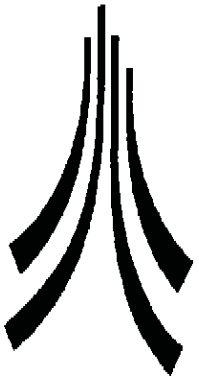
RPS Planning, Transport and Environment

INDEX DATA	RPS INFORMATION
Scheme Title A1 Dishforth to North of Leeming	Details Evaluation Interim Report
Road Number A1	Date June 1995
Contractor Lancaster University Archaeological unit	
County N. Yorks.	
OS Reference	
Single sided Double sided ✓ A3 0 Colour 0	

LANCASTER
UNIVERSITY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
UNIT



June 1995

A1 DISHFORTH TO NORTH OF LEEMING (HARROGATE MUSEUM)

NORTH YORKSHIRE

Evaluation Interim Report

Commissioned and funded through:

Barton, Howe, Warren, and Blackledge

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dave Hodgkinson and K. Cooper for supervising and Rob and Pete McNaught, Mark Williams, and Jill Bagnall for their hard work in sun rain and snow.

The illustrations are by Dick Danks and the project was managed by Mark Fletcher.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Highways Agency had appointed Pell Frischmann Consultants Limited as the lead consultants for the upgrading of the Dishforth to North of Leeming stretch of the A1 and Pell Frischmann had retained Anthony Walker and Partners (now Barton Howe, Warren, and Blackledge) as archaeological consultants. Much of this stretch of the A1 follows the line of Dere Street Roman road and a desk-top survey suggested a number of areas of archaeological potential. Further non-destructive surveys (field walking, geophysical survey and earthwork surveys) confirmed this suggestion and a field evaluation by trial excavation was commissioned. This work was undertaken by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit between March and May 1995.

The collection area of the Royal Pump House Museum, Harrogate contained six areas requiring immediate archaeological evaluation; access to one of these areas (Area 6) was not possible and so five areas were investigated. Grid-pegs, to define the corners of the trenches, were laid out by surveyors employed by Barton, Howe, Warren, and Blackledge. Machining was carried out by various mechanical excavators always using toothless buckets and always under close supervision. Trenches were manually cleaned prior to archaeological features or deposits being hand excavated and photographic, textual and drawn records being made. Finds were retained and bagged by context for later examination and recording, and soil samples were taken for subsequent study.

This document is an interim report of the results of the field evaluation. The soil samples are not yet fully processed and further work may be necessary.

Despite the proximity of known prehistoric monuments (Hutton Moor henge and the recently discovered double pit alignment to the south) only a single ditch was discovered in Areas 1 and 2. There was no real dating evidence from this ditch and its function is uncertain although it could have been a boundary to a field, track or enclosure.

Again in Areas 11, 12, and 13 high concentrations of flint were found during fieldwalking but excavation found only two ditches. The geophysical survey had showed two ditches meeting in a T-shape but excavation revealed them in an L-shape. The ditches varied in depth and profile over the short exposed lengths and it is possible that there had been a lowering of the ground surface level, by erosion, wind action, soil-splash, ploughing, etc. since the time of their original excavation. No positive dating evidence was recovered. The few pieces of worked flint from the fills of one of the ditches could have been deposited there at any time after the ditch had started to fill up and there was no evidence to link these ditches to the extensive flint scatter in the immediate vicinity. A nearby shallow pit, contained bone of a probable recent date and would it seem to be unrelated to the ditches.

INTRODUCTION

Barton, Howe, Warren, and Blackledge were retained by Pell Frischmann Consultants Limited as archaeological consultants for the proposed improvements to the A1 between Dishforth and north of Leeming. This is an interim report of the findings for the area covered by the Royal Pump House Museum, Harrogate prior to the final report and post-excavation assessment.

Background

After a desk-top survey a number of non-destructive techniques (field walking, geophysical survey, and surveying) were employed (MAP undated, Johnston undated, Geophysical Surveys 1994) which reduced the number of areas requiring immediate evaluation to six (numbered 1, 2, 6, 11, 12, and 13) and Lancaster University Archaeological Unit was commissioned to conduct the archaeological trial excavations. These involved 17 trenches with a total area of 1100m². Variation Number 1 removed Area 6 from the requirement thus the number of trenches excavated was 12 with a total area of 1910m².

The geophysical survey in Areas 1 and 2 revealed a scatter of pit-like and linear anomalies. Areas 12 and 13 had extensive scatters of flints and some geophysical anomalies including a possible enclosure in Area 12. In Area 13 initial surveys had revealed a thin scatter of flints and pit-like and linear geophysical anomalies.

Trial Excavation Methodology

Grid-pegs to show the location of all the trenches were laid-out by surveyors employed by Barton, Howe, Warren, and Blackledge. Before machining a metal detector was employed to test for metal objects. A variety of mechanical excavators, both wheeled and tracked, but all with toothless buckets were used under close supervision to remove topsoil and where necessary subsoil. After machining the trenches were manually cleaned and inspected. The nature of the geological deposits and the drying of the ground sometimes made archaeological features difficult to detect and sometimes it was necessary manually to lower the level within the trenches.

In trenches where no archaeological features were present *pro forma* trench sheets were filled in recording the topsoil, the natural geology and where appropriate the subsoil. Any archaeological features were excavated by hand and a *pro forma* sheet was filled in for each context. The context numbers used have four digits, with the first two digits being taken from the area that the context was in. Thus context 0102 was in Area 1, context 1112 was in Area 11, etc. Context numbers prefixed by 'M' refer to major features and thus prefixed by 'F' to minor features or segments. Sections were recorded at a scale of 1:10 and plans at 1:20. Photographs for black and white prints and for colour transparencies were taken. Samples of 30 litres were taken from archaeological contexts for General Biological Analysis and Bulk Sieving. In addition the spoil heaps were inspected

for finds and where appropriate so was the topsoil surface in the vicinity of the trench.

Interim Report Methodology

A brief textual description of the trenches is given below (Excavation Results). The Finds Report is included and a short Discussion is added. Drawings are reproduced (Figs. 1 and 2). The *pro forma* trench sheets and context sheets are summarised and presented as Appendices 1 and 2. Matrices are presented as Appendix 3.

EXCAVATION RESULTS

Area 1; ditch F0101 (drawings on page 17) which was aligned slightly to the north-west of the present A1 was located in the north-eastern corner of Trench 1A. It had not been shown on the geophysical survey.

Area 2; no archaeological features were uncovered from the three trenches. The natural geology contained many patches of red clay which may have produced the anomalies on the geophysical survey.

Area 11; Trench 11A contained a circular feature F1117 which after excavation was felt to have been caused by natural disturbance, and no drawings are presented of this feature. Trench 11E (plan on page 18, sections on pages 17 and 18) contained two ditches at right-angles to each other, M1107 and M1112. Two segments, F1102 and F1108, of ditch M 1107 had different depths and profiles. Sondage 1115 to the north of these segments revealed only natural. Segment F1113 of ditch M1112 was very shallow and sondage 1116 to its east revealed sands and gravel of a natural origin.

Area 12; no archaeological features were found.

Area 13; no archaeological features were found.

FINDS REPORT

Introduction (Methodology)

A total of 65 fragments or artefacts was recovered in the course of trial excavation between 13th March and 10th May 1995. Finds were recovered from two areas (Trenches 1A, 11A, 11E and 11F).

Collection strategy

A strategy of total collection for all classes of material was regarded as potentially inappropriate for the smaller excavations; the marked lack of material evidence, however, required the modification of this policy in order to maximise the information potential of individual trenches. In consequence finds of all dates were collected by context.

Processing strategy

All finds were handled and processed in accordance with LUAU standard practice. On collection they were placed in marked self-seal polythene bags, and then further boxed for transfer to LUAU premises. In the laboratory the material was subjected to primary finds processing procedures, basically washing, sorting, drying, and re-bagging. Appropriate material was clearly and legibly marked in the standard LUAU format of site identifier code, trench and context number. In this case the code used was LEE95.

A database using Microsoft Works was created in order to facilitate rapid quantification and assessment. This database will be made available if required. Full documentation, in an appropriate format, will accompany the finds archive on deposition.

Assessment strategy

All finds were examined and assessed by an in-house LUAU finds specialist with appropriate expertise.

Assessment was by rapid scan, and all finds from the project were examined in this fashion. The following criteria were adopted: preservation as an indicator of depositional and post-depositional circumstance, dating potential, and artefact range as an indication of site type.

Preservation

The material classes represented were primarily stone (including flint), ceramic, and bone. Almost no glass or metalwork (ferrous or non-ferrous) was recovered. The level of preservation varied with material group but stone (including flint) was excellent, ceramic good to excellent, and bone medium to good, although on some occasions bone had been reduced by ground conditions to a soft, crumbly consistency which led to rapid deterioration.

Dating potential

For most purposes the finds have been divided into four broad chronological groups, Prehistoric, Romano-British, Medieval, and Post medieval/modern. Detailed comment is appended to individual trench discussions.

Prehistoric: The occurrence of prehistoric material was low, represented only by a few worked flints, and likely to represent the equivalent of background noise - activity in the area over a prolonged period, but not necessarily directly on the site examined.

Romano-British: Romano-British material was almost absent.

Medieval: no medieval material was collected.

Post Medieval/Modern: there was no post medieval/modern material.

Artefact range

The finds groups from the excavated trenches were too small for valid comment. Attempts at synthesis, when dealing with a range of material from the disconnected elements of a linear survey, would be misleading and valueless.

Trench 1A

Two fragments of worked flint were recovered, only one was stratified (context 0103). They are likely to represent little more than 'background noise'. A rim sherd of Roman type, possibly BB1, was recovered from the field.

Area 11

One flint scraper was recovered, unstratified. It is likely to represent little more than 'background noise', although when considered with the flint artefacts from Trench 11E, a slightly more positive interpretation might be accorded the site.

Trench 11E

Three worked flints, two of them scrapers, were recovered from contexts 1101 and 1111. A further, ostensibly unworked, fragment was noted in context 1101. A relatively large amount of well-preserved bone was recovered from context 1103. It derives from a single individual (probably immature sheep/goat) and is likely to be of recent date.

Trench 11F

Only a single fragment of unworked stone, and a single fragment of bone, both unstratified, were recovered from this trench. Neither are of significance.

DISCUSSION

There was a substantial ditch, with no dating evidence, in Trench 1A. There was little to show the function of this ditch although its depth would be consistent with it having been a boundary of some form - either to a field or trackway, possibly around an enclosure. There were flints seen and a rim sherd of BB1 was found in the field but there was no evidence to connect these with the ditch. In view of the nearby recently discovered double pit alignment *c*400m to the south and Hutton Moor henge of similar Later Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date *c*1km to the north the results were disappointing.

In Trench 11E the two ditches, at right-angles to each other, M1107 and M1112, were probably field boundaries and although there is the possibility that they were a part of an enclosure the geophysical evidence does suggest field boundaries. No reliable dating evidence was recovered as the worked flint, which might support a prehistoric date, could be residual, field-walking having shown the presence of flint in the vicinity. The three sections excavated through these two ditches varied widely in profile. It is possible that when originally excavated the ground surface was higher than now although this is not an entirely satisfactory explanation. Possibly the mixed sands, gravels, and clays created difficulties when digging these ditches. Sondage 1115 was excavated immediately to the east of the junction of the ditches and on the line of ditch M1112 but no evidence of it was found before reaching natural sands and clay at a depth of c0.1m. The ditch may survive as a 'topsoil feature' capable of giving a geophysical response but undetectable by excavation.

The very mixed geological deposits of gravel, sand, silt, and clay which interleaved and overlay each other in no obvious fashion, and which also contained visible metal staining particularly iron, may have caused false geophysical responses. It often seemed that the feature in the centre of a trench was a patch of red-stained natural clay causing the excavator to speculate that the colouring and the geophysical response were related.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Geophysical Surveys of Bradford, 1994, *A1 Dishforth to North of Leeming Improvements* Report No. 94/10

Johnston, D.A., undated, *A1 Dishforth to North of Leeming Improvements, Initial Archaeological Fieldwalking, Area 13: Final Report*

MAP, undated, *A1 Dishforth to North of Leeming Improvements, Archaeological Fieldwalking, Area A*

MAP, undated, *A1 Dishforth to North of Leeming Improvements, Archaeological Fieldwalking, Area 13*

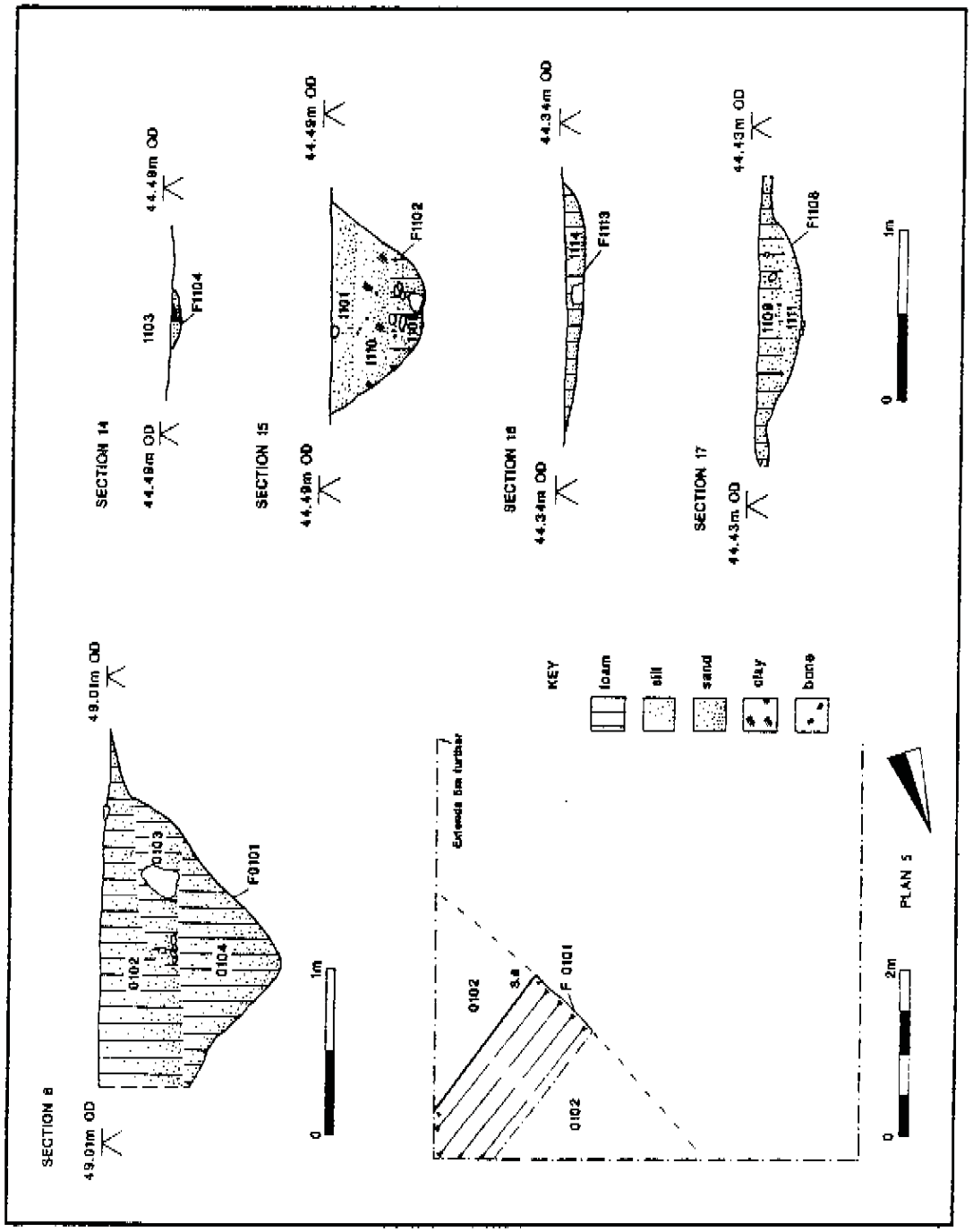


Fig.1 Trench 1A, plan and section; trench 11E, sections.

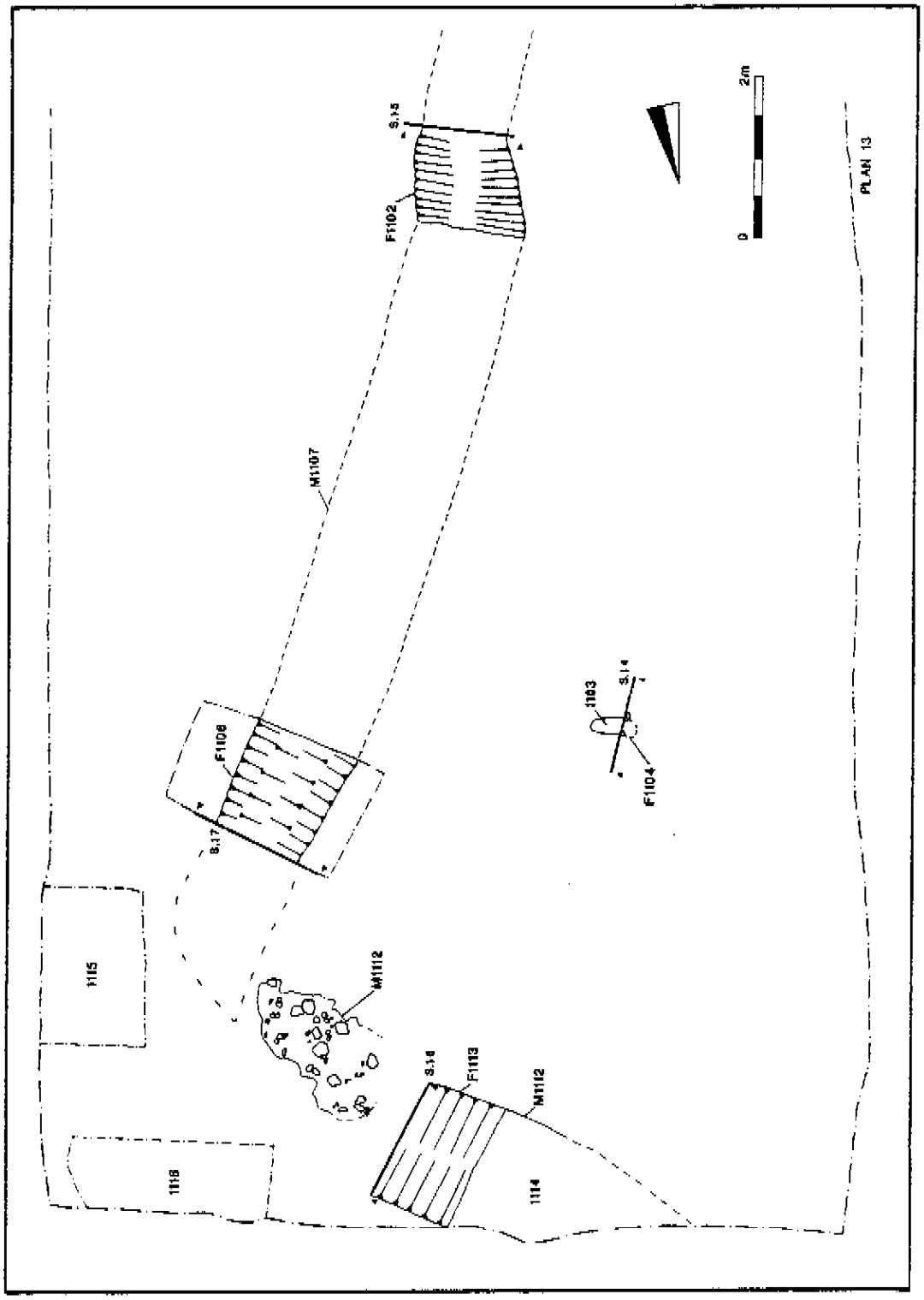


Fig.2 Trench 11E, plan

APPENDIX 1

Summary of trench dimensions, in metres, and descriptions of topsoils and natural deposits.

Tr.	L	B	D	Topsoil	Natural
1A	10	5	0.60	0.37m brown sandy silt loam	Red clay with sandy clay and gravel.
2A	10	10	0.65	0.35m yellow brown sandy silt loam	Golden fine sand banded with a deposit of large cobbles and gravel within a coarse yellow sand and lenses of red sand
2B	5	5	0.50	0.35m yellow brown sandy silt loam	0.35m dark brown silty sandy loam above variously coloured sand and gravel patches
2C	5	5	0.50	0.35m yellow brown sandy silt loam	0.35m dark brown silty loam above mixed reddish brown sand and gravel
11A	20	5	0.40	Brown sandy silt loam	Red clay with large stones and a yellow fine sand band across trench
11B	10	10	0.45	0.35m-0.40m brown silty sandy loam	Brown orange sandy silt overlying reddish brown sticky clay silt
11C	20	5	0.60	0.34m-0.45m dark greyish brown silty loam	Mixed deposits of fine orange sand underlying a reddish brown sticky clay silt
11D	10	10	0.37	0.35m dark greyish brown silty loam	Light brown orange fine silt loam, with occasional patches of darker, stiffer silt loam
11F	10	5; L-shaped	0.44	0.30m dark grey brown silt loam	Orange brown firm compact silt
12A	25	5	0.60	0.36m dark grey brown silty loam	Orange brown compact silty loam with fine sand underlying
13A	10	5	0.46	0.30m dark brown silty loam	Banded sandy clay with river gravel

APPENDIX 2

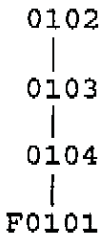
Summary of context sheets

Dimensions are in metres.

0101	Ditch	*c*2.5m -3.0m wide, 1.08m deep, slightly rounded V-shaped profile
0102	Fill	Red brown sandy silt, 0.34m deep
0103	Fill	Red brown sandy silt with rounded pebbles <0.2m. 0.20m deep and only on western side of ditch.
0104	Fill	Red brown sandy silt loam with small rounded pebbles. 0.61m deep.
1101	Fill	Top fill of ditch segment F1102. Red brown sandy silt loam with few sub-rounded pebbles. 0.15m deep.
1102	Segment	Part of ditch M1107. 1.15m long, 1.22m wide and 0.55m deep. Flat base, sides slope at *c*45°.
1103	Fill	Dark brown sandy silt loam, 0.10m deep 0.48m wide. Contained animal bones. Fill of shallow pit F1104.
1104	Shallow pit	Sub-oval pit 0.42m long, 0.23m wide and 0.10m deep.
1105	Natural	0.82m by 0.32m by 0.15m sondage excavated around pit F1104.
1106	Fill	Red brown sandy silt loam containing *c*20% pebbles. Fill of segment F1102.
1107	Ditch	Ran NE to SW. About 18m long and *c*1.5m wide. Segments F1102 and F1108 were excavated and shown to have different depths. Hard to define to NE.
1108	Segment	1.48m excavated. Was 1.14m wide and 0.30m deep with U-shaped profile.
1109	Fill	Orange brown sandy silt with some large pebbles. Fill of segment F1108.
1110	Fill	Similar to fill 1102 above, though paler and fewer stones. Segment F1102.
1111	Fill	Orange brown sandy loam with occasional stones. Fill of segment F1108.
1112	Ditch	Ran NW to SE and showed on geophysical survey. Very hard to define. A segment at its eastern end failed to show it.
1113	Segment	1.00m long segment of ditch M1112. 1.53m wide and 0.10m deep.
1114	Fill	Dark brown silty loam with occasional small pebbles. Only fill of segment F1113.
1115	Sondage	Brown silty loam removed at edge of trench on the line of ditch M1112. 1.8m by 1.2m by 0.1m excavated to obvious *in situ* geology.
1116	Sondage	Similar sondage to 1115 but in line with M1107.
1117	Anomaly	Dark greyish brown sandy silt loam. 0.53m in diameter, 0.10m deep shallow U-shape. ?Natural, animal/plant, in origin.

APPENDIX 3

Tr. 1A



Tr. 11E