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Capelands Farm, Bratton Fleming

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Summary

Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Will Bedford of CgMs Consulting, on behalf of juwi Renewable Energies Limited, to undertake a trial trench evaluation on land at Capelands Farm, Bratton Fleming, North Devon. The site is situated approximately 1.75km north-east of the village of Bratton Fleming, to the east of the A399 and centred on NGR SS 6643 3906.

Archaeological features were generally very sparsely distributed. Several trenches placed to investigate clearly defined geophysical anomalies contained no corresponding archaeological features. Nevertheless, three definite and probable prehistoric cut features were identified and these are concentrated in the general vicinity of a possible long mortuary enclosure, identified by the magnetometer survey. The monument is provisionally presumed to be of early Neolithic date on morphological grounds, although no artefactual dating evidence was recovered from the evaluation.

Trenches 9, 10 and 14, which were placed to investigate the enclosure, produced mixed results. A ditch was found in the predicted location in Trench 10, but not in trenches 9 or 14. Trench 14 did contain a large, stone-packed probable posthole, which lay inside the enclosure near the north-east end and may have been associated with it. Trench 9 contained no archaeological features at all. The former extent of the enclosure is clearly defined on the magnetometer survey plot, but the monument appears to be very poorly preserved, particularly at the north-east end. The lack of any evidence at all for surviving ditches in Trenches 9 and 14 is particularly surprising given the comparative clarity of the monument outline on the magnetometer plot. Test excavations were dug into the natural geology in Trenches 9 and 14, which confirmed that no ditches were present at the predicted locations.

A Beaker pit deposit (late Neolithic/early Bronze Age) was found in Trench 8 (pit 803) and was the only feature present in this trench. All of the pottery from the site was recovered from this single feature. The assemblage consists of 68 sherds (784g) and includes the remains of probably two Beaker vessels and at least one other very large late Neolithic/early Bronze Age vessel. The only other finds from the trenches comprised two unstratified worked flints.

Soil samples recovered from possible prehistoric features all contained well-preserved wood charcoal, but the fragments were generally too small to identify to species, except in the case of the samples from the Beaker pit (803), which was dominated by oak, with some alder and hazel. Other charred material appeared reasonably well preserved despite external encrustation. Charred seeds were only present in samples from the large stone-packed posthole in Trench 14. Charred hazelnut fragments were recovered from the fills of all three of the probable prehistoric features, providing good short-lived sample material for radiocarbon dating if required.

A single undated pit in Trench 1 coincided with a discrete magnetic anomaly on the survey plot, but three linear anomalies in the same trench had no corresponding archaeological features. Trench 2 was placed to investigate an apparent double-ditched trackway on the survey plot, but contained no archaeological features at all.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Will Bedford of CgMs Consulting, on behalf of juwi Renewable Energies Limited, to undertake a trial trench evaluation on land at Capelands Farm, Bratton Fleming, North Devon. The site is situated approximately 1.75km north-east of the village of Bratton Fleming, to the east of the A399, centred on NGR SS 6643 3906.

1.1.2 The work was undertaken in support of a planning application to build a solar farm. Archaeological evaluation trenching was required to assess the survival and significance of the below ground archaeological deposits, and enable an informed and reasonable planning decision to be made. A brief setting out the requirements for the evaluation was produced by Stephen Reed, Archaeological Officer of the Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET 2013). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Oxford Archaeology (OA) which detailed how OA would implement the requirements of the brief (OA 2013). The evaluation comprised 20 trenches, each 50m x 2m in plan, located to investigate the results of a previous geophysical survey undertaken by Pre-Construct Geophysics (PCG 2013). The fieldwork was completed in the period 7th - 16th October 2013.

1.1.3 All work was undertaken in accordance with local and national planning policies, including Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), Devon Structure Plan Policy CO8, and the Local Development Framework Policy on Archaeology.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The underlying solid geology of the area is Morte Slates Formation, a sedimentary rock deposited during the Devonian Era.

1.2.2 The site lies on the crest of a ridge, rising from approximately 315m aOD up to 325m aOD.

1.2.3 The area of proposed development consists of five adjacent agricultural fields, *c* 23 hectares in extent. The north-western field was under arable cultivation at the time of the evaluation, and a crop had just been harvested. The rest of the fields were under pasture.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site has been researched in detail in a desk-based assessment (DBA; Cotswold Archaeology 2012). The following summary is based on the DCHET brief.

1.3.2 The proposed development lies in an area of high archaeological potential. To the north and south of the application area lie prehistoric funerary monuments of national importance, which are protected as Scheduled Monuments (monument refs: 1016654 and 1016655). The Historic Environment Record also records another possible burial site further to the north. There are further prehistoric funerary monuments on the hills to the south (Scheduled Monument ref: 1017137) and north (Scheduled Monument ref: 1016657, and HER refs: MDV12062, MDV12063, MDV12064 and MDV12065), demonstrating widespread prehistoric activity in the surrounding landscape.

1.3.3 The potential for archaeological remains within the application area - lying as it does between Scheduled Monuments 1016654 and 1016655 - is highlighted in the DBA submitted in support of this application, which states: 'the land between the barrows is important as it may contain evidence of paraphernalia associated with the functioning of the monument such as avenues, burials, pyres and feasting areas' (Cotswold Archaeology 2012).

1.3.4 A geophysical survey of the site seemed to confirm the archaeological potential of the area between the barrows by identifying a putative Neolithic long mortuary enclosure (PCG 2013). The survey results were partially compromised by the magnetic properties of the soils, as widespread magnetic variation obscured traces of archaeological features in some areas of the site.

1.3.5 Other recorded heritage assets within the site boundary comprise hedge banks of low cultural heritage significance and two quarries with a single spoil heap, which is of negligible significance.

1.3.6 The site appears to have been within an area of uncultivated open land prior to Enclosure in 1838. Since then it has been in agricultural use, predominantly as pasture, with some quarrying in the north-west corner. The landowner states that the fields were under arable cultivation for a time in the late 20th century (C Clare, pers. comm.). Below ground remains relating to modern field systems were expected to be present within the site, which were expected to be of negligible archaeological value (Cotswold Archaeology 2012). There has been little change in the field boundaries since the 1838 enclosures.

1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 The evaluation was carried out under the supervision of Will Bedford (CgMs Consulting) acting on behalf of juwi Renewable Energies Limited. The Oxford Archaeology site team comprised Vix Hughes (Project Officer), Ashley Strutt, Jennifer Thurstan and Nik Petek. Stuart Foreman was the OA Project Manager. Mike Heywood was the excavator driver. Particular thanks are extended to the landowners, Colin and Brenda Clare, for their hospitality and much practical assistance.

2 Evaluation Aims and Methodology

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The project aims, as detailed in the WSI, were to determine the presence/absence, extent, date range, condition and complexity of any archaeological remains which may survive, and to assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape. The evaluation also aimed to determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence, and the implications of any remains with reference to economy, status, utility and social activity, including consideration of the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present.

2.1.2 The trenches were positioned to characterise a variety of linear and discrete magnetic anomalies identified by the magnetometer survey, including an anomaly resembling a Neolithic long mortuary enclosure (PCG 2013).

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The evaluation comprised 20 trenches, each 50m x 2m in plan (2000m^2 in total), as shown on Figure 2. The total development area is *c* 23 hectares. Due to the limited below ground impact of the solar farm installation the trenches represent a low density sample, *c* 1% of the affected area.

2.2.2 Plough-disturbed soil horizons were removed by mechanical excavator fitted with a wide toothless bucket to expose archaeologically significant horizons or the surface of the solid geology. The trenches were excavated to a typical depth of *c* 0.3m. When no trace of the putative long mortuary enclosure ditches was found in Trenches 9 and 14, in spite of clear magnetic anomalies on the geophysical survey plot, localised deeper test excavations were made to confirm identification of the geological deposits.

2.2.3 A summary of OA's general approach to excavation and recording is included in Appendix A of the WSI. Standard methodologies for geomatics and survey, environmental evidence, artefactual evidence and burials can also be found in Appendices B, C, D and E of the WSI respectively.

2.2.4 One long face of trenches containing significant archaeology was cleaned to allow the site stratigraphy to be understood, and for the identification of archaeological features. The very small number of discrete features discovered were 100% excavated. The few linear features encountered were also fully excavated within the limits of the trench to maximise the recovery of artefacts.

2.2.5 Bulk environmental samples were taken from contexts suspected to be of prehistoric date, for the recovery of charred plant remains, and to assess the potential of the contexts for radiocarbon dating and palaeoenvironmental analysis.

2.2.6 In addition, a series of 100ml soil samples were taken at 1m intervals from the base of the topsoil in Trenches 9 and 14, to allow magnetic susceptibility readings to be taken if needed. These may help to explain why magnetic anomalies detected by the geophysical survey appear to show a ditched enclosure, but no corresponding features were found in these trenches. For comparison, a series of samples was also taken from Trench 10, where a ditch was found in the location predicted.

2.2.7 Trench plans and section drawings were drawn at a scale appropriate to the complexity of the features to be recorded (usually 1:20 or 1:50 for trench plans and 1:20 for sections).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The following section summarises the results of the evaluation. The general location of the trenches is shown on Figure 2, overlaid on the interpreted magnetometer survey results. More detailed plans, focussed on an area containing potentially significant prehistoric archaeology, are included as Figures 3 and 4 (Trenches 8, 9, 10 and 14). The latter show the archaeological trenches and cut features respectively overlaid on the interpreted and uninterpreted magnetometer survey plots. Features that were investigated as possible features but turned out to be of natural origin, are coloured green on the trench plan (Figs 3 and 4). Detailed trench plans and sections of trenches containing significant archaeology are included as Figures 5-11. A selection of photographs illustrate the soil sequence and significant archaeological features (Plates 1-8). Archaeological descriptions are presented in summary in the context inventory (Appendix A), and within the descriptive text where they are integral to the interpretation of the context in question. Artefacts recovered, and the contents of soil samples, are noted in the trench descriptions below where they occurred. No animal bone was recovered.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 Overall the evaluation was undertaken in good weather conditions with occasional rain.

3.2.2 The topsoil in most trenches was a thin mid-brown friable silty clay loam, typically *c* 0.25 - 0.35m thick. The underlying soil, derived from the weathered bedrock (Morte Slates Formation), is locally known as *shillet*, comprising very stony, mottled orange brown/grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions. Occasional rounded granite stones occur in these soils, although most of those seen in the evaluation were found in archaeological feature fills. Any large stones on the surface are likely to have been cleared in the modern period, since the fields were enclosed in 1838.

3.2.3 Ground conditions were generally good and the trenches well-drained, except for Trenches 17 and 18, which lay in a boggy slight depression. Trench 17 suffered from some groundwater, but not sufficient to interfere with archaeological recording. In trench 18 archaeological visibility was limited to a brief period as the trench was being excavated, as it flooded immediately thereafter. As no archaeology was visible it was then backfilled straight away. The waterlogged topsoil in Trench 18 was black in colour and organic-rich, but was only 0.30m thick, and directly overlay the weathered bedrock, as in the other trenches. No peat deposits were encountered in any of the trenches.

3.2.4 Unless otherwise stated in the trench descriptions, the archaeological features were cut into the natural geology and covered by topsoil. There was little evidence for plough erosion or systematic land drainage, although the western fields were under arable cultivation at the time of the evaluation. The landowner reports that ploughing is undertaken to a shallow depth to avoid introducing stones into the ploughsoil from the underlying geology.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits (Figs 2-4)

3.3.1 Archaeological features were generally very sparsely distributed. Several trenches placed to investigate clearly defined geophysical anomalies contained no corresponding archaeological features. Nevertheless, some definite and probable

prehistoric cut features were identified and these are concentrated in the general vicinity of the putative long mortuary enclosure. Trenches 9, 10 and 14, which were placed to investigate the enclosure, produced mixed results (Figs 3 and 4). A ditch was found in the predicted location in Trench 10 but not in Trenches 9 or 14. A stone-filled pit or large posthole of uncertain date (1405) was found in Trench 14, which almost matches the location of a discrete magnetic anomaly on the survey plot, but no trace of the suspected long mortuary enclosure boundary was visible in plan or section. Trench 9 contained no archaeological features at all. Sondages were excavated by machine into the natural geology in Trenches 9 and 14, which confirmed that no cut features were present.

3.3.2 A Beaker pit deposit (late Neolithic/early Bronze Age) was found in Trench 8 (pit 803) and was the only feature present in this trench. It corresponds with a discrete feature on the magnetometer plot, but several other discrete magnetic anomalies and one linear anomaly investigated in Trench 8 had no corresponding archaeological features.

3.3.3 A single undated pit in Trench 1 coincided with a discreet magnetic anomaly on the survey plot, but three linear anomalies in the same trench had no corresponding archaeological features. Trench 2 was placed to investigate an apparent double-ditched trackway on the survey plot, but contained no archaeological features at all.

3.4 Trenches with no archaeological features (Fig. 2)

3.4.1 Trenches 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 contained no discernible archaeological features at all, and are therefore not described in detail (see Appendix A for trench and context details). Of these, trenches 2, 3, 5, 7 and 15 were placed to investigate one or more potentially significant magnetic anomalies identified by the magnetometer survey, but failed to reveal any archaeological features. Trench 9 also contained no significant archaeology but is described below as the results are relevant to discussion of the putative long mortuary enclosure.

3.5 Trench 1 (Fig. 5, Plate 1)

3.5.1 This trench was located to investigate one discrete and three linear anomalies identified by the geophysical survey.

3.5.2 A single shallow, undated possible pit was identified (103), which was 0.78m x 0.75m in plan and 0.09m deep. The feature corresponded approximately with the discrete magnetic anomaly and was a relatively clear oval shape in plan so is considered unlikely to be a root hollow or other natural feature. No artefacts were recovered from the stoney, mid-greyish brown clay silt fill (104). Occasional charcoal flecks in the fill support its interpretation as an archaeological feature.

3.6 Trench 6 (Fig. 6, Plate 2)

3.6.1 This trench was located to investigate three possible archaeological features on the geophysical survey (two linear and one discrete). A faint linear band was investigated, which approximately matched the alignment and location of a short linear anomaly on the geophysical survey plot. This was investigated as a possible feature but when excavated the fill was not clearly distinguishable from the surrounding natural geology and the feature was found to be extremely shallow. It is interpreted as a natural feature, possibly an erosion gully. No artefacts or other evidence for human activity were recovered.

3.7 Trench 8 (Fig. 7 Plate 3)

3.7.1 This trench was located to investigate a cluster of discrete magnetic anomalies identified by the geophysical survey. A single pit was identified (803) which appears to correspond with one of the anomalies. No other features were visible in the trench.

3.7.2 The pit was a clearly defined oval shape (1.10m x 0.84m in plan), with nearly vertical (slightly undercut) sides and a flat base (0.45m deep). Deposit 809 was stratigraphically the earliest fill, being a thin layer sandwiched between the pit edge (803) and a series of stone settings placed around the bottom of the pit (context 810). Context 810 consisted of rounded granite stones, holding in place vertically positioned flat pieces of shale, which survived *in situ* only in the south-western quadrant of the pit at the base. These may have been part of a pit lining or edge supports, or perhaps supports for pottery vessels placed in the pit (Plate 3).

3.7.3 Five pit fills were identified (804, 805, 806, 807, 808), all of which comprised slightly different shades of brown silty clay containing variable proportions of stones, charcoal and pottery. The fills are numbered in stratigraphic order, the earliest being 808 and the latest 804. The lowest fill (808) was much stonier that the rest, and the stones may represent the disturbed remains of the pit lining (context 810). Contexts 805 and 807 were notably more clayey in texture, and richer in charcoal and pottery than the intervening fills (804 and 806). This sequence may reflect episodes of deliberate deposition separated by periods of silting. However, fills 805 and 807 contained unabraded sherds which appeared to be from the same vessel, suggesting that fills 805, 806 and 807 were all deposited within a relatively short period. Context 804 is interpreted as a secondary fill slumped into the top of the pit at a later date. It produced a single very battered small flint flake consistent with a later prehistoric date.

3.7.4 The pottery assemblage from pit 803 as a whole consisted of 68 sherds (784g) and probably includes the remains of two Beaker vessels and at least one other very large early Bronze Age vessel. None of them were fully represented, even though the whole of each fill was excavated to maximise artefact recovery. Fills 804 to 809 all contained pottery, although the quantities in each context varied markedly. Contexts 805 and 807 were the richest, containing 18 and 15 sherds respectively.

3.7.5 Separate soil samples were wet-sieved from contexts 804, 805, 806, 807 and 808 (samples 800-804). Charred material was present in all of the samples but with visibly higher concentrations in 805 and 807. The charred plant remains were dominated by oak charcoal but with some alder and hazel that may be suitable for radiocarbon dating. Hazel nutshells were present in contexts 805 and 806, but no charred seeds were noted in the scanned portions of any of the samples.

3.8 Trench 9 (Figs 3-4, Plates 4-5)

3.8.1 This trench was placed transversely across the putative mortuary enclosure to investigate the north-western and south-eastern long sides .

3.8.2 Initially no features were identified in the trench. Following thorough hand cleaning, in search of the predicted enclosure ditches, two very faint and irregular bands were investigated as possible features in the vicinity of the north-western enclosure boundary. On excavation they were found to be very shallow and irregular in plan and profile, the 'fills' indistinguishable from the surrounding natural geology. No artefacts or other indications of human activity were recovered. These features are interpreted as naturally occurring bands in the geology, similar to variations in the natural geology observed in most of the other trenches, perhaps erosion features.

3.8.3 Following hand investigation a test trench was excavated mechanically into the natural geology across the predicted line of the north-western enclosure boundary, to a depth of *c* 0.65m below ground level, which confirmed that no cut archaeological features were present (Plate 5). A series of magnetic susceptibility samples were taken at 1m intervals along the length of the trench from the base of the topsoil, to permit further analysis of the geophysical survey results, if required (samples 900-935; Plate 4).

3.9 Trench 10 (Figs 8-9, Plate 6)

3.9.1 Trench 10 was placed on a north-south alignment, crossing the south-western end of the putative long mortuary enclosure.

3.9.2 A single ditch (1003) was identified which closely matches the predicted location and alignment of the enclosure boundary (Fig. 4). The ditch profile was flat-based and survived to a depth of 0.4m. It had moderately steep sides on the southern side (the outer edge of the enclosure). The northern (inner) edge of the enclosure ditch had a distinctly stepped profile. Two fills were identified (1007 overlying 1004) which were very similar in appearance, comprising mid orange brown clay silt, including occasional large granite stones (up to *c* 300mm in size) and smaller soft shale fragments (up to *c* 100mm in size). The lower fill (1004) was distinguished by a higher density of stones, concentrated in a band along the middle of the ditch. These did not appear to form a structure but could have rolled into the ditch from an adjacent structure. However, there is no indication that the stones derived from one side of the ditch and thus no evidence for the former presence of a bank or mound inside the enclosure. Similar stones occur naturally in this geological context and they may have accumulated in the ditch as a result of slope erosion or field clearance. The ditch section within the trench was fully excavated to maximise the recovery of artefacts, but no finds or animal bone were recovered from either of the fills.

3.9.3 Bulk soil samples were wet-sieved from contexts 1004 (sample 1000) and 1007 (sample 1001). The two fills produced some charred plant remains, including hazelnut fragments from both fills, in sufficient quantity to be radiocarbon dated. Other charred material recovered is unsuitable for radiocarbon dating (being either unidentifiable to species or possibly intrusive modern root material). No charred seeds were noted in these samples.

3.9.4 A series of magnetic susceptibility samples was recovered to permit further analysis of the geophysical survey results, if required. Samples 1002-1014 were recovered from a transect crossing ditch 1003, at 1m intervals, for comparison with Trenches 9 and 14 where no evidence for the enclosure ditch was found.

3.9.5 A small possible pit or posthole (1005) was identified on the northern edge of ditch 1003 (inside the enclosure). It was 0.15m deep and 0.36m in diameter, with an irregular profile and appeared in plan as a well-defined roughly circular feature. However the shallow, irregular profile suggests that it could be a root hollow or similar natural feature. The fill (1006) was a mid orange brown silty clay. No artefacts were recovered and the feature was too shallow to be suitable for sampling. There was no indication of charred material in the fill during hand excavation.

3.9.6 A single flint artefact was recovered from the topsoil in this trench: a possible scraper consistent with a later prehistoric date.

3.10 Trench 11 (Plate 7)

3.10.1 Trench 11 was placed to investigate an area with no significant magnetic anomalies according to the geophysical survey. A single small, shallow discrete feature (1103) was investigated as a possible archaeological feature. It was 0.35m in diameter and 0.09m deep, with a shallow and irregular profile, and contained a mid grey brown silty clay fill (1102). No artefacts or other indications of human activity were present in the fill. It is interpreted as a possible posthole, although the identification is very uncertain and it could equally be a root hollow or animal burrow.

3.11 Trench 14 (Figs. 10-11, Plate 8)

3.11.1 Trench 14 was placed lengthways along the centreline of the putative long mortuary enclosure, cutting across the curved north-eastern boundary. It also investigated a short possible linear feature and a discrete magnetic anomaly located within the enclosure.

3.11.2 As in Trench 9, close investigation and cleaning failed to identify any evidence for linear archaeological features within the trench. On completion of hand investigation, a sondage was excavated mechanically into the natural geology across the predicted line of the north-eastern enclosure boundary, to a depth of *c* 0.55m below ground level, which confirmed that no cut archaeological features were present (Fig. 11). A series of magnetic susceptibility samples were taken at 1m intervals to permit further analysis of the geophysical survey results, if required (samples 1405-1415).

3.11.3 A pit or large posthole (1405) was identified *c* 2m south-west of the discrete magnetic anomaly. The feature was oval in plan (1.35m x 0.7m), steep-sided, flat-based and survived to a depth of 0.8m. Three fills were identified (1404, 1406 and 1407), all of which consisted of densely packed stones (a mixture of shale and granite) in a light reddish brown silty clay matrix. The stones appeared less densely packed in fills 1404 and 1407, giving the impression of a post pipe in the south-western side of the pit. There was no surviving trace of the post itself. Fill 1406 was stratigraphically the earliest and was interpreted as post-packing.

3.11.4 The pit was initially half-sectioned and recorded. The remainder of the fills were then excavated to maximise the recovery of artefacts. Bulk soil samples were wet-sieved from contexts 1404 (sample 1400), 1406 (sample 1401), and 1407 (sample 1402). No artefacts or animal bones were recovered from any of the fills during hand excavation or sieving. The three fills contained some charred plant remains, including small fragments of hazel nutshell in sufficient quantity for radiocarbon dating. Most of the charred material is unsuitable for radiocarbon dating (being either unidentifiable to species or possibly intrusive modern root material).

3.12 Finds summary

3.12.1 The finds assemblage was very small and limited in the range of material present. However, a significant assemblage of Beaker pottery, of late Neolithic/early Bronze Age date, was recovered from pit 803 in Trench 8 (68 sherds, 784g).

3.12.2 Just two pieces of worked flint were recovered: one from topsoil in Trench 10, and the other from the uppermost fill of pit 803 (context 804).

3.13 Environmental summary

3.13.1 Bulk soil samples from various fills of three potentially significant features were wet-sieved for the recovery of charred plant remains. Pit 803 is securely dated to the late

Neolithic/early Bronze Age on the basis of associated Beaker pottery. The other two sampled features (pit 1405 and ditch 1003) are currently undated but are provisionally considered to be of early prehistoric date as they seem to be associated spatially with the putative long mortuary enclosure.

3.13.2 The sample residues were scanned to assess their potential for palaeoenvironmental analysis and radiocarbon dating. The residues all contained well-preserved charcoal, but the fragments were generally too small to identify the species, except in the case of the samples from pit 803, which was dominated by oak, with some alder and hazel present. Other charred material appeared reasonably well preserved despite external encrustation. Charred seeds were only present in samples from the large posthole (1405).

3.13.3 Charred hazelnut fragments are present in samples from all three of the features investigated. The fragments are suitable short-lived organic material for radiocarbon dating, and the quantities present should be sufficient. The best and most plentiful radiocarbon sample material was recovered from the Beaker pit (803).

4 Discussion

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 The trenching has successfully characterised the significant archaeological features identified by the magnetometer survey, although some important questions remain unresolved at this stage. In particular, the scarcity of artefacts associated with the putative long mortuary enclosure, and the poor preservation of the monument, result in uncertain dating, and severely limits what can be said about its function and associations. The chronology may be resolved by radiocarbon dating hazel nutshell fragments recovered from the ditch fill in Trench 10.

4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

4.2.1 Archaeological features were generally very sparsely distributed. Several trenches placed to investigate clearly defined geophysical anomalies contained no corresponding archaeological features. A single undated pit in Trench 1 coincided with a discrete magnetic anomaly on the survey plot, but three linear anomalies in the same trench had no corresponding archaeological features. Trench 2 was placed to investigate an apparent double-ditched trackway on the survey plot, but contained no archaeological features at all.

4.2.2 Nevertheless one definite and two probable prehistoric cut features were identified and these are concentrated in the general vicinity of the putative long mortuary enclosure. Trenches 9, 10 and 14, which were placed to investigate the enclosure, produced mixed results (Figs 3 and 4). A ditch was found in the predicted location in Trench 10 but not in Trenches 9 or 14. Trench 14 did contain a large, stone-packed probable posthole, which lay inside the enclosure near the north-east end and may have been associated with it . Trench 9 contained no archaeological features at all.

4.2.3 The former extent of the enclosure appears clearly defined on the magnetometer survey plot, but the monument appears to be very poorly preserved, particularly at the north-east end. The lack of any evidence at all for surviving ditches in Trenches 9 and 14 is particularly surprising given the comparative clarity of the monument in outline on the magnetometer plot. Test excavations were dug into the natural geology in Trenches 9 and 14, which confirmed that no ditches were present at the predicted locations. One possibility is that the enclosure is not continuous, as cursus and long mortuary enclosures often have causewayed entrances. However, there is no sign of gaps in the enclosure on the magnetometer plot, and it is highly improbable that the trenches coincided with entrances at three separate locations. The possibility that the features have been entirely eroded away at the north-west end is problematic for several reasons: firstly, a Beaker pit survives to a depth of 0.45m, 80m to the west, within the same field as the enclosure, suggesting that erosion has not been especially severe, at least since the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age. The ground dips slightly from north-south in the area of the enclosure, but is not sufficiently steep to suggest that slope erosion was a major factor. The site does not seem to have been extensively ploughed historically, being a relatively marginal upland landscape. The topsoil cover was very shallow with no underlying ploughsoil. It is plausible that any upstanding remains may have been levelled when the fields were enclosed in the early 19th century, but that does not explain the complete absence of the ditches as buried archaeological features. There is evidence for differential preservation on either side of an extant 19th century field boundary, which cuts across the enclosure on a NW-SE alignment. The difference is apparent on the magnetometer plot and in the trenches, with better

preservation apparent on the south-west side of the boundary (Fig. 4). Perhaps the most likely explanation is that the earthwork was always very slight such that even minor erosion was enough to remove any obvious traces at the north-west end. The magnetometer plot perhaps detected remnant magnetic traces in the topsoil and the surface of the natural geology. Following advice from a specialist geophysicist (A Bartlett, pers. comm.) magnetic susceptibility samples were taken from the interface between the topsoil and natural geology in transects along Trenches 9, 10 and 14 which may shed further light on this question.

4.2.4 There was no surviving indication of an internal mound or bank, but this is unsurprising given the very poor preservation of the monument, at least at the north-eastern end. The fills of ditch 1003 in Trench 10 do not show any obvious signs of infilling from one side, which often indicates the former presence of a bank. Long mortuary enclosures and cursus monuments typically have a bank on the inside. The stones in the fill of ditch 1003 did not represent an *in situ* structure, being relatively sparsely distributed in a band along the centre of the ditch, predominantly in the lower fill. However, they perhaps hint at the former presence of a stone revetment or curb. The inner edge of the enclosure ditch had a distinctly stepped profile (Fig. 9, Plate 6) and a possible posthole (1005) was recorded on the inside edge of the ditch.

4.2.5 The date of the enclosure is currently uncertain as no artefacts were recovered from the enclosure ditch, which only survived in Trench 10. Soil samples from the upper and lower ditch fills produced hazel nutshell, which should be in sufficient quantity for radiocarbon dating purposes, although the material from the ditch fills may not relate to the primary period of construction and use of the monument. A scarcity of securely stratified artefacts and suitable radiocarbon sample material is a common feature of long mortuary enclosures and cursus monuments, which makes dating them reliably very difficult. On current evidence the date range of such monuments is broadly early and middle Neolithic (*c* 3800-3000 BC), with mortuary enclosures probably dating from an earlier period (*c* 3800-3400 cal BC) than cursus monuments *(c* 3600-3300 cal BC) (Bayliss and Whittle 2007; Whittle *et al.* 2011; Barclay and Bayliss 1999; English Heritage 2011; Barclay *et al* 2003).

4.2.6 A large stone-packed probable posthole in Trench 14 (1405) lay inside the enclosure, slightly south-east of the long axis, close to the north-east end. It is currently undated and may have been entirely unrelated to the enclosure. If it was contemporaneous it could perhaps have been part of an internal mortuary structure, or alternatively a large free standing post marking the end of the enclosure, perhaps an entrance. Charred hazel nutshells were also recovered from secure contexts from this feature, in sufficient quantity for radiocarbon dating. A date from the post-packing would be particularly informative as it is likely to date the erection of the post rather than secondary infilling.

4.2.7 A Beaker pit deposit (late Neolithic/early Bronze Age) was found in Trench 8 (pit 804) and was the only feature present in this trench. All of the pottery from the site was recovered from this single feature. The pottery assemblage as a whole consisted of 68 sherds (784g) and probably includes the remains of two Beaker vessels and at least one other very large early Bronze Age vessel. Parts of the same vessels appear to be present in different fills, which suggests that the pit fills (804-809) were probably deposited within a short time. None of the vessels were complete, which suggests either that part of the pit has been lost to truncation, or that the pots were not deposited as complete vessels. One possible interpretation is that the pit was originally dug to receive complete storage vessels, containing hazelnuts (and/or other organic materials

that have not survived). When the stored material was recovered, parts of vessels that had broken during the period of storage were discarded into the pit as it was infilled.

4.3 Significance

4.3.1 Two significant features have been identified by the evaluation. The putative long mortuary enclosure identified by the magnetometer survey (Trenches 9, 10 and 14) and the Beaker pit in Trench 8 (late Neolithic/ early Bronze date).

4.3.2 The long mortuary enclosure appears on the magnetometer survey plot as an elongated enclosure with convex ends, 21m wide and 146m long (measured from outer edge to outer edge). This is within the size range usually classified as a 'long mortuary enclosure' rather than a 'cursus'. These two classes of monument may have been related, and have a wide geographical distribution in Britain and Ireland. Cursus monuments are seen as developing with reference to earlier related forms, including both long barrows and long mortuary enclosures (English Heritage 2011; Barclay *et al* 2003; Harding and Barclay 1999). About 150 examples have been recorded, three of which are in Devon. Many of these are known only as cropmarks on aerial photographs, the identification and date of which has not been proved by excavation (Harding and Barclay 1999). As classified by archaeologists, the distinction between these two monument classes is mainly one of scale, although the smaller monuments may also have been functionally different and earlier in date. Cursus monuments generally consist of an elongated or rectilinear banked enclosure with a ditch on the outside, which can be anything from 20m-128m wide and 170m-10,000m long. Their ends are usually closed with either squared or convex terminals. The largest example is the Dorset Cursus, which runs for *c* 10km through the chalklands of Cranborne Chase in East Dorset. The term 'long mortuary enclosure' is applied to monuments of similar form on a smaller scale. Enclosures of this type are sometimes regarded as plough-levelled long barrows. Both classes appear to have been closely connected with funerary monuments such as barrows, but the details of their use is otherwise enigmatic.

4.3.3 Early Neolithic cursus monuments and long mortuary enclosures can occur in isolation but more often occur in conjunction with contemporary and later monuments, forming extensive ritual landscapes that were respected and added to over several millennia. The Stonehenge and Avebury landscapes are the best known and most extensive examples. The Dorset Cursus was also associated with a complex and varied series of monuments, one of which is a mortuary enclosure somewhat similar in size to the Capelands Farm enclosure (25m wide x 100m long).

4.3.4 The discovery at Capelands Farm of a late Neolithic/early Bronze Age Beaker pit, 68m north-west of the putative early Neolithic long mortuary enclosure suggests that the site may have been a significant focus for prehistoric activity for a long period during the Neolithic and early Bronze Age. The Beaker pottery was probably made at least a thousand years (and possibly as many as 1600 years) after the likely date of construction of the enclosure. Beaker ceramics form part of a package of material culture (including early metalwork, barbed-and-tanged flint arrowheads, and other items). Radiocarbon dates from high status graves associated with Beaker artefacts, including the 'Amesbury Archer' and the 'Boscombe Bowmen' place the origins of this culture in the period *c* 2400–2200 BC, in the latest phase of the Neolithic, and extending into the early Bronze Age.

4.3.5 Prehistoric pit deposits are relatively commonplace in the SW region as a whole and span a broad range of dates. They are regarded as an important index of settlement (as

opposed to funerary and monumental) activity, in a period and region with few recognisable traces of domestic buildings (Webster 2008). Whether the Capelands Farm pit deposit represents economic activity (such as food storage) or ritual activity is not clear. Such distinctions may not have been meaningful to prehistoric communities. Major prehistoric monuments are believed to have served as important communal meeting places, used for a variety of social functions, not necessarily confined to funerary activities.

Appendix A. Trench Descriptions and Context Inventory

Trench 1						
General description					**Orientation**	N-S
Trench 1 contained a single possible pit. No finds were recovered. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions and patches of shale gravel. A thin subsoil layer was recorded.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.35
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
100	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.04 - 0.11	Subsoil	-	-
102	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-
103	Cut	0.78	0.05	Shallow pit, oval in plan	-	-
104	Fill	-	-	Fill of 103	-	-

Trench 2						
General description					**Orientation**	WNW-ESE
Trench 2 contained no archaeological finds or features. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions. Probable erosion features or bands of subsoil were investigated and recorded in two bands in the middle and eastern sections of the trench.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.28
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	51m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
200	Layer	-	0.26	Topsoil	-	-
201	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-
202	Layer	-	0.04	Localise band of weathered and plough eroded subsoil (middle of trench)	-	-
203	Layer	-	0.04	Localised band of weathered and plough eroded subsoil (same as 202 at west end of trench)	-	-

Trench 3						
General description					**Orientation**	NW-SE
Trench 3 contained no archaeological finds or features. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions. An irregular patch is recorded as a root hollow or other natural feature.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.29
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
300	Layer	-	0.22	Topsoil	-	-
301	Layer	-	0.07	Subsoil/weathered and plough eroded upper surface of geology	-	-
302	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-

Trench 4						
General description					**Orientation**	E-W
Trench 4 contained no archaeological finds or features. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.25
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
400	Layer	-	0.19	Topsoil	-	-
401	Layer	-	0.06	Subsoil/weathered and plough eroded upper surface of geology	-	-
402	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-

Trench 5						
General description					**Orientation**	N-S
Trench 5 contained no archaeological finds or features. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.25
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
500	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil	-	-
402	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-

Trench 6						
General description					**Orientation**	N-S
Trench 6 contained a single possible linear feature. The fill was barely distinguishable from the natural and this may be a erosion gully. No archaeological finds or features were present. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions and gravel patches.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.28
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
600	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil	-	-
601	Layer	-	0.03	Subsoil/weathered and plough eroded upper surface of natural geology	-	-
602	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-
603	Cut	1	-	Probable erosion gully	-	
604	Fill	-	-	Fill of 603	-	

Trench 7						
General description					**Orientation**	E-W
Trench 7 contained no archaeological finds or features. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown / blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions and gravel patches.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.26
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
700	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil	-	-
701	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-

Trench 8						
General description					**Orientation**	E-W
Trench 8 contained a single pit with a sequence of fills, stone settings at the base and abundant prehistoric pottery. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions and gravel patches.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.36
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
800	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil	-	-
801	Layer	-	-	Subsoil/weathered and plough eroded upper surface of natural geology	-	-

Trench 8						
802	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-
803	Cut	1.1	0.46	Pit cut	-	-
804	Fill	1.1	0.12	Secondary fill of pit 803	Pottery; worked flint; charred plant remains	Prehistoric
805	Fill	1.1	0.08	Fill of pit 803	Pottery; charred plant remains	Late Neolithic/early Bronze Age (Beaker)
805	Fill	1.1	0.08	Fill of pit 803	Ditto	Ditto
806	Fill	1.1	0.1	Fill of pit 803	Ditto	Ditto
807	Fill	1.1	0.06	Fill of pit 803	Ditto	Ditto
808	Fill	1.1	0.16	Fill of pit 803	Ditto	Ditto
809	Fill	-	0.04	Fill of pit 803 (between stone settings 810 and pit sides)	Ditto	Ditto
810	Fill	-	-	Stones settings at base of pit 803	-	-

Trench 9						
General description					**Orientation**	NE-SW
Trench 9 contained a single pit with a sequence of fills, stone settings at the base and abundant prehistoric pottery. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions and gravel patches. Bands in the natural were investigated at two locations (903 and 905) as potential archaeological features, but on excavation the 'fills' were indistinguishable from the natural geology, probably variations in the natural or erosion scars.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.36
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
900	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil	-	-
901	Layer	-	0.13	Subsoil/weathered and plough eroded upper surface of natural geology	-	-
902	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-
903	Cut?	1.5	-	Natural feature	-	-
904	Fill?	1.1	-	Fill of natural feature	-	-
905	Cut?	1.1	-	Natural feature	-	-
906	Fill?	1.1	-	Fill of natural feature	-	-

Trench 10						
General description					**Orientation**	NW-SE
Trench 10 contained one ditch and one possible posthole. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions and gravel patches.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.35
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
1000	Layer	-	0.23	Topsoil	Unstratified worked flint	-
1001	Layer	-	0.12	Subsoil/ weathered and plough eroded upper surface of natural geology	-	-
1002	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-
1003	Cut	1.5	-	Ditch – possible long mortuary enclosure boundary	-	-
1004	Fill	1.1	-	Lower fill of 1003	-	-
1005	Cut?	1.1	-	Possible posthole	-	-
1006	Fill?	1.1	-	Fill of 1005	-	-
1007	Fill			Upper fill of 1003	-	-

Trench 11						
General description					**Orientation**	E-W
Trench 11 contained one possible posthole. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions and gravel patches.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.3
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
1100	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil	-	-
1101	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-
1102	Fill?	-	-	Fill of 1103	-	-
1103	Cut?	1.5	-	Possible posthole?	-	-

Trench 12		
General description	**Orientation**	SW-NE
Trench 12 contained no archaeology. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale	**Avg. depth (m)**	0.28
	Width (m)	1.6
	Length (m)	50m

Trench 12						
inclusions and gravel patches.						
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
1200	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil	-	-
1201	Layer	-	-	Subsoil/weathered and plough eroded upper surface of natural geology	-	-
1202	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-

Trench 13						
General description					**Orientation**	N-S
Trench 13 contained no archaeology. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions and gravel patches.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.29
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
1300	Layer	-	0.23	Topsoil	-	-
1301	Layer	-	0.07	Subsoil/weathered and plough eroded upper surface of natural geology	-	-
1302	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-

Trench 14						
General description					**Orientation**	NNE-SSW
Trench 14 contained one large stone-packed possible posthole. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions and gravel patches.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.35
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
1400	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil	-	-
1401	Layer	-	0.05	Subsoil/weathered and plough eroded upper surface of natural geology	-	-
1402	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-
1403	Layer	-	-	Lens of clay natural (seen in sondage)	-	-
1404	Fill	-	0.35	Fill of 1405 (postpipe infill)	Charred plant	-

Trench 14						
					remains	
1405	Cut	1.35	0.8	Large stone-packed posthole	-	-
1406	Fill	-	0.8	Fill of 1405 (postpacking)	Charred plant remains	-
1407	Fill	-	0.4	Fill of 1405 (postpacking)	Charred plant remains	-
1408	Layer	-	-	Lens of silty clay natural (seen in sondage)	-	-

Trench 15						
General description					**Orientation**	NE-SW
Trench 15 contained no archaeology. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions and gravel patches.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.3
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
1500	Layer	-	0.23	Topsoil	-	-
1501	Layer	-	0.07	Subsoil/weathered and plough eroded upper surface of natural geology	-	-
1502	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-

Trench 16						
General description					**Orientation**	NW-SE
Trench 16 contained no archaeology. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions and gravel patches.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.21
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
1600	Layer	-	0.18	Topsoil	-	-
1601	Layer	-	0.03	Subsoil/weathered and plough eroded upper surface of natural geology	-	-
1602	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-

Trench 17						
General description					**Orientation**	SW-NE
Trench 17 contained no archaeology. It suffered from some flooding after excavation. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions and gravel patches.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.3
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
1700	Layer	-	0.19	Topsoil	-	-
1701	Layer	-	0.11	Subsoil/weathered and plough eroded upper surface of natural geology	-	-
1702	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-

Trench 18						
General description					**Orientation**	SW-NE
Trench 18 contained no archaeology. The topsoil was waterlogged, very black and organic-rich. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions and gravel patches.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.3
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
1800	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil	-	-
1801	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-

Trench 19						
General description					**Orientation**	E-W
Trench 19 contained no archaeology. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions and gravel patches.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.35
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
1900	Layer	-	0.28	Topsoil	-	-
1901	Layer	-	0.07	Subsoil/weathered and plough eroded upper surface of natural geology	-	-
1902	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-

Trench 20						
General description					**Orientation**	N-S
Trench 20 contained no archaeology. Natural geology comprised a very stony, mottled orange brown/blue grey silty clay with very frequent predominantly soft shale inclusions and gravel patches.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.28
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	50m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
2000	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	-	-
2001	Layer	-	0.08	Subsoil/weathered and plough eroded upper surface of natural geology	-	-
2002	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-

APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

By Lisa Brown

D.3.6 Some 68 sherds weighing 784g were recovered from six fills of a single pit. The grog-tempered fabrics common to all sherds and several distinctive Beaker sherds with comb-impressed decoration place this assemblage in the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age. Several sherds in similar fabric come from a large undecorated urn with a simple rim. Assuming the pit was completely excavated, neither the Beakers, of which probably two are represented, or the larger vessel(s) were deposited as complete vessels in the pit.

Ctx	no. sh/wt	Fab/form	Comments	date
804	6/13g	Grog	Undec body	LN/EBA
805	18/398g	Grog/very large vessel (urn)	1 simple rim, others are undec body	LN/EBA
806	3/24g	Grog	Undec body	LN/EBA
807	9/24g	Grog	Small undec body	LN/EBA
807	15/268g	Grog/from large vess (poss part of 805)	Undec body	LN/EBA
807	4/20g	Grog/Beaker	Comb-impressed dec	LN/EBA
808	1/3g	Grog	Undec body	LN/EBA
808	10/11g	Grog+granitic rock/Beaker	Comb-impressed	LN/EBA
809	2/23g	Grog	Undec body	LN/EBA

B.2 The flint

By Geraldine Crann

Context	Description
804	<800> A single very battered small flake recovered from sieving, 2g
1000	Irregular snapped thick flake, distal end retouched, possible scraper, 7g

D.3.7 The size of the assemblage and its condition limits interpretation of the material. Given the pragmatic use of an irregular flake to form a retouched tool (scraper?), a later prehistoric date is possible and in keeping with the pottery assemblage. The flints from the evaluation should be fully integrated into any future analysis arising from further investigation on the site.

APPENDIX C. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Environmental samples

By Sharon Cook

4.3.8 Samples <800> (804), <801> (805), <802> (806), <803> (807) and <804> (808) were taken from the fills of Beaker pit [803] in Trench 8. Samples <1000> (1004) and <1001> (1007) were taken from the fills of a possible Neolithic enclosure ditch in Trench 10 and samples <1400> (1404), <1401> (1406), and <1402> (1407) were taken from a large stone-packed posthole in Trench 14, which may also have been of prehistoric date.

C.1.1 Sampling was undertaken to:

- Determine whether ecofacts and environmental evidence (such as plant remains, animal bone, human bone and molluscs) are present
- Determine the quality, range, state and method of preservation of any environmental evidence
- Recover and identify any small artefacts
- Make further recommendations about sampling for future excavations at the site

C.1.2 The samples were processed for charred plant remains (CPR) by water flotation using a modified Siraf-style flotation machine. The flot was collected on a 250µm mesh and the heavy residue sieved to 500µm; both were dried in a heated room, after which the residue was sorted by eye for artefacts. The dried flot was scanned for charred plant remains using a binocular microscope at approximately x10 magnification. Seed identifications were made with reference to Oxford Archaeology's reference collection. Nomenclature for the plant remains follows Stace (2010). Charcoal was identified by Sheila Boardman.

C.1.3 **Pit [803]:** Sample <800> (804), the upper fill of [803] was a 35L sample of yellowish brown silty clay (10YR 5/6). Pottery and flint were recovered from the residue. The sample yielded approximately 450ml of flot material of which 25% was scanned.

C.1.4 Sample <802> (806), a 10L sample of secondary fill, was a yellowish brown sandy silt loam (7.5YR 4/6). Pottery was recovered from the residue. The sample yielded approximately 220ml of flot material of which 25% was scanned.

C.1.5 Sample <803> (807) was a 35L sample of strong brown silty clay (7.5YR 4/6) and again pottery was recovered from the residue. The sample yielded approximately 700ml of flot material of which 10% was scanned.

C.1.6 Sample <804> (808) was a 30L sample of strong brown silty clay (7.5YR 4/6) from the base of [803], again containing pottery. The sample yielded approximately 200ml of flot material of which 25% was scanned.

C.1.7 Samples <800> - <804> contain frequent fine modern roots. Charcoal is present, including fragments of >4mm, which are identifiable to species. While mostly oak (*Quercus* sp.), there are some fragments of hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and alder (*Alnus* sp.) which may be suitable for radiocarbon dating. Hazelnut shell was noted in flots <801> and <802>, but no charred seeds were noted in the scanned portion of the flots.

C.1.8 **Ditch [1003]:** Sample <1000> (1004) was a 35L sample of yellowish brown silty clay (10YR 5/6) from the lower fill of the ditch. No finds were recovered from the residue. The sample yielded approximately 75ml of flot material of which 50% was scanned.

C.1.9 Sample <1001> (1007) was a 15L sample of yellowish brown silty clay (10YR 5/6) from the upper fill. No finds were recovered from the residue. The sample yielded approximately 25ml of flot material of which 100% was scanned.

C.1.10 The flots for these samples also contain large quantities of fine modern roots. Charcoal is present and well preserved although the fragments are mostly <4mm, and so probably not identifiable. No charred seeds were noted within the scanned portion of these flots. Hazelnut fragments were noted within <1001> and these could be radiocarbon dated.

C.1.11 **Posthole [1405]:** Sample <1400> (1404) was a dark reddish brown silty clay (5YR 3/4) and was a total of 8L in size. This was the upper fill of posthole [1405]. No finds were recovered from the residue. The sample yielded approximately 10ml of flot material of which 100% was scanned.

C.1.12 Sample <1401> (1406) was a strong brown sandy silt loam (7.5YR 4/6) and was a total of 35L in size. This sample was part of the fill of posthole [1405]. No finds were recovered from the residue. The sample yielded approximately 25ml of flot material of which 100% was scanned.

C.1.13 Sample <1402> (1407) was a 36L sample of strong brown sandy silt loam (7.5YR 4/6). No finds were recovered from the residue. The sample yielded approximately 50ml of flot material of which 100% was scanned.

Discussion

C.1.14 All the flots included moderate quantities of fine modern roots. Charcoal is present and well preserved, although the fragments are mostly <4mm and so probably not identifiable. Four small fragments of hazel nutshell were retrieved from sample <1400> and a small number of possible fungal fruiting bodies were noted within the flots of samples <1401> and <1402> but are not identifiable due to heavy encrustation on their exteriors. Three bugle (*Ajuga* sp.) seeds were also retrieved from the flot of <1401>; these are native wild flowers.

C.1.15 The flots for all samples contained well-preserved charcoal which was large enough for identification in the case of the samples from Pit [803] although not for the remaining samples. Charred seeds were only present within samples <1401> and <1402>, they appeared reasonably well preserved despite external encrustation. Hazelnut fragments are present within a number of the samples providing good material for radiocarbon dating, if this is required, although the best material for dating was present within those samples which also contained pottery.

C.1.16 Charred remains, especially charcoal, are evidently preserved at the site, and any future excavations should incorporate a sampling policy in accordance with the most recent sampling guidelines (eg Oxford Archaeology 2005; English Heritage 2011).

Appendix D. Bibliography and References

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Appendix E. Summary of Site Details

Site name: Capelands Farm, Bratton Fleming, Devon

Site code: BAFC13

Grid reference: SS 6643 3906

Type: Evaluation

Date and duration: 07/10/13 - 16/10/13

Area of site: 23 Ha

Summary of results: Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Will Bedford of CgMs Consulting, on behalf of juwi Renewable Energies Limited, to undertake a trial trench evaluation on land at Capelands Farm, Bratton Fleming, North Devon. The site is situated approximately 1.75km north-east of the village of Bratton Fleming, to the east of the A399. Archaeological features were generally very sparsely distributed. Several trenches placed to investigate clearly defined geophysical anomalies contained no corresponding archaeological features. Nevertheless three definite and probable prehistoric cut features were identified, and these are concentrated in the general vicinity of a possible long mortuary enclosure, identified by the magnetometer survey. The monument is provisionally presumed to be of early Neolithic date on morphological grounds, although no artefactual dating evidence was recovered from the evaluation.

Trenches 9, 10 and 14, which were placed to investigate the enclosure, produced mixed results. A ditch was found in the predicted location in Trench 10, but not in trenches 9 or 14. Trench 14 contained a large, stone-packed probable posthole, which lay inside the enclosure near the north-east end. Trench 9 contained no archaeological features. Although the former extent of the enclosure is clearly defined on the magnetometer survey plot, the monument appears to be very poorly preserved.

A Beaker pit deposit (late Neolithic/early Bronze Age) was found in Trench 8 (pit 803) and was the only feature present in this trench. All of the pottery from the site was recovered from this single feature. The assemblage consisted of 68 sherds (784g) and includes the remains of probably two Beaker vessels and at least one other very large late Neolithic/early Bronze Age vessel. The only other finds from the trenches comprised two unstratified worked flints.

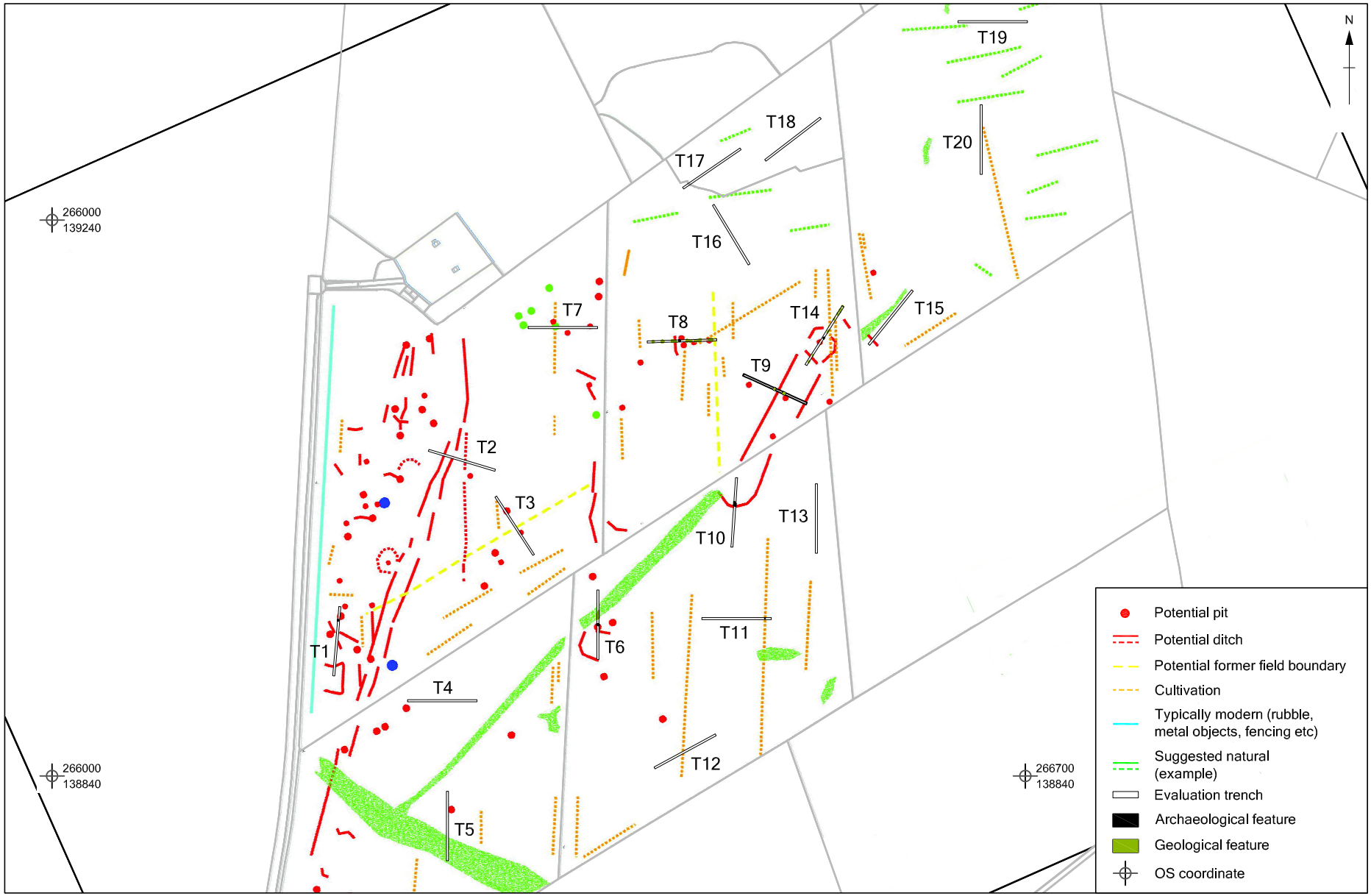
Soil samples recovered from possible prehistoric features all contained well-preserved wood charcoal, but the fragments were generally too small to identify to species, except in the case of the samples from the Beaker pit (803), which was dominated by oak, with some alder and hazel present. Other charred material appeared reasonably well preserved despite external encrustation. Charred seeds were only present in samples from the large stone-packed posthole in Trench 14. Charred hazelnut fragments were recovered from the fills of all three of the probable prehistoric features, providing good short-lived sample material for radiocarbon dating if required.

A single undated pit in Trench 1 coincided with a discrete magnetic anomaly on the survey plot, but three linear anomalies in the same trench had no corresponding archaeological features. Trench 2 was placed to investigate an apparent double-ditched trackway on the survey plot, but contained no archaeological features at all.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be doffered to The Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon in due course.

Figure 1: Site location

X:\c\Capelands Farm, Bratton Fleming, Devon \010Geomatics\02 CAD\001current\BAFCEV_Current_221013.dwg(Figure 2)*BAFC13*BAFCEV*Capelands Farm, Bratton Fleming*leo.heatley* 03 Nov 2013



Geophysics interpretation supplied by :
Pre-Construct Geophysics Ltd

0 200 m

Scale at A4 1:4000

Figure 2: Trench location plan overlaid on interpreted geophysical survey results

X:\c\Capelands Farm, Bratton Fleming, Devon \010Geomatics\02 CAD\001current\BAFCEV_Current_221013.dwg(Figure 3)*BAFC13*BAFCEV*Capelands Farm, Bratton Fleming*leo.heatley* 03 Nov 2013

N

266540
139170

Trench 8

803

Trench 14

1405

Trench 9

905

903

Trench 10

1005

1003

Trench 13

266440
139020

266540
139020

Potential pit
Potential ditch
Potential former field boundary
Cultivation
Typically modern (rubble, metal objects, fencing etc)
Suggested natural (example)
Evaluation trench
Archaeological feature
Geological feature
1003 903 Context number
OS coordinate

Geophysics interpretation supplied by :
Pre-Construct Geophysics Ltd

0 20 m

Scale at A3 1:500

Figure 3: Features in trenches 8-10 and 14, on interpreted geophysical survey results

X:\c\Capelands Farm, Bratton Fleming, Devon \010Geomatics\02 CAD\001current\BAFCEV_Current_221013.dwg(Figure 4)*BAFC13*BAFCEV*Capelands Farm, Bratton Fleming*leo.heatley* 03 Nov 2013

Geophysics plot supplied by :
Pre-Construct Geophysics Ltd

0 20 m
Scale at A3 1:500

Figure 4: Features in trenches 8, 9, 10 and 14, on greyscale geophysical survey plot

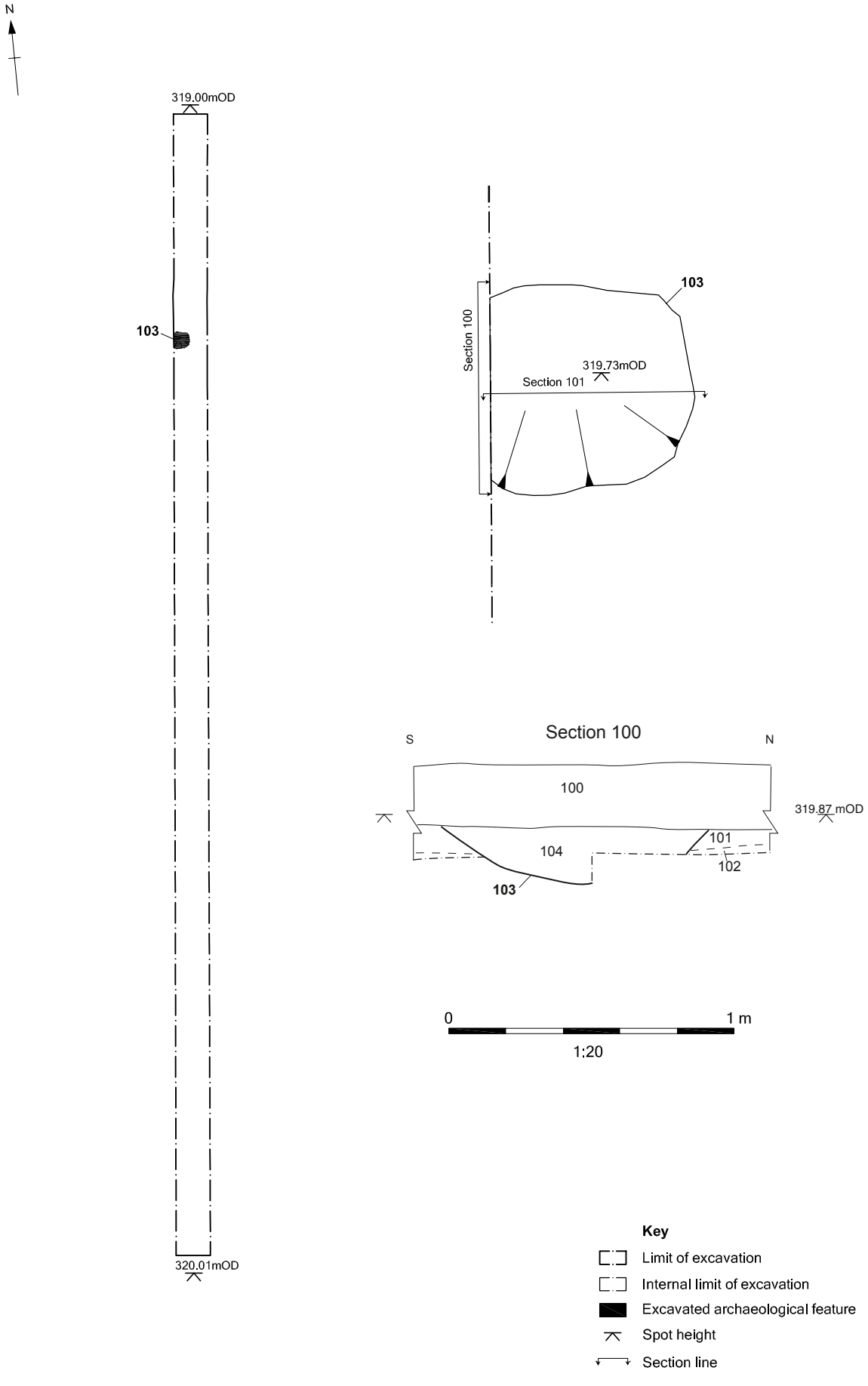


Figure 5 - Detailed plan and section of trench 1, pit 103 NE

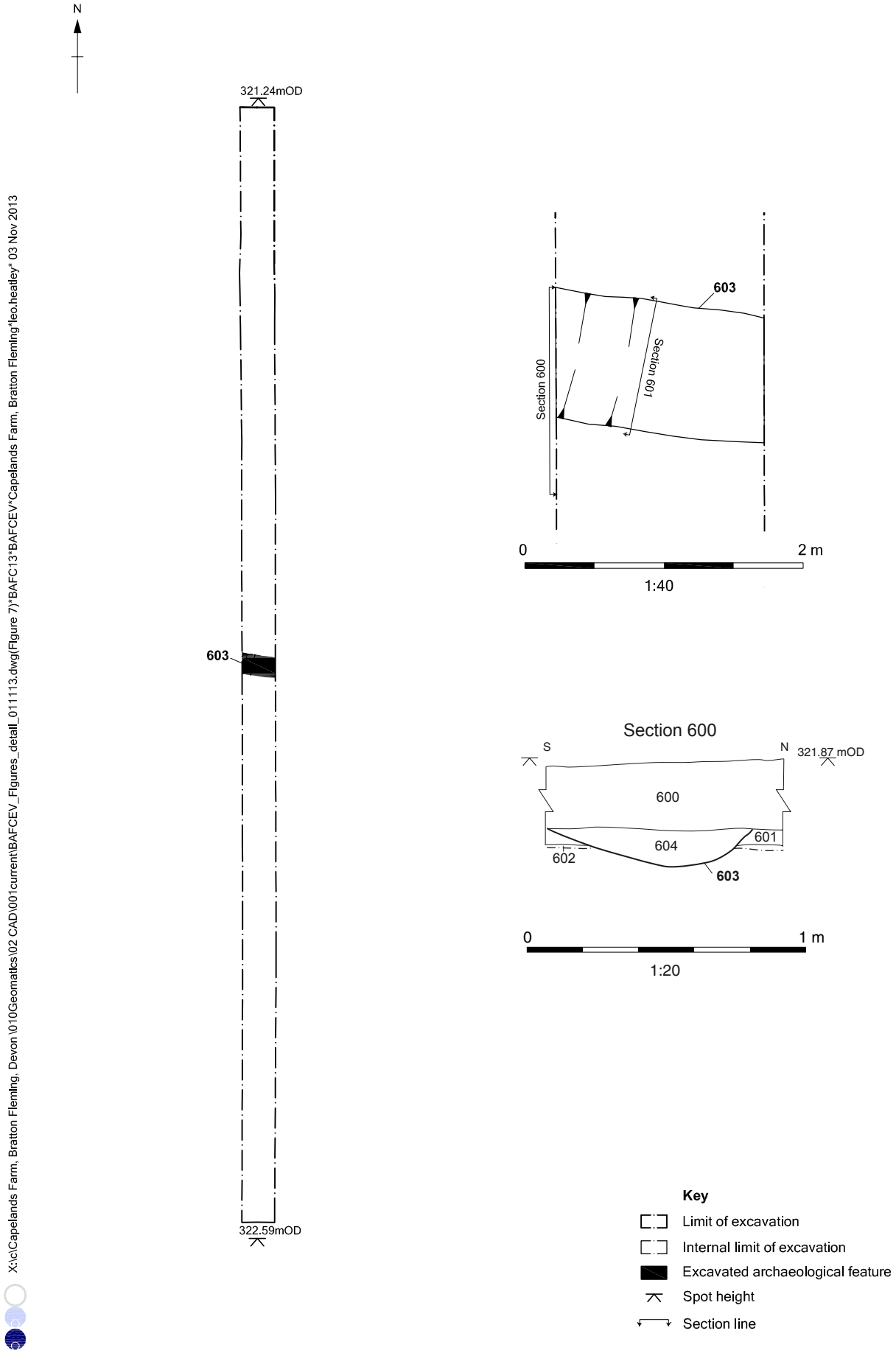
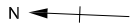
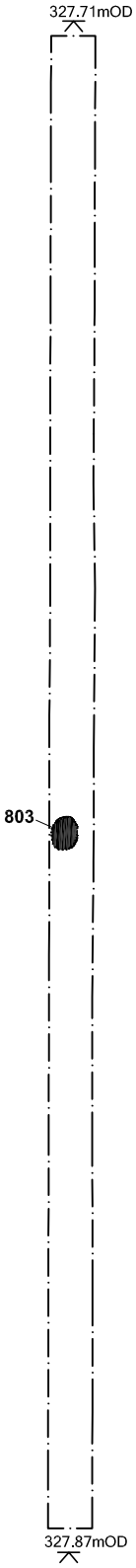
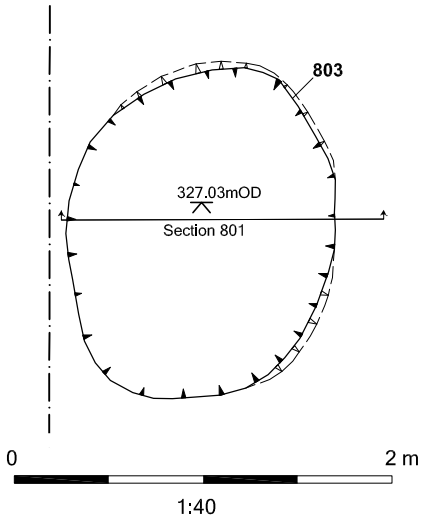
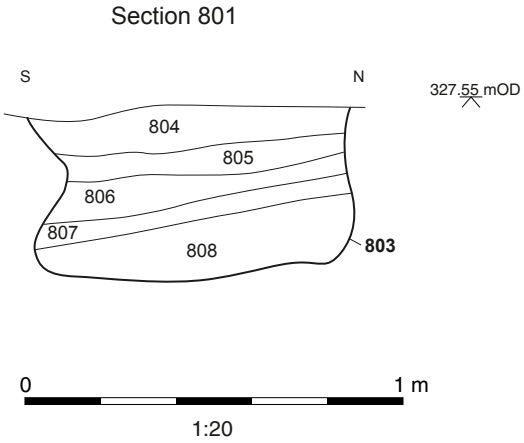


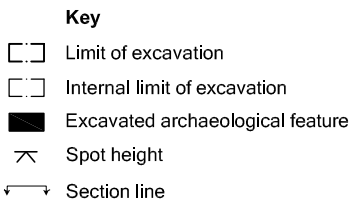
Figure 6 - Detailed plan and section of trench 6, feature 603











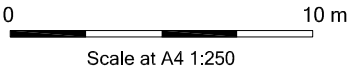


Figure 7 - Detailed plan and section of trench 8, pit 803

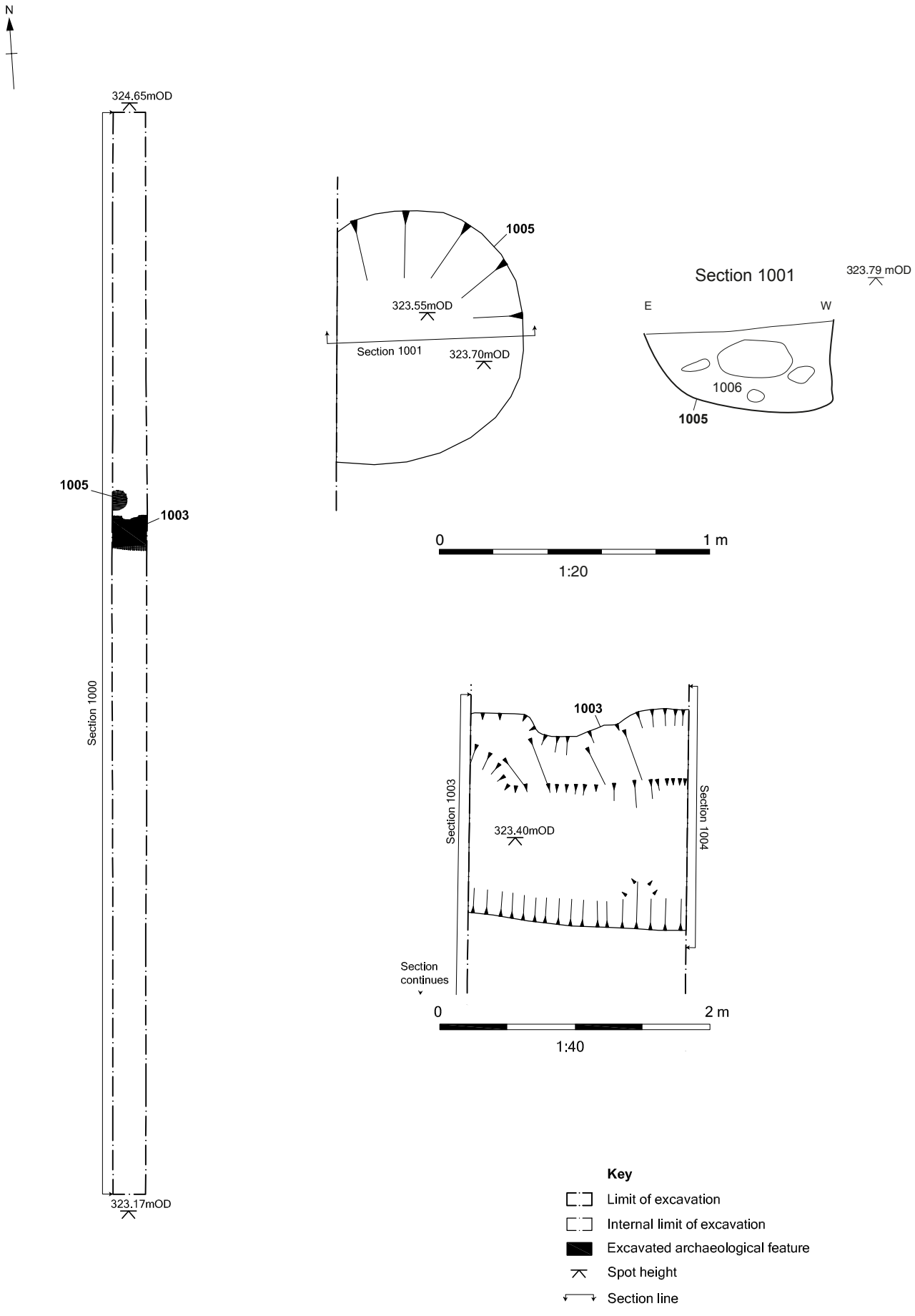


Figure 8 - Detailed plan of trench 10, features 1003 and 1005

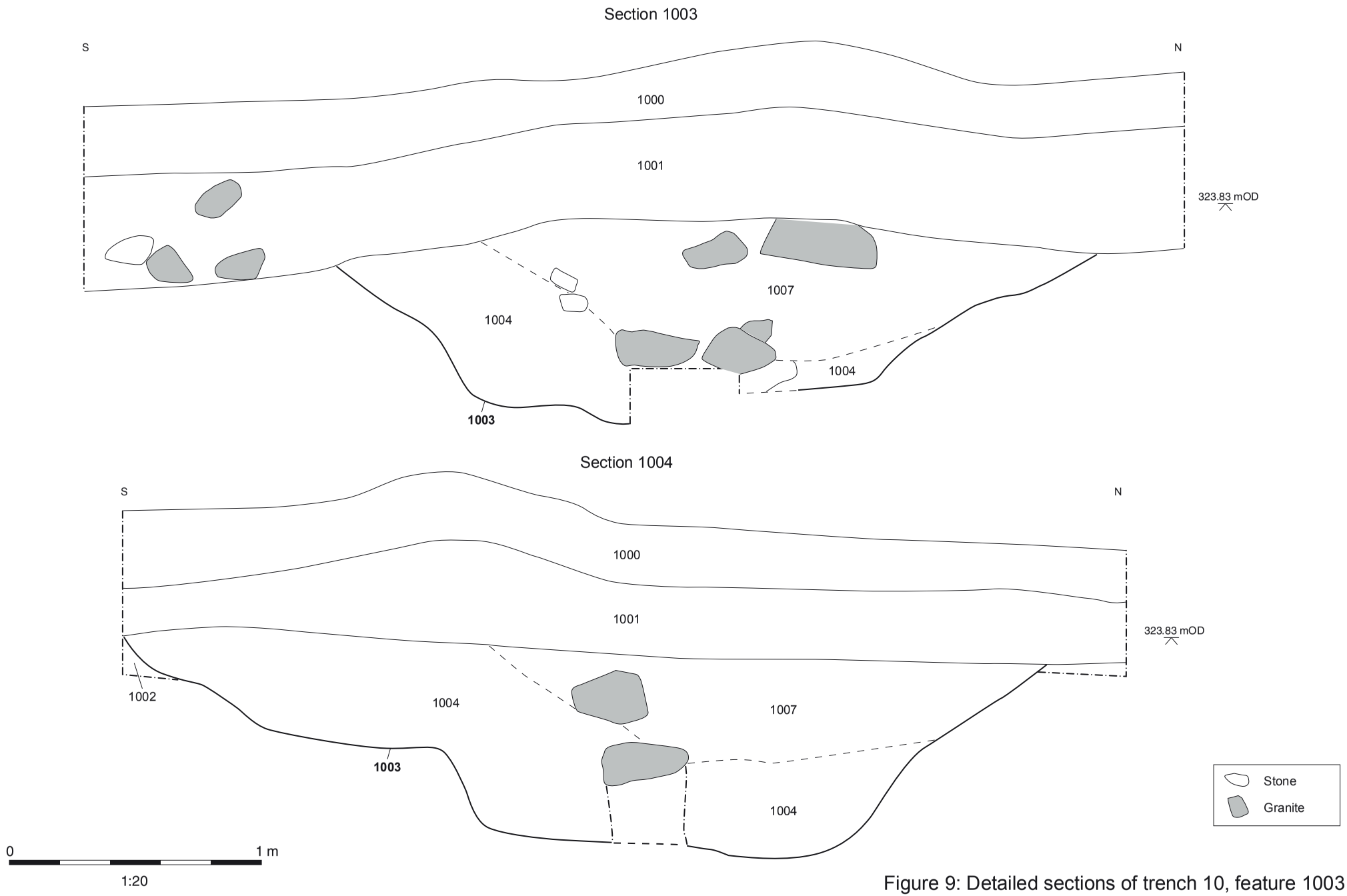


Figure 9: Detailed sections of trench 10, feature 1003

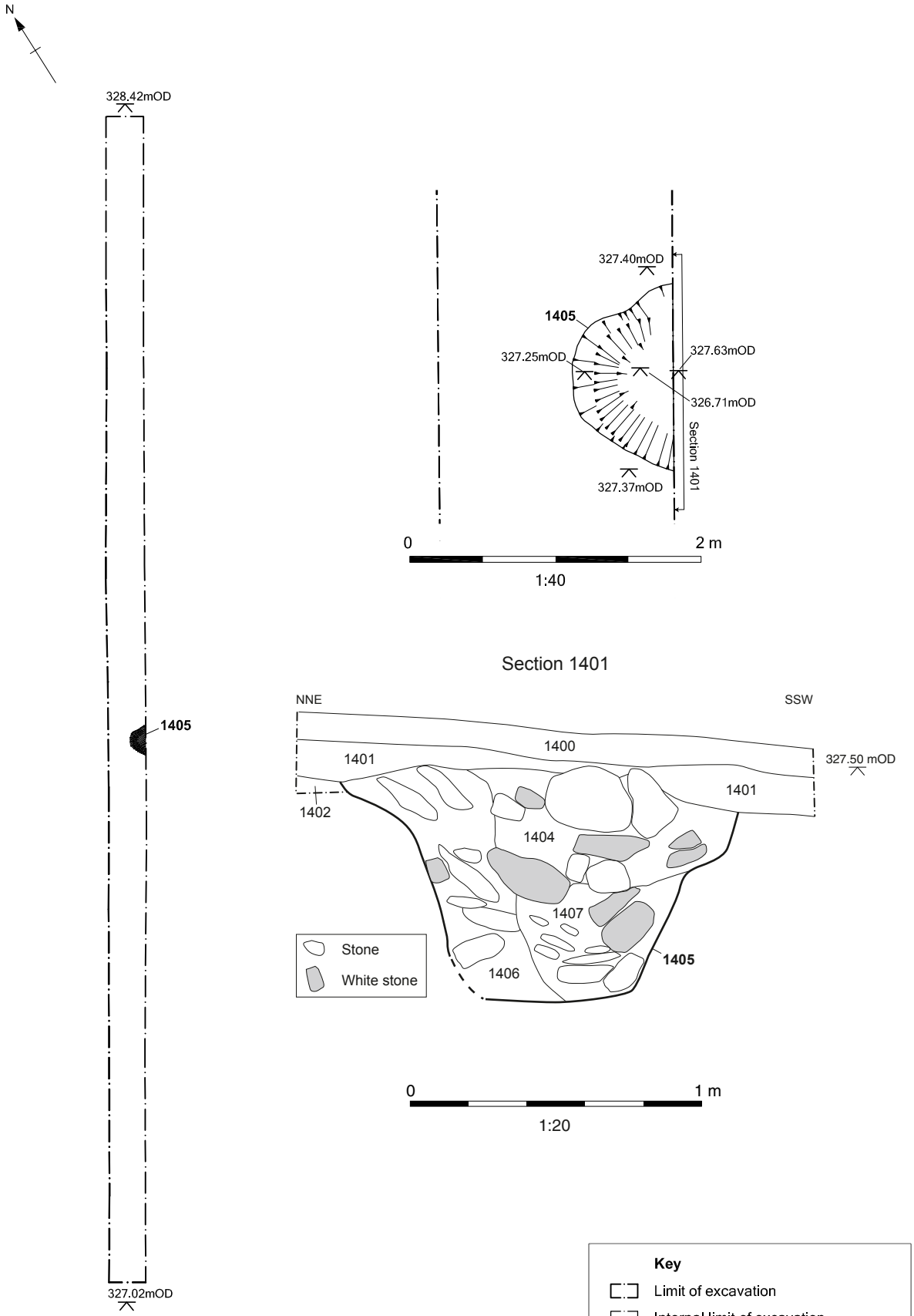
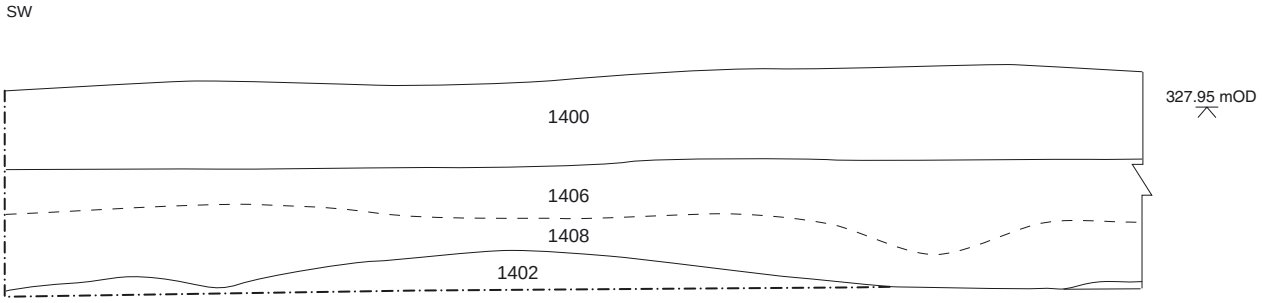
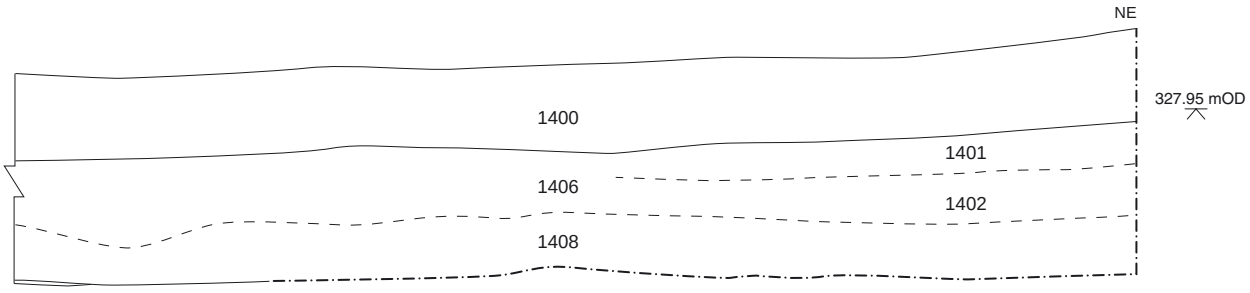


Figure 10 - Detailed plan of trench 14 and pit 1403

Section 1402



Continuation of section 1402



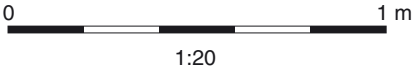


Figure 11: Detailed sections of trench 14 (sondage to confirm natural)

Plate 1: Trench 1, pit 105

Plate 2: Trench 6, ditch 603

Plate 3: Trench 8, pit 803

Plate 4: Trench 9 – Magnetic susceptibility samples

Plate 5: Trench 9 – sondage to confirm natural

Plate 6: Trench 10, ditch 1003

Plate 7: Trench 11, pit 1103

Plate 8: Trench 14, pit 1405

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