

CLIFTON HAMPDEN (OX)

# CLIFTON HAMPDEN FULLAMORE FARM

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

## CLIFTON HAMPDEN FULLAMORE FARM

### ASSESSMENT FOR THAMES WATER UTILITIES

#### Proposed Didcot to Oxford trunk main

#### Introduction

An assessment of the area near Culham where crop marks have revealed ring ditches, linear ditched boundaries and pit clusters was undertaken in order to ensure that the final route of the proposed pipeline in this area avoided any monuments. The proposed route lies along the parish boundaries of Clifton Hampden and Culham and just S of two ring ditches. Along this parish boundary a build-up of soil was observed which it was thought might have been a medieval headland associated with the practice of ridge and furrow agriculture.

The site lies on the First Gravel Terrace to the E of the parish boundary on land owned by Mr Veitch.

#### Strategy

Five trenches were positioned in order to investigate the probable headland, examine a major linear cropmark feature and establish the presence or absence of archaeological features and deposits adjacent to the known monuments. All the trenches were machine-dug (by JCB) and were 30 metres long.

### RESULTS

#### TRENCH A

Trench A was situated 15 metres S of two known ring ditches (Fig. 1). Immediately below 0.30 m of modern plough soil 0.40 m of an earlier ploughsoil of probable medieval date was encountered. This was a light brown/orange sandy loam with 2% gravel and overlay 0.20 m of what seemed to be another ploughsoil, as yet undated.

Under the ploughsoils were deposits of alluvium. The upper 0.20 m was a mottled orange/brown which contained one abraded pottery sherd of Roman date. The lower alluvium was 0.40 m thick and was dark blue/grey; it contained some waterlogged organic material. Natural was encountered at a depth of 46.70 m OD. No archaeological features were seen.

## **TRENCH B**

Trench B was situated in the SW corner of the field and contained the same ploughsoils as in Trench A. The SE end of this trench also showed a buildup of alluvium similar to that found in Trench A. In the northern 13 metres of the trench a dark grey silty occupation layer was found which contained some fragments of late Bronze Age pottery along with three fragments of flint (core) and a small quantity of burnt flint (pot boilers). This layer was cut by a undated ditch aligned NW/SE which had a recut on its eastern edge.

Natural gravel was encountered at a depth of 47.29 m OD.

## **TRENCHES C, D and E**

Trenches C, D and E are all situated approx 8.0 m E of the parish boundary (Fig. 1). All three trenches have a similar buildup of ploughsoils, ranging from 0.30 m thick in Trench D to 0.55m in Trench C. Below this and old ground surface layer was encountered which on average was 0.25 m thick. This layer contained fragments of late Bronze Age pottery.

## **TRENCH C**

This trench was positioned to cut the major linear feature seen in aerial photographs running across the countryside on a NE/SW orientation. It was excavated by machine and was found to be 2.75 m wide and 1.20 m deep, cutting through the late Bronze Age ground surface, but ploughing has truncated its uppermost levels. From what remained of the upper fills late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery was recovered. No dating evidence was recovered from the lower fills.

Natural sand was encountered at a depth of 49.00 m OD.

## **TRENCH D**

Trench D was located opposite linear cropmarks and probable pit clusters on the other side of the parish boundary. Two small pits were recorded in this trench, one in the SW corner, the other in the middle of the trench. The pit in the middle of the trench was oval in plan (0.70 m x 0.50 m by 0.23m in depth) and contained a semi-articulated skeleton of a sheep/goat along with some late Bronze Age pottery.

Natural sand was encountered at a depth of 49.20 m OD.

## **TRENCH E**

This trench contained no archaeological features. It was situated further up the

hill than the others and contained less ploughsoils and less of the old ground surface.

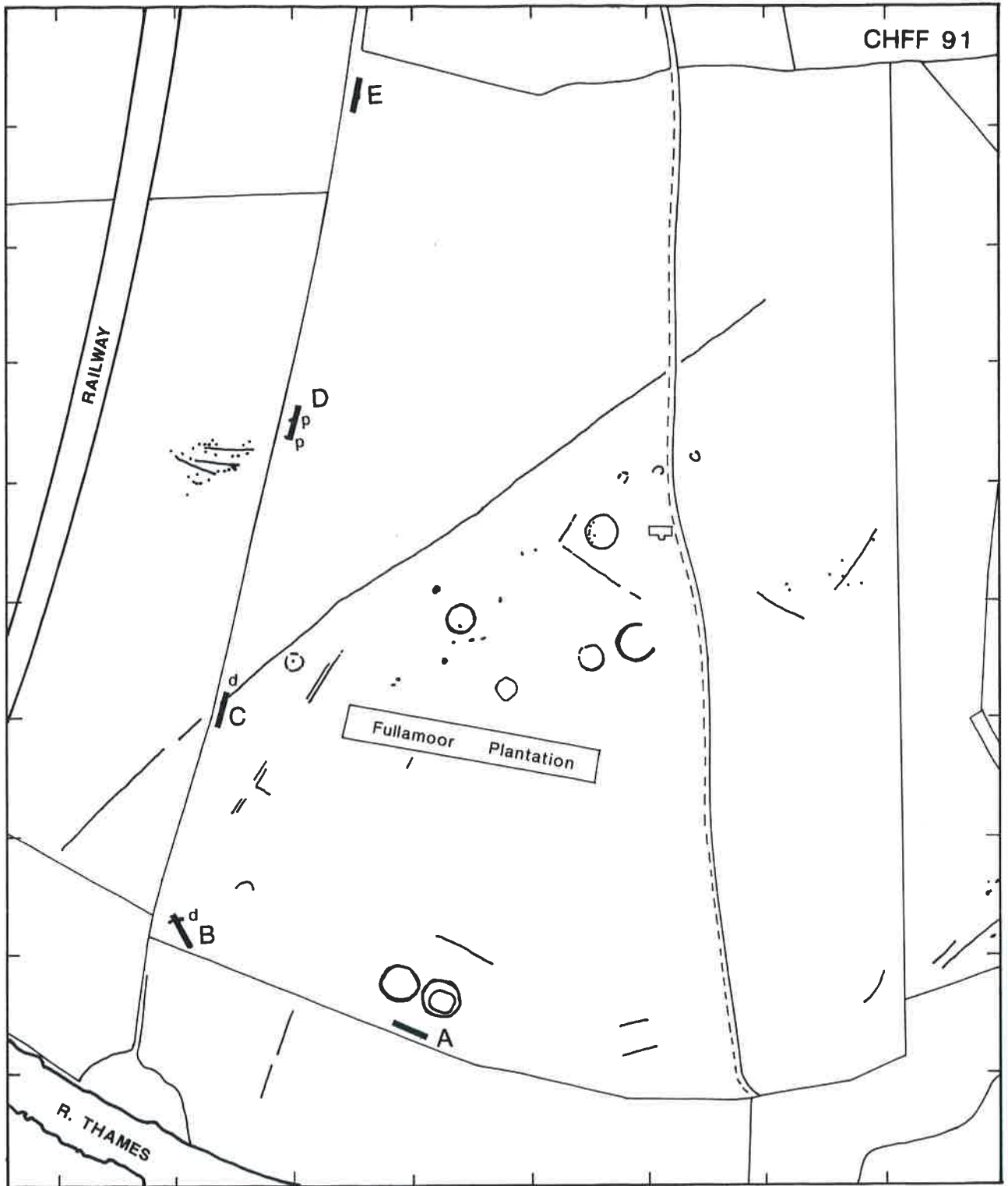
Natural sand was encountered at a depth of 48.50 m OD.

## CONCLUSIONS

Trenches C - D confirmed that the buildup of soil along the parish boundary was a headland. An old ground surface survives, protected by the headland, and features dating to the late Bronze Age are cut into it. The old ground surface also contained late Bronze Age pottery.

No features were found in or under the alluvium, the top of which appeared to have been ploughed. The Roman sherd could result from ploughing in the Roman period or could have been disturbed from the gravel terrace in the medieval period.

OAU  
13 5 91



100 0 500 m.

— B Trenches

p Pits

○ Cropmarks

d Ditches



Fig. 1

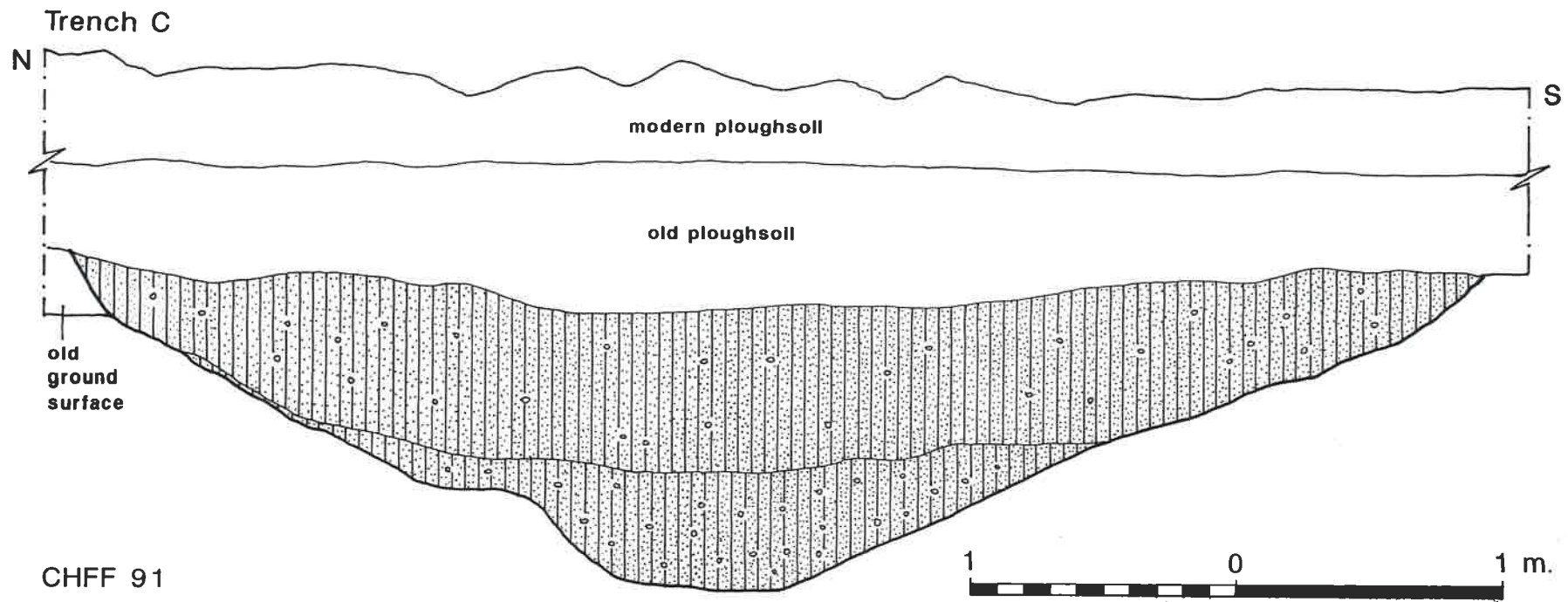
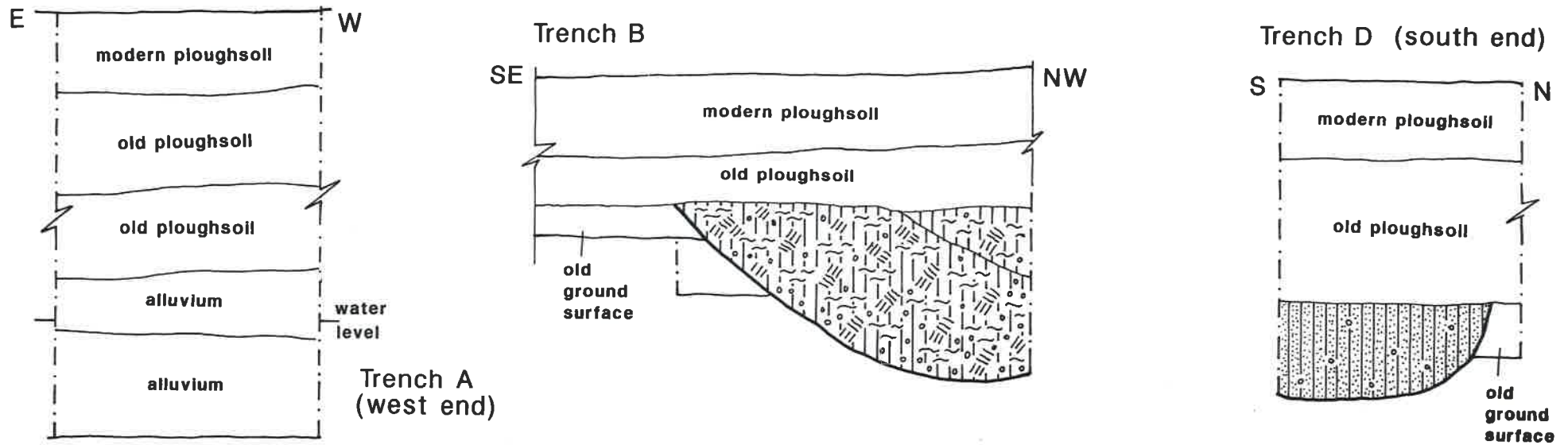


Fig. 2