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BLACKLANDS, LANGTON MATRAVERS, DORSET

Archaeological Observations and Recording

Report No. 53189/3/1

December 2013

BLACKLANDS, LANGTON MATRAVERS, DORSET

Archaeological Observations and Recording

May 2005 and January 2007

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Archaeological Watching Brief
May 2005 and January 2007

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Blacklands, Langton Matravers, Dorset

Archaeological Watching Brief, May 2005 and January 2007

SUMMARY

Archaeological recording was carried out by Terrain Archaeology during topsoil stripping for two new quarry areas and a haul road, in land to the south of Acton near Langton Matravers, Dorset. Towards the centre of Pond Field, two small truncated pits or scoops of probable Early Neolithic date were found. Both contained burnt material and one also included abraded pottery, flint knapping debris and saddle quern fragments. This may represent occupation debris from a small Early Neolithic settlement. Almost adjacent, was an isolated Romano-British grave containing the skeleton of an adult female in a stone slab cist. The only other feature revealed was a large burnt area associated with a small quantity of medieval pottery in the southwest corner of Blacklands Field.

INTRODUCTION

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by D & P Lovell to undertake archaeological observations and recording during topsoil stripping for new quarries in three fields to the south of Acton near Langton Matravers. The archaeological observations and recording are a condition of granting of planning consent for one quarry in Blacklands field (Quarry 4), one in Sea Spray field (Quarry 3), and two in Pond Field (Quarries 1 and 2), together with associated access tracks and service areas (Planning Application Nos. 6/2004/1045, 1046, 1047, 1048, and 1049).

'Archaeological Observations and Recording' (also known as a 'watching brief') has been defined in the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief as "*a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons, within a specified area or site […] where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive.*"

The site lies to the south of Acton, Langton Matravers on the Purbeck limestone plateau on the south side of the Isle of Purbeck (Figure 1). The site consists of four fields lying to the south of Priest's Way near the highest point of the ridge. The ground slopes gently towards the south and southeast and lies at a height between about 125m –140 m above OD. The fields were in pasture prior to the quarrying activity, but had previously been ploughed up until the late 1980s. The underlying geology is mapped as Purbeck Limestone.

The groundworks observed consisted of the stripping of Quarry 1 in Pond Field (SY992778) and Quarry 4 in Blacklands Field (SY991777), together with a haul road along the eastern edge of Home Field, the south side of Blacklands Field, the west side of Sea Spray Field (SY992777), up to Quarry 1 in Pond Field (Figure 2). A further watching brief was carried out when the quarries in Blacklands Field and Pond Field were extended in January 2007. Quarry 3 in Sea Spray Field was also stripped in 2007, but was the subject of a separate report (Tatler and Bellamy 2007). Quarry 2 has not been worked.

The fieldwork was carried out between the 11th–25th May 2005 and 22nd January 2007 by Steven Tatler with occasional help from Peter Bellamy and Rod Brook.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The archaeological and historical background is based on data from the National Trust Historic Landscape Survey of the Langton Wallis part of the Corfe Castle Estate (Papworth 1994) and from the results of archaeological fieldwork done by the National Trust. This fieldwork included a fieldwalking survey across this area undertaken in 1987 (Papworth 1994, 53) and archaeological field evaluation undertaken in 2004 and 2005 in Blacklands Field, Pond Field and Sea Spray Field to inform the proposals for the new quarries (Papworth 2004 & 2005).

A scatter of worked flint of Neolithic/Bronze Age character was found by fieldwalking and during the evaluation. These artefacts must have been brought into the area, as flint is not found in the Purbeck limestone beds but derives from the chalk deposits to the north.

The archaeological evaluation identified three areas of possible Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age to Romano-British occupation in Blacklands Field, Pond Field and Sea Spray Field. In the south west of Blacklands Field (at SY99037770) a number of finds and features dating from the Late Bronze Age – Romano-British period were interpreted as a continuation of an Iron Age to Romano-British settlement associated with Kimmeridge shale working discovered by J. B. Calkin in 1945, during quarrying in Blacklands Quarry (Calkin 1948, 43; RCHME 1970, 602; Papworth 2004). In Pond Field (at SY99327783) a concentration of Romano-British pottery and prehistoric flint was recovered, in association with what may have been pits and ditches. These features were not excavated, but a subsequent geophysical survey of this area revealed a long narrow rectangular anomaly, tentatively identified as an enclosure, 80 m by 20 m, aligned northwest to southeast (Papworth 2005). In Sea Spray Field (at SY99247771) a concentration of worked flint and Romano-British pottery was taken as an indication of the proximity of another occupation area (Papworth 2005).

In the 16th century this land was part of Acton South Field, unenclosed pasture land perhaps originally common arable land in the medieval period (DRO D/BKL Treswell Survey 1586). The N–S boundary wall between Blacklands Field and Pond/Sea Spray Fields probably represented a medieval manorial boundary and is shown on the 1586 map (DRO D/BKL Treswell Survey).

By 1775 the South Field had been enclosed and the three fields affected by this watching brief had been created called Blacklands (Blacklands), Purbecks Field (Pond Field) and Coursefields Serrells Ground (north part of Sea Spray) (DRO D/BKL Woodward Survey).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the fieldwork was to preserve by archaeological record any archaeological features that will be disturbed within the area included in the planning application.

Areas of archaeological significance have been avoided where known, but additional discoveries have been recorded to the standards of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

METHODS

Archaeological observations were carried out during topsoil stripping for a new haul road, the areas to be quarried and their adjacent overburden dumps. The observations and subsequent recording were undertaken in line with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*.

All deposits and features exposed during the topsoil strip were recorded using elements of Terrain Archaeology's recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records.

The records have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current UKIC guidelines and the requirements of the receiving museum. The archive will be deposited with the National Trust.

RESULTS

Introduction

Topsoil stripping for a haul road and for two quarries was undertaken in four adjacent fields (Figure 2). The haul road strip was about 8-10 m wide and ran from the Priest's Way along the eastern edge of Home Field, then along the southern edge of Blacklands Field and the western edge of Sea Spray Field into Pond Field (Figure 2). A roughly 95 m by 85 m L-shaped area in the south-east corner of Blacklands Field was stripped for Quarry 4 and a roughly 120 m by 105 m area in Pond Field for Quarry 1.

Over most of the stripped area, natural stone and clay was exposed directly below the topsoil and no archaeological features were visible, other than a series of stone-filled land drains (Figure 2; Plates 4-5). Pond Field was the only area where there was any significant archaeology.

Natural Deposits

Natural deposits were exposed immediately below the topsoil across the whole area. These consisted of a series of compact pale-dark reddish-brown clays and pale yellow clay with differing amounts of limestone (2, 3,4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13, 15).

Prehistoric Features, Pond Field

Towards the centre of the area stripped for the quarry, at SY 99283 77840, two small prehistoric scoops or pits (21, 23) were exposed. These lay immediately west of a Romano-British grave (Figures 2 and 3).

Pit 21 was sub-circular in plan with vertical or undercut sides and a flat base measuring about 0.65 m in diameter and 0.22 m deep (Figure 3; Plate 9). In the base of the pit was a 0.05 m thick layer of charcoal-rich dark yellowish-brown clay (20), which contained three fragments of heathstone saddle quern, some small sherds of abraded pottery and some worked flint. The remainder of the pit was filled with a yellowish-brown clay (19) containing frequent flecks of charcoal and lumps of heat-reddened clay and sparse small pieces of limestone. This upper layer produced further sherds of abraded pottery and worked flint. The poor condition of the pottery meant that it was not possible to determine how many vessels were represented, nor was it closely datable and may be either Early Neolithic or Late Bronze Age (see Mepham, below). The character of the flint suggests that an Early Neolithic date is most likely.

About 2.6 m to the WSW was a shallow oval scoop (23) with concave sides and base measuring 0.48 m by 0.38 m across and 0.05 m deep. It was filled with reddish-brown clay (22) containing patches of red clay and very occasional flecks of charcoal. No finds were recovered, so its date is unknown, but its proximity to Pit 21 may suggest it is broadly contemporary.

Romano-British Grave, Pond Field

About 1.75 m to the north west of Pit 21 was a large rectangular grave (17) (Figure 3; Plates 6–8). The grave cut was 2.9 m long by 1.2 m wide and 0.7 m deep. The grave was lined with limestone slabs (18) along both sides, but none at the ends (Plate 8). There were four roughly rectangular slabs on each side measuring up to 600mm by 300mm by 5mm. The grave was capped by two large flat stones (26) that had broken into a large number of pieces and slumped into the grave (Figure 4; Plate 6). The largest of these stones was about 1200mm long by 700mm wide and up to 8mm thick. Overlying the capstones was a layer of reddish-brown clay (16), containing frequent lumps of red and yellow clay.

The grave contained the badly damaged remains of an adult female extended supine inhumation (25) with the head to the east (Plate 7). The lower part of the skeleton had been destroyed by the

collapse of the capstone. This individual was originally interred in a wooden coffin, as evidenced by the large number of coffin nails (54 in total) found in the grave. These were found along the north side of the grave and at the east end (Figure 4). It is likely that many of these nails had moved post-deposition. The nails were found in a pale reddish-brown clay (24), which also sealed the human remains.

Blacklands Field Haul Road Archaeological Features

In the southwest corner of Blacklands field, a large oval feature (11) was found in the centre of the haul road (Figure 2; Plate 1). It measured 4.0 m long by 2.5 m wide and had shallow rounded sides and a flat base 0.2 m deep (Figure 5; Plate 2). It was filled with a compact clay (10), which varied in colour from bright orange through dark orange to red, the lighter coloured part of the deposit being at the centre of the feature. A few sherds of abraded medieval pottery, some pieces of worked flint and an animal tooth were recovered from this deposit. The discolouration of the fill of this feature was probably caused by the effect of a large bonfire heating the underlying natural subsoil and leading to various degrees of reddening depending on the penetration of the heat.

Field Drains

A series of stone-filled field drains were encountered across the observed area (Plates 3–5). These drains all cut the natural clay and were filled with void limestone rubble. These were not recorded individually, but their positions were planned on site (Figure 2). No field drains were found in Home Field. In Blacklands Field two drains ran roughly N-S and three E-W. The E-W drains were also traced across the Sea Spray Field access road (Plate 4). Three other drains running NE-SW and NW-SE were also recorded. In Pond Field five field drains running roughly N-S and E-W were recorded (Figure 2).

Topsoil

The topsoil across all the observed fields was similar and lay directly on top of the natural deposits. It was a 0.2–0.3 m thick layer of yellowish-brown clayey loam with rare small pieces of limestone (1, 8, 12, 14).

FINDS

Introduction

The finds retained from the watching brief are tabulated in Table 1 and each material type is briefly described below.

Context	Pottery		Fired Clay		Stone Objects		Worked Flint		Iron	Human Bone		Animal Bone	
	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	No	Wt (g)
10	3	18					2	20				2	16
15							1	32					
16	6	7	1	1			2	19					
19	31	56	2	3			5	23					
19 < 2>	19	36	2	2			65	39					
20					3	2067	11	53					
20 < 3>	28	21					42	34					
24							4	15	54				
25										*	*		
Total	*87*	*666*	*5*	*6*	*3*	*2067*	*132*	*235*	*54*			*2*	*16*

Table 1: All finds by context

Pottery and Fired Clay (Lorraine Mepham, Wessex Archaeology)

Introduction

The assemblage examined comprises 87 sherds of pottery (666g) derived from four contexts (burnt area 10, fill 16 within Romano-British grave, and pit fills 19 and 20). It also included material from two sieved samples from pit fills 19 and 20 (only material from the 5.6mm fraction was recorded; fragments from the 4mm or 500 micron fractions were not examined). The assemblage is listed by context in Table 2.

The condition of most the material is extremely poor, and the consequent difficulties of assigning a date range are discussed below. A few sherds are in harder fired fabrics and are not so friable, but these are still small and abraded. Mean sherd weight overall is 1.6g.

Context	No. sherds	Wt. (g)	Comments	Date
10	3	18	coarse sandy ware	medieval
16	5	6	Black Burnished ware	LIA/ERB
16	1	1	tiny body sherd with flint temper; probably later prehistoric	late prehistoric
19	31	56	very abraded body sherds; coarse flint/chert temper	Neo/LBA
19 (sample 2)	19	36	very abraded body sherds; coarse flint/chert temper	Neo/LBA
20 (sample 3)	28	21	very abraded body sherds; coarse flint/chert temper	Neo/LBA

Table 2: Pottery by context

Pottery

Pottery from pit fills 19 and 20 is all of a very similar character, and may in fact derive from a single vessel. However, there are no diagnostic pieces, and the sherds are so small and abraded that definitive comment cannot be made. The soft-fired and friable fabric contains sparse, poorly sorted inclusions (<2mm) of flint/chert, and occasional quartz grains. This is sufficient to date the sherds as prehistoric, but not to assign them to a specific ceramic tradition or chronological period with any degree of confidence – possibilities include either Neolithic or Late Bronze Age. Very similar fabrics were recorded, for example, amongst the prehistoric assemblage from Poundbury, Dorchester, where they occurred in both Early Neolithic and Late Bronze Age vessel forms, with practically no visual distinction (either macroscopic or microscopic) in fabric between the two (Leivers 2011 and pers. comm.).

One very small flint-tempered sherd from grave fill 16 is most likely to be of Late Bronze Age date; this is clearly residual in a Romano-British grave.

Five further sherds from grave fill 16 are in coarse sandy fabrics which can be accommodated within the range of Durotrigian Black Burnished ware (Late Iron Age or Early Roman); one comes from a rim, although too small to ascertain vessel form. These are also almost certainly residual; there is no suggestion that they represent grave goods of any kind.

Three sherds from burnt area 10 are also in coarse sandy fabrics, but these are harder fired, with 'pimply' surfaces, and can be identified as medieval; they fall within the tradition of sandy coarsewares found across east Dorset and south-east Wiltshire between the 12th and 14th centuries.

Fired Clay

Five very small fragments of fired clay (6 g) were recovered; these came from grave fill 16 and pit fill 19. All are abraded and completely undiagnostic; their date and function remains uncertain.

Worked Stone

Three heathstone saddle quern fragments (2067g) and one other fragment of heathstone (94 g), which may also be part of a quern, were recovered from context 20 (Pit 21). The querns are made on tabular heathstone fragments 45–50 mm thick. The largest quern fragment has a slightly dished pecked surface, which has been worn almost smooth. The other large fragment also has a worn pecked surface.

Worked Flint

Introduction

A total of 132 pieces of worked flint were recovered (Table 3), most coming from Pit 21 (Contexts 19 and 20). The majority of the flint was in sharp condition and unpatinated. Eleven burnt pieces were present, ten from Pit 21. The raw material, where it can be determined, was a mid greyish brown translucent flint with a thin eroded cortex. A fragment of polished flint axe was of opaque pale grey flint.

Context	10	15	16	19	19 (Sample 2)	20	20 (Sample 3)	24	Total
Flakes			1	4	3	7	4	1	*20*
Broken flakes	1			1	1	3	6	1	*13*
Blades					3		4	1	*8*
Broken blades					2		2		*4*
Tool	1	1	1						*3*
Angular Shatter							2		*2*
Chips					56	1	25	1	*78*
Total	*2*	*1*	*2*	*5*	*65*	*11*	*42*	*4*	*132*

Table 3: Worked flint assemblage by number

Debitage

The material derived from Pit 21 comprises a small proportion of primary and secondary core trimming flakes (6%), a larger proportion of thin broad trimming flakes (11%), a number of whole and broken small blades (9%) with a large number of chips forming the major part of the assemblage (67%). This material appears to represent knapping debris, with no obvious utilised pieces present. The flakes and blades have narrow plain butts, probably detached with a relatively soft hammer. There is no evidence for platform preparation. The chips comprise a mixture of accidental removals and broken blade and flake fragments.

Tools

Three tools were recovered all from residual contexts, two scrapers (contexts 10 and 15) and a broken piece of the blade of a polished flint axe (context 15). The scrapers have semi-abrupt retouch on small thick squat flakes. The axe fragment is highly polished on both faces and has part of a flat facet along one edge. The fragment has been reused as a core for small bladelet removals.

Discussion

The assemblage primarily consists of material incorporated into the fill of Pit 21, together with a small amount of similar material within the fill of the adjacent grave 17 and occasional other residual pieces. The material from Pit 21, although it contains no diagnostic pieces, probably fits best into an Early Neolithic flint knapping tradition. The material appears to have been accidentally incorporated knapping debris, rather than a deliberate deposit.

Human Bone (Clare Randall BA BSc MSc PhD)

Introduction

A single skeleton (context 25) from Grave 17 was examined. The remains consisted of only about 30% of the skeleton, and were considerably fragmented, partly due to the collapse of the covering stone slabs in the grave. This limits the reliability and resolution of anthropological analysis as well as the availability of elements to consider pathology. However, it is evident that the skeleton is of a fully adult individual of 25-35 years of age or older, probably female. Unusual wear patterns were noted in the anterior teeth, and the individual suffered from poor oral hygiene.

Methods

The material was examined to determine where possible ancestry, sex, age, stature and skeletal and oral pathology, generally in line with BABAO/IFA guidance (Brickley and McKinley 2004). A full skeletal inventory and record of the individual is retained in archive. Bone condition was assessed utilising scores following McKinley (2004). Sexing was carried out using morphological characteristics of the skull as the innominate was not available (Bass 1995; Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994; White and Folkens 2000). Metrical determination of sex was not possible due to fragmentation. Ageing methods which would normally employed, morphological changes to the pubic symphysis (Brooks and Suchey 1990; Todd 1921a; 1921b); changes to the sternal ends of ribs (Dudar 1993; İşcan and Loth 1986); the auricular surface (Lovejoy et al 1985; Meindl and Lovejoy 1989); and late fusing elements (Scheuer and Black 2000), were not possible, so ageing relies on occlusal wear of teeth (Brothwell 1965). Stature (Trotter 1970; Ousely 1995) could not be estimated due to lack of entire long bones. Pathological conditions were considered using a variety of sources (e.g. Brickley 2000; Ortner 2000; Rogers 2000).

Preservation and taphonomy

Only about 30% of the skeleton was present, and all elements represented were fragmentary. Most of the thoracic region was absent, along with the majority of the left arm, hands, pelvic girdle, and lower legs and feet. However, the bone that was present however was not in particularly poor condition, scoring Stage 3 on McKinley's scale.

Anthropological data - Sex, Age, and Stature

Estimation of sex was reliant on the heavily fragmented skull, providing a handful of traits for assessment. However, the traits present all scored firmly in the female range. The traits of the skull are less reliable indicators than the pelvic girdle, and could indicate a male with gracile features, but it seems likely that this individual was female. Age could only be assessed from toothwear, which indicated 25-35 years at death. However, this method tends to underage individuals. Some of the sutures of the skull had closed to the point that they were ceasing to be visible, and whilst this is a non-linear process and cannot supply a reliable ager range, particularly in fragmentary material, it might support this being an older individual. Stature could not be estimated due to the lack of entire long bones.

Pathology

Skeletal pathology

No skeletal pathology was noted, but this is unsurprising given the paucity of material, its surface condition and the loss of areas most likely to demonstrate pathological change such as the spinal column and joints.

Oral/Dental pathology

Whilst the mandible and maxilla were not recovered, most of the dentition was present as loose teeth. No dental enamel hypoplasias were noted. These are indicative of interruption of tooth

development and imply malnutrition or disease in childhood, but there is no evidence that this individual suffered this. Poor oral hygiene was indicated, with two teeth with carious lesions at the cemento-enamel junction (on the neck of the tooth) and at least one third molar with development of gross dental calculus (mineralised plaque), which not only covered the cheek side of the tooth to a depth of at least 2mm, but had spread over the biting surface of the tooth. This indicates that the person was not chewing on that biting surface as the act of eating should have cleared the plaque away. This may indicate some particular habit, or be resultant from another oral pathology e.g. caries or abscess, resulting in avoidance of chewing on a painful part of the mouth. The anterior teeth also demonstrate an unusual pattern of wear, with the worn surface sloping outwards, affecting the teeth irregularly and being more pronounced on the left incisors. This may be occupational or might relate to the other oral problems in either a causative way or as a result of adapting to oral disease. A full assessment is not possible in this individual given the loss of the bone of the mandible and maxilla.

Non-metric traits

A parietal foramen was noted on the right parietal. The rest of the vault was too fragmentary to determine whether this was bilateral.

Discussion /Conclusion

Whilst the information obtainable from this individual has been limited by the fragmentary condition of the remains and the presence of a limited portion of the skeleton, it is possible to assign a sex and broad age group. The oral pathology is interesting but not inconsistent with other individuals in the area dating to the Romano-British period.

Animal Bone

Two fragments (16 g) of sheep/goat tooth were recovered from context 10 (fill of feature 11).

DISCUSSION

The archaeological evaluation of the area of the new quarries undertaken by the National Trust in 2004 suggested three areas of possible archaeological activity in Blacklands Field, Sea Spray Field and Pond Field (Papworth 2004, 2005). In Blacklands Field, finds and features probably belonging to the Iron Age – Romano-British occupation site in Blacklands Quarry (RCHME 1970, 602) were confined to southwest corner of the field. A scatter of Romano-British pottery and worked flint found in the western part of Sea Spray Field hinted at prehistoric and Roman activity in this area, but as this lies beyond the area of the current observations, it will not be considered further here. The archaeological activity in Pond Field consisted of a scatter of Romano-British pottery and worked flint, some of which may have been associated with possible ditches and pits (none of which were excavated). Some of this possible archaeological activity appeared to be associated with a curvilinear ditched enclosure revealed by geophysical survey to be 80m long and 20m wide aligned north-west to south-east (at SY99327783).

The present observations have confirmed the presence of activity in Pond Field, but the results do not confirm the proposed character of the archaeology suggested by the evaluation (Papworth 2004, 2005). The archaeological features in Pond Field were found towards the centre of the area stripped for the quarry. These lay about 20 m to the west of the 'enclosure' revealed by geophysical survey (Figure 2). The area of stripping included the northwestern half of the 'enclosure', but no trace of the postulated enclosure ditch, nor of any features associated with this enclosure was found by the watching brief. It is possible that the resistivity survey picked up differences in the geology rather than defining an archaeological feature. It is perhaps pertinent to note that the 'enclosure' was not picked up by gradiometry. The potential features noted during the evaluation were only recorded as soil changes at the base of the topsoil and not excavated, so

it is possible that what was recorded in the evaluation trenches were slight changes in the interface between the topsoil and the natural clay beneath, and the associated finds were part of the general scatter of artefacts in the topsoil.

The two prehistoric features found in Pond Field during the watching brief (Pits 21 and 23) are clearly truncated and no associated surface features survived. The contents of Pit 21 appear to represent occupation debris and included pottery, quern fragments, flint knapping debris and possible hearth remnants in the form of burnt clay and charcoal. The precise date of this pit is uncertain but taking the character of the pottery and flint together, an Early Neolithic date appears most likely. The similarity of the material contained in both contexts in Pit 21, including sherds possibly from the same vessel in both the upper and lower fills suggests that the pit was filled up over a relatively short period of time and that both fills represent a single act of deposition. The character of the contents of Pit 21 suggests it was filled with occupation refuse. It is unclear whether this material was simply the disposal of refuse or the result of structured deposition, as recognised in Early Neolithic pits elsewhere (Butterworth and Gibson 2004; Harding 2010). The existence of knapping debris and hearth deposits suggests that the Neolithic activity took place in relatively close proximity to the pit. Despite the poor survival of the remains, this site is significant, as there has been very little evidence to date for Early Neolithic activity in Purbeck.

The Romano-British grave 17 contained the burial of an adult female in a stone slab cist and this appears to have been a single isolated burial. It can be compared to another isolated Romano-British burial in a stone slab cist discovered in 1949 about 500 m to the north of Blacklands Quarry (Farrar 1949, 68). The association of either burial with the settlement at Blacklands is unclear. The location of the grave in close proximity to the Early Neolithic features is interesting considering no other archaeological features were found across the rest of the stripped area of Pond Field. It is unclear whether this represents the coincidental placement of features several millennia apart or whether this area remained a significant special location over a long duration. Topographically there was nothing distinctive about this particular location, which lay below the highest point of the ridge on a slight south-facing slope.

The lack of archaeological features in the stripped area in the southeast corner of Blacklands Field confirms the impression from the evaluation that the Iron Age/Romano-British settlement is restricted to the western part of the field. The only feature revealed in the southwest corner of the field was burnt feature 11. This appears to be no more than the remains of a bonfire rather than a deliberate feature. The association of a small amount of medieval pottery with this feature does not definitely date this feature, but does suggest that it is not part of the adjacent Iron Age/Romano-British settlement. It is likely to be medieval or post-medieval in date.

In conclusion, the observations have demonstrated that the significant archaeological remains may be found in apparent isolation in this area. The discovery of the remains of a probable Early Neolithic settlement in Pond Field may be related to the previously recorded scatter of prehistoric flints found north of Sea Spray (NTSMR 112346*0). This appears to be the first example of stratified Early Neolithic evidence found in Purbeck. The discovery of the Romano-British grave adds another example of an isolated burial of this date in this part of Purbeck, but it is unclear on present evidence how these relate to the known Romano-British settlement sites in this area.

PROJECT ARCHIVE

The archive of written records and finds from the observations (Terrain Archaeology Project No. 53189) will be deposited with the National Trust.

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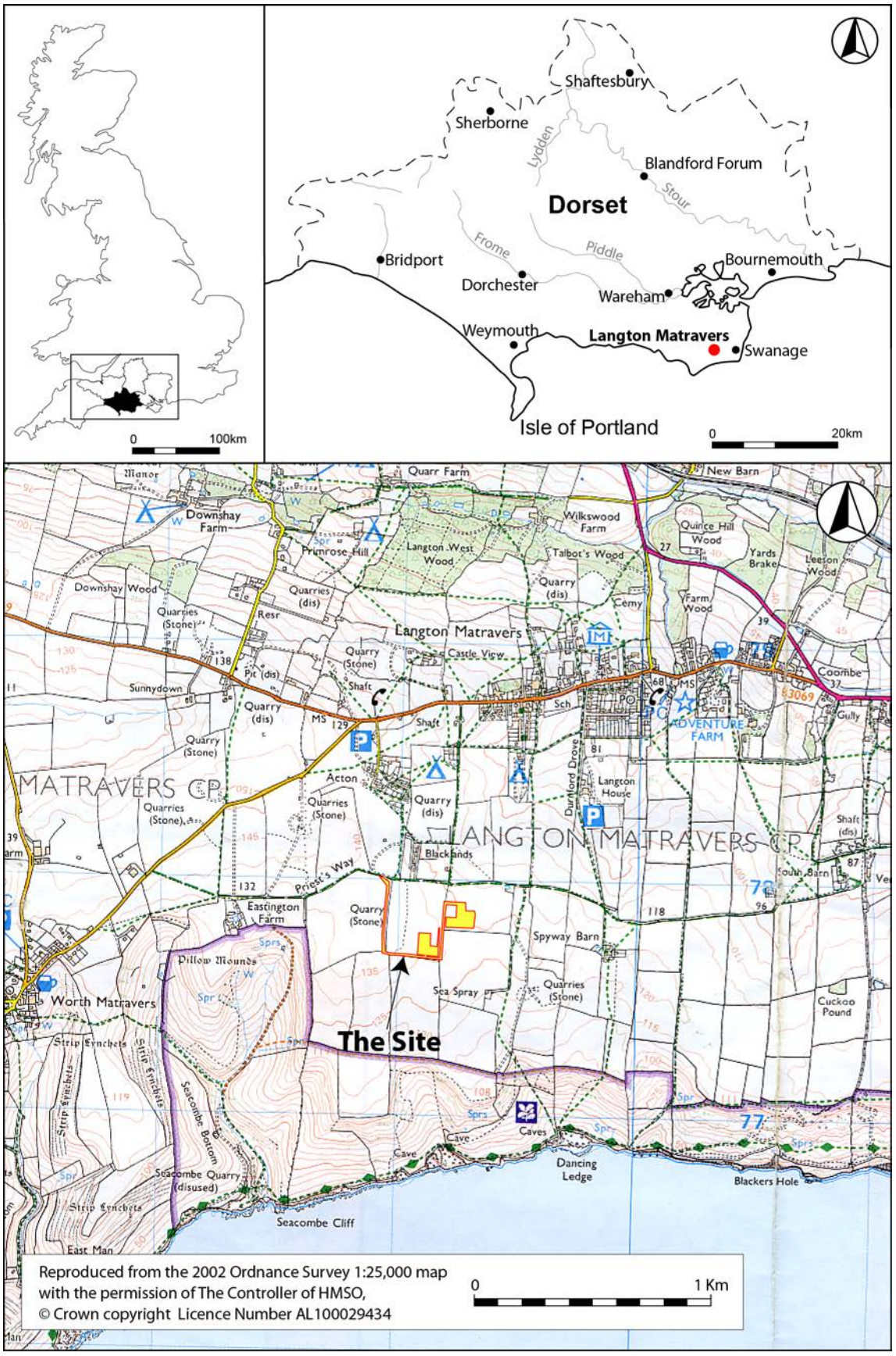

Figure 1: Location Map.

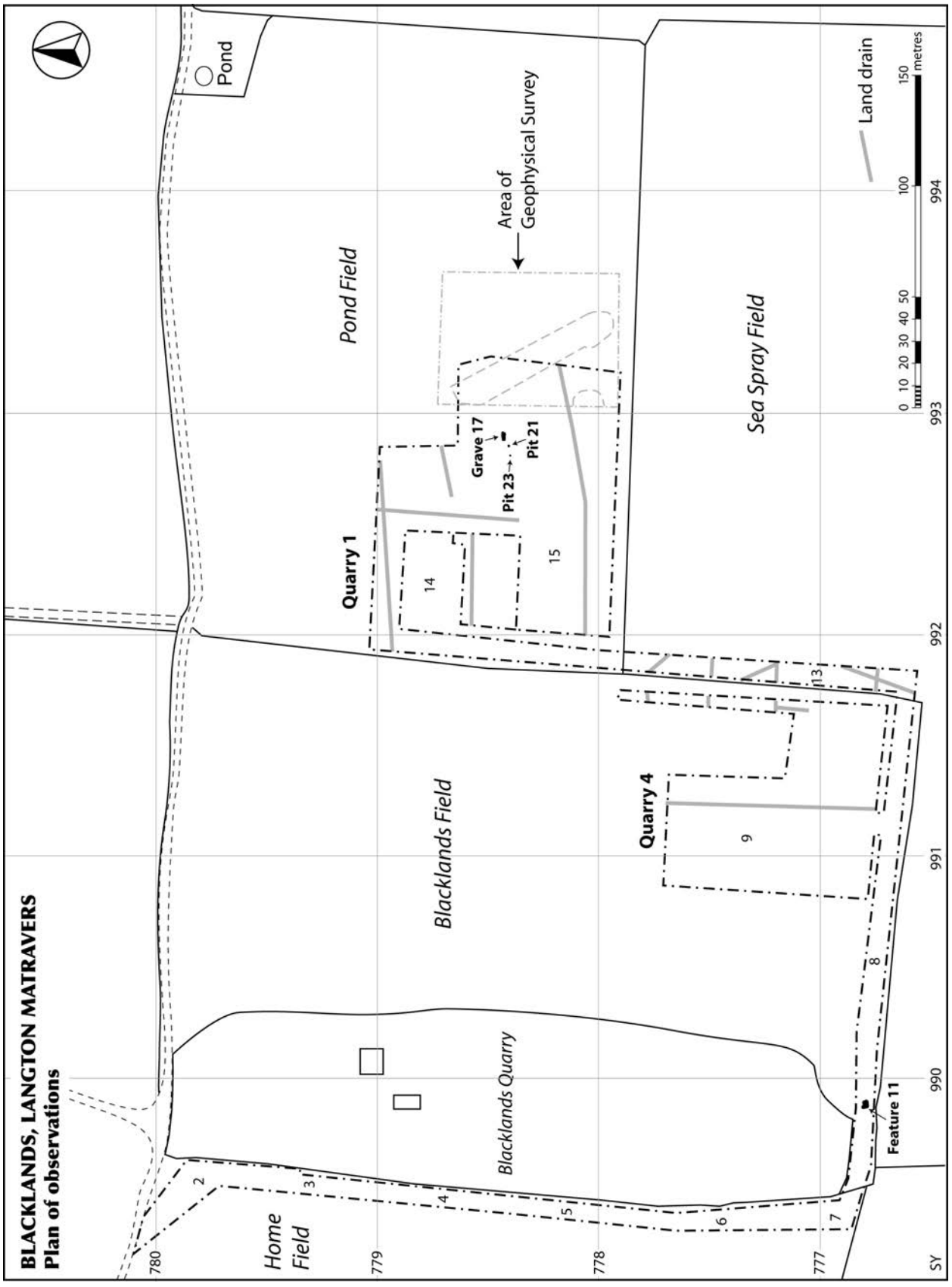

Figure 2: Plan of observations.

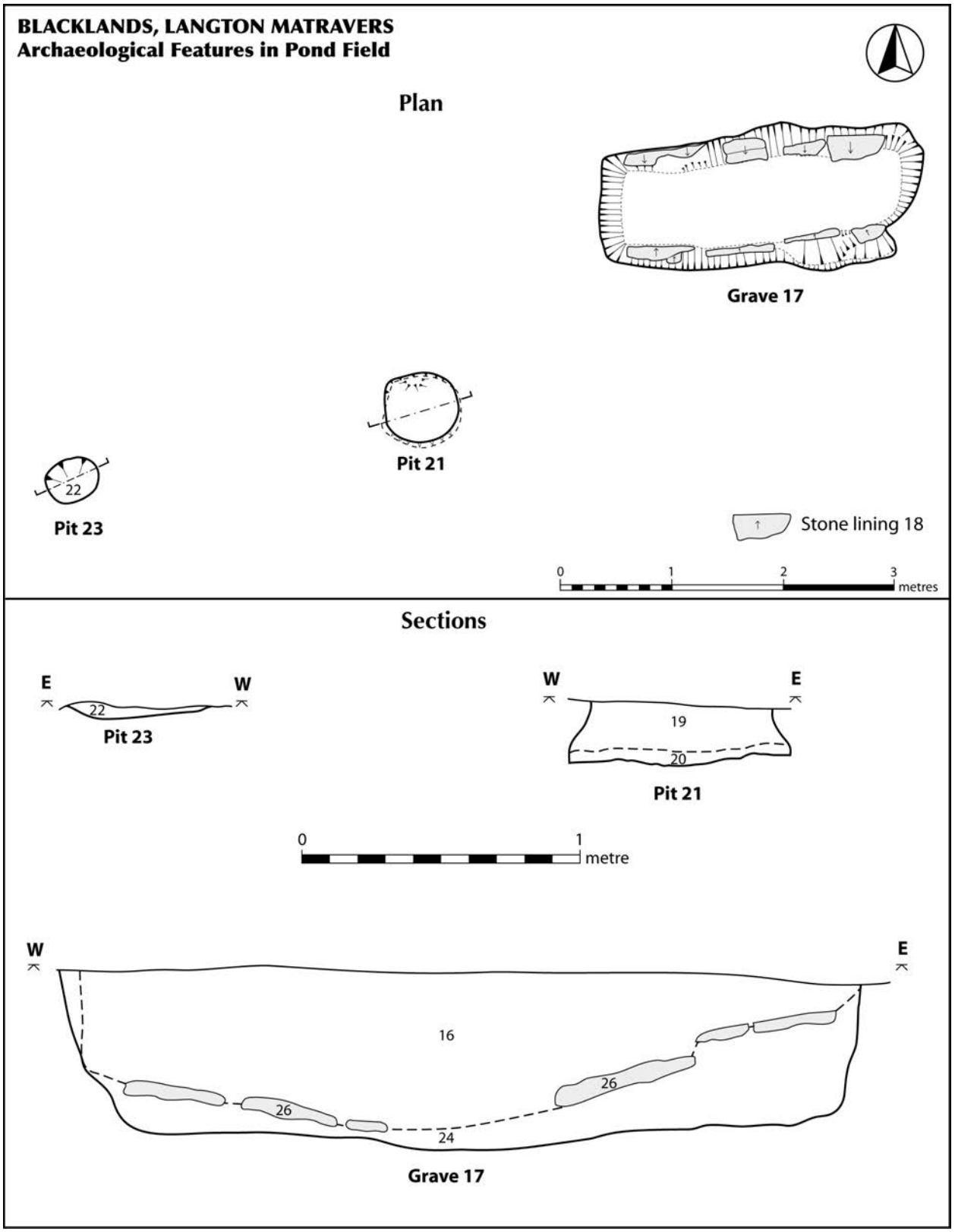

Figure 3: Plan and Sections of Archaeological Features in Pond Field.

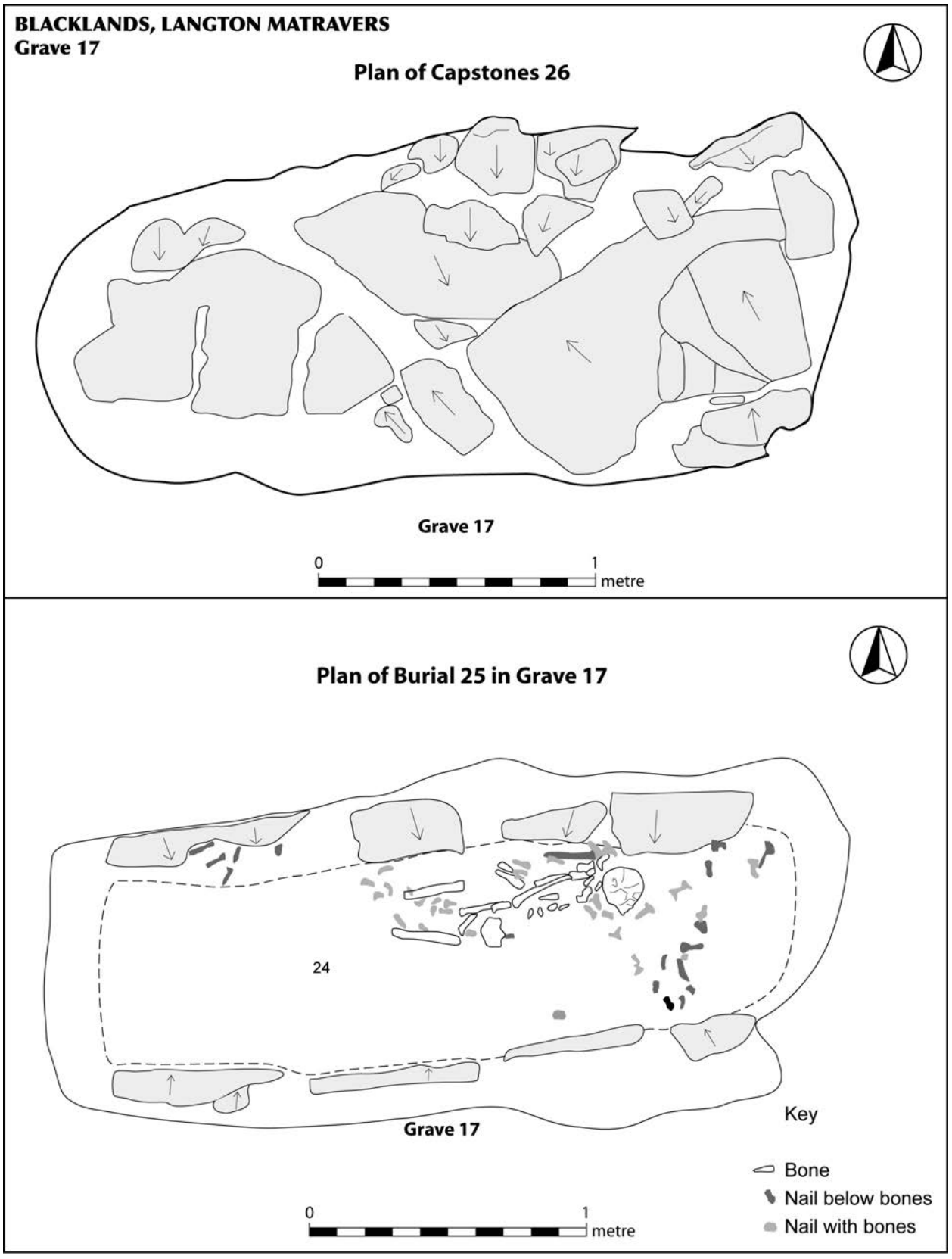

Figure 4: Plans of Grave 17.

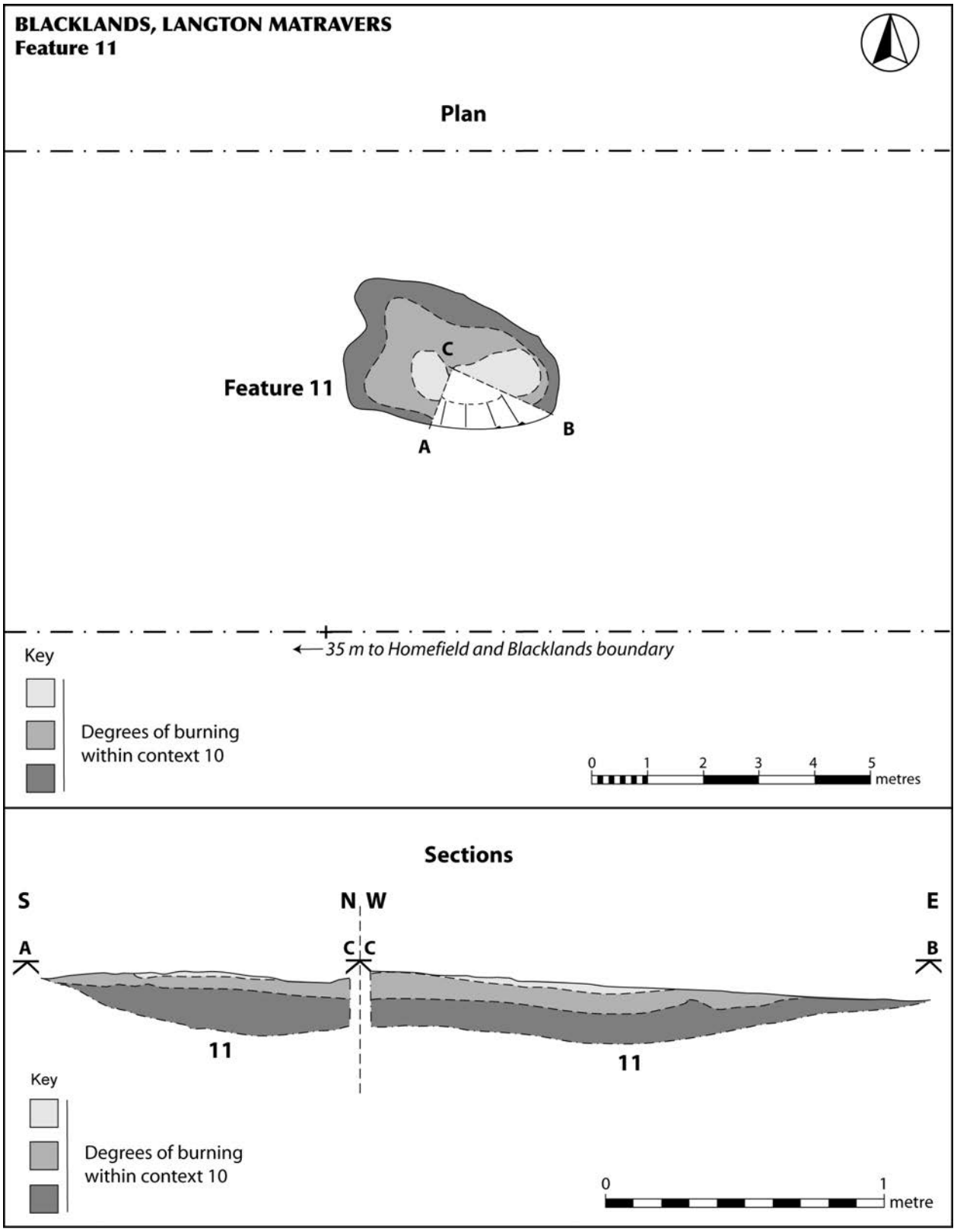

Figure 5: Plan and Sections of Feature 11.

Plate 1: West end of haul road in Blacklands Field showing position of burnt clay feature 11.

Plate 2: Burnt clay feature 11 in Blacklands Field. 1m scales.

Plate 3:Blacklands Field. Quarry 4 looking north.

Plate 4: Sea Spray Field. Haul road looking SSE.

Plate 5: Pond Field. Quarry 1 looking east.

Plate 6: Pond Field. Collapsed capping stones (26) in Grave 17. 1m and 2m scales.

Plate 7: Pond Field. Grave 17 showing skeleton 25, viewed from east. 1m and 2m scales.

Plate 8: Pond Field. Grave 17 showing stone lining 18 after removal of skeleton, viewed from east. 1m and 2m scales.

Plate 9: Pond Field. Pit 21, half sectioned, viewed from north. 1m scale.