

Archaeological Evaluation at Land east of New Road Melbourn



Archaeological Evaluation Report



February 2017

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Archaeological Evaluation at land east of New Road, Melbourn

Archaeological Evaluation

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Summary

In August 2014, Oxford Archaeology East excavated 32 trenches totalling approximately 1360m in length at land east of New Road, Melbourn, TL 3884 4436. Trenches were targeted based geophysical and aerial photographic surveys.

Across the site, several natural hollows, believed to have glacial origins, were encountered and shown to preserve buried dry land soils containing evidence of Mesolithic and Early Neolithic activity and possible occupation across the landscape. These varied in size from 6 to at least 35m across. A single small pit, containing pottery and hearth stones, and an associated posthole indicated Middle Neolithic occupation in the west of the site.

A Bronze Age ring ditch, known from geophysical survey, was exposed in three trenches. In the east of the site, a field system of probable Middle Bronze Age date, comprising at least two enclosures, was recorded, with elements of another to the southeast. More enclosures on the same alignment are known to exist further south. A large pit or well, dating between the Middle Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, and a number of postholes lay within the enclosure.

At the northern corner of the site, a depression or hollow of prehistoric date was found to have a metalled surface at its base: possible ground stabilisation around a pool or well.

From the Roman period, a single possible beam slot was excavated while a number of residual finds came from later features. A probable Roman ditch was also uncovered below what may be a medieval headland running north-south in the centre of site.

A disused trackway, possibly part of the Roman route, Ashwell Street, running east-west across the middle of the site was found to have stark variations in its depth and form, including a section of hollow way close to New Road. This track forms the basis of the Medieval ridge and furrow system across the west and south of the area. An undated curvilinear ditch was recorded near the western portion and two undated converging ditches were recorded near its centre.

Several ditches and associated subdivisions, as well as a metalled track dating from parliamentary enclosure in the 1830s were also recorded.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at New Road, Melbourn, TL 3884 4436.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), supplemented by a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by OA East (Wiseman 2014).
- 1.1.3 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2012). The results will enable decisions to be made by CCC, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on chalk bedrock with no superficial deposits with the Melbourn Rock Member running roughly west-southwest to east-northeast across the site (BGS 2014). The site sits at elevations ranging from 26 to 30mOD, partly on the lower northeastern slopes of a chalk ridge running southwest to northeast.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 More detailed background for Melbourn has been provided in a recent appraisal for the site (Flitcroft 2014). The following is largely taken from the site's WSI (Wiseman 2014).

Neolithic

- 1.3.2 Although the wider area has been settled since the Neolithic, only one site nearby has yielded Neolithic remains: pits containing worked flint and animal bone excavated on Water Lane, 400 metres southwest of the site (CHER15249).

Bronze Age

- 1.3.3 The geophysical (Prestidge 2014) and aerial photograph (Cox 2014) surveys identified one ring ditch on the site: probably a Bronze Age funerary site; and a second which falls outside the evaluation area, to the south (TL 3893 4403). There are a number of other Bronze Age barrows recorded nearby:
 - Two in the field immediately south of the site at TL 389 439 (CHER 3166) – one containing a central crouched burial (EBA/MBA), with at least 7 secondary cremations (possibly MBA or LBA)
 - A heavily truncated round barrow with ditch on Water Lane, 400 metres southwest of the site (CHER15249)
 - One round barrow on Goffer's Knoll, 1.6 kilometres south of the site (TL 39163 42449)
 - A Scheduled Bronze Age barrow cemetery with at least five round barrows and one MIA Square Barrow at TL 383 415 (CHER03172)

1.3.4 An alignment of five four-post structures dating from the LBA/EIA was excavated on Water Lane, 400 metres southwest of the site (CHER15249), Possibly associated with it was a group of pits.

1.3.5 A hoard of eight Bronze Age artefacts was discovered on Back Lane in the 1800s (CHER16894), about 750 metres west of the site.

Iron Age

1.3.6 There is a Scheduled MIA Square barrow at Summer House farm, 1.2 kilometres south of the site, and another in a Bronze Age barrow cemetery at TL 383 415 (CHER03172), 2.4 kilometres to the south.

1.3.7 A complex of cropmarks, presumed to be Iron Age or Roman settlement is located east of the site (MCB10277, CHER8569, 8570, 8919).

Roman

1.3.8 1.7 kilometres east of the site is a presumed Roman settlement, seen in aerial photographs. Fragments of quern and pottery have been found on the surface after ploughing (CHER04203). Roman pot has also been found on the surface around the two Bronze Age barrows immediately south of the site (CHER3166a).

1.3.9 One kilometre northeast of the site is a rectangular Roman earthwork and cemetery dating from the first or second centuries CE (CHER3197).

Saxon

1.3.10 In the 1950s, an early Saxon cemetery was discovered on the Saxon Way Industrial Estate: 28 individuals were excavated (MCB15249). 150 metres east of it on Water Lane, another early Saxon cemetery was excavated in 2000. It contained 52 graves and 59 individuals (CHER03161). It is not clear whether these belong to a single cemetery or two different clusters. Both sites are about 500 metres west of the proposed development site.

Medieval

1.3.11 Most medieval sites in Melbourn are located in the area between the High Street and Orchard Road, with some located further west toward the river.

1.3.12 The chief evidence for medieval activity around the development site comes from aerial photographs of the site and nearby fields. These identify 'linear and sinuous features' which may be the remains of former field boundaries, accessways, and headlands of medieval ploughing (Cox 2014). Possible enclosures and ridge-and-furrow were also identified in the geophysical survey (Prestidge 2014).

1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 The project was commissioned by Myk Flitcroft and Simon Mortimer of CgMs on behalf of Endurance Estates and was managed by Richard Mortimer. Kasia Ganiec of CHET monitored the evaluation. Metal detecting was performed by Jason Baker. Andrew Greef, Katherine Hamilton, Kimberly Watt, Emily Abrehart, Kathryn Nicholls, Stephen Morgan and Steven Graham and the author undertook excavations on site.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

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

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked 360 excavator using a toothless ditching bucket 2m wide.
- 2.2.2 The site survey was carried out using a Leica GS08 RTK GPS.
- 2.2.3 Ploughsoils were bucket sampled for finds and spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 2.2.4 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 2.2.5 Bulk soil samples were taken for environmental analysis and where finds such as micro-debitage were expected. Further spot samples were taken from the fills of geological features which were known to contain prehistoric artefacts. These were rapidly assessed for pollen and for mollusc analysis.
- 2.2.6 Generally the evaluation proceeded in dry and sunny or cloudy conditions with a weekend of heavy rain but no flooding.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 Results are described in order of Trench number (see Figures 2 - 6 for layout) starting with the earliest features and proceeding chronologically. All trenches were 2 - 2.1m in width. Larger scale trench plans with cut numbers are shown in Figures 4 - 5. Where the geophysical survey is mentioned, this is from Prestidge (2014), also shown in Figures in this report. Aerial photographic evidence is from Cox (2014).

3.2 Trench 1

- 3.2.1 This trench was moved from its original (non-targeted) location due to access requirements. The trench was 25m long, sitting at 29.1mOD. It covered a collection of features of uncertain relationship to each other. A shallow ditch (**185**), 1.2m wide by 0.2m deep was aligned north-south. Immediately to the east, a ditch 0.7m wide (**217**) and another ditch terminus 0.9m wide (**215**) fell on the same alignment. These appeared to be cut by a pit (**213**) 1.3m across.
- 3.2.2 Due to unclear relationships between the fills of these features (186, 218, 216, 214 respectively) finds allocation was uncertain. Pottery from Fill 186 (a discrete ditch) has been dated as broadly Iron Age. Pottery from Fill 218 (part of an uncertain relationship between features **213**, **215**, & **217**) has been dated as Romano-British.
- 3.2.3 These ditches are aligned north-south, perpendicular to a similarly spaced pair in Trench 7 nearby. This alignment is reflected in prehistoric enclosures to the northeast, but in no later features in this landscape.
- 3.2.4 These features were sealed by approximately 0.1m of subsoil (2) - a light greyish brown fine sandy silt and 0.3 - 0.4m of topsoil (1; the active plough soil). The subsoil (2) appears across the site to be of medieval or later origin, filling furrows (and post-medieval ditches) and sealing a possible headland (see Trench 12).

3.3 Trench 2

- 3.3.1 Features in Trench 2 (47.8m in length at 29.7m OD) produced no finds, however, they all appear to relate to post-medieval agriculture, agreeing with the interpretation of the geophysical survey (see Figure 4).
- 3.3.2 A possible natural hollow or tree throw (**4**) was excavated, having an irregular base and being 0.6m wide by 0.2m deep).
- 3.3.3 Three ditches were excavated, aligned northwest-southeast: Ditch **6** was 1.4m wide by 0.4m deep; ditch **8** was 0.5m wide by 0.1m deep, ditch **10** was 0.8m wide by 0.2m deep. All were filled by greyish brown sandy silt (7, 8, 9 respectively) similar to the subsoil (2). Ditch **6** is a field boundary visible on the geophysical survey and recorded on 1886-1891 OS maps. Its parallels **8** and **10** are smaller and may relate to subdivision or agricultural activity. Two of the three were also recorded in Trench 7 to the northwest.
- 3.3.4 Features were overlain by 0.1m of subsoil (2) and 0.3 - 0.35m topsoil (1).

3.4 Trench 3

- 3.4.1 Running 49.5m southeast from the centre of Trench 2 at 29.7 - 30.0mOD, Trench 3 presented no archaeological features. Subsoil was 0.15m thick and topsoil 0.35m.

3.5 Trench 4

- 3.5.1 At 27.5m long, Trench 4 was situated at an elevation of 30.3mOD. It crossed a glacial hollow feature (**112**) in excess of 14m across reaching a depth of 1.7m below the surface. This was partially excavated by machine sondage, followed by hand test pitting in 0.1m spits which produced a large assemblage of flint flakes including micro-burins of Mesolithic date and a number of pieces of unworked burnt flint suggesting hearth use.
- 3.5.2 As with other hollows of varying size on the site, **112** preserved buried soil layers which elsewhere have been truncated. Three distinct layers filled this hollow: a light brown chalk/silt interface (56), a dark greyish brown, friable, occasionally chalky silt (55), a very dark grey-brown layer of sandy/clayey silt (13/54) and a mid-dark brown clayey silt (12). This top layer (12) appeared to be a later buried soil sealing the darker fills.
- 3.5.3 The western edge of this hollow was cut by a ditch (**14**) approximately 0.8m across, another part of the historic (1861-1891) field boundary system. Its fill (15) was indistinguishable from the overlying subsoil (2), which here was 0.4m thick, while topsoil (1) was 0.2m thick.

3.6 Trench 5

- 3.6.1 Trench 5 trench was 48m long and at around 29mOD. Another hollow (**111**) at least 8m across occupied the southern portion of the trench.
- 3.6.2 The pattern of fills in the hollow was similar to **112** although a deeper portion was tested (see Section 6), reaching 1.6m below surface level. A lower interface layer (110) was overlain by a grey clayey silt (109) with a dark, friable, slightly sandy silt (17) producing an assemblage of burnt flints suggesting that hearths were built within it or it was used to dispose of hearth waste. Scraps of pot from the later fill (17) have been dated to the Early Neolithic. This was sealed by a presumed buried soil layer of clayey silt (16).
- 3.6.3 The hollow was overlain by up to 0.5m of subsoil (2) and 0.3m of subsoil (1).

3.7 Trench 6

- 3.7.1 Lying on flatter ground, at 28.5 - 29mOD, Trench 6 was 48.6m long. It took in an area of trackway on the geophysical survey at a point where the southern side of the track becomes indistinct.
- 3.7.2 The only feature seen was a shallow ditch initially recorded as a furrow (**18**), running northwest-southeast. However, it is on the wrong alignment here for furrows, it is also slightly too concave at 2m wide by 0.25m deep. Its fill (19) was a light brown chalky silt with frequent chalk pieces. It may relate to the trackway's southern side, although the angle is also wrong for that also. No finds were recovered.
- 3.7.3 At the northern end of the trench, 4 wheel ruts aligned with the centre of the trackway were recorded. These features were covered by 0.1m of subsoil and 0.35m of topsoil

3.8 Trench 7

- 3.8.1 This 75m long trench was targeted across the western part of the trackway where a stronger response was detected by geophysical survey. Surface heights were 28.2 - 28.9mOD. The earliest feature cutting the chalk was a natural hollow (**163**) at the northern end of the trench. This was at least 10.5m in diameter but only 0.5m deep nearest its centre. Its fill (164) was similar to the darker friable fills of hollows **111** and **112** and contained Early Neolithic pottery.

- 3.8.2 An undated curvilinear ditch (**161**) cut from northwest to southeast just south of this hollow. This was 0.6m wide by 0.2m deep. Its fill (162) was a fine grey silt.
- 3.8.3 Towards the southern end of the trench, two parallel ditches aligned east-west both 0.9m wide and 0.2 - 0.25m deep (**153** and **155**) do not fit in with other alignments but are perpendicular to the north-south ditches nearby in Trench 1. The fills (154 and 156 respectively) were of a light brownish grey clayey silt, both producing residual Early Neolithic flint-tempered pot fragments (pottery from their perpendicular counterparts in Trench 1 was dated as Iron Age/Romano British).
- 3.8.4 Across the centre of the trench on the line of the track was a broad feature 15m across filled with homogeneous grey silt (182) topped with occasional angular flints, broken by a line of redeposited chalk just below the sub soil.
- 3.8.5 Further machining to a depth of 0.5m below the surface resolved a pair of ditches at either side (see Section 36 & Plate 1; north: **165**, 1.7m across, 0.4m deep; south: **167**, 1.8m across, unexcavated) and a series of wheel ruts covering an area spanning 12m (collectively numbered **169**). Four possible undulations/features were seen in section (collectively **174**), 0.5m to 0.8m wide and 0.2m deep below top soil (see Section 36). No artefacts were recovered.
- 3.8.6 It appears the trackway in this area had seen use extensive enough to form a hollow way at least 0.5m deeper than the surrounding landscape. The system of ridge and furrow to the north and south respects this trackway (see Figure 3) so it existed as a routeway in the Medieval period, and probably prior to the formation of the field system. Its longevity and date of disuse are not possible to determine, except to say that it does not appear on the earliest maps of the area.
- 3.8.7 At the northern end of the trench an unexcavated furrow 1.4m across was recorded, matching the geophysical survey, running parallel to the hollow way.
- 3.8.8 Cutting the wheel ruts at the base of the hollow way, but with no visible cut higher up in the backfill were two animal burials. **171** was only just visible in side of the trench. Burial **173** was of a young pig in a cut 1m by 0.75m. These are thought to be post-medieval in date.
- 3.8.9 Three parallel ditches (aligned with historic ditches in Trenches 2 and 4) were recorded across the trench: ditch **229** (1.5m across, unexcavated) at the south of the trench; ditch **157** (0.6m by 0.15m deep) which cut the southern side of the hollow way; and a third ditch **159** (1.0m wide by 0.15m deep) north of the hollow way. These align with the similar ditches in Trenches 2 and 4.
- 3.8.10 Subsoil (2) was generally 0.25m thick across the trench although its lower horizon with 182, the back fill of the holloway, was unclear. Topsoil was 0.3 - 0.4m thick.

3.9 Trench 8

- 3.9.1 In the western corner of the field, Trench 8 lay at approximately 27.5mOD, was 28.2m long, running east-west. An irregular, probably natural feature (**179**) against the southern baulk 0.9m across produced no finds. Its fill (180) was similar to the buried soils of larger natural hollows excavated in other trenches: very dark greyish brown, friable, sandy/clayey silt with occasional chalk pieces. Bulk environmental samples from this produced a possible Later Mesolithic narrow blade microlith.
- 3.9.2 By comparison with an adjacent Later Neolithic pit (**175**) here, one can say that **179** and other such small irregular features are natural, probably tree throws.

- 3.9.3 The pit was more regular, concave and 0.9m across (although probably larger south of the baulk; Section 51, Plate 2). Its fill (176) was a mid/dark brown silt with occasional chalk flecks. It contained sherds of a Grooved Ware bowl and several pieces of sandstone, thought to be from a hearth. Environmental processing revealed fragments of hazelnut shell.
- 3.9.4 Two metres to the north west, an undated posthole (**177**) 0.25m in diameter and 0.12m deep) was filled with soft mid-brown silt (178).
- 3.9.5 Here only a thin layer of sub soil (2) survives 0.05m thick covered by 0.3m of top soil (1).

3.10 Trench 9

- 3.10.1 Trench 9 was 47.8m in length aligned northwest-southeast, targeted across furrows recorded by geophysical survey. One of these was recorded near the south of the trench, matching the survey, while a possible second one at the northern end does not appear on the survey.

3.11 Trench 10

- 3.11.1 On the geophysical survey, the southern side of the trackway is indistinct away from the west of the field, so Trench 10 was targeted across this area. Its length was 73m with surface heights of 27.8m in the northwest to 28.8m in the southeast.
- 3.11.2 A large natural hollow (**70**) covered at least 16m at the south-east of the trench (Section 16, Plate 3). This was partially excavated by machine, then test pitted by hand to a depth of 1.9m below the surface. As with the hollows in Trenches 4 and 5 (**112** and **111**) there was a build up of preserved buried soil: a transitional basal fill of grey chalky silt (73) 0.1m thick, followed by a dark grey brown, friable, sandy silt (72) 0.2m thick. In this case, there was an intermediate lighter greyish brown fill (71 & 69; 0.1m spits of the same fill) and then a similar but sandier fill (68). Following this was a further dark layer similar to 71/69 (57 & 53, 0.1m spits). Above this was a clayey silt layer (52 & 51, 0.1m spits) similar to that in the tops of the hollows in Trenches 4 & 5 (12 & 16 respectively), consisting of a mid-grey brown firm sandy silt. Flints of Late Mesolithic to Early Neolithic date were retrieved from the hollow as well as Early Neolithic pottery (from 68) and Early Iron Age pottery (69).
- 3.11.3 Across the centre of the trench a series of parallel ditches followed the line of the trackway. One of the earliest in the sequence (**38**, 0.9m wide by 0.1m deep), delineated the undetected southern side of the track. Adjacent to this was a ditch terminus (**74**, 0.7m by 0.2m, Section 15). On the northern side of the trackway, a ditch (**32**, at least 1.2m by 0.3m). This was filled by two layers (33 & 42) extending south across the trackway and over the south of the trench, the latter covering the top of hollow **70** and the earlier ditches, **38** & **74**. These layers appeared to be buried soils built up through the use of the trackway and/or ploughing to either side, consisting of a mid grey brown sandy silt up to 0.3m thick. Unfortunately no finds were attributed to these layers.
- 3.11.4 Of uncertain relationship, at the northern side of the track, south of the ditches, a possible tree throw 1m across (34) produced pottery of Romano-British type (36).
- 3.11.5 A pair of possible tree throws (**34**, 1m across, and **36**, 0.8m by 0.2m), sat stratigraphically between the two layers against the north-western baulk, apparently cutting layer 33 but being sealed by 42. The former contained a single Romano-British pottery sherd.

- 3.11.6 Cutting layer 42, a further pair of ditches (**28**, 1.1m by 0.35m and **30**, 1.7m by 0.4m) lay parallel to the north of the track.
- 3.11.7 An undated pair of ditches (**40**, 0.5m by 0.1m) forming two arcs terminating at their intersection, pointing southeast lay towards the northern end of the trench. These did not appear to be natural features, respecting the trackway, but the fill excavated (41) did not produce any finds.
- 3.11.8 At the northwestern end of the trench, a probable furrow (**26**, 0.9m by 0.1m) was excavated. Subsoil 0.2m thick and topsoil 0.25m thick covered the archaeological layers and features.

3.12 Trench 11

- 3.12.1 Lying north-east of Tr10, this trench was again targeted across the trackway as it turns eastwards gradually heading up hill. The trench was 73m in length, the surface lying at 27.4mOD in the north and 28.7mOD in the south.
- 3.12.2 At the southern end of the trench, a natural hollow (**93**) was recorded in excess of 11.5m in diameter but was not excavated. Surface finds of pot have been dated to the Early Neolithic (94).
- 3.12.3 A series of ditches were recorded in plan throughout this trench (from the south: **95**, 1.6m wide; **97**, 1.8m wide, cutting **99**, 0.6m remaining width; **101**, 0.8m wide; **105**, 2.2m wide; and **107**, 2.4m wide), all evidently bounding the trackway at different times. Between them, a number of wheel ruts cutting into the chalk were visible (collectively numbered **103**). Although not excavated, cleaning these revealed a rim of Romano-British pottery (fill 104).
- 3.12.4 The lack of any buried soils and shallow subsoil (0.05m thick) and topsoil (0.3m) means these ditches survive in isolation with only the one relationship discernible.

3.13 Trenches 12 and 13

- 3.13.1 These trenches form a right-angled L-shape in the centre of the evaluation area. Both 49m in length, aligned east-west and south-north respectively.
- 3.13.2 In Trench 13, a small irregular sub-circular feature (**127**) 1m across and 0.4m deep was similar to that noted in Trench 8 (**179**) and was probably of natural origin. The fill was again similar to that of **179** and the buried soils from hollows in the southern trenches: very dark greyish brown, friable, slightly sandy silt.
- 3.13.3 Adjacent to this was a linear feature also thought to be of geological origin (**63**). It was over 2m in width with no clear base, filled with fine sandy, chalky silt (64) running east to west.
- 3.13.4 Another probable tree throw was excavated at the eastern end of Trench 12 (**65**). While its fill was similar to other natural features, it yielded a piece of cattle humerus as well as a sherd of Late Iron Age pottery. This feature was at least 1.4m across and 0.5m deep with an irregular base and sides.
- 3.13.5 A linear ditch, aligned north-northwest to south-southeast, (**59**) crossed the centre of Trench 12, at the base of a machine sondage. This was 1m wide and 0.5m deep with straight sides and a rounded v-shaped base (Section 53, Plate 4). Its lower fill of firm mid-brown clayey silt (60) produced a single charred oat in environmental processing. Covering the top of the ditch was a layer (58) which spread out across the whole of Trench 12 and 17m of Trench 13.

- 3.13.6 Approximately 50% of this layer was excavated by machine sondage with two 1-metre hand dug test pits. Most finds were retrieved from its upper surface rather than in the test pits and spot dated it to the Late Iron Age. This layer probably corresponds to what the aerial photographic survey records as one of several 'sinuous' landscape features, possible headlands and access ways (although they appear to be very large). It is therefore suggested that ditch **59** is of Roman date, covered by layer 58; a medieval soil or possible headland.
- 3.13.7 Missing from this trench was the line of a ditch recorded by geophysics and corresponding to historic map records.
- 3.13.8 Above layer 58 was 0.4m of subsoil and 0.35m of topsoil.

3.14 Trench 14

- 3.14.1 Trench 14, aligned north-south in the north-western part of site, was 39m in length. The surface level was 27.5mOD. It contained a sub-oval, probable tree throw (**128**) 2m across and 0.5m deep with an irregular base (Section 24). Its fill was the same friable dark grey slightly sandy silt (127) as the buried soils from natural hollows. This contained no finds.
- 3.14.2 Almost no subsoil survived here, overlain by about 0.35m of topsoil.

3.15 Trench 15

- 3.15.1 Just north of Trench 14, Trench 15 was targeted across a lost historic field boundary at 27.1mOD. At 48.7m in length it was dominated by a natural hollow (**130**) 32m across its western portion and 0.5m deep. This was tested by machine sondage and a hand test pit dug in 10cm spits. Its lower fill (135) was a chalky silt interface above the natural chalk. Above this was 0.4m of dark grey brown, friable, slightly sandy silt (0.1m spits from base: 134, 133, 132, 131). A number of flint flakes, a blade and a Mesolithic micro-burin came from this deposit as well as Early Neolithic flint tempered sherds from 132 and 133.
- 3.15.2 To the southeast of this, the historic ditch (**137**), mapped between 1886 and 1891, was excavated at 2.3m wide by 0.5m deep. Its lower fill (138) was a mixed light brown silt 0.2m thick. It had evidently been backfilled with redeposited chalk (139) when consolidating the modern fields prior to 1901.
- 3.15.3 An adjacent, parallel plough scar (**139**) was recorded.
- 3.15.4 Overlying these features was 0.2m of subsoil and 0.3m of subsoil.

3.16 Trenches 16, 17 and 18

- 3.16.1 These three trenches were targeted to converge on the centre of a ring ditch (diameter c.25m), probably the remains of a barrow, at the northwestern edge of site, at around 23.4mOD. Trench 16 radiated southwest (49m), 17 northwest (21.8m) and 18 southeast (22.2m). Trench 18 was positioned where the geophysical survey appeared to show a break in the ditch.
- 3.16.2 A small natural hollow (**197**) 12.7m across made identification of the ring ditch in Trench 16 impractical. The hollow was filled with another dark grey brown friable slightly sandy silt, similar to other hollows. No attempt was made to excavate this area at this stage at the risk of contaminating the relationship between ditch and hollow. It seems more likely that the ditch cut the hollow, however, the cut edge was unclear.
- 3.16.3 Northeast of these (i.e. towards the inside of the ring ditch) a number of dark round features were recorded but not excavated (**189, 191, 193, 195**). These may be remains

of cremations but were indistinct, looked similar to features elsewhere interpreted as natural (e.g. Trenches 8, 13) and showed no signs of containing bone fragments. A curvi-linear feature 0.5m wide in this area (**187**) may also be natural with its light brown, firm, sandy silt fill (188). It was positioned with no discernible respect for the centre or perimeter of the ring ditch.

- 3.16.4 Another smaller (6m) hollow was test pitted at the northwestern end of Trench 17 (**201**) to a depth of 0.4m producing no finds from its two fills (transitional sandy fills: 202, 203 darker, friable fill: 204).
- 3.16.5 The ring ditch showed up clearly in both Trench 17 (**199**, 2.5m across, unexcavated) and Trench 18 (**205**, 1.8m across, 0.45m deep with gently sloped sides and a flat 1.1m wide base; Section 53, Plate 5). Its basal fill (206) was a compacted dark grey sandy silt. Overlying this, redeposited sandy slumps indicate the potential original existence of an inner mound (ditch fill: 208) and outer bank (ditch fill: 207). The final fill (210) was a dark greyish brown friable sandy silt.
- 3.16.6 At most 0.05m of subsoil (2) was visible in parts of these trenches. Modern plough scars were visible below the 0.25 - 0.3m of topsoil (1) across the meeting point of the three trenches (probably 4m north of the ring ditch centre). As such there is clearly no surviving barrow mound and limited likelihood of the survival of secondary cremations (though earlier central cremation(s) may survive well).

3.17 Trench 19

- 3.17.1 South of the ring ditch trenches, Trench 19 was extended 2.4m westwards from its 28.7m length to clarify the appearance of an oblong feature (**24**) in its baulk. On excavation, this was thought to be a tree throw with its irregular sides and the dark greyish brown friable silt fill (25) seen in the natural hollows. Small sherds (retrieved from environmental samples) of Early Bronze Age Collared Urn were recovered. While the feature looks natural the possibility that represents a small pit/trench deliberately cut cannot be discounted.
- 3.17.2 Overlying this was almost no subsoil and 0.28m of topsoil. The surface level was 27.3mOD.

3.18 Trench 20

- 3.18.1 Further southeast, Trench 20 was 27.7m long with surface at 27.0mOD. It contained no archaeology and only 0.3m of topsoil.

3.19 Trenches 21 and 22

- 3.19.1 These trenches were targeted over an area of geological variation (from the geophysical report, Prestidge 2014) at the base of the hillside. Trench 21 ran east-west for 31m while Trench 22 ran for 49m from south to north with surface levels varying from 27.2m in the northwest to 28.2m in the southeast.
- 3.19.2 This area covered the largest hollow recorded on site (**146**), measuring at least 24m by 35m. Three machine sondages were made through its upper fill to a depth of 1m below the surface; one of these was then test pitted by hand (Section 28, Plate 6) while the others were augered to establish depth. The test pit reached a depth of 2m below the surface, while the auger at the south of Trench 22 showed a depth of 1.58m below the surface (1.2m by machine, 0.38m by auger). The sondage at the western end of Trench 21 was augered to a total depth of 1.35m below surface. Only its northern extent was determined.

- 3.19.3 Fills of the hollow recorded in the test pit consisted of a lower very dark grey friable silt (0.1m spits from base: 152, 151, 150), followed by a slightly lighter dark grey friable slightly sandy silt (spits: 149, 148, 147 and 222). These were sealed by a grey silt with moderate-frequent chalk inclusions 0.2m thick (219). This is similar to the buried soil in the tops of the other hollows.
- 3.19.4 Flints from this fill include two datable to the Early Bronze Age, including a broken barbed and tanged arrowhead). Pottery finds are not closely datable, although one may be Early Neolithic, and another possibly Iron Age.
- 3.19.5 A second smaller hollow (**221**) was recorded at the northern end of Trench 22. This was only 9m across and 0.3m deep with a similar dark friable fill to the other hollows (220).
- 3.19.6 0.2m of subsoil and 0.2m of topsoil overlay these features. The top soil (numbered 78 here) yielded small finds from metal detecting, including 4th century Roman coins (one illegible and one Constantius II, 337-361).

3.20 Trench 23

- 3.20.1 Towards the east and north of the site, geophysical survey detected an early rectilinear field system aligned north-south with at least two enclosures. This was one of several trenches targeting the enclosure ditches. It was 49m long, sitting at 26.4 - 27.0mOD.
- 3.20.2 It contained 5 undated postholes (Plate 7), four of them in two overlapping pairs inside the enclosure, as well as an east-west aligned enclosure ditch (**91**) 1m in width. The ditch was not excavated here but in Trench 32 to the east.
- 3.20.3 The two pairs of postholes, separated by 1.3m, were roughly aligned east-west (**81**, 0.2m by 0.15m & **83**, 0.4m wide by 0.2m deep, Section 18) and north-south (**85**, 0.3m by 0.1m & **85**, 0.4m by 0.25m). A fifth posthole (**89**, 0.2 by 0.15m) lay 4m to the southwest. The fills were all clayey silts (82, 84, 86, 88, 90 respectively) with no finds.
- 3.20.4 Subsoil 0.05m and topsoil 0.3m sealed the features.

3.21 Trenches 24 and 25

- 3.21.1 These trenches (both 39m long) were targeted across a trackway recorded by geophysics and mapped between 1886 and 1891. The track is aligned northwest-southeast. Most of the track is lost on mapping from 1901 but Orchard Way was established on the same line by 1948-1951 and then Trigg Way by 1960. Paralleling the modern field boundaries, this trackway must date to the enclosure of these fields in 1838.
- 3.21.2 Trackside ditches were recorded in Trench 24 on both sides of the track, with just the eastern side falling in Trench 25 (**183**). The eastern ditch was excavated in Trench 24 (**142**) being 0.9m wide and 0.15m deep. The area between the ditches in both trenches was covered by a light grey silty clay layer (144 & 145) with frequent chalk and flints making a metallised surface. This surface was cut by wheel ruts in both trenches.
- 3.21.3 Almost no subsoil survived, with 0.25m of topsoil sealing the track.

3.22 Trench 26

- 3.22.1 This trench was untargeted, 28.6m in length and lay at 26.5mOD aligned northwest-southeast. The southern end revealed a natural hollow (**113**) at least 6m across tested to a depth of 0.5m with the common pattern of grey chalky silt transitional fill (118) overlain by a dark friable silty fill (0.1m spits: 117, 116, 115, 114) producing only occasional flints.

- 3.22.2 In the centre of the trench, aligned with its sides, was a small linear gully or beam slot. This was 6.45m long and 0.45m wide with varying depth, excavated in two 1m slots at the termini (**119**: 0.3m, **121**: 0.15m, Section 26, Plate 8). The fill (120, 122 respectively) was a greyish brown sandy silt containing Romano-british wares from both slots. Subsoil of 0.2m and topsoil of 0.3m overlay these.

3.23 Trench 27

- 3.23.1 This trench was targeted over another broad apparent geological disturbance in the northern corner of the field. At a height of 26.6mOD and length of 43.1m, it was initially machined to what appeared to be the top of another natural hollow – the fill (233) being the same as described in various other hollows, suggesting a similar date.
- 3.23.2 However, upon test pitting this layer by hand, a metallised surface of rounded cobbles and angular flints (211) appeared at a depth of 0.3 - 0.5m below sub soil (Section 46).
- 3.23.3 Machine sondages were then excavated through layer 223 to establish the extents of the surface (see Figure 6, Plate 9). It appears to occupy the eastern 30m of the trench before thinning out to the west. In a hand test pit at the western end, it was not present.
- 3.23.4 Although difficult to assess within a trench, this surface may represent metalling around a pond/pool or watering hole. Other purely natural hollows had formed no such layers of flint, so this appears to be anthropogenic and similar metalling on a smaller scale was seen in Trench 31 around a well or watering hole (see below). Neither the metalling nor the layer built-up above were seen in the neighbouring trenches. Shell tempered pot sherds from the buried soil may be Iron Age in date.
- 3.23.5 Subsoil was 0.3m thick and topsoil 0.25m deep.

3.24 Trench 28

- 3.24.1 Located between Trench 27's metallised surface and the area of prehistoric enclosure, Trench 28's 38.5m revealed no archaeological remains, only occasional root disturbance, with subsoil 0.2m thick and topsoil 0.2m thick.

3.25 Trench 29

- 3.25.1 Trench 29 was targeted on the prehistoric field system, covering 28.7m at 26.5mOD. It revealed another small natural hollow (**226**) 6m across with the same dark friable fill (227) as described elsewhere only 0.1m to 0.15 deep. To the northwest of this lay a north-south aligned ditch (**123**) presumed to be the return of the enclosure ditch in Trenches 23 and 30. This was 0.8m across and 0.3m deep with convex sides meeting a flat base 0.2m wide. Its fill (124) was similar to the other elements of the enclosure ditches and the darker fills of the natural hollows.
- 3.25.2 To the south of the hollow lay a circular pit (**125**), against the southwestern baulk. This had slightly convex sides and a narrow flat base 0.2m wide. Its fill of light greyish brown sandy silt (126) produced one flint blade.
- 3.25.3 0.1m of subsoil and 0.25m of topsoil overlay the features.

3.26 Trench 30

- 3.26.1 This trench was targeted across the northern boundary of the presumed prehistoric enclosure.
- 3.26.2 A number of natural rooting features traversed the trench including a small hollow only 0.2m deep. This was cut by the enclosure ditch (**228**), 0.7m wide although this was not

excavated here to preserve this relationship as its extents were clear from the geophysical survey.

- 3.26.3 At the northern end of the trench a possible deeper pit feature was exposed. This feature had been identified by geophysical survey. Not enough of this was available to excavate (**224**) although on the information available (geophysical signal, location and fill) it is perhaps similar to the possible well in Trench 31.

3.27 Trench 31

- 3.27.1 Targeted within the centre of the northern prehistoric enclosure, over a strong geophysical signal of a possible cut feature, Trench 31 covered 38.8m from east to west. Initially appearing as another hollow at the western end of the trench, this resolved to a roughly circular pit (**48**) estimated at 3m in diameter with steep, funnelling sides. It was excavated to 0.8m and augered to a total depth of 1.4m below subsoil (Section 17, Plate 10).
- 3.27.2 Surrounding the top of the pit was a layer of silt (**49**) with a number of angular broken flints at least 6m across, obscuring the upper edges of the pit. This appears to be metalling around the pit. As such the pit may have been a well or watering hole, positioned within a prehistoric enclosure.
- 3.27.3 Its fills (from bottom: **44**, **46**, **47**, **45**, **49**) were generally of dark or mid brown clayey silts, with the last fills having a similar nature to those of the hollows and prehistoric ditches. An upper fill (**45**) produced a piece of early to mid Bronze Age grog tempered ware, while a slump (**47**) to the side below this produced a sherd of tentative Earlier Iron Age date. Fills **45** & **46** produced fragmentary sheep/goat bones and **47** a cattle humerus.
- 3.27.4 At the eastern end of the trench was a 1 - 1.5m wide linear ditch (**76**) part of the post-medieval ploughing on the geophysical survey.
- 3.27.5 Subsoil and topsoil each measured 0.3m in thickness.

3.28 Trench 32

- 3.28.1 At the eastern corner of the site, Trench 32 was targeted on a ditch of the prehistoric field system. A 1m section of this ditch (**22**) was excavated. Its width was 1.1m with a depth of 0.5m below subsoil. Its sides were straight at approximately 45 degrees with a flat base 0.2m wide (Section 8, Plate 11). This is similar to the profile in the north-south portion of ditch in Trench 29 (**123**).

3.29 Finds Summary

- 3.29.1 The flint assemblage (Appendix B.1) was large, representing working and use of flint at the site from the Mesolithic through to at least the Early Bronze Age. The assemblages from hollows **70** and **112** represent working and preparation of raw materials while hollow **111** produced a good quantity of burnt flint.
- 3.29.2 Pottery finds although small and in poor condition (Appendix B.2) dated from the Early and Late Neolithic (including Grooved Ware), Early Bronze Age (including Collared Urn) with some tentative Iron Age sherds. Roman finds were abraded and not closely datable. No Medieval finds were retrieved from any of the features.
- 3.29.3 The natural hollows featured mainly Early Neolithic pottery and flint with no finds later than Iron Age being recovered. The possibility of the movement of finds between

contexts is raised by the frequency of burrowing snails from all samples (see Appendix C).

- 3.29.4 Surface finds by metal detecting included a 4th-century Roman coins (SF1, SF2) and a 16th century Nuremberg Jeton (SF4) and a number of other metal objects.

3.30 Environmental Summary

- 3.30.1 Eighty fragments of animal bone were recovered from the excavation with 45 fragments identifiable to species.
- 3.30.2 In total, 27 environmental samples were taken, of which 12 were spot samples for snail analysis. Most of the samples were devoid of plant remains other than modern rootlets and sparse charcoal fragments. Sample 5, fill 60 of Roman ditch **59** contained a single charred oat (*Avena* sp.) grain and Sample 23, fill 176 of pit **175** contained occasional fragments of hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) shell.
- 3.30.3 Modern roots and the burrowing blind snail *Cecilloides acicula* are present in all of the samples.
- 3.30.4 Three spot samples were also assessed for pollen content. These proved largely barren of pollen with no potential for further analysis.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Natural Hollows – Mesolithic & Neolithic Soils

- 4.1.1 The evidence available suggests that these hollows likely have periglacial origins, although they may also relate to the band of Melbourn Rock, a break in the chalk geology which approximately follows the 30mOD contour across site (BGS 2014), resulting in springs such as at Fowlmere and Shepreth. However, the environmental evidence (including samples from a range of contexts through these features) suggests that the hollows were never waterlogged, situated as they are on chalk. The most telling evidence for the dark, humic buried soils within the hollows relating to a dry-land rather than water-lain habitat comes from the snail assemblages (see Appendix C.1).
- 4.1.2 The presence within the hollows of early prehistoric flint and pottery is likely a result of occupation activities having taken place within and around them, with these activities being preserved within their buried soils. The assemblages from hollows **70** and **112** appear to be the most informative, indicating primary working, dating to the Mesolithic (**112**) and later Mesolithic/Early Neolithic (**70**) (see Appendix B.1).
- 4.1.3 The pottery from these contexts is all abraded while the flint, although recorticated, is thought to have been recovered close to where it was originally discarded, with potential for *in-situ* working areas. This likely reflects the finds' incorporation in the building up of soils with conditions having a more detrimental effect on the pottery than the harder flint.
- 4.1.4 It should be born in mind that 1m square test pits were excavated by hand and the deepest parts of these hollows were not necessarily excavated in each case, their extents being uncertain. As noted in Appendix B.1, they may also contain evidence of multiple flint working episodes, both spatially and chronologically. Although the potential for stratified sequences is noted, the presence of burrowing snails and modern roots in all samples taken on site may allow for the movement of smaller finds between contexts.

Trench number	Cut (hollow) number	Diameter (within trench; m)	Depth below present surface (m)	Finds range
4	112	>14	1.7	Late Meso – Early Neolithic
5	111	>8	1.6	Mesolithic – Early Neolithic (tentative)
7	163	10.5	1.1	Early Neolithic (uncertain)
10	70	16	1.9	Early Neolithic – Early Iron Age
11	93	11.5	(unexcavated)	Early Neolithic
15	130	32	1	Early Neolithic
16	197	12.7	(unexcavated)	Possibly Later Mesolithic
17	201	6	0.7	
21/22	146	>35	≥2	Early Neolithic – Iron Age (tentative)
22	221	9	0.7	
26	113	6	1	
29	226	6	0.6	

Table 1: Natural hollow summary

4.2 Neolithic

- 4.2.1 Neolithic pottery, the majority of Early Neolithic date, is almost exclusively confined to the natural hollows (with fragments from ditches **153** & **155**). However, one small pit (**175**) in Trench 8 produced several pieces of a Later Neolithic grooved ware vessel along with hazelnut shell fragments. Sandstone cobbles found within this pit may have come from a hearth and an undated posthole lay nearby, suggesting occupation of some date in this area of site.

4.3 Ring Ditch/Barrow

- 4.3.1 The presence of the ring ditch within Trenches 16-18 was confirmed, except for the unclear picture at its southwestern side. It produced few finds, though only one slot was excavated on the assumption that mitigation would precede any developmental threat.
- 4.3.2 The existence of an original mound and outer bank are suggested by the slumps recorded in the section. It is likely a barrow of earlier Bronze Age date, perhaps relating to the subsequent ditch system 70m to the east. No inhumations or cremations were seen within the trenches, either primary or secondary, though it should be noted that the precise centre of the internal area was not trenched, nor was the northeastern and eastern section of the ditch.
- 4.3.3 A possible tree throw or pit/trench (**24**) in Trench 19 contained sherds of Collared Urn. Its proximity to the ring ditch is note-worthy when considering this as a 'non-funerary' context.

4.4 Bronze Age Fields

- 4.4.1 The prehistoric field system (**22**, **91**, **128**, **228**), aligned broadly north-south/east-west across the north east of the site is tentatively dated to the Middle Bronze Age. This is based on the form and size of the field(s) (approximately 90m by 90m) and of the ditches, and the presence of Middle Bronze Age pottery within the well feature located inside one enclosure (see Appendix B.2), although this feature also contains Earlier Iron Age pottery. The line of the western boundary between trenches 23 and 29 is extrapolated. Part of a second enclosure to the north is recorded by geophysics.
- 4.4.2 It is worth noting that in the southwest of the site, ditches **153**, **154**, **185** and **215** etc. are the only other features on this north-south/east-west axis, although 250m away from the other system. These contain sherds of Early Neolithic (**153**, **154**) and Iron Age (**215**) pottery.
- 4.4.3 All other ditch features on site share variations on the enclosure line of New Road (i.e. pointing slightly west of north, or slightly north of east).

4.5 Prehistoric

- 4.5.1 The metallised surface (211) in Trench 27 is dated only by finds within the layer above it (223) which produced fragments of Iron Age pottery and some struck flint.
- 4.5.2 The similarities in terms of make-up and environmental samples between this layer, the hollow fills and the fills of the presumed MBA enclosure ditches, ring ditch and the large pit in Trench 31 all suggest they formed in a similar environment. The absence of later artefacts supports the notion that this soil is of prehistoric date, with the metallised surface perhaps of Bronze Age origin.

4.6 Iron Age

- 4.6.1 Iron Age pottery retrieved from the site is tentatively dated, coming from a (probably medieval) buried soil (58), the fill of a hollow (146 of **148**) and a ditch in Trench 1 (186 of **185**). No features of definite Iron Age date were recorded.

4.7 Roman

- 4.7.1 The Roman pottery recovered from the site was of limited quantity. Fragments were typically larger than in the prehistoric assemblage, although still abraded and not closely datable, coming from discrete features (the beam slot **119** in Trench 26), a possible tree throw or rut in the trackway of Trench 10 (**34**) and from an uncertain ditch/pit relationship in Trench 1 (218 from **217**).
- 4.7.2 The possible beam slot produced sherds from two excavated slots. It was aligned just slightly closer to north-south than the line of post-enclosure ploughing, with definite termini so it is not likely to be a mistaken post-medieval agricultural ditch. It suggests the presence of a basic structure here, although abraded pot means dating is not specific.
- 4.7.3 To the southwest of this feature, Roman activity is suggested by the v-profiled ditch (**59**). Although lacking finds, it was buried under a probable headland soil (58). Its alignment deviates further from the 1830s enclosure system but its extents are unclear from geophysics. It appears that the two lines have become conflated on the aerial photographic survey (Cox 2014).

4.8 Medieval Trackway

- 4.8.1 Crossing the site from west to east, the trackway was excavated and recorded in Trenches 1, 6, 10 and 11. With the ridge and furrow system respecting its alignment, it was clearly a landscape feature in the Medieval period, though may have developed prior to the establishment of the medieval field system. Tracing its western line through the modern landscape (Figure 7), it likely formed part of the Romanized route, Ashwell Street, to the southwest of Melbourn. Running eastwards, it can be seen in aerial imagery heading towards the Bran Ditch (7th-century) near Black Peak, where a small Romano-British settlement is recorded.
- 4.8.2 Both Trenches 10 and 11 indicated some longevity to the track with several phases of ditching on its northern side and (in Trench 10) some cutting through the soils built up over earlier ditches and ruts. A pair of associated ditch termini (**40**) of uncertain function appeared to respect the trackway but were not dated.
- 4.8.3 In Trench 7, closer to its western end, the track had formed a hollow way with ditches cutting deeper either side and wheel ruts at its base, yet its use had continued even after the hollow way filled up with evidence of coarse metallurgy just below the subsoil.
- 4.8.4 The top soil around Trenches 21 and 22 just north of the trackway produced two 4th century Roman coins and a 16th-century Nuremberg jeton. Lacking any evidence for post-Bronze Age occupation on the site (except a possible Roman beam slot and ditch), these finds may be indicative of periods when the trackway was in use.
- 4.8.5 Ditches possibly relating to the trackway (e.g. **161** & **40**) remain undated and unexplained.

4.9 Ridge and Furrow

- 4.9.1 The system of ridge and furrow is clearly recorded by geophysics, with several furrows also being excavated in the evaluation trenches, their fills essentially matching the

subsoil (2), which is therefore interpreted (broadly) as a medieval plough soil. This system respects the trackway.

- 4.9.2 A large area of Trenches 12 & 13 was covered by a possible headland. This took the form of a buried soil (58) up to 0.5m thick which lies at the eastern end of the furrows on the north side of the track way.

4.10 Enclosure & later trackway/road

- 4.10.1 The present field system was established by parliamentary enclosure in 1838 (Wright 1982), establishing New Road. The north-south trackway located in Trenches 24 and 25 would appear from its alignment to date to the same enclosure. Mapped and unmapped ditches and possible subdivisions following this alignment were recorded in the northeast and the southwest of the site, clearly crossing the earlier trackway.

4.11 Conclusions

- 4.11.1 Flint working activities are closely associated with buried soils preserved in natural hollows. These soils are particularly important in their potential to provide stratigraphic evidence across the Mesolithic/Neolithic transition.
- 4.11.2 Only one neolithic site has been excavated nearby, 400m to the southwest at Water Lane and the quantity of Grooved Ware pot from the county is small. So the Later Neolithic pit with hearth stones and possible associated posthole (Trench 8) are of particular interest.
- 4.11.3 Generally the evaluation confirmed the picture provided by the geophysical survey, for example: the prehistoric field system and the possible well/watering hole within it. Other features with a similar geophysical signature lie within the same enclosures and were not tested by evaluation. Further dating of these features and enclosures would place them in their local and regional context.
- 4.11.4 Although the ring ditch has been heavily ploughed, the possibility persists that human remains are preserved in this monument if they were cut into the chalk or into the ring ditch fills. Further ring ditches are visible on aerial photographs but fall south of the present evaluation area (Cox 2014).
- 4.11.5 In other areas this evaluation showed more features than expected from geophysics, such as: the presumably prehistoric metal surface in the northern corner of the site; the southeastern side of the ring ditch; the Roman possible beam slot; the previously missing extents of the south side of the main track way as well as the numerous recuts on its northern side. The main east-west trackway, while clearly in use into the medieval and probably post-medieval periods, appears to predate the medieval field system, which formed in relation to it. It is likely that this represents one of the many east-west routes of the Romanized Icknield Way/Ashwell Street system.
- 4.11.6 The presence of medieval and later agricultural systems and the enclosure track way was entirely expected. However, the presumed Roman ditch (**59**) in Trench 12 suggests a predecessor to the ridge and furrow/east-west trackway system on similar alignments (if not earlier origins for the track itself). It clearly follows a different line from the post-medieval track (see Figures 2/3).
- 4.11.7 The 'sinuous' landscape features (Cox 2014), of which buried soil (58) sealing ditch **59** is likely a part, are not yet understood, being perhaps too large simply to be headlands.

4.12 Recommendations

- 4.12.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

APPENDIX A. TRENCH AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

A.1.1 Contexts are listed in Table 2 in order of trench number then context number.

Table 2: Context list

Trench	Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Breadth	Depth
	1		layer	topsoil		
	2		layer	subsoil		
	3		layer	chalk geology		
1	185	185	cut	ditch	1.3	0.2
1	186	185	fill	ditch		
1	213		cut	ditch	1.25	
1	214	213	fill	ditch		
1	215	215	cut	ditch	1.5	0.5
1	216	215	fill	ditch		
1	217	217	cut	ditch	1.6	0.5
1	218	217	fill	ditch		
2	4	4	cut	pit/tree throw	0.56	0.12
2	5		fill	pit/tree throw	0.56	0.12
2	6	2	cut	ditch	1.52	0.42
2	7	6	fill	ditch	1.52	0.42
2	8	8	cut	ditch	0.48	0.08
2	9	8	fill	ditch	0.48	0.08
2	10	10	cut	ditch	0.8	0.18
2	11	10	fill	ditch	0.8	0.18
4	12		layer	layer		0.28
4	13		layer	layer		0.3
4	14	14	cut	ditch	1	0.48
4	15	14	fill	ditch	1	0.48
4	54		layer	layer		
4	55		layer	layer		
4	56		layer	layer		
4	112	112	cut	natural hollow		
5	16	111	layer	buried soil/colluvium		0.34
5	17	111	layer	buried soil		0.34
5	109	111	fill	buried soil		0.16
5	110	111	fill	buried soil		0.16
5	111	111	cut	natural hollow	2.1	

Trench	Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Breadth	Depth
6	18	18	cut	ditch	1.78	0.26
6	19	18	fill	ditch	1.78	0.26
7	153	153	cut	ditch	0.85	0.22
7	154	153	fill	ditch		
7	155	155	cut	ditch	0.9	0.26
7	156	155	fill	ditch		
7	157	157	cut	ditch	0.6	0.14
7	158	157	fill	ditch		0.14
7	159	159	cut	ditch	1	0.17
7	160	159	fill	ditch		0.17
7	161	161	cut	ditch	0.62	0.16
7	162	161	fill	ditch		0.16
7	163	163	cut	natural hollow	10.6	0.42
7	164	163	fill	buried soil		0.42
7	165	165	cut	ditch	1.9	0.4
7	166	165	fill	ditch		0.4
7	167	167	cut	ditch	1.9	
7	168	167	fill	ditch		
7	169	169	cut	wheel ruts		
7	170	169	fill	wheel ruts		
7	171	171	cut	pit	0.7	
7	172	172	cut	pit		
7	173	172	fill	pit		
7	174		layer	variations in section		
7	182	169	fill	hollow way fill		
7	212		layer	hollow way fill		
7	229		cut	ditch	1.5	
8	175	175	cut	pit	0.6	0.2
8	176	175	fill	pit		
8	177	177	cut	post hole	0.24	0.12
8	178	177	fill	post hole		
8	179	179	cut	natural	0.7	0.25
8	180	179	fill	natural		
8	181	181	layer	subsoil		
10	26	26	cut	furrow	0.86	0.08

Trench	Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Breadth	Depth
10	27	26	fill	furrow	0.86	0.08
10	28	28	cut	ditch	0.96	0.32
10	29	28	fill	ditch	0.96	0.32
10	30	30	cut	ditch	1.7	0.42
10	31	30	fill	ditch		
10	32	32	cut	ditch	1.4	0.15
10	33	32	fill	ditch		0.1
10	34	34	cut	natural	1.9	0.2
10	35	34	fill	natural	1.9	0.2
10	36	36	cut	natural	0.8	0.14
10	37	36	fill	natural	0.8	0.14
10	38	38	cut	ditch	1.15	0.1
10	39	38	fill	ditch	1.15	0.1
10	40	40	cut	ditch	0.48	0.1
10	41	40	fill	ditch		
10	42	32	layer	spread		0.28
10	51	70	fill	buried soil		0.35
10	52	70	fill	buried soil		
10	53	70	fill	buried soil		0.3
10	57		fill	buried soil		
10	68	70	fill	buried soil		0.1
10	69	70	fill	buried soil		
10	70	70	cut	natural hollow		1.1
10	71	70	fill	buried soil		
10	72	70	fill	buried soil		0.24
10	73	70	fill	buried soil		0.08
10	74	74	cut	ditch	0.7	0.18
10	75	74	fill	ditch		
10	77	76	fill	furrow		
11	93	93	cut	natural hollow		
11	94	93	fill	buried soil		
11	95	95	cut	ditch		
11	96	95	fill	ditch		
11	97	97	cut	ditch		
11	98	97	fill	ditch		
11	99	99	cut	ditch		

Trench	Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Breadth	Depth
11	100	99	fill	ditch		
11	101	101	cut	ditch		
11	102	101	fill	ditch		
11	103	103	cut	wheel ruts		
11	104	103	fill	wheel ruts		
11	105	105	cut	ditch		
11	106	105	fill	ditch		
11	107	107	cut	ditch	2.35	0.08
11	108	107	fill	ditch		
12	58		layer	layer		0.4
12	59		cut	ditch	1	0.4
12	60	59	fill	ditch	1	0.35
12	65		cut	pit		
12	66		fill	pit		
13	61	61	cut	pit	0.6	0.35
13	62	61	fill	pit		
13	63	63	cut	furrow	1	0.35
13	64		fill	furrow		
14	127	128	fill	three throw		0.45
14	128	128	cut	tree throw		0.45
15	130	130	cut	natural hollow		1
15	131	130	fill	buried soil		
15	132	130	fill	buried soil		
15	133	130	fill	buried soil		
15	134	130	fill	buried soil		
15	135	130	fill	buried soil		
15	137	137	cut	ditch	2	0.48
15	138	137	fill	ditch		
15	139	137	fill	ditch		0.37
15	140	140	cut	plough scar		
15	141	140	fill	plough scar		
16	187	187	cut	ditch/natural		
16	188	187	fill	ditch/natural		
16	189	189	cut	natural?		
16	190	189	fill	natural?		
16	191	191	cut	natural?		

Trench	Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Breadth	Depth
16	192	191	fill	natural?		
16	193	193	cut	natural?		
16	194	193	fill	natural?		
16	195	195	cut	natural?		
16	196	195	fill	natural?		
16	197	197	cut	ditch		
16	198	197	fill	ditch		
16/17/18	79		layer	topsoil		
17	199	199	cut	ditch	2.4	
17	200	199	fill	ditch		
17	201	201	cut	natural	6	0.4
17	202	201	fill	natural		
17	203	201	fill	natural		
17	204	201	fill	natural		
18	205	205	cut	ditch	2.2	0.4
18	206	205	fill	ditch		
18	207	205	fill	ditch		
18	208	205	fill	ditch		
18	209	205	fill	ditch		
18	210	205	fill	ditch		
19	24	24	cut	natural	1.2	0.4
19	25	24	fill	natural	1.2	0.4
21	146	146	cut	natural hollow		
21	147	146	fill	buried soil		
21	148	146	fill	buried soil		
21	149	146	fill	buried soil		
21	150	146	fill	buried soil		
21	151	146	fill	buried soil		
21	152	146	fill	buried soil		
21	219	146	cut	natural hollow		
21/22	78		layer	topsoil		
22	220	221	fill	buried soil	9	0.7
22	221	221	cut	natural hollow		
22	222	146	fill	buried soil		
23	80		layer	topsoil		
23	81	81	cut	post hole	0.24	0.12

Trench	Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Breadth	Depth
23	82	81	fill	post hole		
23	83	83	cut	post hole	0.34	0.2
23	84	83	fill	post hole		
23	85	85	cut	post hole	0.26	0.08
23	86	85	fill	post hole		
23	87	87	cut	post hole	0.36	0.21
23	88	87	fill	post hole		
23	89	89	cut	post hole	0.2	0.13
23	90	89	fill	post hole		
23	91	91	cut	ditch	1.4	
23	92	91	fill	ditch	1.4	
24	142	142	cut	ditch	1	0.15
24	143	142	fill	ditch		
24	144		layer	trackway	20	
25	145		layer	trackway		
25	183	183	cut	ditch	0.2	
25	184	183	fill	ditch		
26	113	113	cut	natural hollow		0.25
26	114	113	fill	buried soil		
26	115	113	fill	buried soil		
26	116	113	fill	buried soil		
26	117	113	fill	buried soil		
26	118	113	fill	buried soil		0.05
26	119	119	cut	beam slot	0.42	0.28
26	120	119	fill	beam slot	0.42	0.28
26	121	121	cut	beamslot	0.47	0.15
26	122	121	fill	beam slot		
27	211		layer	surface (external)		
27	223		layer	buried soil		
29	123	123	cut	ditch		
29	124	123	fill	ditch		
29	125	125	cut	pit		
29	126	125	fill	pit		
29	226	226	cut	natural hollow	6	0.15
29	227	226	fill	buried soil		

Trench	Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Breadth	Depth
30	224	224	cut	ditch/pit	0.7	0.2
30	225	224	fill	ditch/pit		
30	228		cut	ditch	0.7	
31	44	48	fill	pit	1.36	0.12
31	45	48	fill	pit		0.24
31	46		fill	pit		
31	47	48	fill	pit	1.58	
31	48	48	cut	pit		
31	49		layer	overflow	5.8	0.16
31	76	76	cut	furrow	1.5	
32	20	20	cut	natural	0.85	0.22
32	21	20	fill	natural	0.85	0.22
32	22	22	cut	ditch	1.1	0.51
32	23	22	fill	ditch	1.1	0.51
32	43		layer	spread		

APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Flint

By Barry Bishop

Introduction

- B.1.1 The archaeological evaluation at the above site resulted in the recovery of 363 pieces of struck flint and a small quantity of unworked burnt flint. This report provides a brief description of the main characteristics of the assemblage, discusses its archaeological significance and potential to contribute to the further understanding of the nature and chronology of the activities identified during the project, and recommends any further work required. This text should be read in conjunction with the catalogue which provides further details of each piece. All metrical descriptions follow the methodology of Saville (1980).

Description

- B.1.2 Given the size of the areas investigated the assemblage may be considered as large and represents the working and use of flint at the site over a long period, from the Mesolithic period to at least the Early Bronze Age. The assemblage represents all stages in the reduction sequence, from the preparation and reduction of cores to the use and discard of retouched implements. It is dominated by flakes but with blades contributing relatively high proportions of the total. Although a large proportion of the material represents unusable knapping waste, there are relatively few cores present, but retouched implements are well-represented. Knapping waste in the form of micro-debitage (flakes and flake fragments measuring 15mm or less in maximum dimension) comprises just over a third of the assemblage and concentrations of this may indicate *in-situ* flint working areas.
- B.1.3 The assemblage is generally in a good condition and although some residuality is likely most of the material is likely to have been recovered close to where it was originally discarded. However, virtually all pieces are very heavily recorticated, this often penetrating the flint to depths of 2-3mm and therefore extending completely through many flakes. It has caused the edges of many pieces to become friable and crumbly, thereby excluding the assessment of any light retouch or utilization traces.
- B.1.4 The raw materials all comprise good knapping-quality flint but its heavily recorticated state precludes identifying the colour of most pieces. However, occasional recent breaks have revealed the flint to be invariably fine grained translucent and very dark grey or black. Cortex is present on many pieces and this is usually relatively thin but rough and unweathered. Occasional thermal surfaces and the presence of thermal flawing in several pieces indicate that the flint was obtained from derived or shallow surface deposits. These could include the colluvium that is present to the south of the site but perhaps more likely it is from outcropping glacially weathered flint seams in the Holywell Chalk that can be found to the south of the site, and which were widely exploited during the Mesolithic and Neolithic further to the east at Heathfield (Dickens and Dodwell 1997; Dodwell 1997; McFadyen 1999a; 1999b).
- B.1.5 The assemblage was recovered from 37 contexts representing 21 separate features. The bulk, nearly 90% were recovered from the fills a series of natural hollows with a variety of other features producing small assemblages. Virtually all of the unworked burnt flint came from just two of the hollows, [111] and [112].

The Hollows

	Decortication flake	Rejuvenation flake	Flake	Flake fragment	Prismatic blade	Non-prismatic blade	Blade core	Retouched	Micro-burin	Conchoidal chunk	Micro-debitage <15mm	Total
Hollow 70 (no.)	12	4	39	20	8	5	1	1		15	95	200
Hollow 70 (%)	6.0	2.0	19.5	10.0	4.0	2.5	0.5	0.5		7.5	47.5	100
Hollow 111												0
Hollow 112 (no.)	3	1	19	15	11	10		1	4		14	78
Hollow 112 (%)	3.8	1.3	24.4	19.2	14.1	12.8		1.3	5.1		17.9	100
Hollow 113			2	1								3
Hollow 130	2		6	3	1			1	1			14
Hollow 146	1		5	1	1			2			1	11
Hollow 179			1			1		1			2	5
Hollow 201			1									1
Hollow 221	2		1		1							4

Table 3: Quantification of the Lithic Material from the Natural Hollows

- B.1.6 The natural hollows produced most of the struck flint from the site and nearly all of the unworked burnt flint, but it was not evenly distributed amongst these (Table 3). These variations are due to both differences in quantities and concentrations present and also in the degree that the hollows were excavated.
- B.1.7 Hollow [70] produced the largest assemblage of struck flint. This is friable due to the heavy recortication but is otherwise in a good condition. It is the product of a blade-based reduction strategy but is dominated by knapping waste and includes high proportions of micro-debitage, which contribute nearly half of the struck from this feature, as well as other elements of primary waste, such as decortication and rejuvenation flakes. Only a single core was present, a single platform blade type that was well-worked but abandoned after attempts to establish a new platform proved unsuccessful. There is also only a single retouched piece, this consisting of a simple edge-trimmed blade with a slightly denticulated edge.
- B.1.8 Hollow [112] produced the next largest assemblage at 78 pieces. This was also blade-based and dominated by knapping waste but it does include higher proportions of blades and concomitantly fewer flakes. There are also lower proportions of micro-debitage present, which might be due to differences in recovery techniques. There are no cores but it also contains a single retouched piece, this comprising a finely worked fabricator with a characteristically rubbed end. Perhaps most importantly, however, the assemblage also includes four definite and one possible micro-burin, these being waste pieces associated with the manufacture of microliths and firmly dated to the Mesolithic period. It also contained a relatively large assemblage of unworked burnt flint suggestive of hearth use.

B.1.9 The other hollows produced much smaller assemblages. Of interest is a fragment of a possible narrow blade microlith from hollow [179] which, if correctly identified, is of Later Mesolithic date, and a broken barbed and tanged arrowhead from hollow [146] which is diagnostic of Early Bronze Age industries. Hollow [146] also produced a large flake with coarse denticulation, which would also fit in with such a date. Hollow [111] did not contain struck flint but it did produce the largest assemblage of unworked burnt flint from the site, indicating that either hearths had been constructed within it or that it had been used to dispose of hearth waste.

Other Features

Feature	Decorification flake	Flake	Flake fragment	Prismatic blade	Non-prismatic blade	Flake Core	Retouched	Ground flint axe	Conchoidal chunk	Micro-debitage <15mm	Total	Burnt Stone (no.)	Burnt Stone (wt:g)
? [126]				1							1		
? [218]											0	2	27
? [71]							1				1		
? [79]								1			1		
? [94]	1	2			2				1		6		
Ditch 155		2								2	4		
Layer 223					1						1		
Layer 58		1		2			1				4		
Pit 175		7	1								8		
Pit 48		1					1				2		
Ring-ditch 205	3	3	1		1	1	1				10		
Sub-soil TR2		1							1		2		
Sub-soil TR3		1			1						2		
Topsoil TR12		1									1		
TR30 Spit1			1								1		
Tree-throw 24		1		1							2		
Unstrat		1									1		
Total	4	21	3	4	5	1	4	1	2	2	47	2	27

Table 4: Quantification of the Lithic Material from the Other Features

B.1.10 The remainder of the assemblage was recovered from a variety of features and soil horizons (Table 4). Perhaps the most notable implement found is the butt end of a finely ground Neolithic flint axe or chisel from context [79]. It has recorticated white and its colour cannot be ascertained. It is thin and narrow and tapers gently in towards the end. The sides and end have a thin flat facet between 1mm and 3mm wide but is otherwise

symmetrically oval in profile. Virtually all pre-grinding scars have been removed but there are occasional small post-flaking scars around the edges, possibly caused by damage. The axe has then split along a long-plunging break comparable to an 'end-shock' scar. The break has then been trimmed to form a small faceted striking platform and this has been used to remove a few narrow flakes and blades. It currently measures a maximum of 64mm long by 35mm wide and 17mm thick, and weighs 28g.

- B.1.11 None of the other features produced particularly exceptional or large assemblages. Neolithic pit [175] contained eight struck pieces which may be contemporary with its infilling but these all consisted of small core trimming and shaping flakes. The upper fills of Bronze Age ring-ditch [205] produced a collection of ten pieces, which include a carefully made end-scraper with a well-formed symmetrical working edge typical of Later Neolithic or Early Bronze Age examples. Layer [58] produced a long end scraper with an obliquely set working edge made on a prismatic blade, most likely of Mesolithic date.

Discussion and Significance

- B.1.12 The flintwork recovered during the investigations demonstrate persistent prehistoric activity at the site over a long period, as can be demonstrated by the presence of diagnostic implements such as Mesolithic micro-burins and a possible microlith, a Neolithic ground implement and an Early Bronze Age arrowhead. The assemblage is significant by itself in terms of understanding prehistoric activity at the site. This is considerably increased by the discovery of preserved prehistoric soils within natural hollows that they are closely associated with the *in-situ* working of flint and use of hearths.
- B.1.13 The two most informative assemblages from the hollows, [70] and [112], are largely comparable, they both represent the initial working and preparation of raw materials that were probably gathered close-by from outcropping flint seams, and it appears that potentially useful pieces, such as useable flakes and blades, retouched pieces and still-productive cores, were being removed for use elsewhere. Both assemblages therefore represent the primary working of flint rather than more general or broad-based activities, which is of interest as the character and routines of raw material procurement remain poorly understood in East Anglia. There are also certain differences between these two assemblages. The flintwork from [112] can be dated to Mesolithic period by the presence of Microliths. The assemblage from hollow [70], whilst still blade-based, indicates a decline in the ability or desire to make blades and this could suggest it dates to slightly later, it perhaps being closer in date to the Early Neolithic pottery also found in the hollow. The hollows continued to be a focus for activity, however, as is evidenced by the recovery of a barbed and tanged arrowhead from hollow [146]. It is also important to consider that, as the hollows infilled over a considerable time, they could contain evidence for multiple episode of flintworking. The possibility of stratified sequences of assemblages from different periods is of considerable significance in that these could contribute to understanding of many poorly understood issues, such as changing patterns of landscape use and technological developments in lithic industries. This would be particularly important for the poorly understood changes that occur across the Mesolithic / Neolithic transition, and which are widely regarded as national research priorities.

Recommendations

- B.1.14 The struck flint assemblage is indicative of prehistoric activity at the site which further fieldwork could potentially considerably elucidate. Should further work at the site be

considered, the assemblage reported here should be re-documented in conjunction with any additional material found following the completion of the archaeological programmes. From the point of view of the lithic material, any further fieldwork should focus on obtaining as large and closely contextually defined lithic assemblage as possible, in order to attempt to understand the nature, extent and chronology of any prehistoric lithic-based activities. Should sufficient quantities of lithic artefacts be procured from any future work, full metrical, typological and technological analysis may be warranted.

B.2 Prehistoric Pottery

By Sarah Percival

Introduction

- B.2.1 A total of 189 sherds of prehistoric pottery weighing 389g were collected from fourteen excavated contexts in eleven trenches (Table 5). The earliest pottery recovered is Earlier Neolithic Bowl which came into use c.3855-3730 cal. BC and continued until c.3355-3210BC (Whittle *et al.* 2011, 759). Early Bronze Age (3200-1800 cal. BC), mid Bronze Age (1800 – 1100 BC) and Early Iron Age (800-350 BC) pottery was also found.
- B.2.2 The sherds are small and abraded in keeping with the context of deposition, most being recovered from natural hollows, tree throws and buried soils. A small quantity of Later Neolithic Grooved Ware came from pit **175** in trench 8. This pottery dates to c.3000-2000 BC. A small Iron Age sherd came from furrow **185** in trench 1 (500-350BC).

Trench	Feature	Feature type	Context	Spot date	Quantity	Weight (g)
1	185	Furrow	186	Iron Age	1	5
5	111	Buried soil	17	Early Neolithic	2	4
7	153	Ditch	154	Early Neolithic	1	18
	155	Ditch	156	Early Neolithic	1	15
	163	Natural feature	164	Early Neolithic	2	2
8	175	Pit	176	Later Neolithic	49	110
10	37	Tree throw	37	Early Neolithic	12	11
	70	Natural feature	52	Not closely datable	14	14
			57	Early Neolithic	33	39
			68	Early Neolithic	23	24
			69	Earlier Iron Age	12	28
11	93	Natural feature	94	Early Neolithic	5	8
15	130	Natural feature	132	Early Neolithic	7	14
			133	Early Neolithic	3	6
19	24	Tree throw	25	Early Bronze Age	4	11
21	146	Natural feature	148	Iron Age	2	13
				Not closely datable	5	2
			150	Early Neolithic	1	6
				Not closely datable	1	4
27	223	Buried soil	223	Iron Age	4	3
31	48	Well/pit	45	Middle Bronze Age	4	32
			46	Earlier Iron Age	3	20
Total					189	389

Table 5: Quantity, weight and date of prehistoric pottery by trench, feature and context

Methodology

- B.2.3 The assemblage was analysed in accordance with the Guidelines for analysis and publication laid down by the Prehistoric Ceramic Research Group (PCRG 2010 [Methodology.doc](#)). The total assemblage was studied and a full catalogue was prepared. The sherds were examined using a binocular microscope (x10 magnification) and were divided into fabric groups defined on the basis of inclusion types. Fabric codes were prefixed by a letter code representing the main inclusion present (F representing flint, G grog and Q quartz). Vessel form was recorded; R representing rim sherds, B base sherds, D decorated sherds and U undecorated body sherds. The sherds were counted and weighed to the nearest whole gram. Decoration and abrasion were also noted. The pottery and archive are curated by OAE

Trench 1

- B.2.4 A single body sherd is sandy fabric Q1 was recovered from fill (186) of furrow **185**. The sherd is small weighing just 5g and is abraded. It is likely to be of Iron Age date (c.500-350 BC).

Trench 5

- B.2.5 Two small scraps of pottery were recovered from buried soil (111). The fragments are both in flint-tempered fabrics, one within a sandy clay matrix (fabric QF) and the other containing only angular flint inclusions. These sherds have been tentatively dated to the Early Neolithic.

Trench 7

- B.2.6 Three features in trench 7 produced a total of four sherds weighing 35g. All are flint-tempered and are of Early Neolithic date. Ditch fills (154) and (156) from ditches **153** and **155** each produced a single, fairly large flint-tempered body sherd. Two very small scraps of pottery in shell with flint tempered fabric came from (164), the fill of natural feature **163**. These sherds are very abraded and weigh only 1g each, making dating uncertain.

Trench 8

- B.2.7 A total of 49 sherds weighing 110g from the flat base and lower body of a Later Neolithic Grooved Ware bowl were recovered from pit **175** in trench 8. The base is flat and the base angle suggests a tub shaped vessel. The sherds are again abraded and consequently the decoration is extremely worn however the shallow incised channels which are highly characteristic of Grooved Ware are still just visible. The vessel is made of flint with shell-tempered fabric.
- B.2.8 Grooved Ware remains relatively rare in Cambridgeshire having been recovered from around thirty sites (Longworth and Cleal1999) including Linton where radiocarbon dates suggested that it was deposited c.2700-2570BC (R. Clarke *pers. comm.* SUERC 14059 – SUERC 14067 and SUERC14247).

Trench 10

- B.2.9 Trench 10 produced 94 sherds weighing 116g, all from natural feature **70**. All are small abraded sherds in a range of flint and shell-tempered fabrics. One sherd is made of sandy fabric with sparse chalk inclusions.

- B.2.10 The assemblage contains rims from two vessels, both jars one with a rounded rim terminal, the other pinched-out. These are almost certainly of Early Iron Age date. The body sherds are less easily dated and could be either Early Neolithic or Early Iron Age.

Trench 11

- B.2.11 Five very small and abraded flint tempered body sherds weighing 8g came from fill (94) of natural feature 93. The sherds have been dated to the Early Neolithic.

Trench 15

- B.2.12 Natural feature **130** produced ten body sherds weighing 20g in flint and shell-tempered fabrics. These sherds have also been assigned an Early Neolithic spot date.

Trench 19

- B.2.13 Tree-throw **24** contained four sherds weighing 11g from an Early Bronze Age Collared Urn in grog-tempered fabric. The undecorated sherds from the collar and upper body of the vessel have smooth wet-hand-wiped surfaces characteristic of Early Bronze Age pottery.

- B.2.14 Collared Urn has been found in non-funerary deposits at sites such as West Row Fen (Martin and Murphy 1988) and it is likely that these sherds derive from similar domestic activity.

Trench 21

- B.2.15 A total of nine sherds weighing 25g were recovered from natural feature **146** in trench 21. The sherds are in a mix of sandy and flint-tempered fabrics and are not closely datable with the possible exception of one sherd in moderate flinty fabric F2, which may be Early Neolithic and a sandy sherd which may be Iron Age.

Trench 27

- B.2.16 Four small body sherds weighing 3g in shell-tempered fabric may be Iron Age. The sherds were collected from buried soil (223).

Trench 31

- B.2.17 Trench 31 produced a total of seven sherds weighing 52g, all from the fills of well **48**. Four small sherds weighing 21g are shell tempered. The remaining three sherds, 31g are in fine grog-tempered fabric G2. The shell-tempered sherds have been tentatively dated as Iron Age. The grog-tempered sherds are early to mid Bronze Age.

Discussion

- B.2.18 The assemblage, though small and in poor condition, suggests activity at the site from the Earlier Neolithic and the Iron Age. Of interest is Grooved Ware pit, 175 in trench 8, which provides a small assemblage to add to the diminutive but growing corpus from the county. It would be useful to see if the pit is an isolated example or one of a wider cluster as this may suggest the longevity and or possible repetition of occupation at the site.
- B.2.19 The Collared Urn from tree-throw **24**, trench 19, is also significant as few non-funerary assemblages are known. The sherds may also suggest deliberate deposition of material into tree-throws.
- B.2.20 The remainder of the assemblage is formed of earlier prehistoric material, especially Early Neolithic bowl, which has become incorporated into large natural hollows. This is very similar to deposits noted by Frances Healy at Spong Hill, where tree throws contained exclusively early prehistoric pottery despite the presence of significant later

activity at the site (Healy 1988; Healy 2013). This early prehistoric material was originally deposited in surface deposits and subsequently found its way into the natural hollows, sometimes as deliberately deposited dumps (Healy 2010, 19).

B.3 Roman Pottery

By Sarah Percival

- B.3.1 A total of five sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from five excavated features (Table 2). The assemblage comprises four sherds of unprovenanced sandy greyware including a rim from an undiagnostic jar and a body sherd in wheelmade shell-tempered fabric. The sherds are not closely datable within the Roman period.
- B.3.2 The pottery was recovered from a range of features including ditch **217**, trench 1, wheel rut **103** in trench 11 and a beam slot in trench 26. One sherd came from tree throw **34** in trench 10.

Trench	Feature	Feature type	Context	Description	Quantity
1	217	Ditch	218	Shell tempered body sherd	1
10	34	Tree throw	35	Sandy greyware body sherd	1
11	103	Wheel rut	104	Sandy greyware rim	1
26	119	Beam slot	120	Sandy greyware body sherd	1
	121	Beam slot	122	Sandy greyware body sherd	1
Total					5

Table 6: Quantity and weight of Roman pottery by trench, feature and context

- B.3.3 The assemblage is too small and abraded to indicate widespread activity during the Roman period, perhaps being derived from agricultural manuring or similar activity.

B.4 Post Roman Pottery

By Sarah Percival

- B.4.1 A body sherd in local medieval glazed fabric was found in subsoil, context (2). The sherd dates to approximately the 12th century.
- B.4.2 A fragment of 18th century stoneware marked with the excise stamp of Queen Anne was found in topsoil (1).

APPENDIX C. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Faunal remains

By Chris Faine

- C.1.1 Eighty fragments of animal bone were recovered from the excavation with 45 fragments identifiable to species. The total weight of the assemblage is 1.52 kg.
- C.1.1 The overall species distribution in terms of fragments (NISP) along with the numbers of ageable mandibles, epiphyses and measurable/sexable bones are recorded in Table 8. The counting system is based on a modified version of the system suggested by Davis (1992) and used by Albarella and Davis (1994). Completeness was assessed in terms of diagnostic zones (Dobney & Reilly, 1988). Ageing was assessed via tooth wear (Grant, 1982).
- C.1.2 Pig is the most prevalent taxon, consisting of partial juvenile skeleton from context **173**. No mandible was recovered but epiphyseal fusion suggests an animal no older than 1 year old at death. Further identifiable fragments are limited to cattle and sheep/goat remains. Cattle remains of loose teeth and vertebral fragments, along with two adult humeri from contexts **47** & **66**. Sheep/Goat remains consisted of a partial tibia and radius from context **46**. Context **46** also contained a mandible from an animal around 2-3 years of age at death.

Context	Weight in kg
173	0.21
66	0.55
47	0.32
46	0.15
124	0.06
57	0.06
24	0.09
164	0.07
54	0.01
71	0.01
149	0.01
148	0.01
68	0.05
220	0.02

Table 7: Bone weight by context

	Identifiable Bones	Ageable Epiphyses	Measurable Bones	Ageable Mandibles
Cattle (Bos)	12	0	2	1
Sheep/Goat (Ovis/Capra)	5	0	0	1
Pig (Sus scrofa)	28	2	5	0
Total:	45	0	17	2

Table 8: Numbers of Identifiable/Ageable/Measurable elements

C.2 Environmental samples

By Rachel Fosberry

Introduction

- C.2.1 Environmental samples were taken from features within the evaluated areas at New Road Melbourn in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant and mollusc

remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations. Features sampled include natural hollows or 'pingos' formed as voids in the chalk bedrock in which buried soils have accumulated. Pits, ditches and tree-throws dating from the Neolithic through to the Roman period were also sampled.

Methodology

C.2.2 The total volume (up to 20 litres) of each bulk sample was processed by water flotation (using a modified Siraff three-tank system) for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The floating component (flot) of the samples was collected in a 0.3mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through 10mm, 5mm, 2mm and a 0.5mm sieve. Both flot and residues were allowed to air dry. A magnet was dragged through each residue fraction prior to sorting for artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The dried flots were subsequently sorted using a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 60 and a complete list of the recorded remains are presented in Table xxx.

Quantification

C.2.3 For this initial assessment, molluscs have been scored for abundance

+ = rare, ++ = moderate, +++ = abundant

Results

Sample No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	14	16	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Context No.	5	23	55	56	60	66	52	57	68	71	72	73	16	17	10	11	11	13	13	17	18	15	14	22
Cut No.	4	22			59	65	70	70	70	70	70	70	11	11	11	11	11	13	13	17	17	15	14	
Feature Type	pit	ditch	hollow	hollow	ditch	pit	hollow	hollow	hollow	hollow	hollow	hollow	hollow	hollow	hollow	hollow	hollow	hollow	hollow	pit	pit	ditch	hollow	hollow
Volume processed (L)	6	10	10	10	20	19	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	20	2	20	2	10	10	9	16	9
Residue volume (L)	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.25	0.9	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.05	0.1	0.05	0.05	0.1	0.05	0.05	0.2	0.02	0.2	0.05	0.45	0.25	0.5	0.2	0.1
Charred Plant remains																								
<i>Avena</i> sp. Caryopsis																								
<i>Corylus avellana</i>																								
Open country mollusc species																								
<i>Helicella itala</i>					+		+		+		+				+	++		+		+	+		+	

Sample No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	14	16	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Context No.	5	23	55	56	60	66	52	57	68	71	72	73	16	17	10	11	11	13	13	17	18	15	14	22
Cut No.	4	22			59	65	70	70	70	70	70	70	11	11	11	11	11	13	13	17	17	15	14	
<i>Pupilla muscorum</i>		+			++										+	++			+				++	
<i>Vallonia sp.</i>	+	+	++		+	+									++	+	+		+		+		++	
<i>Vertigo cf. pygmaea</i>		+	+	+											+				+					
Chalkland species																								
<i>Pomatias elegans</i>		+	++	++			++	++	+	++			+	++	+			++		+		+		+
Catholic mollusc species																								
<i>Cepaea sp.</i>				+											+			++	+					
<i>Trichia cf. hispida</i>																	+							
Woodland/ Shade-loving species																								
<i>Carychium sp.</i>				++																				
<i>Discus rotundatus</i>			++	+								+	+	++	++		+							
Intrusive species																								
<i>Cecilloides acicula</i>	+	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Table 9: Environmental samples

C.2.4 Most of the samples were devoid of plant remains other than modern rootlets and sparse charcoal fragments. Sample 5, fill 60 of Roman ditch **59** contains a single charred oat (*Avena* sp.) grain and Sample 23, fill 176 of pit **175** contains occasional fragments of hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) shell.

C.2.5 Modern roots and the burrowing blind snail *Cecilloides acicula* are present in all of the samples which may have resulted in movement of material between contexts. Land snails that are thought to be contemporary with the deposits sampled are relatively low in diversity. The most common snail present is *Pomatias elegans* which is a habitat-specific species that requires soils that are loose and friable and high in calcium carbonate such as those found in the deposits encountered at this site. The most abundant open country species are *Pupilla muscorum*, *Vallonia sp.*, *Helicella itala* and *Vertigo pygmaea*. The catholic taxa are dominated by *Trichia hispida* with occasional shells of *Cepaea* sp. Shade-loving species include *Discus rotundatus* and *Carychium* sp.

Discussion

- C.2.6 Charred hazelnut shell fragments are present in the fill of pit **175** which is thought to date to the Neolithic and would be consistent evidence of wild food procurement for this period. Plant remains have not been preserved in the hollows as would be expected of deposits that have not been used for the disposal of domestic waste although pottery fragments and flint flakes have been recovered from some of the residues from these samples. The single charred grain present in the only Roman deposit sampled from this site is indicative of the disposal of a food type but further interpretation is precluded by the sparse quantity.
- C.2.7 The brief assessment of the molluscs present suggests an area of open grassland with the possibility of some shade provided by trees and shrubs. It is interesting to note that the larger assemblages of *Pomatias elegans* are from the hollows or 'pingos' in which the buried soils are found providing the ideal habitat for this species.

C.3 Palaeoenvironmental assessment

By Mairead Rutherford

Introduction

- C.3.1 Three sub-samples taken from sediments within possible pingo features, from Melbourn, Cambridge, were submitted by OA East for pollen assessment.

Quantification

- C.3.2 Volumetric samples were taken from the three sub-samples and one tablet containing a known number of *Lycopodium* spores was added so that pollen concentrations could be calculated (Stockmarr 1971). The samples were prepared using a standard chemical procedure (method B of Berglund and Ralska-Jasiewiczowa 1986), using HCl, NaOH, sieving, HF, and Erdtman's acetolysis, to remove carbonates, humic acids, particles > 170 microns, silicates, and cellulose, respectively. The samples were then stained with safranin, dehydrated in tertiary butyl alcohol, and the residues mounted in 2000cs silicone oil. Slides were examined at a magnification of 400x by ten equally-spaced traverses across at least two slides to reduce the possible effects of differential dispersal on the slides (Brooks and Thomas 1967) or at least until 100 total land pollen grains were counted. Pollen identification was made following the keys of Moore *et al* (1991), Faegri and Iversen (1989), and a small modern reference collection. Plant nomenclature follows Stace (2010). The preservation of the pollen was noted and an assessment was made of the potential for further analysis. Fungal spore identification and interpretation followed van Geel (1978).

Results

- C.3.1 Three pollen sub-samples were assessed. The results are presented in the table below:

Sample and context numbers	Pollen grains counted	Microcharcoal particles counted	Fungal spores counted	Potential for analysis
8 (57)	0	25	0	No
15 (17)	2	66	5	No
22 (133)	2	80	7	No

Table 10: Results of pollen assessment

- C.3.2 The material processed proved largely barren of pollen. From sub-sample **15 (17)**, only two pollen grains were recorded, a grass pollen grain (Poaceae) and a dandelion-type

(*Taraxacum*-type). From sub-sample **22 (133)**, a grass pollen grain was present as well as a sedge (Cyperaceae) pollen grain. Several fungal spores were recorded, of which *Glomus* (HdV-207), was positively identified. This fungal spore has been associated with newly developing soils and disturbed ground (van Geel, 1978). Microcharcoal was present in all three sub-samples, suggesting local or regional burning events.

C.3.3 There is no potential for analysis of these sub-samples.

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APPENDIX E. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number			
Project Name			
Project Dates (fieldwork)	Start	Finish	
Previous Work (by OA East)		Future Work	

Project Reference Codes

Site Code		Planning App. No.	
HER No.		Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	
Development Type	

Please select all techniques used:

☐ Aerial Photography - interpretation	☐ Grab-Sampling	☐ Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
☐ Aerial Photography - new	☐ Gravity-Core	☐ Sample Trenches
☐ Annotated Sketch	☐ Laser Scanning	☐ Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure
☐ Augering	☐ Measured Survey	☐ Targeted Trenches
☐ Dendrochronological Survey	☐ Metal Detectors	☐ Test Pits
☐ Documentary Search	☐ Phosphate Survey	☐ Topographic Survey
☐ Environmental Sampling	☐ Photogrammetric Survey	☐ Vibro-core
☐ Fieldwalking	☐ Photographic Survey	☐ Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)
☐ Geophysical Survey	☐ Rectified Photography	

Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the [NMR Monument Type Thesaurus](#) and significant finds using the [MDA Object type Thesaurus](#) together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

Monument	Period	Object	Period

Project Location

County		Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District		
Parish		
HER		
Study Area		National Grid Reference

Project Originators

Organisation	
Project Brief Originator	
Project Design Originator	
Project Manager	
Supervisor	

Project Archives

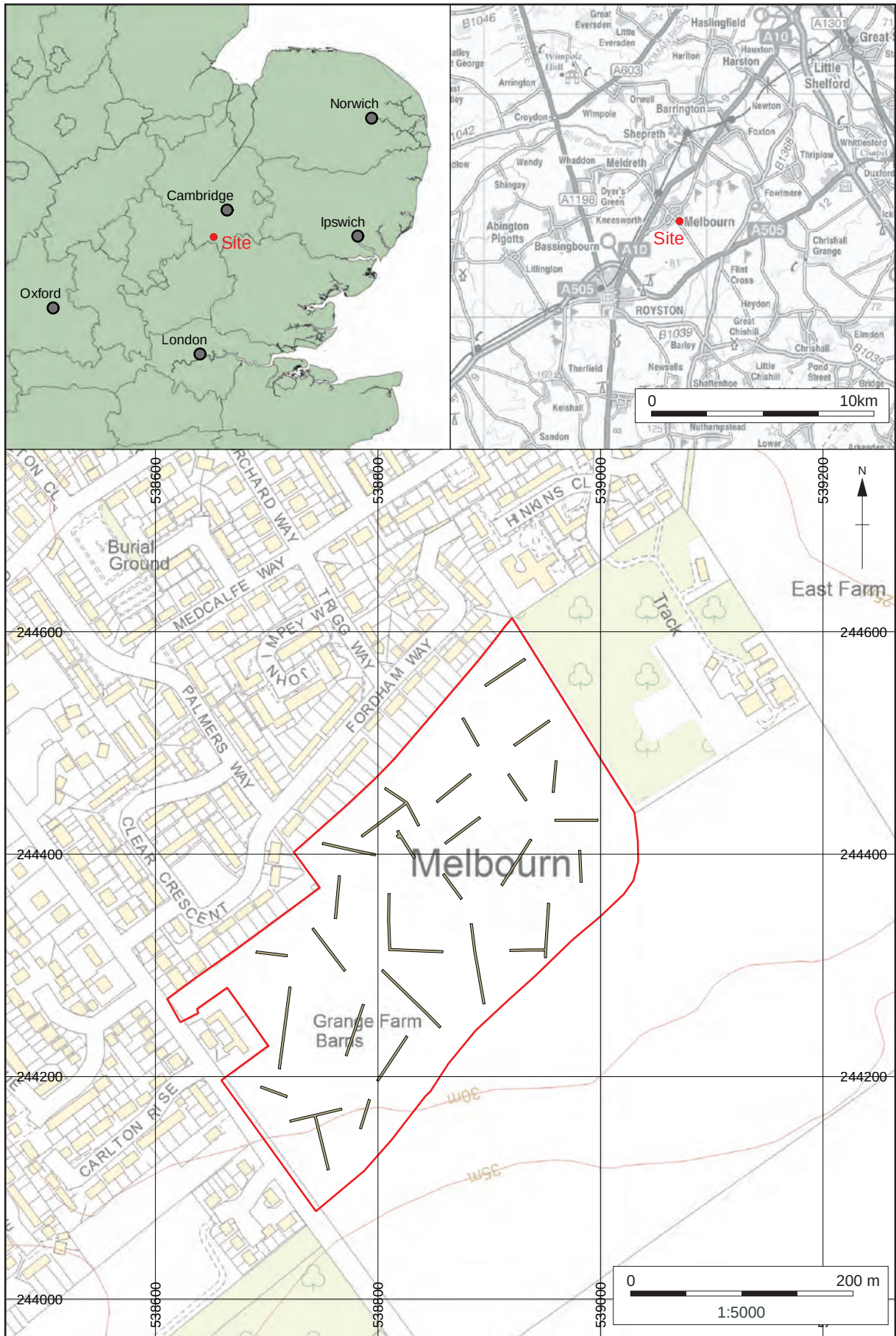
Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	☐	☐	☐
Ceramics	☐	☐	☐
Environmental	☐	☐	☐
Glass	☐	☐	☐
Human Bones	☐	☐	☐
Industrial	☐	☐	☐
Leather	☐	☐	☐
Metal	☐	☐	☐
Stratigraphic		☐	☐
Survey		☐	☐
Textiles	☐	☐	☐
Wood	☐	☐	☐
Worked Bone	☐	☐	☐
Worked Stone/Lithic	☐	☐	☐
None	☐	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐	☐

Digital Media	Paper Media
☐ Database	☐ Aerial Photos
☐ GIS	☐ Context Sheet
☐ Geophysics	☐ Correspondence
☐ Images	☐ Diary
☐ Illustrations	☐ Drawing
☐ Moving Image	☐ Manuscript
☐ Spreadsheets	☐ Map
☐ Survey	☐ Matrices
☐ Text	☐ Microfilm
☐ Virtual Reality	☐ Misc.
	☐ Research/Notes
	☐ Photos
	☐ Plans
	☐ Report
	☐ Sections
	☐ Survey

Notes:



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Figure 1: Site location showing archaeological trenches (black) in evaluation area (red)



Figure 2: Trench layout and archaeological and geological features (numbered) with geophysical survey plot (from Prestidge 2014, Figure 3)

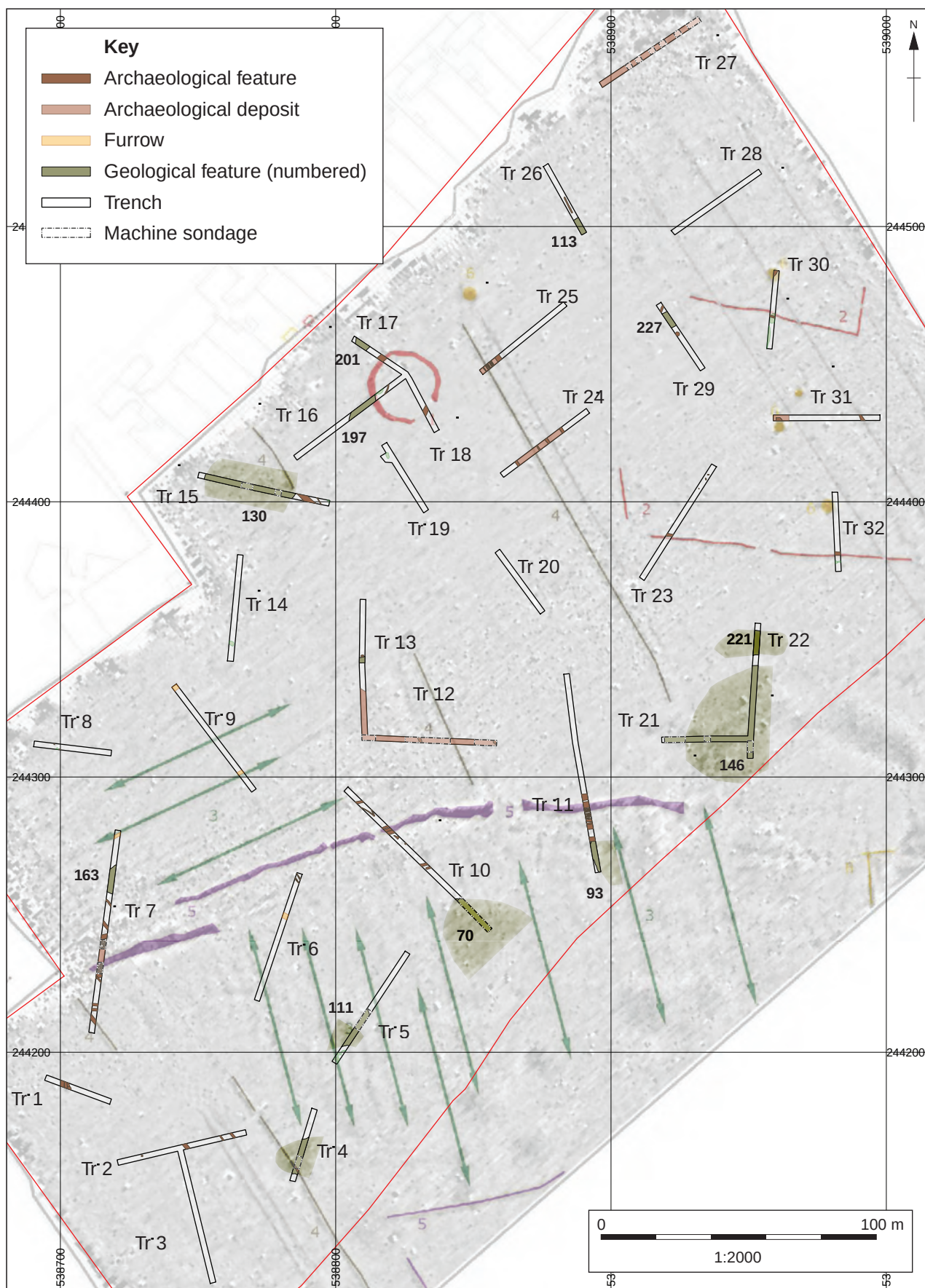


Figure 3: Trench layout and archaeological and geological features (numbered) with geophysical survey plot and interpretation (from Prestidge 2014, Figures 3 & 4)

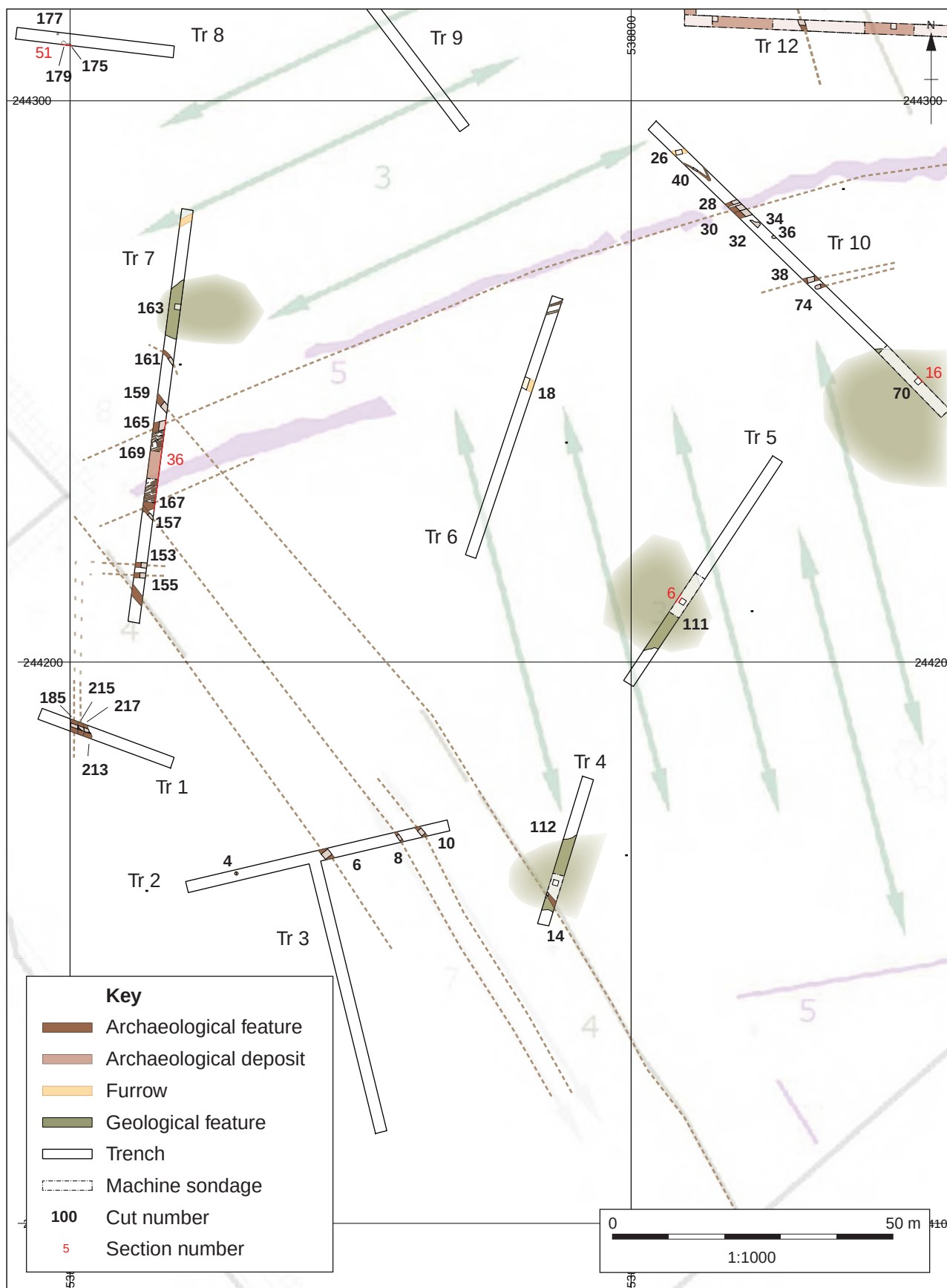


Figure 4: Trenches 1-8 & 10, including geophysical survey interpretation (from Prestidge 2014, Figure 4) and extrapolated lines

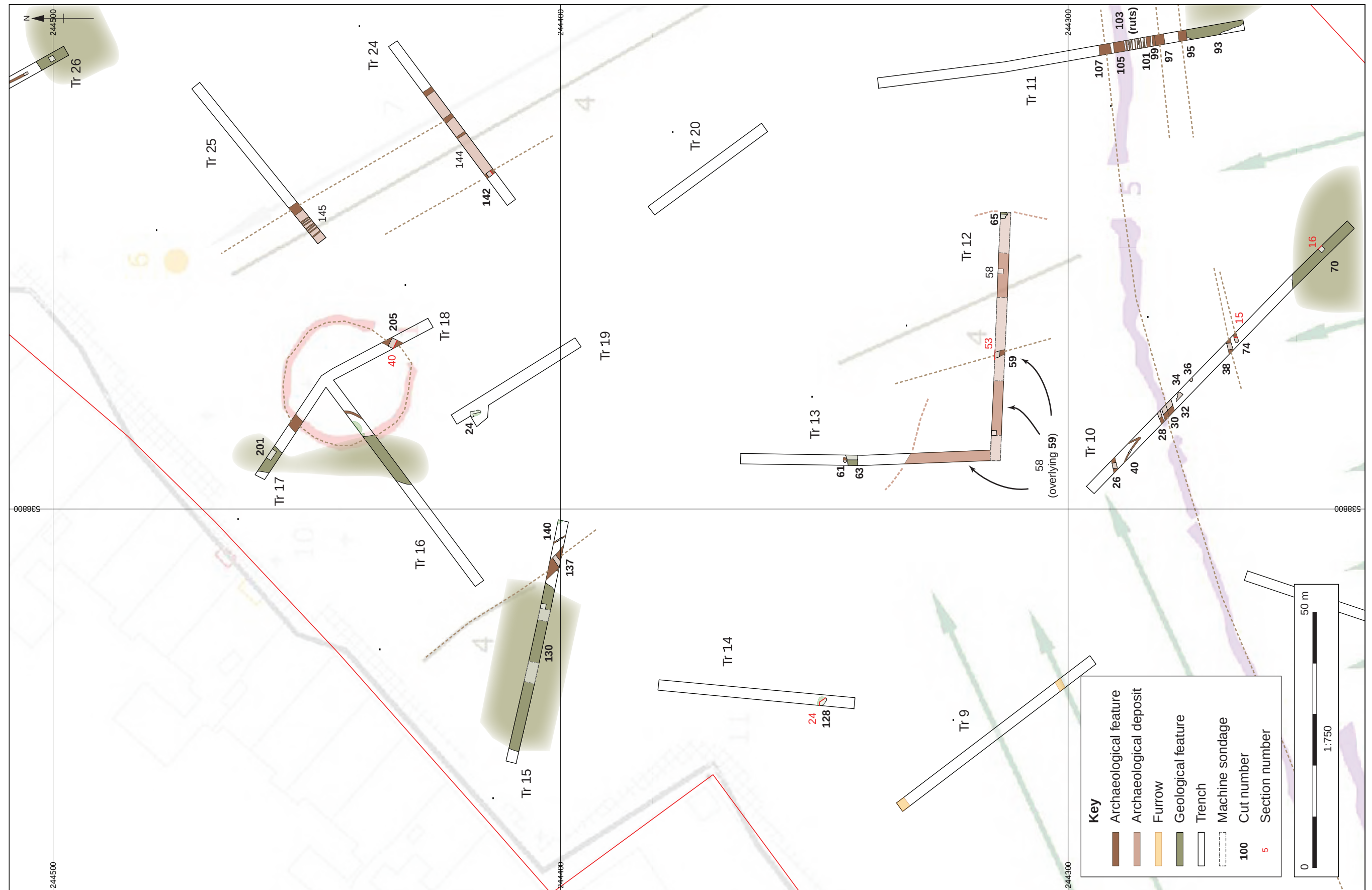


Figure 5: Trenches 9-20, 24 & 25 including geophysical survey interpretation (from Prestidge 2014, Figure 4) and extrapolated lines

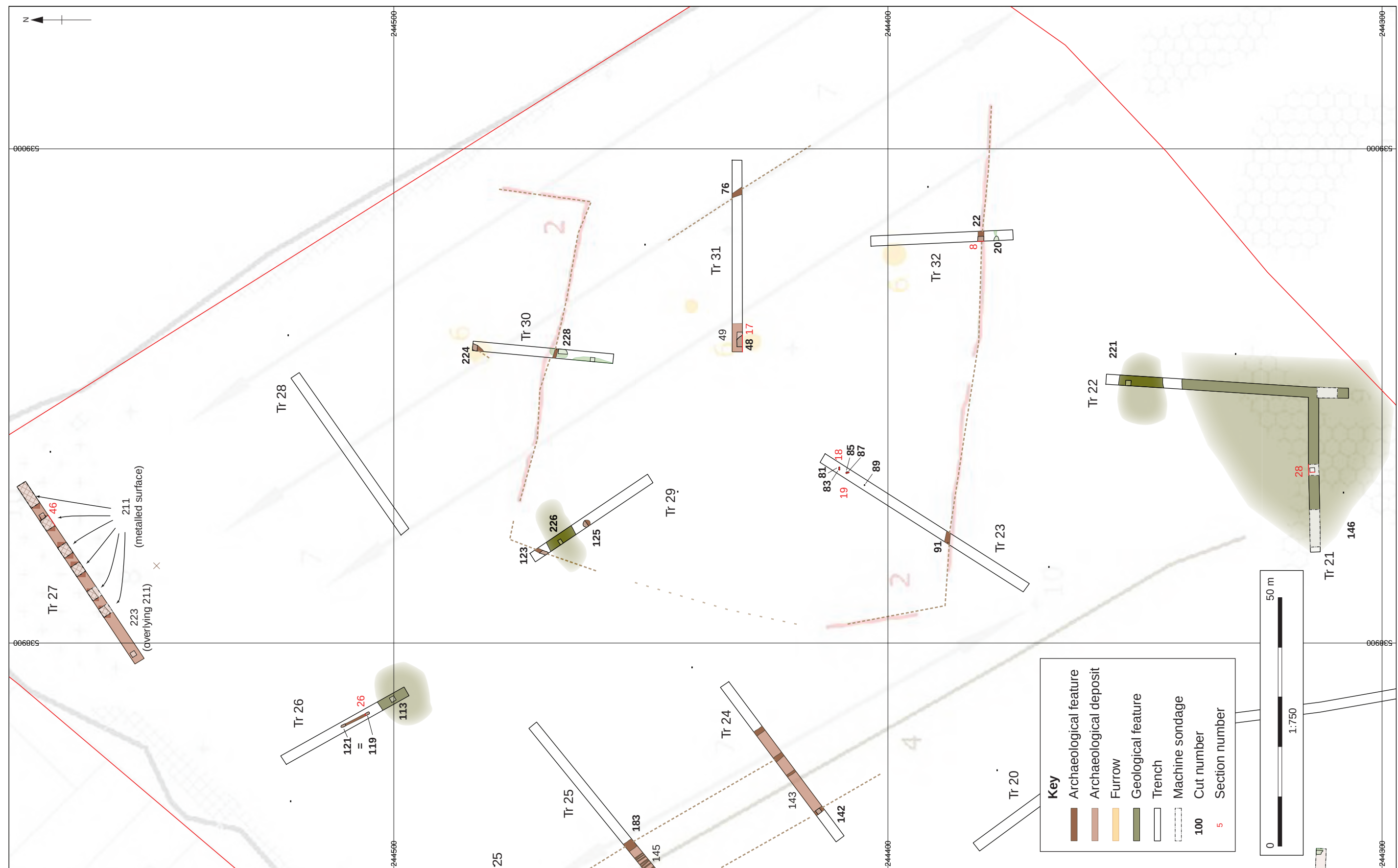


Figure 6: Trenches 21-23 & 26-32 including geophysical survey interpretation (from Prestidge 2014, Figure 4) and extrapolated lines

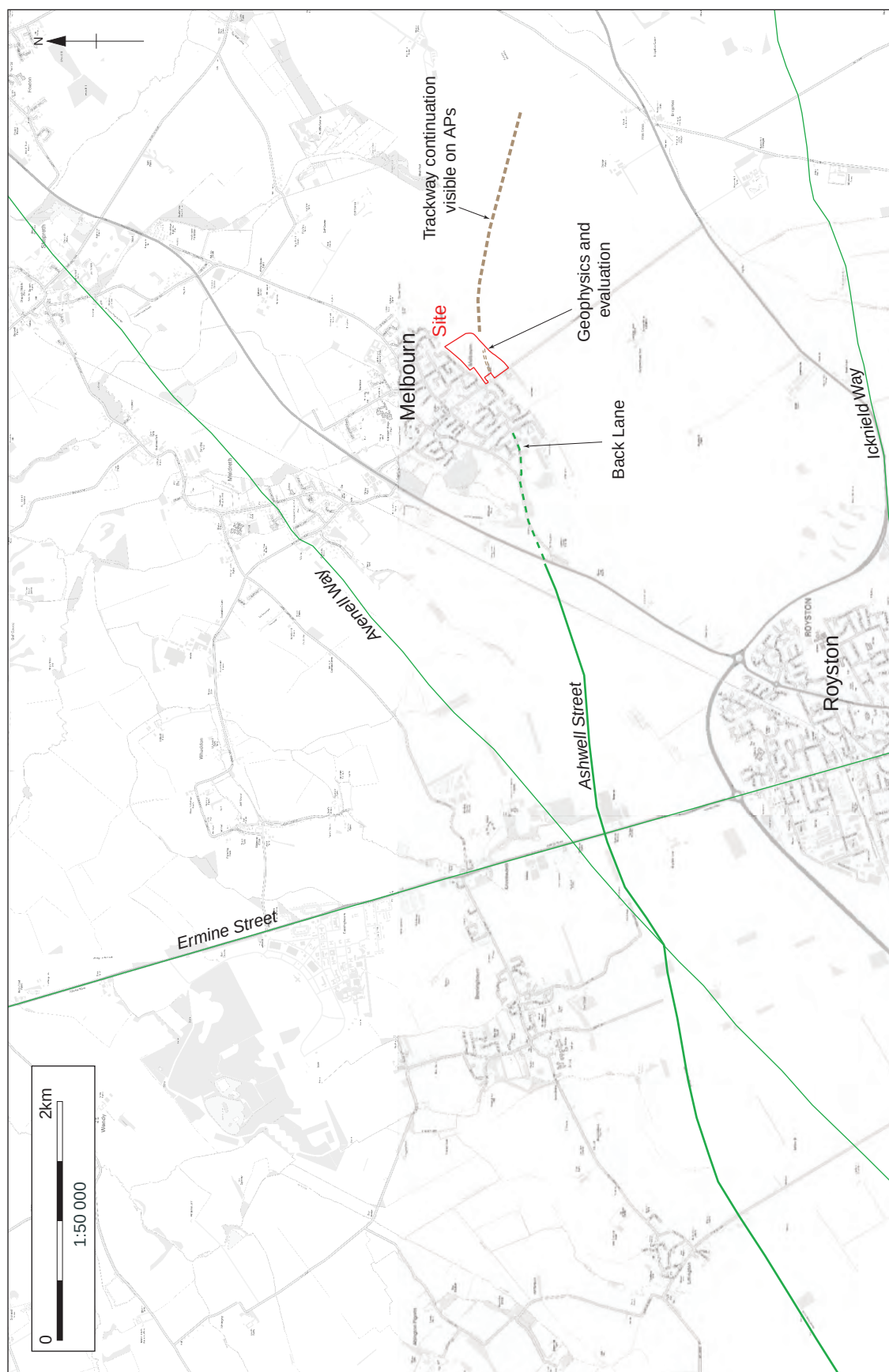


Figure 7: Ashwell Street and associated routes (after Atkins 2013) and possible continuation at New Road Melbourn

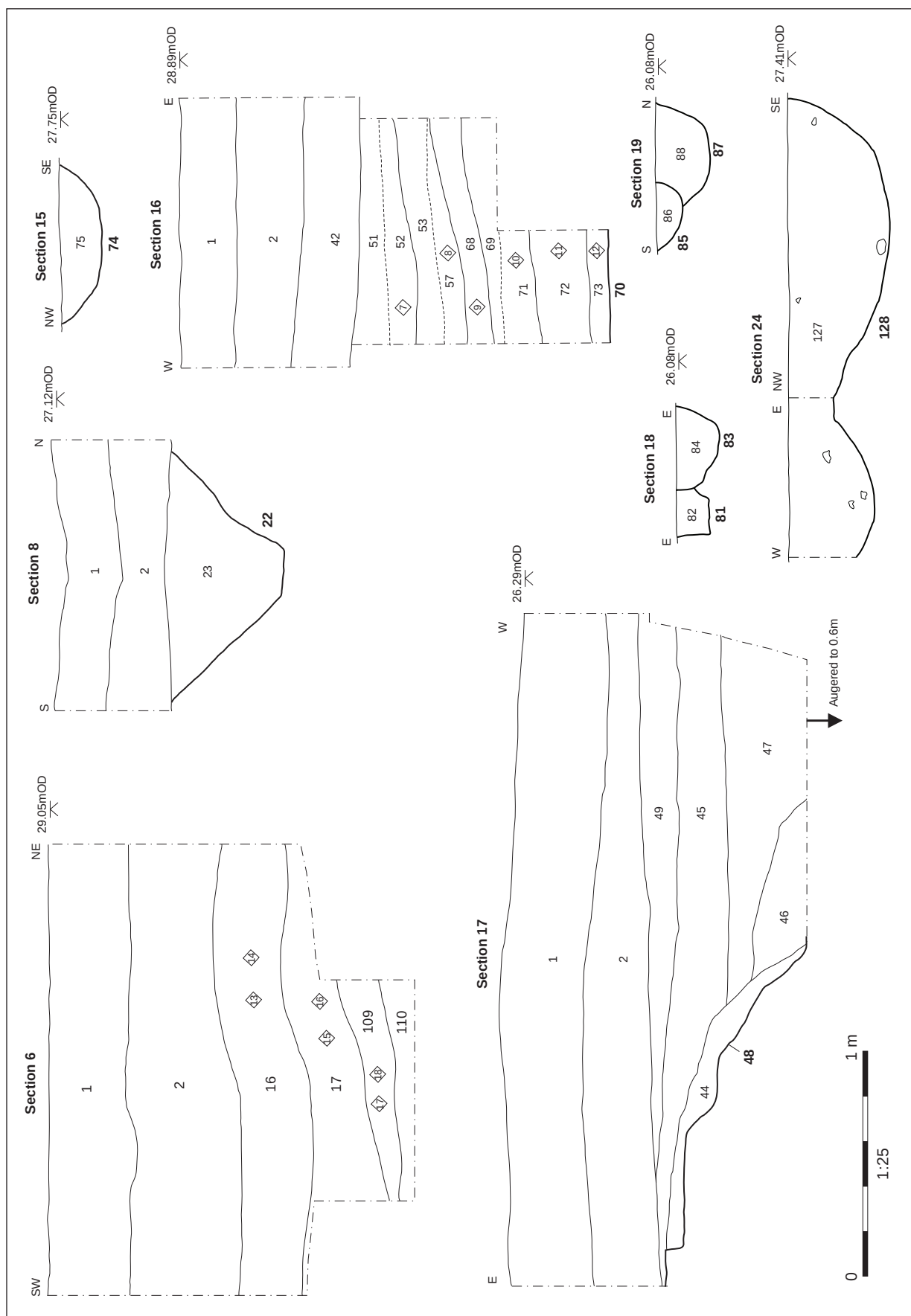


Figure 8: Sections

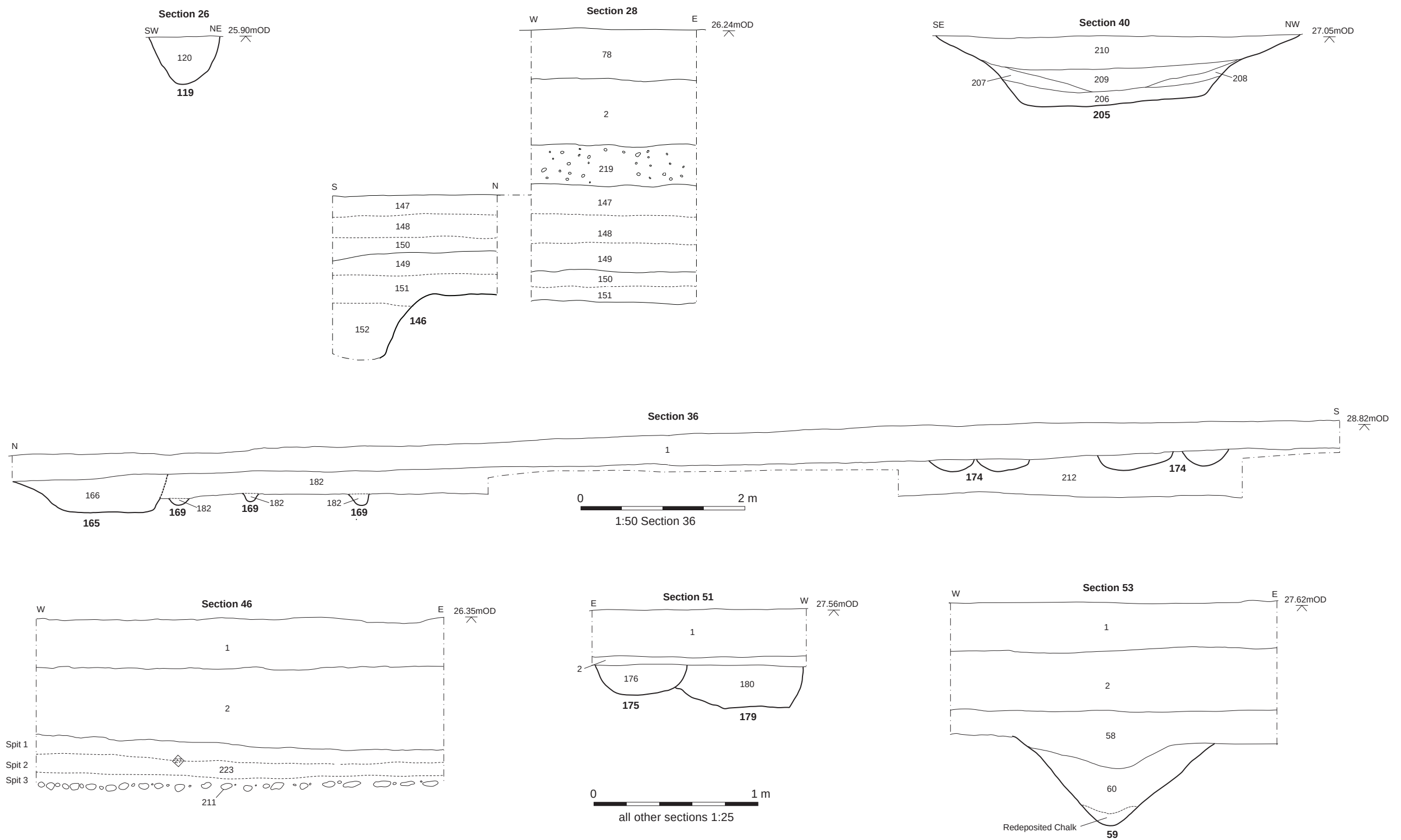


Figure 9: Sections



Plate 1: Trackway ditch **165** and wheel ruts **169** in the hollow way, Trench 7. Looking southeast.



Plate 2: Neolithic pit **175**, natural feature **179** and posthole **177**, Trench 8. Looking south.



Plate 3: Test pit through natural hollow **70**, Trench 10. Looking northeast.



Plate 4: Ditch **59** sealed under layer 58, Trench 12. Looking north.



Plate 5: Ring ditch **205**, Trench 18. Looking southwest.

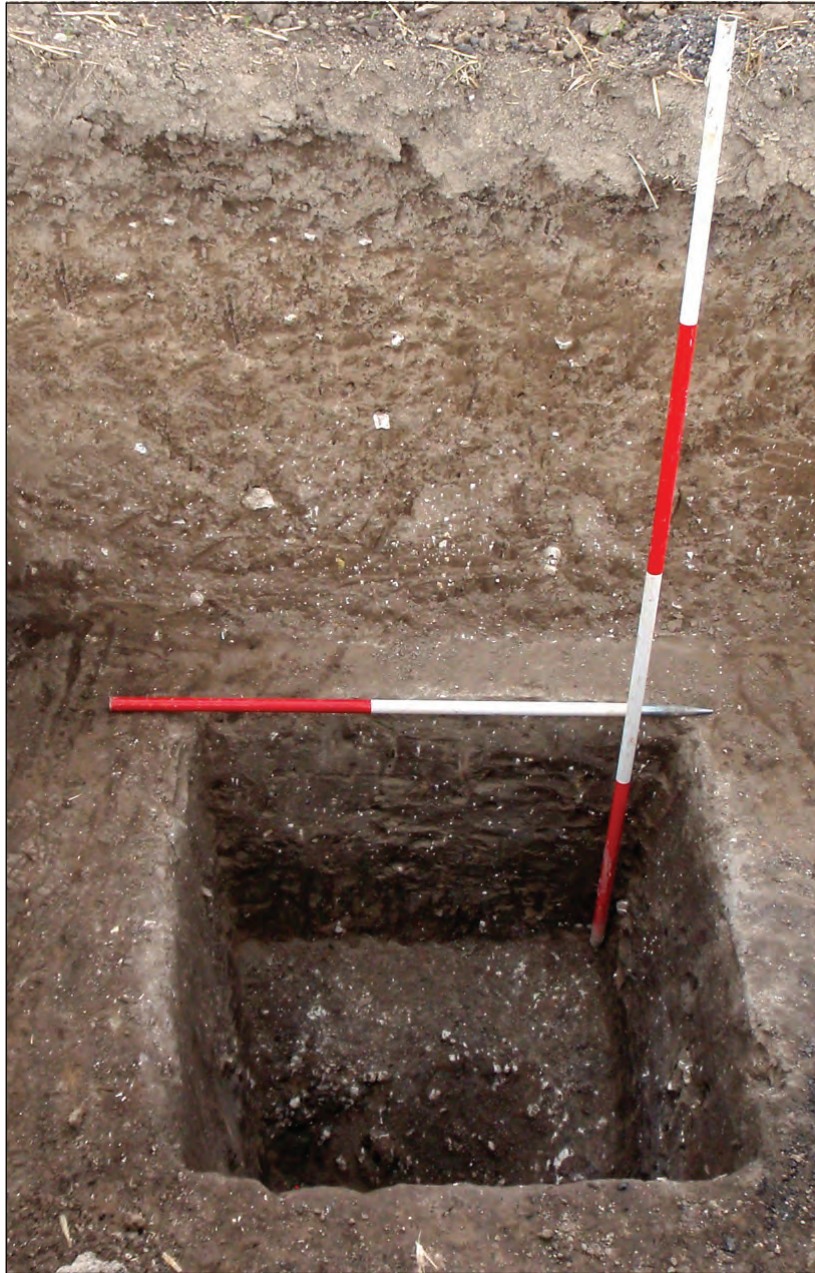


Plate 6: Sondage and test pit through natural hollow **146**, Trench 21. Looking north.



Plate 8: Trench 26, showing test pit in hollow **113** and possible beam slot **119/121**.



Plate 7: Postholes (from foreground) **81, 83, 85, 87 and 89**, Trench 23. Looking southwest.



Plate 9: Trench 27, showing machine sondage through layer 223 to expose metallised surface 211. Looking west.



Plate 10: Pit or well 48, Trench 31. Looking south.



Plate 11: Ditch 22, Trench 32. Looking west.