Dark grey clayey silt + shells	Fill of active channel					S4*	
404	Cut	Linear sloping edge no bottom	Palaeochannel						
405	Layer	Lt brown-grey clay	Alluvial channel fill						
406	Layer (=411)	Sticky grey/yellow mottled clay	Alluvial channel fill						
407	Layer (=412)	Sticky grey clayey silt	Alluvial channel fill						
408	Layer (=413)	Sticky brown organic silt	Reedswamp/marsh					S2, S3	
409	Layer	Sticky dk grey organic clayey silt	Channel fill					S5, S6	
<i>Trench 3 North</i>									
410	Layer	Dark brown humic silt + roots	Alluvial topsoil						
411	Layer (=406)	Sticky yell/grey mottled silt clay	Alluvial channel fill						
412	Layer (=407)	Sticky grey silty clay	Alluvial channel fill						
413	Layer (=408)	Sticky brown organic silt	Reedswamp/marsh						
414	Layer	Grey organic silt (+ gravel/sand)	Fluvial channel fill					S1	
415	Layer	Blue-grey sandy gravel	Channel bottom						
<i>Trench 4</i>									
500	Layer (=521)	Dk grey-brown organic silty clay	Fluvial channel fill?			Plank 35		S27*	Roman
501	Layer	Sticky dk grey clay + sand lens	Alluvial channel fill						
502	Fill of 504	Dk brown organic clay	Fluvial channel fill			Stakes 34, 44, 43		S29, S30*	Roman
503	Fill of 504	Dk grey silty clay + snails	Fluvial channel fill	1 RB				S31*	Roman
504	Cut	Linear saucer-profiled	Palaeochannel						
505	Layer (?=508)	Sticky grey clay	Alluvial channel fill						
506	Layer (?=412)	Sticky dark grey silty clay	Alluvial channel fill						
507	Layer (?=413)	Sticky dk brown organic silty clay	Reedswamp/marsh					S32*	

Table 10. Contexts and Finds

Context	Type	Description	Flint and stone	Pottery	Bone	Worked wood	Other	Sample	Date
508	Layer (?=505)	Dk grey silty clay + black mottles	Alluvial channel fill		1id,1?				
509	Layer (?=506)	Sticky pinkish-grey clay + sand	Alluvial channel fill						
510	Layer	Yellow sandy gravel	Natural gravel						
511	Cut	Linear shelving N side, no bottom	Palaeochannel						
512	Layer (?=507)	Dk purple-brown organic clay silt	Reedswamp/marsh						
513	Layer (?=414)	Grey organic silt, a little sand	Fluvial channel fill					S33*	
514	Layer	Brown silty loam	Topsoil						
515	Layer	Sticky grey-brown silty clay	Alluvium						
516	Layer	Compact or-grey silty clay	Alluvium				Charcoal	S36*	
517	Layer	Lt grey-brown clayey silt	Alluvium					S37	
518	Cut	Linear saucer-profiled	Stream channel						
519	Fill of 518	Sticky grey-brown silty clay	Fluvial channel fill	4 1st.					
520	Layer (?=521)	Dk grey-brown organic clay silt	Fluvial channel fill?					S39	
521	Layer (=500)	Dk brown organic clayey silt	Fluvial channel fill					S40	
522	Cut	Linear bowl-profiled	Man-made channel	2 Pmed					Pmed
523	Fill of 522	Or-brown clay loam +sand/gravel	Backfill of channel cut		3id,35?		Charcoal,tile		
524	Layer	Sticky yellow clayey silt + gravel	Primary channel fill						
525	Cut	Irregular sloping sides flat base	Treehole?						
526	Fill of 530	Compact grey slightly silty clay	Gully fill	1 fl., 5 + 1st			Charcoal		
527	Fill of 525	Brown-yellow sandy silt + gravel	Treehole fill						
528	Layer	Or-brown clayey silt + staining	Alluvium						
529	Layer	Limestones, pebbles and gravel	Causeway?	2 Med			Charcoal		Medieval
530	Cut	Linear steep sides and flat base	Gully or ditch						
531	Layer	Or-grey silty clay + staining	Alluvium				Charcoal		
<i>Trench 5</i>									
701	Layer (=711)	Dark brown silty loam	Topsoil						
702	Layer (=712)	Mixed loams, clays & silts	Dumping	20thC			Glass, coal, etc.		AD 1964
703	Layer (=713)	Grey-brown clayey silt	Recently buried topsoil						
704	Layer (=714)	Grey silty clay + gravel/ pebbles	Reworked alluvium	1 M	1?				Medieval?
705	Layer (=715)	Sticky grey clayey silt	Alluvium with dumping	1RB	2id,1?				Roman
706	Layer (=716)	Blue-grey silty clay	Alluvium				Charcoal	S41	
<i>Trench 6</i>									
711	Layer (=701)		Topsoil						
712	Layer (=702)		Dumping						
713	Layer (=703)		Recently buried topsoil						
714	Layer (=704)		Reworked alluvium						
715	Layer (=705)		Alluvium with dumping		1?				Roman?
716	Layer (=706)		Alluvium						

Table 10. Contexts and Finds

Key:

Stone: fl = flint; qtz = quartzite; bnt = burnt; lst = limestone; sst = sandstone.

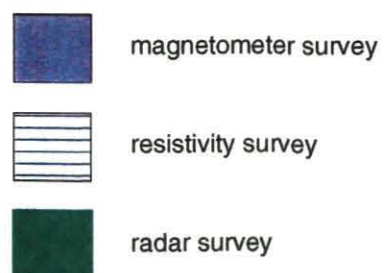
Pottery: IA = Iron Age; MIA = Middle Iron Age; RB = Roman; S = Saxon; Med = Medieval; Pmed = Post-medieval.

Bone: numbers refer to identified bones and ?(unidentified) bones. See Table for details. See Table for details.

Other: FC = fired clay.

Sample: Sample numbers are given where environmental samples were taken. Those with asterisks were assessed.

Date: Meso/Neo (6500-2700 BC); IA (700BC-43 AD); MIA (350BC-0AD); Roman (AD43-AD400); Saxon (AD400-AD950); Medieval (AD1066-AD1540); Post-medieval (AD1540-AD1900).



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Abingdon Abbey Grounds and Abbey Meadows Feasibility Study

Geophysical Survey 1998

Survey Location

Scale

1:2500

Figure 1

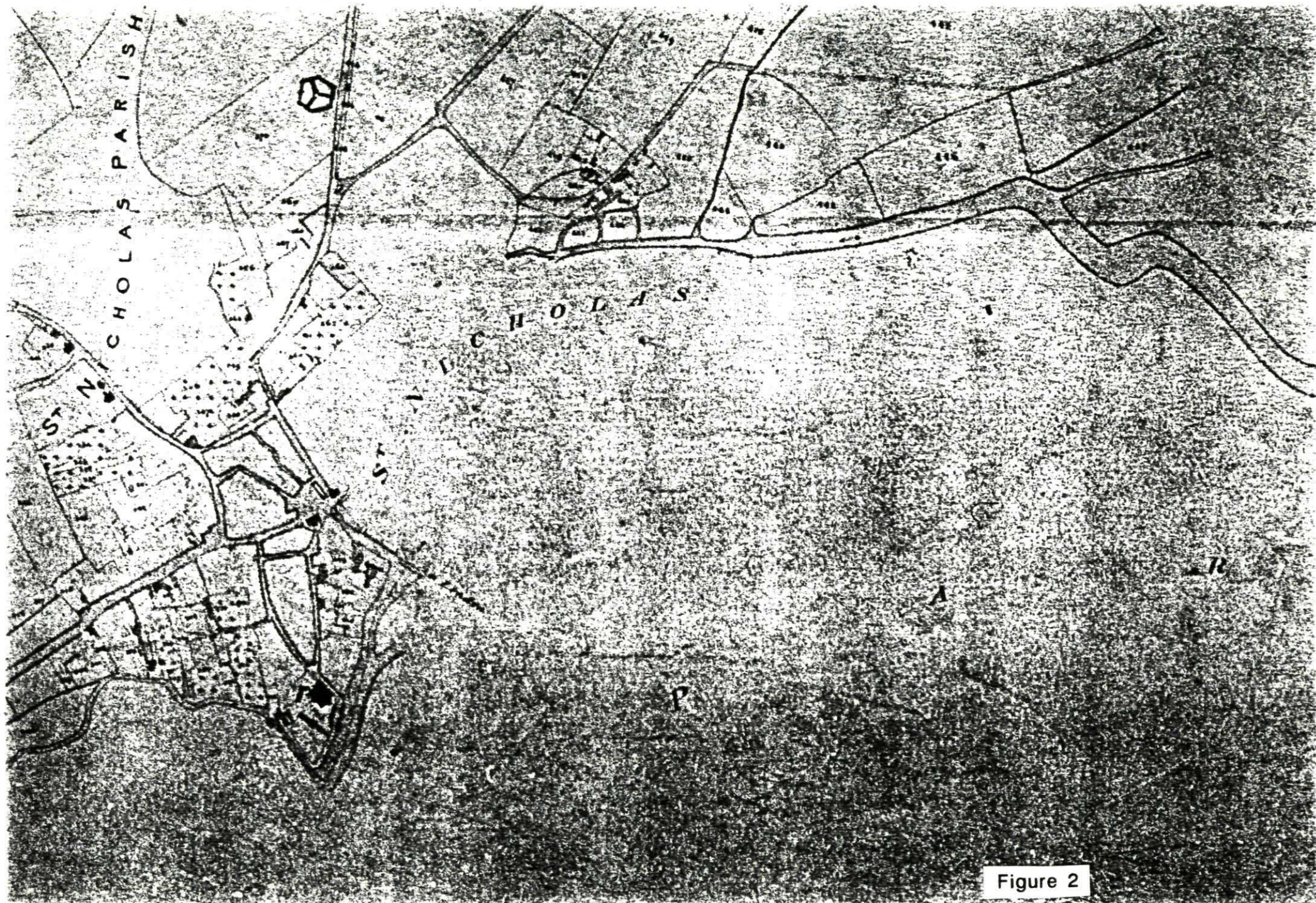


Figure 2



Figure 3

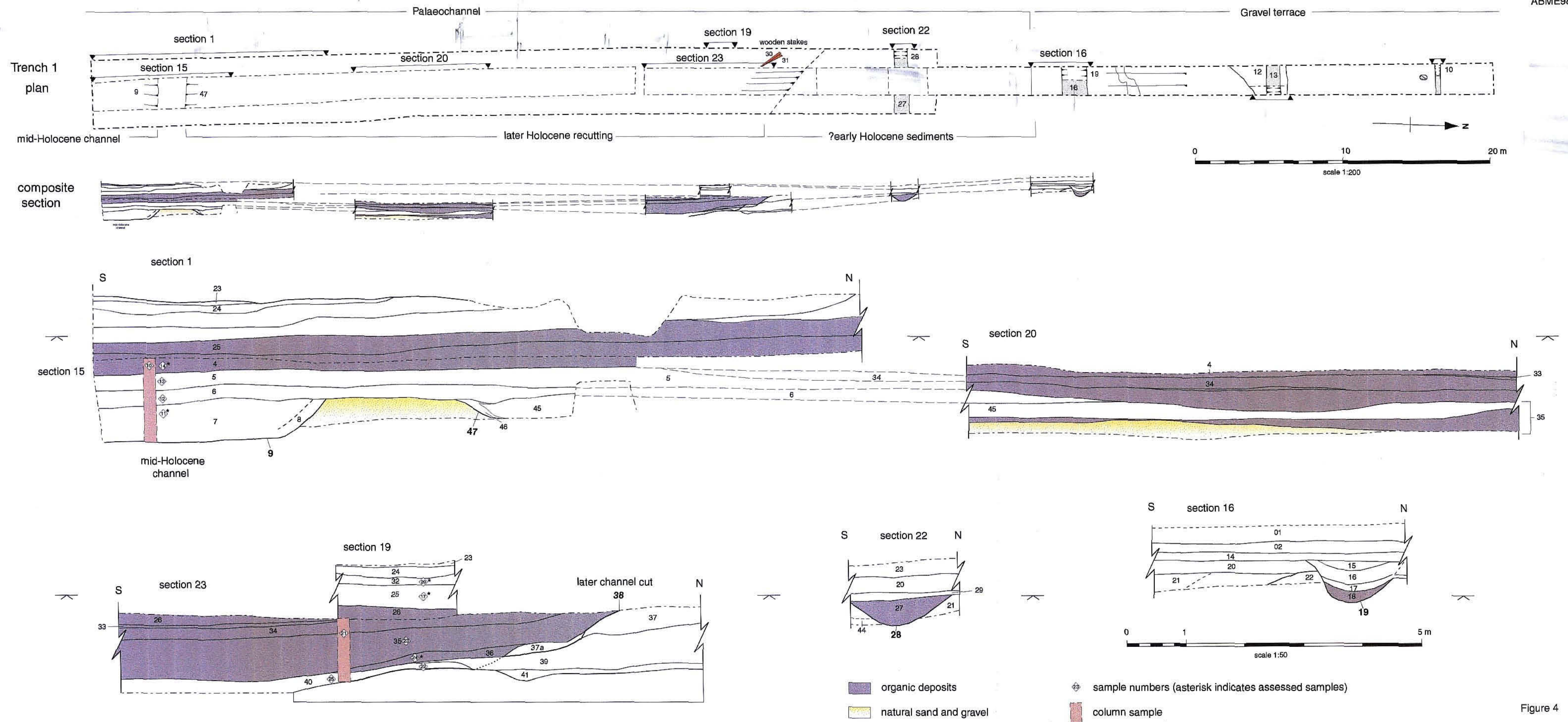


Figure 4

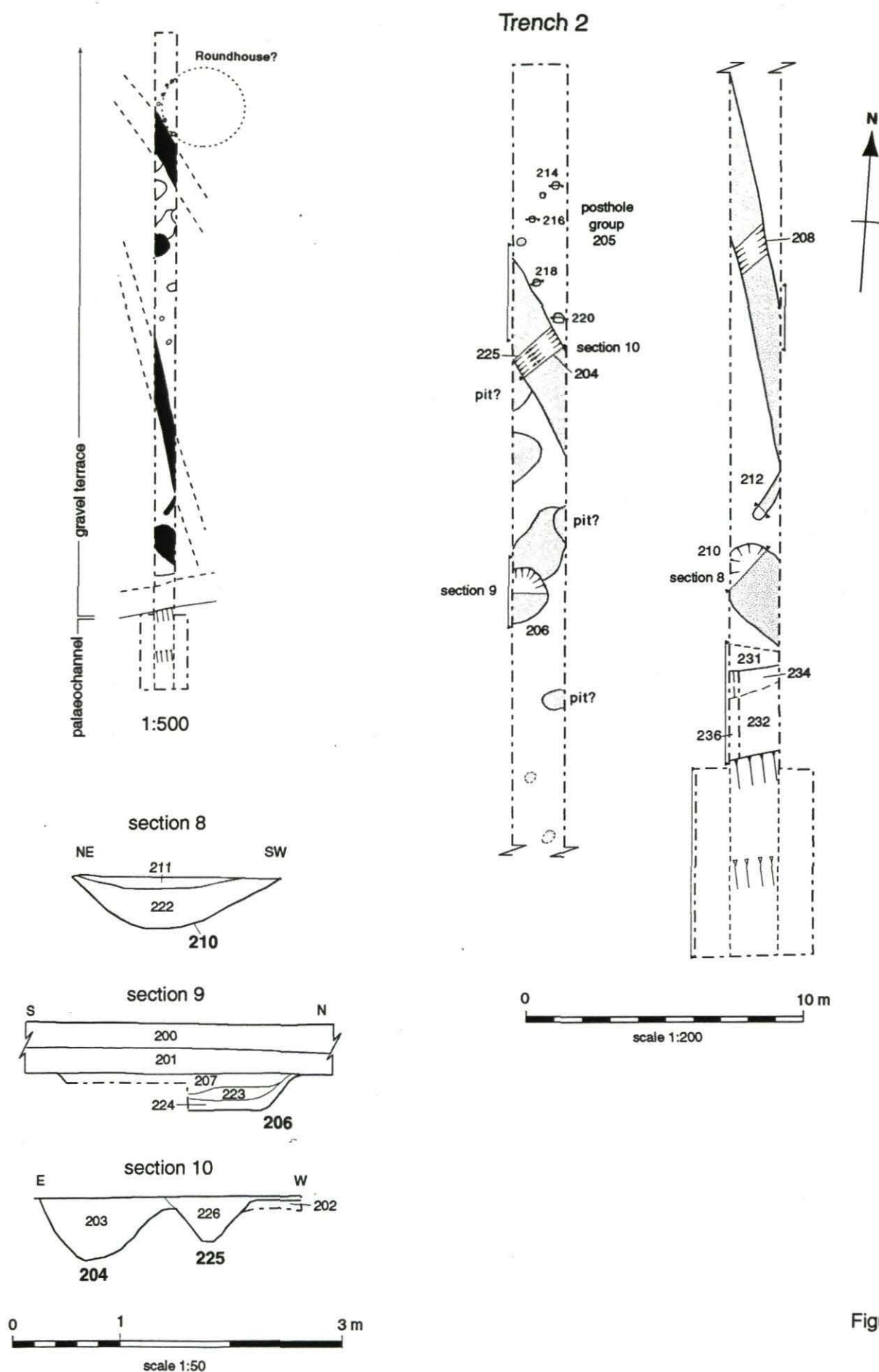


Figure 5

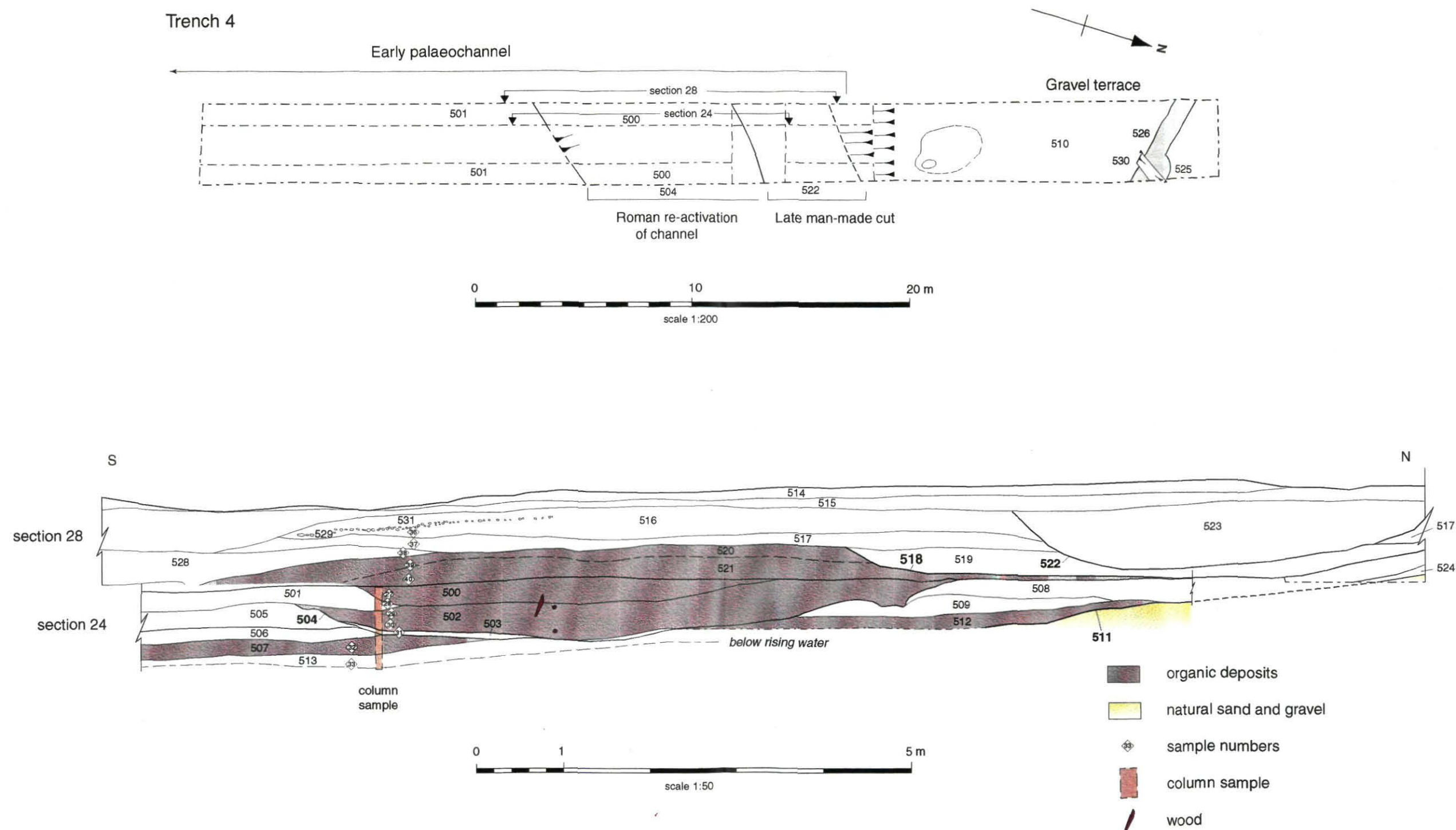
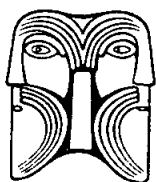


Figure 6



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