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Archaeological Evaluation Report



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JOHN SAMUELS ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANTS

**MONKTON HEATHFIELD,
TAUNTON, SOMERSET**

NGR: ST 2590 2660 (centred)

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SUMMARY

In September 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Monkton Heathfield, Taunton, Somerset (NGR: ST 2590 2660) on behalf of John Samuels Archaeological Consultants (JSAC), in respect to a proposed development of the area. Part of the proposed development area had been the subject of a geophysical survey, the results of which informed on the eventual layout of the evaluation trenches. A larger evaluation sample was implemented on those areas outside the geophysical survey.

Archaeological evidence in the trenches was limited to ditch features. All of the remains encountered had been heavily truncated by previous agricultural activity. Areas 1, 2 and 3 and the Aginghill Farm area appear largely devoid of archaeological features and deposits, with the exception of a few field boundaries of probable post-medieval date.

Archaeological features have been identified in most trenches within Areas 4 and 6, and are likely to represent field boundaries of post-medieval date. Some of these could be traced on historical maps. Discrete features were also recorded, but no concentrations suggesting significant areas of archaeological activity could be identified. One ditch in Area 4 and one gully in Area 6 produced two sherds of Iron Age pottery and one sherd of Roman pottery respectively. The Roman sherd in Area 6 was so small and abraded and probably residual but the potential for limited Iron Age activity in Area 4 cannot be completely excluded.

Areas 5 and 7 revealed potential areas of archaeological significance. Several ditches of prehistoric date ranging from the middle-Neolithic to the Iron Age were identified within Area 7 (Trenches 35, 36 and 37). This suggests the presence of significant prehistoric activity in here, which is previously unknown around the Taunton area. This discovery is of local and regional importance and has the potential to enhance the understanding of the prehistoric occupation landscape here. A possible enclosure and occupation area of Roman date was identified in Area 5.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In September 2004, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation on behalf of John Samuels Archaeological Consultants (JSAC) in respect of a proposed development site at Monkton Heathfield, Taunton, Somerset.
- 1.1.2 JSAC were commissioned by RPS Planning and Transport and the development area lies within the area defined by the Taunton Deane Local Plan.
- 1.1.3 The Study Area comprised eight separate areas and covered a total of c 120 ha. (Fig. 1).

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The geology in the west part of the proposed development area is river terrace drift, giving rise to well-drained coarse and fine loamy soils of the Newnham (541w) Association. In the east part of the proposed development area, the geology is of Permo-Triassic and Carboniferous mudstone, giving rise to fine loamy or fine silty over clayey soils of the 572f Whimple 3 Association. The Study Area lies at 20-25 m OD, and slopes gradually to the south towards the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 All work was carried out in accordance with the Specification for an Archaeological Investigation (JSAC 2004b).
- 1.3.2 A desk-based assessment prepared by JSAC (JSAC 2004a) indicated that there was little evidence for pre-Iron Age activity in the vicinity of the Study Area. Evidence from aerial photography suggested that the wider area may have seen occupation activity during the Iron Age and Roman periods, and in particular there was some potential for late prehistoric and/or Roman activity in the vicinity of the small stream running roughly parallel with and west of the A38 road. This hypothesis was to some extent confirmed by the results of the geophysical survey, although the evaluation results are not conclusive.
- 1.3.3 The proposed development area appears to have been used as heath grazing land, perhaps with scrub woodland through the medieval period and later. There is little, if any, evidence for archaeology of post-Roman date within the proposed development area.
- 1.3.4 The geophysical survey was undertaken to further assess the crop-mark features within the proposed development area, with limited survey undertaken on apparently blank areas of the proposed development site in order to assess their apparently low archaeological potential.

- 1.3.5 The geophysical survey commissioned by JSAC found relatively few responses of an archaeological nature. Most of them seem to represent the remains of field boundaries and agricultural disturbance.

2 AIMS OF THE EVALUATION

- 2.1.1 The aims of the evaluation were to determine the location, extent, date, character, and state of preservation of any archaeological remains surviving within the Study Area. Attention was given to remains of all periods, including evidence for past environments, with provision for environmental sampling included.
- 2.1.2 This was achieved through the implementation of a programme of archaeological trial trenching of the proposed development area. The location of the trenches was informed by the results of the geophysical survey; the areas not included in the geophysical survey were subject to a higher sample percentage. Provision was made for additional trenching in order to investigate areas of archaeological interest if deemed necessary.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the geophysical survey and subsequent field evaluation. The results of the investigation will allow the Planning Authority to make an informed decision regarding the area's suitability for development.

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The archaeological investigation was undertaken in two stages consisting of a programme of geophysical survey and a subsequent trenched evaluation, as detailed below.

Phase I geophysical survey

- 3.1.2 The area affected by the programme of development was the subject of a magnetic susceptibility survey of 25ha followed by a targeted detailed fluxgate gradiometer survey of 5ha. The results of the geophysics were used to identify areas of archaeological potential and inform the subsequent programme of trial trenching.

Phase II trial trenching (Figs.2-18)

- 3.1.3 A total of fifty nine trenches were excavated throughout the area of the proposed development. Informed by the results of the geophysical survey, these were positioned to define areas of possible archaeological sensitivity, and also to confirm the absence of features where no positive results were obtained. Three of this total were excavated as contingency trenches to further test specific areas.
- 3.1.4 The trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision by 360° tracked mechanical excavators equipped with a toothless ditching/grading buckets. Trenches were excavated the top of the first archaeological horizon, or if this was absent, to the underlying natural geology.

- 3.1.5 The trenches were cleaned by hand and features sampled to determine their extent, nature, and for the retrieval of finds and environmental samples. Trenches were planned at a scale of 1:50 and sections drawn at a scale of 1:20 or 1:10 as appropriate. Trenches and sections were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

4 FINDS

- 4.1.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context in accordance with the *OA Fieldwork Manual* (OA, 1992).

5 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

- 5.1.1 A general description of the soils, ground conditions, stratigraphic sequence and distribution of archaeological deposits is given below, along with the results of the geophysical survey. The empty trenches are listed in Appendix 1, but not otherwise described. Trenches containing features are described in detail.
- 5.1.2 The trench descriptions are followed by a description of the finds and a summary and discussion of the results. A table detailing individual contexts is given in Appendix 1.

5.2 Results: General

5.3 Phase 1: Geophysical Survey results

The following is a summary and must be read in conjunction with the detailed results of the survey (GSB2004). No Geophysical work was carried out in the Ayinghills Farm area.

Area 1 - (Fig. 2)

- 5.3.1 Several linear responses were identified, all coinciding with former field boundaries. A number of pit type anomalies were also identified.

Area 2 (Fig. 3)

- 5.3.2 A single linear anomaly was detected which was presumed to relate to a former boundary.

Area 3

- 5.3.3 A series of poorly defined pit-type anomalies were detected most likely indicative of a plough damaged linear feature.

Area 4

- 5.3.4 Isolated pit anomalies were recorded along with several linear trends, which were interpreted as being the result of modern disturbance.

Area 5

- 5.3.5 A number of linear responses and pit anomalies were recorded.

Area 6

- 5.3.6 A series of irregular, weak linear anomalies were recorded which potentially could be of archaeological interest.

Area 7

- 5.3.7 A number of linear anomalies were thought to derive from ploughing and possible ridge and furrow, along with a possible former field boundary.
- 5.3.8 A fully illustrated report with complete findings for all areas concerned has been prepared by GSB Prospection Ltd and should be read in conjunction with this document (GSB 2004).

5.4 Phase 2: Trench Evaluation**5.5 The stratigraphic sequence**

- 5.5.1 The stratigraphic sequence was generally consistent across the Study Area. The natural geology varied from an orange-brown gravely silt clay to a light orange silt-clay with lenses of yellow clay throughout. All archaeological features were sealed by a red-brown silt clay layer, which varied in depth between 0.2 m and 0.45 m, sealed by the present topsoil, which varied between 0.2 and 0.35 m depth. A possible colluvial or alluvial deposit was recorded beneath the subsoil in Trench 42, Area 7.

5.6 Distribution of archaeological deposits

- 5.6.1 Over half of the evaluation trenches were empty, and are not described beyond the stratigraphic sequence, above. Archaeological features were present in Areas 2 - 7 and are detailed below.

5.7 Results: Trench Descriptions***Area 1 (Trenches 1-8)***

- 5.7.1 No archaeological features were present within Trenches 1 - 7. Trench 8, which was sited to test the geophysical results, was not excavated as it was positioned within an existing cricket pitch.

Area 2 (Trenches 9-15, plus 70)

- 5.7.2 No archaeological features were present within Trenches 9, 10, 13 and 15. Archaeological features were present in the remaining trenches. Unless otherwise described, all feature fills in this area were derived from natural slow silting and consisted of light to medium orange brown silty clay with occasional pebble or gravel inclusions.

Trench 11 (Fig. 3)

- 5.7.3 Two ditches were present in this trench. Ditches 1101 and 1102 were respectively aligned NE-SW and ENE-WSW. Both ditches had moderately sloping sides and a

concave base. No dating evidence was recovered from any of the fills. Natural was encountered between 24.19 m OD and 26.67 m OD.

Trench 12 (Fig. 3)

- 5.7.4 Only one ditch (1201) was present in this trench and was aligned NW-SE. It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. One irregular flint waster, possibly the remains of a multi-platform flake core, was recovered from its only fill (1202). It was suggested that this artefact could be of Neolithic date and has been re-deposited. Ditch 1201 is likely to have been part of the same field boundary as ditch 1102, identified in Trench 11. Both ditches have very similar profile and fills. It is likely that this ditch is of post-medieval date as it is on the same alignment as an existing field boundary within this area. Natural was encountered between 25.28 and 25.61 m OD.

Trench 14 (Fig. 3)

- 5.7.5 Two features were recorded in Trench 14. Sub-circular feature 1401 was possibly a pit, but did not contain any dating evidence. Ditch 1406 was aligned NW-SE, had a U-shaped profile and was filled by a single deposit (1407), which contained one sherd of pottery (weighing 6 g) of post-medieval date. Natural was encountered between 25.74 m OD and 26.36 m OD.

Trench 70 (Fig. 3)

- 5.7.6 This trench was excavated as part of the contingency trenching to test the linear anomalies identified in the Geophysical Survey. Four ditches and two discrete features were recorded in this trench. Posthole 7004 and pit 7014 were both shallow features and did not contain dating evidence. Ditches 7006, 7008, 7010 and 7012 were all aligned NE-SW and are likely to represent field boundaries. Ditch 7006 had a 'v'-shaped profile. Ditch 7008 had moderately sloping sides and a flat base. Ditches 7010 and 7012 both had moderately sloping and slightly irregular sides with a concave base. They are all undated as no artefacts were retrieved from their fills. Natural was encountered between 25.07 and 26.88 m OD.

Area 3 (Trenches 16-21) - (Fig. 4)

- 5.7.7 Trenches 17 and 18 were sited to test the Geophysical results. Trench 21 sampled a steep-sided and grassed quarry. No archaeological features were present within Trenches 17 - 21.
- 5.7.8 Trench 16 (Fig. 3) revealed one small gully (1604), with a U-shaped profile, aligned NE-SW and filled with a single deposit of reddish-brown silt with moderate gravel inclusions. No dating evidence was recovered. Natural ground was encountered between 23.39 m OD and 24.51 m OD.

Area 4 (Trenches 61-69) - (Fig. 5)

- 5.7.9 No archaeological features were present within Trench 68. All other trenches contained archaeological evidence. Unless otherwise described, all feature fills in this

area were derived from natural slow silting and consisted of medium to dark orange brown silty clay or brownish-grey sandy silt with occasional small pebble or gravel inclusions.

Trench 60 (Fig. 5, Fig. 6)

- 5.7.10 Two features were recorded in this trench. Pit 6006 had a roughly square shape, a concave base and irregular sides. Ditch 6004 was aligned east-west, with moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Two sherds of Iron Age pottery (weighing 10 g) were recovered from its fill (6005). Natural ground was encountered between 24.83 m OD and 25.02 m OD.

Trench 61 (Fig. 5)

- 5.7.11 Two features were recorded in this trench. Sub-circular pit 6101 was visible on the edge of the trench and had a flat base with concave sides. It did not contain any dating evidence. Ditch 6103 was aligned north-south and had a 'v'-shaped profile with a flat base. A single small piece of post-medieval pottery (2 g in weight) was recovered near the top of the ditch. Natural was encountered between 24.75 and 24.96 m OD.

Trench 62 (Fig. 5)

- 5.7.12 Three probable discrete features were recorded in this trench. Feature 6204 was situated on the edge of the trench and could have been either a sub-circular pit or a ditch terminus. It had steep sides and a concave base. Its only fill (6205) contained frequent charcoal inclusions and occasional ironstones, but no datable material. Shallow postholes 6206 and 6208 did not contain any dating evidence. Natural ground was encountered between 24.81 m OD and 24.92 m OD.

Trench 63 (Fig. 5)

- 5.7.13 Two features were recorded in this trench. Ditch 6303 was only partially visible in the south-east corner of the trench and its complete profile could not be excavated. It did not provide any dating evidence. It could be part of the same field boundary as ditch 6103, identified in Trench 61. Both have identical fills and appear to be on the same alignment. Oval pit 6305 measured 0.8 m by 0.9 m and was very badly truncated. Only the bottom of the pit survived, revealing the remains of an animal skeleton. No dating evidence was found. Natural ground was encountered between 24.67 m OD and 24.92 m OD.

Trench 64 (Fig. 5)

- 5.7.14 Seven features were recorded in this trench, five of them being of probable natural origin. Gully 6408 was aligned north-south and had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. It terminated within the extent of the trench. No dating evidence was retrieved during excavation. A small-undated shallow posthole (6410) was excavated to the east of the gully. A further five features were recorded in the rest of the trench. The irregular profile and the nature of their fill indicates bioturbation suggesting that they are probably natural features such as hedgerows (6404 and 6406) and tree-bowls (6412, 6413, and 6416). Natural was encountered at 24.87 m OD and 24.89 m OD.

Trench 65 (Fig. 5)

5.7.15 This trench was placed to sample a pit anomaly from the geophysical results. Two features were recorded in this trench. Sub-circular feature 6504 had irregular sides and base and was likely to have been a tree-throw hole. It was truncated by a modern land drain on its east side. Gully 6508 was a very shallow feature with a concave base. It curved towards the north edge of the trench. No dating evidence was retrieved. Natural was encountered between 25 m OD and 25.12 m OD.

Trench 66 (Fig. 5)

5.7.16 This trench was positioned to sample the Geophysical results. A single ditch, 6604, was found. It was aligned NE-SW and had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. It did not contain any dating evidence. Natural was encountered between 25.23 m OD and 25.37 m OD.

Trench 67 (Fig. 5)

5.7.17 This trench was positioned to sample the Geophysical results. Gully 6704 ran NW-SE for 6.70 m across the trench. This feature was very shallow and truncated in the centre of the trench. No dating evidence was found but it is likely to be part of the same ditch as 6604 identified in Trench 66. Both ditches have very similar profiles and fills. Natural was encountered between 25.13 m OD and 25.29 m OD.

Trench 69 (Fig. 5)

5.7.18 Only two parallel linear features (6904, 6906), aligned east-west were present. They were both very shallow and could have been gullies or plough scars. No dating evidence was retrieved from the fills. Natural lay between 25.61 m OD and 25.69 m OD.

Area 5 (Trenches 27-31) - (Fig. 7)

5.7.19 All five trenches situated in this area contained archaeological features. Trenches 27-29 were placed to sample the Geophysical results. Unless otherwise described, all feature fills in this area were derived from natural slow silting and consisted of light to medium orange brown silty clay or greyish-brown sandy silt with occasional to frequent small pebble or gravel inclusions. All features were severely truncated.

Trench 27

5.7.20 Two discrete features were identified, one tree-throw (2706) and a possible posthole (2704). Both features were very shallow and did not contain any dating evidence. Natural ground was encountered between 24.13 and 24.27 m OD.

Trench 28 (Fig. 7, Fig. 8)

5.7.21 Various archaeological features were identified in this trench, including 13 postholes and two gullies. Gullies 2822 and 2832 appear on a slightly different alignment, running respectively for *c* 6 m WNW-ESE and for *c* 2 m NW-SE. The relationship between the two could not be determined, as they seem to meet at the edge of the

trench. It is possible that they both form part of the same slightly curvilinear boundary, possibly to delineate an enclosure. To the south-east of gully 2822, a line of four similar-sized postholes was identified (2825, 2826, 2828, 2830). The western-most posthole (2825) was cut by gully 2822, possibly indicating that the gullies and the row of postholes belong to two different phases of occupation. In the western half of the trench, a further nine postholes were recorded. No coherent pattern could be identified in their layout. They were all very shallow, probably due to plough truncation, and a few of them (2806, 2812, 2814, 2816) had an oblong shape probably indicating inter-cutting postholes rather than a single feature. The remaining depth however, did not allow relationships to be identified. Unfortunately no dating evidence was recovered. Natural was encountered between 23.63 m OD and 23.90 m OD.

Trench 29 (Fig. 7, Fig. 9)

5.7.22 Three features were identified in this trench. Ditch 2904, aligned north-south across the trench, was very shallow with a concave base. Ditch 2908 ran along the southern edge of the trench for approximately 5.3 m before terminating. Its profile was only partially visible, half of it being located beyond the extent of the trench. It appeared to be a steep-sided with a flat base. At the east end of the trench, ditch 2908 cut feature 2906. The latter was probably a pit, although as it was visible only at the edge of the trench, its true nature could not be confirmed. No dating evidence was recovered from any of the features. Natural was encountered between 23.68 m OD and 23.78 m OD.

Trench 30 (Fig. 7, Fig. 10)

5.7.23 Two features were found in this trench. Ditch 3006 was aligned NE-SW and was shallow with a concave base. It was filled by a single deposit (3007), which produced one sherd (12 g) of Roman pottery. It was cut by a land drain. Pit 3004 was identified on the west edge of the trench. This feature was shallow with a flat base and could not be dated. Natural was encountered between 22.46 m OD and 23.37 m OD.

Trench 31 (Fig. 7, Fig. 11)

5.7.24 A single ditch (3104) was recorded in this trench. It was aligned east-west, had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. No dating evidence was recovered. Two modern land drains were also observed. Natural was encountered between 23.03 m OD and 23.13 m OD.

Area 6 (Trenches 22-26) - (Fig. 12)

5.7.25 Trenches 23 and 24 were sited to sample the Geophysical results. No archaeological features were present within Trench 22. All other trenches contained archaeological evidence. Unless otherwise described, all feature fills in this area were derived from natural slow silting and consisted of medium orange brown clay silt or yellowish-brown sandy silt with occasional small pebble or gravel inclusions.

Trench 23 (Fig. 12)

5.7.26 Two linear and two discrete features were recorded in this trench. Gully 2306 was aligned roughly NE-SW, had steep sides and a concave base. Only the terminus was clearly visible within the trench, the remaining of the gully becoming indistinct towards the edge of the trench. One sherd of Roman pottery (3 g) was recovered from its fill (2307). Ditch 2308 was orientated ENE-WSW, and had a 'v'-shaped profile with a concave base. It cut through a small discrete feature, possibly a posthole (2311) located on its southern side. No dating evidence was recovered from any of the fills of these two features. A substantial pit, 2304, was recorded in the middle of the trench. It was sub-circular with gently sloping sides and a flat base. Its fill (2305) contained frequent charcoal inclusions, burnt clay and 833 g of slag. There was, however, no evidence of burning *in situ*, suggesting this material has been dumped from a nearby hearth or furnace into this probable rubbish pit. It was re-cut by two smaller pits, 2313 and 2315, filled by similar deposits with frequent inclusions of charcoal and burnt clay. No dating evidence was recovered from any of the fills. Natural was encountered between 15.14 m OD and 15.44 m OD.

Trench 24 (Fig. 12)

5.7.27 Three features were recorded in this trench. Ditch 2404 was aligned NNE-SSW, had moderately sloping sides and a flat base. Its lower fill (2405) produced 1 sherd (10 g) of pottery of post-medieval date. The upper fill (2408) contained three fragments of ceramic building material. Ditch 2404 appeared to be the re-cut of an earlier ditch, 2406, only recorded in section. The latter was a much smaller ditch (0.40 m wide while 2406 was 1.84 m wide), with steep sides and a concave base. It could not be dated. Large sub-circular pit 2409 had fairly steep sides and a flat base. It was filled by two deposits (2410 and 2411), which did not contain any dating evidence. Natural ground was encountered between 15.97 and 16.17 m OD.

Trench 25 (Fig. 12)

5.7.28 Two features were identified within this trench. Ditch 2504 was a curvilinear ditch, steep-sided to the south and moderately sloping to the north, with an uneven base. A deposit of re-deposited gravel (2505), slumped into the ditch along its southern edge, suggested the presence of a bank on this side. No dating evidence was found. A gully (2508), aligned NNW-SSE was recorded at the north-west end of the trench. It was very shallow with a concave base and could not be dated. Natural ground was encountered between 15.61 m OD and 16.02 m OD.

Trench 26 (Fig. 12, Fig. 13)

5.7.29 Five features were identified. Feature 2604 was partially visible at the northern edge of the trench, and could have been either a pit or a ditch terminus. The visible corner of this feature was rather square and its recorded edge (in the section of the trench) was steep. One sherd (6 g) of pottery was recovered from the secondary fill (2606), suggesting a post-medieval date. Another partially visible ditch (2617) was recorded at the western extremity of the trench. Its visible edge suggested that it was aligned

NW-SE. It did not contain any dating evidence. Ditch 2610, probably running NE-SW, had a V-shaped profile with a concave base. It was only recorded in section, as it was re-cut by a later, larger ditch 2608. Ditch 2608 had gently sloping sides and a concave base. It was filled by a single deposit (2609), which contained two sherds (5 g) of post-medieval pottery. Although earlier ditch 2610 was undated, it was likely to have been of late medieval or post-medieval date. Ditch 2608 also truncated gully 2613. This gully was aligned NW-SE, had steep sides and a flat base. It could not be dated. Finally, a large ditch, 2619, was recorded across the trench, running NW-SE. Only a partial section could be recorded across this ditch, due to its size and orientation within the trench. Its north-east edge was steep with a flat base. This ditch was filled by four deposits of different nature. Its secondary and tertiary fills appeared to be dumps of respectively re-deposited natural gravel (2622) and a mixed layer of slate, brick and gravel (2621). These were likely to have been deliberately placed in the ditch to help drainage. Fill 2621 produced one sherd of pottery (6 g) and twenty-five fragments of brick of post-medieval date. The upper fill (2620) was formed by natural gradual silting after the ditch has ceased to be maintained. A depression in the ground was observed, extending along the alignment of ditch 2619, beyond the extent of trench 26. Natural was encountered between 14.24 m OD and 14.73 m OD.

Area 7 (Trenches 32-37, 40-46, 71-72) - (Fig. 14)

5.7.30 No archaeological features were present within Trenches 33, 34, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43 and 44. All other trenches contained archaeological evidence. Unless otherwise described, all feature fills in this area were derived from natural slow silting and consisted of medium greyish or orange/brown silty clay with occasional small pebble or gravel inclusions.

Trench 32

5.7.31 Three features were recorded in this trench. Large ditch 3204, aligned east-west, had moderately sloping sides and a flat base. Its fill (3205) consisted mostly of clay and appeared characteristic of a deposit formed in standing water. It produced one re-deposited retouched flint flake of possible Neolithic date. No other dating evidence was retrieved, but the features morphology and fills indicate that this ditch is a post-medieval field drainage ditch. Ditch 3204 cut an earlier ditch, 3211, aligned NW-SE. It had fairly steep, slightly irregular sides and a concave base. No dating evidence was retrieved. Both ditches 3204 and 3211 were truncated by a modern land drain (3206). A large discrete feature (3207) of amorphous shape was also cut by ditch 3204. It had irregular sides and an uneven base, suggesting a possible tree-throw. No material was recovered from its fills. Natural was encountered between 14.11 m OD and 14.90 m OD.

Trench 35 (Fig. 15)

5.7.32 A single ditch, aligned north-south, was identified. It had steep sides and a slightly concave base. Its only fill (3505) contained one serrated flint flake and 9 sherds (36 g) of pottery. These include sherds from at least four Peterborough-Ware vessels, a large decorated sherd from a bowl and refitting decorated sherds from a small cup, all dated

to the middle of the Neolithic period. Natural ground was encountered between 16.68 m OD and 16.98 m OD.

Trench 36 (Fig. 16)

5.7.33 Seven linear features were identified in this trench. The westernmost ditch (3610) was aligned NE-SW, had moderately sloping, concave sides and a concave base. Its fill contained three sherds (8 g) of Iron Age pottery. Around 1 m to the east of this ditch was another linear (3616), very shallow and fairly irregular. This undated feature could be natural. It was cut by ditch 3612, aligned NNW-ESE. Ditch 3612 had a V-shape profile. Its fill (3613) produced twenty-two sherds of mid Iron Age pottery. Its relationship was uncertain with gully 3614, a very shallow undated feature. Another three ditches were located 5 m to the east of the trench. Terminus 3608 was very shallow with a concave base. It did not contain any dating evidence. Gully 3606 was curvilinear and terminated within the extent of the trench. It had a V-shape profile with a concave base and produced fourteen sherds (49 g) of pottery of late Bronze Age or Iron Age date. Gully 3604 was aligned NW-SE and terminated within the trench. It had a very shallow profile with a concave base. It could not be dated. Natural was encountered between 17.64 m OD and 18.58 m OD.

Trench 37 (Fig. 16)

5.7.34 Four linear features were recorded in this trench. It formed a 'T'-arrangement with Trench 36. At the northern end of the trench, ditch terminus 3710 was very shallow with a flat base. No dating evidence was recovered from this feature. It could be related to ditch 3608 in trench 36. Ditch 3708 was aligned WNW-ESE and had a V-shape profile. It contained four sherds (27 g) of Iron Age pottery. It is very likely that this is the same as ditch 3612 in Trench 36. Both ditches have a similar profile and fill and have been dated to the same period. Further south within Trench 37, a further two ditches were identified, both aligned east-west. Ditch 3706 had a very shallow profile with a flat base. Ditch 3704 had moderately sloping sides and a flat base. No dating evidence was retrieved from these two ditches. Natural was encountered between 17.57 m OD and 17.99 m OD.

Trench 40

5.7.35 Three linear features were recorded in this trench. Gullies 4004 and 4006 were both aligned NNW-SSE. Gully 4004 had a V-shape profile. Gully 4006 was shallow with gently sloping sides and a flat base. Ditch 4008 was aligned north-south and had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. No dating evidence was recovered from any of these features. Natural was encountered between 14.31 m OD and 15.21 m OD.

Trench 45

5.7.36 A single un-excavated feature (4504) was identified in this trench. It appeared to be a large quarry pit. Natural was encountered between 18.94 m OD and 19.98 m OD.

Trench 46

5.7.37 A large quarry pit (4604), similar to cut 4504 in trench 45, was observed in this trench. Natural ground was encountered between 16.76 m OD and 18.85 m OD.

Trench 71 (Fig. 17)

5.7.38 This trench was excavated to determine the possible extent of the feature identified in Trench 35. A single ditch, aligned north-south, was recorded in this trench. It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. No dating evidence was found. Natural was encountered between 16.67 m OD and 17.51 m OD.

Trench 72

5.7.39 This trench was excavated to determine the extent of the features identified in trenches 36 and 37. Another large quarry pit (7204) was identified, similar to those found in trenches 45 and 46. It was cut through the subsoil, indicating a modern date. Natural was encountered between 17.74 m OD and 18.47 m OD.

Aginghills Farm Area (Trenches 38-39) - Fig. 18

5.7.40 Neither trench contained archaeological features. The site sloped southward. Natural was reached at an average depth of 23.03 m in Trench 38 and 21.44 m in Trench 39.

5.8 Results: Finds**Pottery By Alistair Barclay, OA**

5.8.1 A total of sixty-four sherds of pottery were recovered from the evaluation that ranges in date from mid-Neolithic to post-medieval (Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of pottery by context

Context	Number of sherds	Weight	Date
1407	1	6	Post-medieval
2307	1	3	Roman
2401	1	8	Post-medieval
2405	1	10	Post-medieval
2606	1	6	Post-medieval
2609	2	5	Post-medieval
2621	1	6	Post-medieval
3007	1	12	Roman
3505	9	96	mid Neolithic
3607	14	49	Late Bronze Age / Iron Age
3611	3	8	Iron Age
3613	22	147	mid Iron Age
3709	4	27	Iron Age
6005	2	10	Iron Age
6104	1	2	Post-medieval
TOTAL	64	395	