DITCHFORD (NH)

WHDCWB 211/93

HANSON AGGREGATES

DITCHFORD SAND AND GRAVEL QUARRY, DITCHFORD, NORTHANTS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

NGR SP 918 673

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT
APRIL 2000

Hanson Aggregates

Ditchford Sand and Gravel Quarry, Ditchford, Northants.

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Oxford Archaeological Unit

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(NGR SP 918 673)

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Ditchford Sand and Gravel Quarry

Archaeological Watching Brief

SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Oxford Archaeological Unit concomitant with the removal of the overburden and the extraction of sand and gravel from Ditchford Pit by Hanson Aggregates (formerly ARC Central) between 1991 and 2000. Two previous excavations at the site in 1992 and 1994 identified and examined a medieval limestone metalled causeway crossing a palaeochannel and part of the Roman road earthwork (County SMR no. 3127) running across the floodplain towards the Roman town of Irchester. Regular visits were made during the removal of the various overburden layers across the site revealing an expansive sequence of environmental succession and channel movement from the early Holocene (8500 BC) through to the present day. Continued observation and recording during the removal of the overburden across the area to the north of the 1994 Roman road excavation traced the road continuing to the north but only as a rough metalled surface unaccompanied by side ditches. An isolated adult cremation was also discovered and excavated but can only be tentatively dated to the earlier prehistoric period.

1 Introduction

Ditchford Pit (SP 918673) is situated on the gravel terrace deposits in the floodplain of the River Nene approximately 3km to the east-south-east of Wellingborough (Fig. 1). The area formerly consisted of flat hay meadows at around 42m OD. The only remaining area of established hay meadow is now confined to the preserved area of the Roman road earthwork leading to the town of Roman Irchester situated on the southern side of the valley overlooking the floodplain (Fig. 2).

2 Background

2.1 *The Surrounding Landscape and Sites (Fig. 2)*

The middle reaches of the Nene Valley floodplain are known to be extremely rich in archaeology of all periods (RCHME 1975 and 1979). The extent and importance of this has been demonstrated in recent years by the Raunds Area Project (RAP) to the north-east and the excavations by Northants Archaeology on the floodplain running to the south-west of Wellingborough (Meadows 1996).

The prehistoric activity occurring on the floodplain is largely characterised by funerary landscapes. To the north-east (the area covered by the RAP) this consisted of an extensive system of inter-relating monuments spanning a time period of some 1500-2000 years and covering a distance of 2-3km along the floodplain (Windell *et al* 1990, Healy and Harding, in prep). To the south-west this was represented by the barrow cemetery excavated at Grendon (Gibson and McCormick 1985). Ditchford quarry lies between these two concentrations of prehistoric funerary monuments.

To the south-west, excavations and archaeological recording of an area covering 35 hectares of the valley bottom floodplain in advance of sand and gravel extraction have revealed extensive late Iron Age and Roman remains. These primarily consisted of an organised system of small farms spaced along the valley floor in the late Iron Age which were replaced by similar farmsteads during the Roman period (Meadows 1996). The Roman farms were linked by trackways leading towards the nearby Roman town of Irchester (*ibid.*). A unique discovery concerning the Roman farms was that they were not just the typical arable farms. An extensive 'field system' of linear parallel trenches that stretched across and along the valley floor proved to be planting trenches for at least 4,000 separate vines, providing the first conclusive proof for large scale viticulture in Roman Britain (*ibid,* 215).

The most important site in the immediate vicinity of the quarry is the impressive remains of the Roman town of Irchester (Fig. 2) located on the southern side of the valley overlooking the floodplain (RCHME 1979, 91-96). The earthwork remains of the town lie at the junction of three Roman roads and includes extra-mural settlement to the south, east and west. An associated Roman cemetery also existed to the north-east of the town and was discovered during ironstone quarrying of the Cherry Orchard area during the late 19th and early 20th centuries (RCHME 1979, 95). The Roman road earthwork running across the floodplain is aligned on the east gate of the town.

To the north-east of the Roman town lies the deserted medieval hamlet of Chester-on-the-Water with the existing farm of Chester House situated between the remains of the Roman town and the medieval hamlet. Further medieval remains survive in the form of the much repaired Ditchford Bridge crossing the river Nene to the east of the quarry (McKeague 1988-89). Records of an accompanying mill, situated on the main channel of the river to the immediate east of the bridge, dating back to 1292 are known from the *Compotus* Rolls of Peterborough Abbey which held the manor of Irthlingborough (*ibid*, 179).

2.2 *The 1992 Excavation of the Medieval Causeway (Fig. 2)*

As part of the ongoing watching brief which started in 1991, an area of limestone metalling sealed under the alluvium was revealed running into a palaeochannel already recorded running along the western edge of the extraction area (Keevill and Williams 1996). Excavation revealed a metalled surface consisting of roughly quarried limestone slabs with ironstone lumps concentrated along the edges of the causeway. A total of 29 medieval horseshoes were recovered from the causeway showing a that it was constructed shortly after the Norman conquest and continued in use until the 15th century (Allen 1996).

The causeway itself formed a crossing point over the river which had already become shallow enough to ford by the medieval period due to an earlier sequence of general floodplain alluviation and channel silting (Robinson 1996). From the location of the causeway and the surviving medieval field boundaries it is clear that the crossing point was built to provide access to the east side of the Chester-on-the-Water and its fields, whilst the Roman road may still have been in use to provide access to the west side of Chester House (Keevill and Williams 1996).

2.3 *The 1994 Excavation of the Roman Road and Causeway (Fig. 2)*

A discontinuous low linear earthwork (County SMR no. 3127) was recognised running north-north-west to south-south-east across the floodplain towards the east gate of the Roman town during the 1970s (RCHME 1979, 96). This was subsequently interpreted as a road of probable Roman date and part of the extraction plan was adjusted accordingly so as to allow for the *in situ* preservation of the majority of the road running across the floodplain nearest to the Roman town (Fig. 2). Further to this a small area to the north of the London to Sheffield Mainline Railway was excavated prior to extraction.

Excavation of a selected part of the earthwork revealed an interesting construction method used to provide a permanent year-round crossing of the floodplain. The road consisted of a soil agger 17m wide and 0.45m thick covered with a layer of gravel metalling extracted from a series of large quarry pits running parallel to each side of the road. The agger and gravel surface sloped gently down along its length until petering out and then continuing as a flat limestone metalled surface laid directly upon the exposed natural gravel creating a height difference of up to 0.5m between the two types of surfacing. Drainage ditches were subsequently added along the edges of the raised road and the fording point.

The result of the raised and lowered double surface method of construction was to allow the continued movement and drainage of flood water during periods of inundation whilst still providing dry access across the floodplain via the raised surface with the more durable limestone metalled areas acting as fording points (Keevill and Williams 1996).

The waterlogged plant and invertebrate remains gave a further indication into the surrounding land use, frequency of probable flooding and the effectiveness of the construction technique. Both the mollusc (snail) and Coleoptra (beetle) remains suggest the ditches held stagnant water with mollusc species present that can tolerate seasonal drying and Coleoptra that readily visit temporary bodies of water (Robinson 1996, 59). However, plant remains consist almost entirely of terrestrial species implying that the area drained sufficiently quick enough not to allow marsh vegetation to develop (*ibid.*). The sequence of sediments in the side ditches also suggests that the area to the east of the road was occupied by ploughed arable land whilst that to the west was primarily grassland (Keevill and Williams 1996, 63). This combined suggests that the area only suffered temporary periods of flooding and was freely drained during the Roman period.

3 Methodology

A series of site visits were made to the quarry at regular intervals in conjunction with the program of overburden removal and gravel extraction between 1991 and 2000. The earlier phase of the watching brief and extraction led to the discovery and excavation of the medieval causeway in 1992 as described above and reported in Northamptonshire Archaeology (Keevill and Williams 1996). The remainder of the watching brief covers the area to the south of the London to Sheffield Mainline Railway (Fig. 2, Area A). A small area around the 1994 excavation of the Roman road and the strip of field along the north-western edge of the floodplain including the former stock and plant area were also encompassed within the final phase of the watching brief (Area B).

Each area was stripped of overburden using a D8 with a box scraper. Following removal this usually produced a relatively clean surface in which the differing deposits could be identified. Upon each visit the newly uncovered deposits previously sealed by the topsoil and upper alluvium were examined visually and, where appropriate, were sample excavated by hand and recorded. All previously unidentified archaeological deposits were immediately hand excavated and recorded prior to the removal of further deposits around any features. Further to this all sections created by the removal of the overburden were examined in detail and recorded appropriately.

Further work around the area of the Roman road excavation was limited to a visual inspection of the uncovered deposits to ascertain the extent and direction of the earthwork to the north of the excavation area. Due to the previous detailed excavation and sampling of the Roman road, no further detailed excavation was necessary. However a small area (2m x 1m) was sample excavated by hand and recorded to demonstrate the character of the road in this area.

4 Results

4.1 *Area A*

The field to the south of the Railway produced a varied sequence of deposits totalling between 1.2m to 2.3m thick overlying the clean sand and gravel (Fig. 3, section 1). The lower of these layers (context 5) consisted of gravel mixed with a dark brown clayey silt deposit up to 0.7m thick interspersed with lenses of finer silt. This did not extend across the site as a uniform layer but was at its thickest along the edge of the gas pipeline becoming shallower to the south before petering out approximately 30-40m south of the pipeline. A distinctive homogenous yellow silt deposit (4) directly overlay the mixed clayey gravel (5) to a depth of 0.5m. This was overlain to the west by a series of mixed gravely layers separated by sandy silt lenses all displaying a similar extent as that of layer 5. The sequence of sand and silt deposits encountered roughly along the line of the gas pipeline probably represents a series of early post glacial water channels.

Further to the south and south-west of the gas pipeline a similar sequence of deposits was uncovered representing the flow of broad, shallow water channels. Here the deposits primarily consisted of clay and silt finely laminated with thin interspersed layers (21) of organic remains including reeds, twigs, leaves and insects (Fig. 4, section 3). Such deposits, contrary to the coarser sand and gravel layers to the north, represent periods of shallow slower moving water with aquatic and semi-aquatic plants inhabiting the water margins.

Two further water channel related features were recorded in area A. Both consisted of narrow silt filled extant stream courses approximately 1.5m-3m wide. A small sample excavation of one showed a sequence of clay, silt and gravely layers filling the channel in excess of 0.8m deep, again representing alternating periods of fast and slow moving water (Fig. 4, section 2).

Following the early post glacial period of water flow across the valley the resultant accumulation of deposits and the decrease in the volume of water flow resulted in the channelling of the water into narrower more recognisable multi-coursed rivers with higher areas of gravel islands (Robinson, 1992). The area generally remained a wet habitat though with the development of marshy pools across the lower lying areas of the valley floor. This fen carr type habitat was characterised by an uneven dark peaty layer (3,13) typical of reeds, sedges and water loving trees, although Robinson (1992) notes that a full environmental sequence of succession to an established Fen Carr habitat did not occur along the valley to the north-east.

The first signs of human activity appear after this point with a number of treeholes spread out across the surface of layer (3,13) representing the clearance of the woodland cover. Several flints attesting to prehistoric activity were recovered scattered across the upper part of this layer and combined with the recovery of flints from similar treehole features located within the 1994 excavation in area B, shows that the tree cover was progressively cleared during the early prehistoric period (Keevill and Williams 1996). Indeed, by the Roman period there is no evidence of even localised woodland or scrub (*ibid*, 63).

A single isolated sub-circular cremation pit (9) was cut into the surface of layer 3. It was not possible to establish the full extent of the cremation deposit (8) as this was discovered in the section created along the length of the gas pipeline (Fig. 3). However, by cutting back into the section the remaining approximate 75 % of the deposit was exposed and fully excavated. The pit proved to be a shallow rounded scoop 0.6m in diameter and 0.25m deep. A collection of cremated bones was placed central to the pit with large pieces of charcoal, presumably deriving from the cremation pyre, positioned around the edge of the remains (Fig. 3). The grouping of the cremated remains with the charcoal located predominately around the edges suggests that some form of container such as a wooden bowl or leather pouch may have been used to collect and place the bones in prior to burial (see section 5 for the description of the cremated human remains). Several flint micro-flakes and small flakes were recovered from the backfill around the bone which suggests a prehistoric date for the cremation.

A possible pit (7) 0.9m in diameter and 0.55m deep was located adjacent to the cremation pit in section 1 (Fig. 3). This contained a single sterile fill (6) of similar appearance to the peat layer that the pit was cut through. The lack of finds from the fill and its similar peat composition suggest that the feature may equally be a treehole deriving from a fallen tree rather than a purposefully excavated pit.

A number of Roman pottery sherds dating from the late 2nd to early 3rd Century were also recovered from the upper 0.1m of layer 13. Their incorporation into the surface of this deposit probably results from agricultural use of the floodplain during the Roman period. This point is borne out by the environmental evidence from the Roman roadside ditches of the 1994 excavation demonstrating that the surrounding area consisted of an open grassland pasture habitat with some arable activity.

4.2 *Area B*

A similar sequence of deposits was recorded to the north around the 1994 excavation and along the edge of the floodplain. Again mixed deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel were present reflecting broad active water channels flowing across the valley floor. The mineralised peat layer (3,13) sealed the lower layers filling undulations across the underlying gravely layers and the lower lying areas of former channels.

In addition to the layers representing the broad shallow channel sequences, a much larger and deeper palaeochannel was present along the northern edge of the floodplain (Fig. 2). The base of this was some 2.5m below the modern ground surface although the thick layers of alluvium seen across the floodplain represent the upper 1.25m of this depth suggesting the actual channel was a maximum of 1.25m deep (Fig. 4, section 5). In the base of the channel reworked gravels and silt were overlain by a peat deposit (26) 0.4m thick with preserved tree roots showing that trees had grown on the base during drier periods at the end of the peat formation. The peat filled channel was traceable for approximately 300m following the northern edge of the floodplain at a width of 50-70m and continued south-west towards the ford cutting of the 1994 Roman road excavation.

Ephemeral traces of the Roman road excavated during 1994 were traced continuing to the north of the 1994 excavation. This survived as a very rough limestone and ironstone metalled surface (22) located on the northern fringe of the floodplain (Fig. 2). A small sample excavation and continued observation of the area during the removal of the overburden showed this to consist of flat limestone slabs up to 0.25m across with the inclusion of some similar sized ironstone pieces laid directly onto the surface of a mixed gravel deposit (Fig. 5). The metalled surface in the base of this area provided a firm and durable surface. This mirrors the technique used to the immediate south demonstrated by the 1994 excavation (Keevill and Williams 1996). This area differed slightly to that of the excavation though as no side ditches were located parallel to the road surface and the limestone slabs were only present as a 30m long section spreading to a width between 4-6m.

The northern limit of the gravel road agger running into this area was not located due to the disturbance caused by the disused rail branch line. However a gap of some 20-30m existed between the probable end of the gravel agger and the start of the limestone surface. Similarly the limestone metalling was not present at the north-western edge of the floodplain shortly before this rises up the valley slope. In both cases a distinct rise in the contemporary Roman land surface was evident beneath the blanket layer of post-Roman alluvium. This may have negated the need to build an aggered surface at this point towards the edge of the floodplain and valley sides with the area being suitably raised to remain above the water level during periods of flooding.

4.3 *Alluvial Layers, Area A and B*

The sequence of alluvial clays that sealed the Roman road and the metalled surfaces demonstrate the scale of post-Roman flooding. The lower lying areas across the site were filled with a series of thick homogenous blue and yellowish brown inorganic clays. In area B these areas coincided with the ford cuttings along the route of the road and the early Holocene peat filled palaeochannel. At these points the alluvial clay layers (e.g. layer 24, Fig. 5) sealed the metalled surfaces and spread out in either direction in a broad linear fashion clearly defining the extent of the low lying regions of the former channel that had remained in the floodplain landscape.

The final layer of alluvium consisted of silty reddish clay up to 1m thick in places and was present across the entire width of the floodplain (2). This levelled the remaining undulations in the landscape and also sealed the highest levels of the Roman road surface that had previously stood proud of the earlier flood levels and alluvial deposits.

A layer of limestone (12) approximately 6m wide and 0.1m thick (Fig. 3) was observed on the surface of the upper alluvial layer (2) in the section near to the cremation in area A, although it remains unclear if this represents a metalled surface or just a localised spread of limestone. A layer of modern humic ploughsoil (1) sealed the layer of limestone and reddish alluvium across the floodplain.

5 **The Cremation** by Angela Boyle

A single cremation deposit was recovered from an oval pit (9) which measured 0.60 m in width and 0.25 m in depth (Fig. 3). The fill (8) consisted of a compact dark brown-grey sandy silt and clay with occasional inclusions of small charcoal fragments. The cremated bone appeared to sit in the base of the pit with the remains of larger pieces of charcoal situated around the edges. All the identifiable charcoal remains consisted of Oak (*Quercus robur*).

Cremation details

Context	Weight	Age	Sex	Colour	Identifiable bones
8	180 g*	Adult	?	White and calcined	rib, humerus, femur, tibia, fibula, one distal phalange

*not including the unsorted fractions <5-2 mm and <2 mm.

The deposit represents the partial remains of a single adult individual of unknown sex. The complete absence of skull is unusual as this generally survives well and is readily identifiable. With the exception of a tooth root fragment, a rib fragment and a phalange, the entire deposit appears to consist of long bone shaft fragments. However, it is estimated that only *c.* 75% of the deposit was recovered and it is therefore impossible to conclude whether or not this absence was deliberate. Despite this, there is growing evidence elsewhere to suggest that specific selection of body parts for cremation and/or burial did occur, particularly in the earlier prehistoric period such as at Barrow Hills, Radley, Oxon (Boyle 1999).

Two struck flint fragments (see section 6.2) were found within the deposit and although these may be redeposited, the fresh condition of the flint suggests that they are most likely to be contemporary with the deposit. In addition, very small fragments of burnt and unburnt flint were noted in the unsorted fractions. The presence of the charcoal around the edge of the cremated bone is also noteworthy and could be suggestive of some form of container or tray. Alternatively it is possible that the bone and charcoal from the pyre had been separated immediately prior to deposition. Parallels of Bronze Age date are known from Bromfield in Shropshire (Stanford 1982, 306-309).

Examples of unenclosed cremations of both Iron Age and Roman date are also known (Philpott 1991, 45-47). In the Iron Age the unaccompanied and unenclosed cremations are simple deposits of calcined human bone in shallow scoops and examples are known from Puddlehill, Beds and Quinton, Northants (Whimster 1981, 154). The Roman examples correspond with Whimster's simple Iron Age type (1981, 157) and are discussed in detail by Philpott (1991, 45-47). Given the proximity of the feature to known activity of Roman date (Keevill and Williams 1996) it is conceivable that it could date to the Roman period.

6 The Finds

6.1 *The Pottery*

A total of twelve sherds (75 g) of Roman pottery were recovered from the upper part of layer 13. Four of the sherds were very small and abraded including one of Samian ware. The remaining eight sherds were represented by three vessels consisting of a base sherd of Nene Valley colour-coated ware diagnostic of the late 2nd to early 3rd Century and two other local fabrics, one a soft fabric characterised by voids and the other a fine fabric. All the sherds and fabrics represented in this small assemblage can be placed within the date range defined by the diagnostic colour-coated ware base sherd.

6.2 *The Flint by Pippa Bradley*

A small assemblage (9 flakes and 41 chips) of largely non diagnostic flintwork was recovered from three different deposits. These consists mostly of a good quality mid-dark brown flint with a buff cortex similar to the flints recovered from the 1994 excavations and probably derived from the same local river gravel source (Bradley 1996). One or two of the flakes are worn and battered, several others, for example from context 13, exhibit very fresh-looking scars.

Cremation deposit 8 produced two small flakes, one of which was burnt, and all of the chips were recovered from this context. The chips (representing a 25% sample of the 4-0.5 mm sieving residue) are mostly burnt fragments but one or two unburnt micro-flakes were also identified. Unfortunately the material is not particularly diagnostic or of sufficient quantity to closely date.

Flint summary

Context	Type
2	2 flakes, one possibly used
8	2 flakes - one burnt 41 chips (25% sample from the 4-0.5 mm sieving residue)
13	5 flakes - one burnt

7 Discussion

7.1 *The Early Holocene Environmental Sequence and Landscape*

The palaeochannel features and associated deposits present across the valley floor overlying the sand and gravel illustrated the early post-glacial and Holocene landscape. The earliest layers consisted of mixed gravels, fine silts and clay layers characterising a series of broad meandering channels moving across the width of the valley floor with episodic flooding. This was followed by more recognisable large palaeochannels such as that along the northern side of the floodplain with a basal peat fill. Such large channels with peat deposits accumulated in the base are typical of the early Holocene Nene Valley and remained as topographical features in the floodplain until more recent episodes of alluvium deposition (Robinson1992). These channels moved around raised gravel islands across the valley floor with relatively low volumes of flowing water allowing the formation of peat deposits in the base of the channels.

The broad lower lying areas between the gravel islands also supported damp habitats with peat formation resulting from a fen carr type environment spreading out away from the main channels in pockets of undulating ground (layer 3/13). This sequence of gravel island and channel formation with peat accumulation in the base of the channels and the start of fen carr succession matches that seen to the north-east at Stanwick and Raunds (Robinson 1992).

7.2 *The Prehistoric Activity*

Prehistoric activity in the area was attested to by several treeholes which were found to be in association with flint artefacts marking the onset of land clearance in the early prehistoric period. Several flint flakes was also recovered from the surrounding surface and a single cremation (8) deposited in small pit cut into the top of layer 13 may also date to this period. Although burials of this kind are a regular occurrence on the floodplain throughout the prehistoric period (e.g. the extensive funerary monuments located further up and down the valley, Healy and Harding in prep, and Gibson and McCormick 1985) this was the only tangible trace of such activity. The small and limited amount of prehistoric activity present would suggest that the land was not intensively occupied in this immediate area.

7.3 *The Roman Road and Landscape*

Activity on the floodplain during the Roman period was limited to the construction of the road crossing with agricultural activity either side of this. Sherds of Roman pottery recovered from the surface of layer 13 date to the late 2nd to early 3rd Century and their presence probably reflects the practice of manuring often associated with Roman agricultural land around nearby town settlements. The environmental evidence of the previous excavation also demonstrated that the area remained as freely drained pasture and/or arable land throughout the Roman period (Robinson 1996).

The construction technique of the road also reflects the contemporary topography of the valley masked in more recent centuries by the deep alluvial layers. The raised gravel islands were still evident during the Roman period accompanied by the extant remains of the palaeochannels. This was reflected in the siting of the road with the aggered sections occupying the high ground and the fording areas coinciding with the line of the former channels which remained as low lying ground. The lack of notable alluvial deposits up to this point clearly demonstrates the drier character of the valley floor and the less substantial quantities of water flowing through the valley. It was not until the post-Roman period that alluvial deposits gradually filled the extant channels and the thick blanket of medieval alluvium levelled the floodplain area.

7.4 *Post-Roman Alluvial Sequence and Land Use*

The post-Roman sequence was largely represented by alluvial clay layers. This accumulation initially occurred in the lower lying areas of the extant palaeochannels that were present across the site and coincided with the metalled 'fording' sections of the Roman road. During this primary phase of alluviation the gravel agger remained proud of the surrounding flooding. It was only during the final phase, represented by the thick layer of reddish clay (2/31), that the alluvial deposits finally sealed the gravel road. This layer of alluvium formed a thick blanket across the floodplain up to 1m thick levelling the topography to the more recognisable flat water meadow landscape. Previous research in the Nene Valley at the nearby Stanwick Roman villa and West Cotton deserted medieval village shows that the early part of this sequence had begun by the 4th Century although the deep later layers that blanketed the valley floor did not occur until the early 12th Century and was largely complete by the end of the 14th Century (Robinson 1992, Keevill and Williams 1996:75-76). During this period the floodplain was characterised by hay meadow with the area remaining too wet for arable agriculture.

The limestone surface (12) clearly dates to after this period but this remains unclear as to its function or a more precise date. Two limestone structures were discovered in a similar position above the alluvial deposits along the southern edge of the quarry during 1992 (Keevill and Williams 1996). These may represent a later post-medieval track similarly running across the floodplain.

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9 Archaeological Context Inventory

Context No.	*Context Type*	*Thickness (m)*	*Description*
1	Layer	0.25	Topsoil
2	Layer	0.60	Alluvium
3	Layer	0.30	Dark silty mineralised peat located in section 1 same as context 13
4	Layer	0.60	Silt
5	Layer	0.70	Mixed clayey silt and gravel
6	Fill	0.55	Dark fill of possible pit
7	Cut	0.55	Possible pit
8	Fill	0.25	Cremation deposit
9	Cut	0.25	Cremation pit
10	Layer	2.50-3	Clean sand and gravel 'Natural'
11	Layer	1.30	Modern soil bund
12	Layer	0.15	Possible metalled limestone surface
13	Layer	0.20-0.6	Dark mineralised peaty deposit of varying thickness across the site
14	Layer	0.25	Mixed gravel and silt
15	Layer	0.10	Silt
16	Layer	0.20	Mixed coarse sand and gravel
17	Layer	0.40	Silty clay interspersed with sand lenses
18	Layer	0.10	Secondary clay deposit sitting in the base of channel
19	Layer	0.07	Fine dark organic silt
20	Layer	0.10	Primary clay deposit with preserved organic remains
21	Layer	0.02	Finely laminated layers of clay, silt and organic remains including twigs, reeds and beetles
22	Layer	0.10	Limestone 'slabs' with occasional ironstone pieces forming rough metalled surface laid directly onto the gravel
23	Layer	0.10	Mixed clay and gravel overlying the limestone slabs

Context No.	*Context Type*	*Depth (m)*	*Description*
24	Layer	0.30-0.50	Grey clay alluvium
25	Layer	0.15	Reworked gravels and clay
26	Layer	0.40	Peat deposit in the base of the large palaeochannel
27	Layer	0.30	Blue/grey clay and organic remains sealing the peat deposit 27
28	Layer	0.30	Grey clay
29	Layer	0.20	Mottled blue/grey and brown clay alluvium
30	Layer	0.50	Light grey and brown mottled clay alluvium
31	Layer	0.80	Brown and grey mottled clay alluvium sealing the remnant palaeochannel

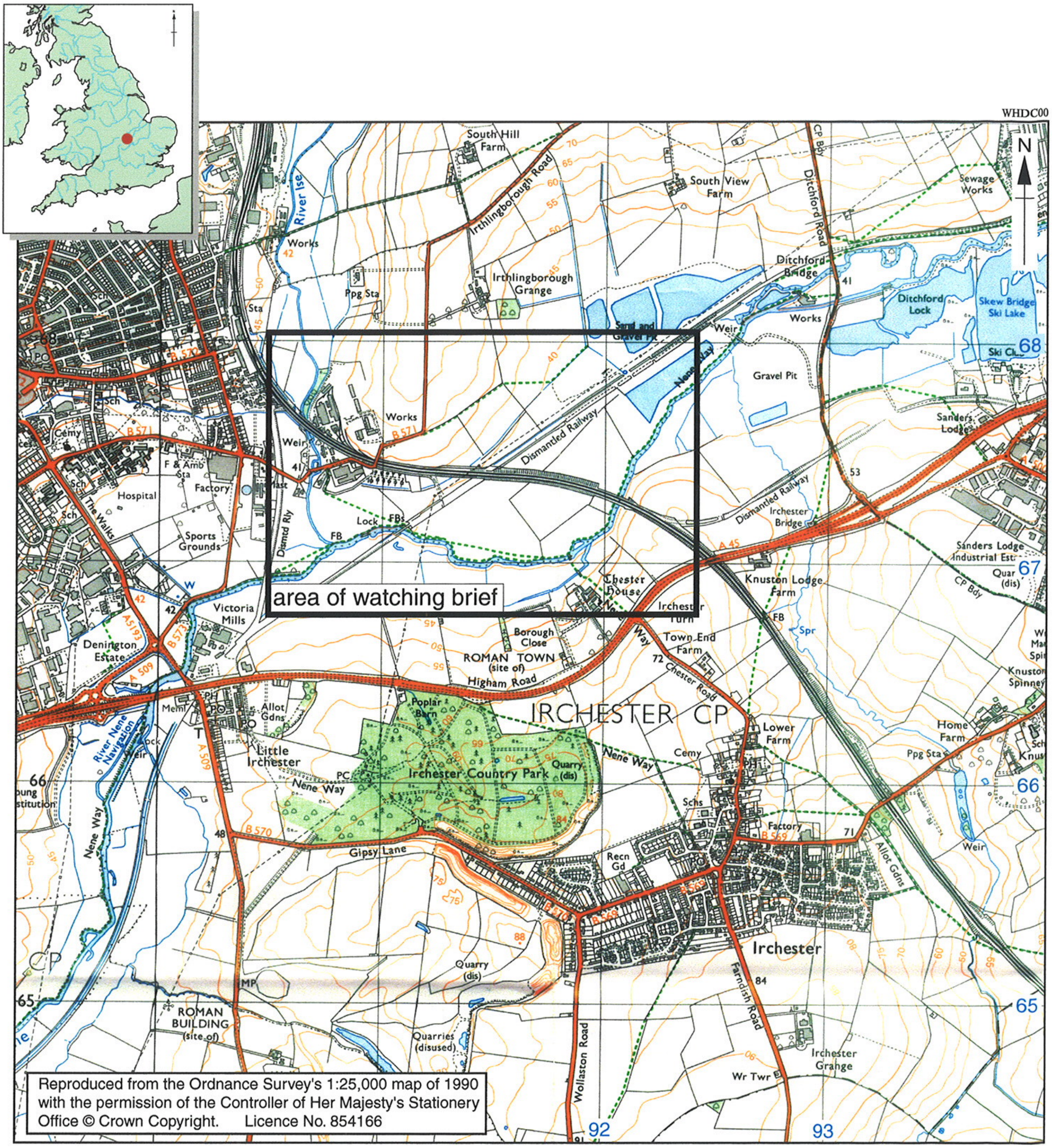


Figure 1: site location

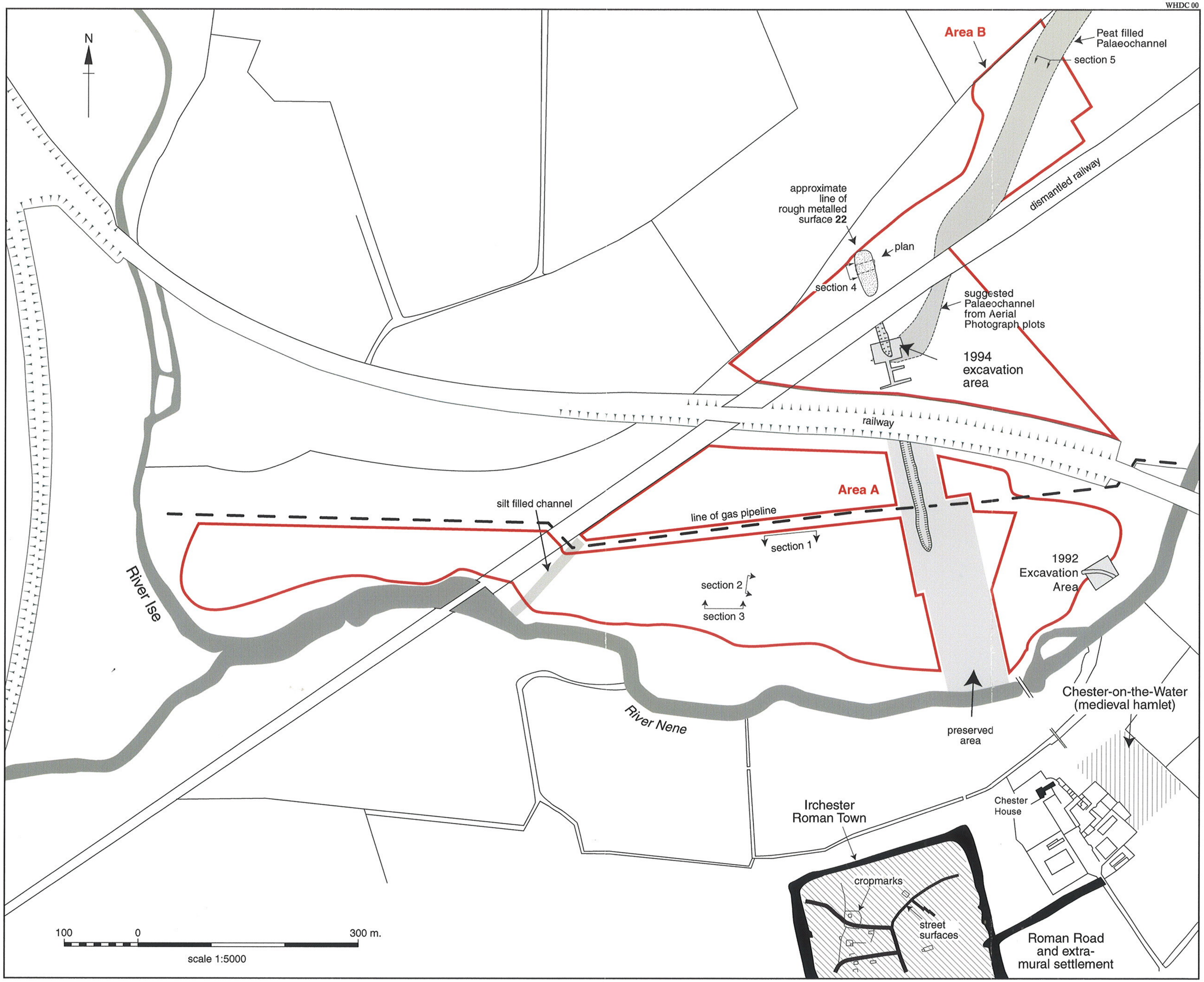
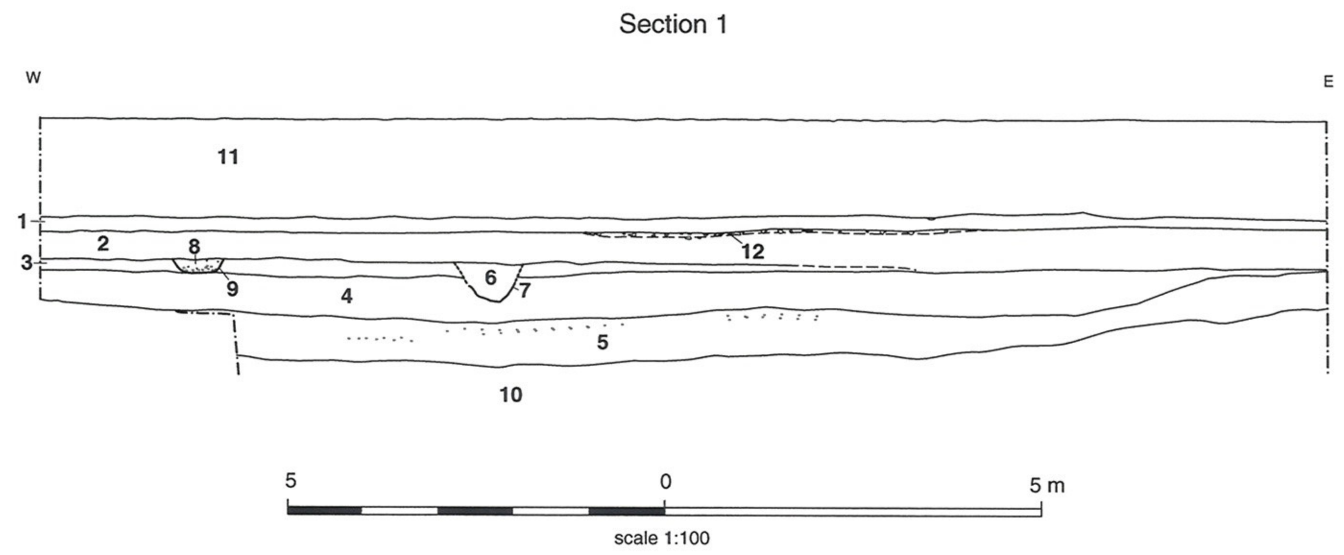


Figure 2: Area of Watching Brief



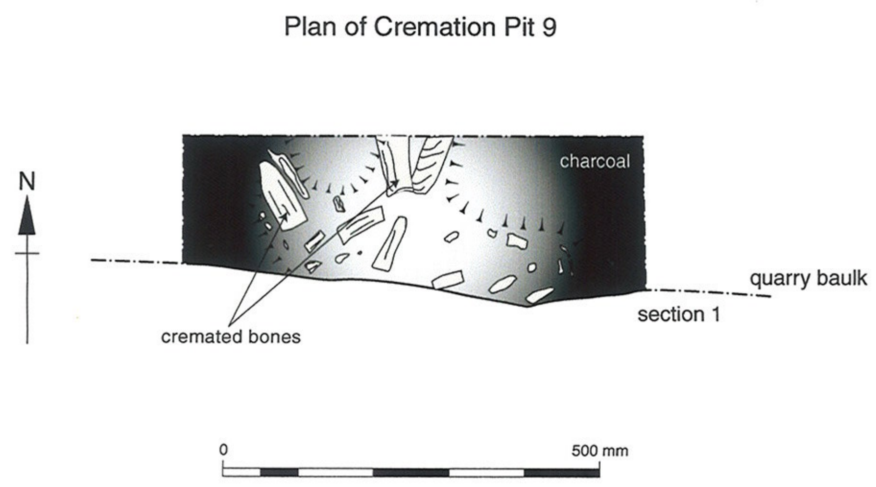
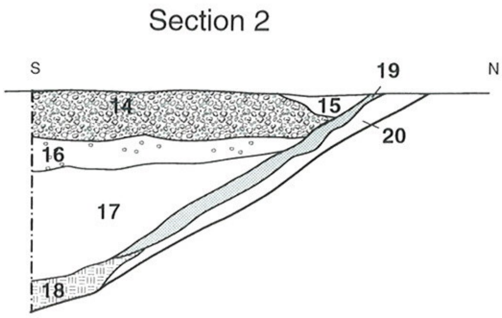
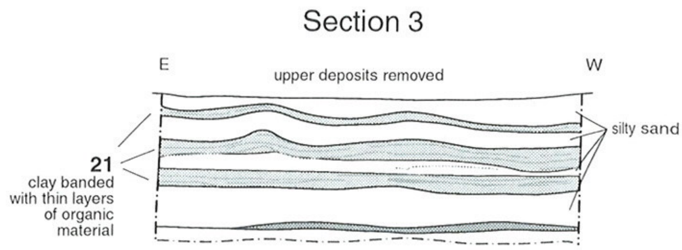


Figure 3: Section 1 and plan of cremation deposit 8.





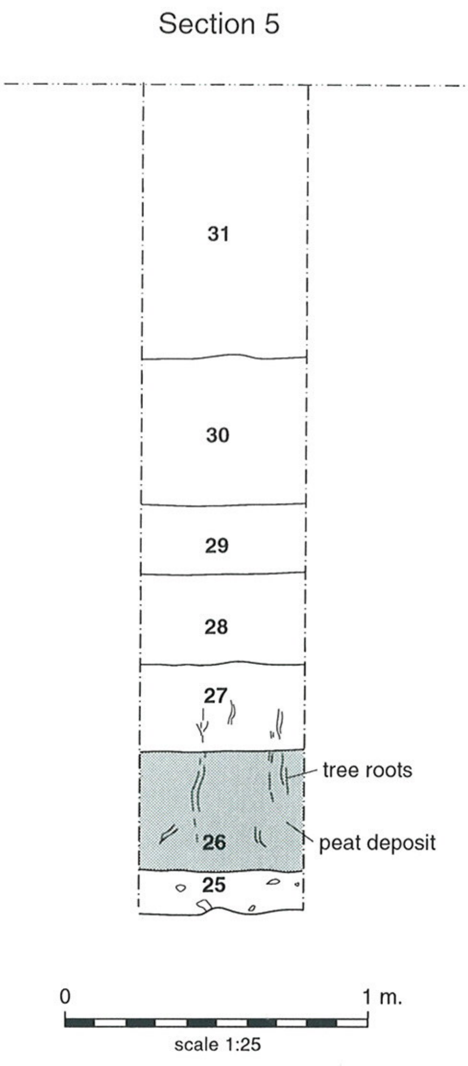
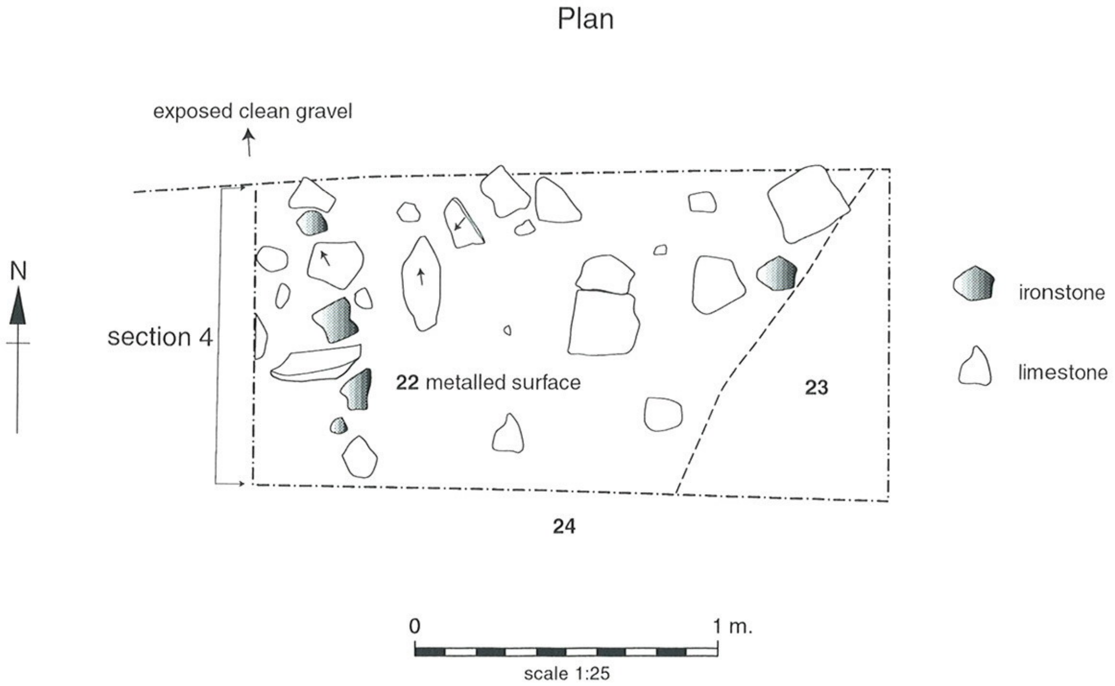


Figure 4: Sections 2, 3 and 5.



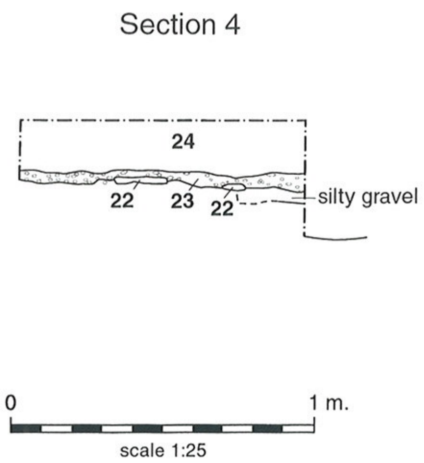


Figure 5: metalled surface **22** and section 4.

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