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Marsh Farm Quarry,  
Salford Priors,  
Warwickshire

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ZHU MICHAM REPORT  
Extraction Phase 4

**Archaeological  
Evaluation**

November 1992

# Marsh Farm Quarry, Salford Priors, Warwickshire

## 2nd Interim Report, Extraction Phase 4

### Introduction

The second phase of archaeological field evaluation at Marsh Farm Quarry, Salford Priors, commissioned by Western Aggregates Limited, was undertaken by the Warwickshire Museum in September 1992. The evaluation formed part of a long term programme of archaeological work, initially agreed when the application for gravel extraction was approved. This report presents the results of the evaluation of extraction Phase 4.

### Location

The evaluation site lies on the west bank of the River Avon (SP079523) on second terrace gravels which have been used extensively for vegetable and cereal cultivation.

Aerial photography has revealed that the site is crossed by a series of linear ditches (Sites and Monuments Record No WA1499) which are revealed as cropmarks. These linear features form part of a large settlement site apparently dating from the late Iron Age/Romano British period and represent a continuation of features investigated during excavation of Phase 2. The features survive as cuts into the natural gravel.

The national importance of the cropmark site is recognised by the protection of part of it as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Monument No Warwicks 162) under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. The Scheduled Ancient Monument, together with a small additional area to the east of extraction Phases 2 and 4 (Fig 1), have been excluded from the present proposals.

The limits of the Scheduled area do not necessarily encompass all deposits of importance and should be regarded as an indication of the state of knowledge at the time of Scheduling rather than as a definitive statement of significance.

## **Aims of the Evaluation**

The aims of the field evaluation were to locate, identify and assess the significance of the cropmarks and to determine whether other archaeological features existed within Phase 4 of the application area.

## **Method**

A series of trial trenches were machined down to the natural, using a tracked 360° excavator with a toothless bucket. Some trenches were positioned to confirm the nature of the cropmarks, whilst others were randomly placed. The exposed surface was then examined for surviving archaeological remains.

The cropmarks and other features were exposed as darker, siltier patches within the gravel. The newly revealed features were cleaned by hand, photographed, planned to scale (1:50) and described in detail using the standard Warwickshire Museum recording system.

## **Results**

All of the trenches except one (*trench 12*) contained archaeological remains.

*Trench 1* measured 30m long and was aligned E to W in the S end of the Phase 4 area. The natural gravel was cut by four features, two of which appeared to be naturally formed (103, 102). A narrow gully (105) ran NW to SE across the trench and a possible pit or gully end (101) protruded from the N trench wall. These features were overlaid by subsoil (106) which in turn was covered by the topsoil (100).

*Trench 2* measured 30m long and was aligned NE to SW at the S end of the Phase 4 area. A series of narrow interlaced gullies aligned N to S (201, 203, 205, 206 and 209) and E to W (202, 204 and 208), were recorded although their relationship remains uncertain. Romano British pottery sherds found within the fill of the gullies suggest a probable Roman origin. A single ditch (211) ran E to W across the N end of the trench. Other features (207, 210 and 212) are probably natural in origin. Subsoil (213) lay over all features and in turn was overlaid by the topsoil (200).

# MARSH FARM 1992, PHASE 4 CROPMARKS AND EVALUATION TRENCHES



PHASE 5

PHASE 4

PHASE 2

T.12

T.8

T.6

T.5

T.10

T.7

T.9

T.4

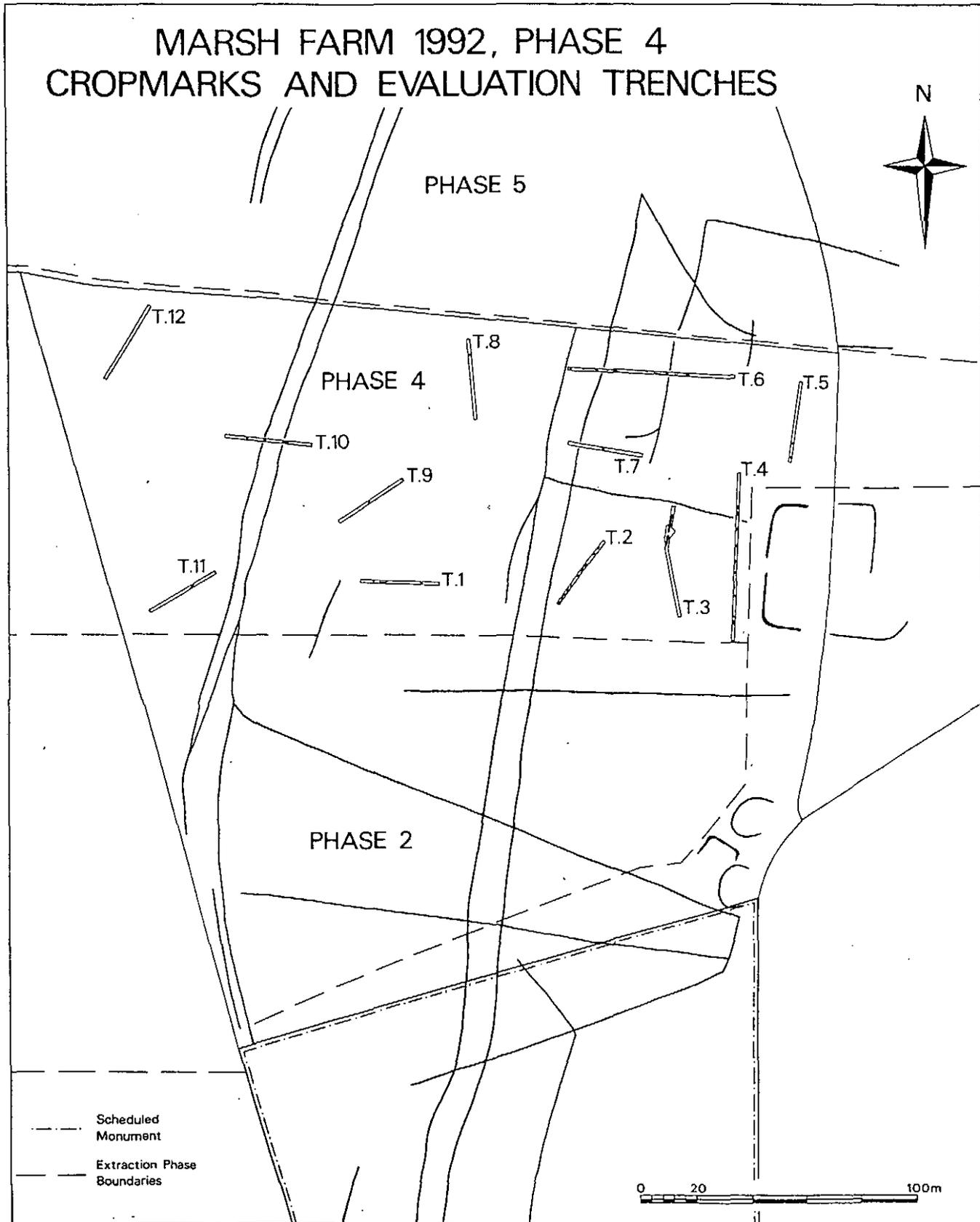
T.11

T.1

T.2

T.3

- Scheduled Monument
- Extraction Phase Boundaries



*Trench 3* was 30m long and was aligned NW to SE in the SE area of the extraction site. A spur roughly 12m long and aligned N to S, was added to the north. Two short lengths of gully were revealed (301 and 302) roughly aligned with the trench although it was uncertain if they continue further. Surface cleaning of the gullies revealed sherds of Romano British pottery and several pieces of daub providing a probable date. A possible hearth was also recorded within the fill of (302), where the soil was darkened with charcoal and contained several heat cracked stones. Subsoil (304) overlay the features which in turn was overlaid by the topsoil (300).

*Trench 4* aligned N-S along the eastern edge of the area was 60m long and positioned to locate cropmarks. The opening of the trench revealed ditches running E-W, two of which (402, 409) lined up with the edges of the nearby enclosure (see Fig 1) cropmark and may relate to it. Other regularly spaced ditches (406, 407 and 408) were similar to those encountered during the excavation of the NE area of Phase 2. These proved to be very shallow when excavated and are probably the remains of a Medieval ridge and furrow field system. Gullies (403) (aligned NW to SE) and (410) (E to W) could also relate to this or an earlier system. Features (404), (405) and (411) could all have natural origins. Subsoil (401) overlay the features, and was in turn overlaid by the topsoil (400).

*Trench 5* was 30m long and aligned N to S in the NE corner of the area. This contained a ditch (502), running E to W, possibly related to the ridge and furrow ditches in Trench 4. A narrow gully (503), to the N of 502, ran NE to SW and was similar to 403. These were covered with the subsoil (501) which in turn was covered with the topsoil (500).

*Trench 6* was 30m long, aligned E to W along the northern edge of the area and positioned to identify cropmarks. A number of features were revealed including two ditches (602 and 608) to the W and middle of the trench respectively, running N to S, which correspond to the cropmark. Other features were recorded including three gullies: (612), aligned N to S, (606) and (607), both aligned NW to SE. Feature (611) was probably a gully butt end.

A small post hole (603) was also recorded along with possible ditch (605) which ran N to S across the trench and two possible natural features (604 and 609) that protruded from the trench walls. The features were covered with subsoil (601) and this, in turn, with topsoil (600).

*Trench 7* was 30m long and aligned E to W in a position S of Trench 6. A single ditch (702) was revealed running in a NW to SW direction across the trench. This was overlaid by the subsoil (701) and this in turn covered by the topsoil (700).

*Trench 8* was 30m long and aligned N to S in the middle of the N edge of the area. A single ditch (802) was found, running E to W at the N end of the trench. This was overlaid with subsoil (801) and in turn was covered by topsoil (800).

*Trench 9* was 30m long and aligned NE to SW. This contained a narrow gully (902) running N to S across the trench which was overlaid with subsoil (901) and then topsoil (900).

*Trench 10* was 30m long, aligned E to W and positioned to sample the cropmark. Three features were revealed: (1002), a ditch or possibly two gullies conjoined, (1003) and (1004), both gullies. All of these ran N to S across the trench and two (1002, 1003) corresponded with the cropmark. These were covered with subsoil (1001) and this in turn by the topsoil (1000).

*Trench 11* was 30m long aligned NE to SW. A single narrow gully (1102) was recorded running in a N to S direction across the trench. (1102) was overlaid by subsoil (1101) and this in turn was covered by topsoil (1100).

## **Conclusions**

Archaeological features were recorded over the majority of the site. Many of these deposits show a continuation of the types of archaeological features encountered during the excavation of Phase 2, thus offering a chance to enhance the information already retrieved. In several places the indications of the aerial evidence were confirmed, and the presence of features not visible as cropmarks suggests a more intensive use of the site.

Mineral extraction without prior excavation and recording would result in the total destruction of these deposits and complete loss of information that could be gained from them.

## **Acknowledgements**

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