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A46 ALCESTER-STRATFORD IMPROVEMENT

SUPPLEMENTARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT

Geophysical Survey and Trial Trenching of possible late Neolithic/early Bronze Age Settlement (WA 7274), Romano-British Settlement (WA 7277), Cropmark Enclosures north of Red Hill (WA 4702) and Roman Road (WA 4757)

Warwickshire County Council

JANUARY 1995

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 As part of the assessment of the impact of the proposed A46 Alcester-Stratford Improvement scheme on the Cultural Heritage a survey was carried out by the Field Archaeology Section of the Warwickshire Museum (*Environmental Statement*, Vol. 1, Sect. 3, Part 2; Sect. 6, Part 2); Vol. 2, Part 2). This survey identified twenty-two archaeological sites in the study corridor of which eight would be affected by the proposals. In the case of three of the archaeological sites, a possible late Neolithic/early Bronze Age settlement (WA 7274), a Romano-British Settlement (WA 7277) and Cropmark Enclosures north of Red Hill (WA 4702), it was felt that further investigation was necessary to produce a proper assessment of their significance. It was also possible that such investigation of sites WA 7277 and 4702 might produce further information on a fourth site, the Alcester-Stratford Roman Road (WA 4757). A programme of field evaluation involving geophysical survey and trial trenching was devised in consultation with English Heritage and the County Field Archaeologist. The necessary permissions from landowners were not available until late summer and the work was carried out in September and October 1994, too late for inclusion in the *Environmental Statement*. Its results are therefore the subject of this report.

1.2 The four sites were assessed in the *Environmental Statement* on the basis of the then available evidence. Their baseline environment was described in Vol. 1, Sect. 3, Part 2, paras. 4.3-4.10 and a detailed assessment of the effects of the scheme and proposals for mitigation were made in Vol. 1, Sect. 6, Part 2, paras. 2.3-2.8. In addition summaries of the effects of the proposals on the four sites were given in Vol. 1, Sect. 4, Paras. 1.6-1.9 and in Vol. 1, Sect. 7, Environmental Impact Table 2, Group 3: The Cultural and Natural Environment, p. 10. These passages should now be read in the light of the following discussion, in which Section 2 contains baseline site descriptions, Section 3 assesses the effects of the scheme and makes proposals for mitigation, and Section 4 summarises the effects of the proposals and contains revised Environmental Impact Table entries for the four sites. Detailed accounts of the evaluations are given in Appendices A-C.

2. BASELINE SITE DESCRIPTIONS

POSSIBLE LATE NEOLITHIC/EARLY BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENT (WA 7274)

2.1 East of Westgrove House, fieldwalking in Fields 25 and 26 (see *Environmental Statement*, Vol. 2, Part 2, Appendix D, fig. 16 for field numbering), produced a scatter of 18 worked flint fragments (plus one post medieval gun flint) concentrating in an area of 6ha centred on SP 13105635 (Fig. 1). Three or four of the fragments were patinated and two of these were of Mesolithic date. The majority of the fragments however were unpatinated. Among these there were three fragments, one a scraper, typical of the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age. There was one core of a type more commonly Mesolithic but not inconsistent with a late Neolithic date. There were also two pieces, one retouched, which were probably borers, and a retouched hammer stone. Although the group was rather small from which to draw conclusions it did appear that the scatter contained a significant late Neolithic/early Bronze Age component possibly from a settlement in this vicinity.

2.2 If such a site contained features preserved below ground to any degree it would one be of national importance because of the rarity of settlement sites of this date. If, however, below ground features did not survive then it would be of much less importance. This site therefore required further field evaluation to allow a proper assessment of its significance. This work was carried out in October 1994 and involved a magnetometer survey of the threatened area in Fields 25 and 27 using a gradiometer to detect features such as hearths, followed by the excavation of three trial trenches (Fig. 2; for detailed account see Appendix A).

2.3 Neither the magnetometer survey nor the trial trenching produced any further evidence of prehistoric settlement. Although there was a build up of 0.75m over the natural clay, the only archaeological features found were traces of ridge and furrow ploughing belonging to the medieval field system of Haselor. The furrows cut into the natural clay and it is likely that any surviving late Neolithic/early Bronze Age below ground remains had been destroyed by medieval cultivation. As the only surviving evidence for the possible late Neolithic/early Bronze Age settlement seems to be the flint scatter in the topsoil, the site is to be assessed as of local importance only.

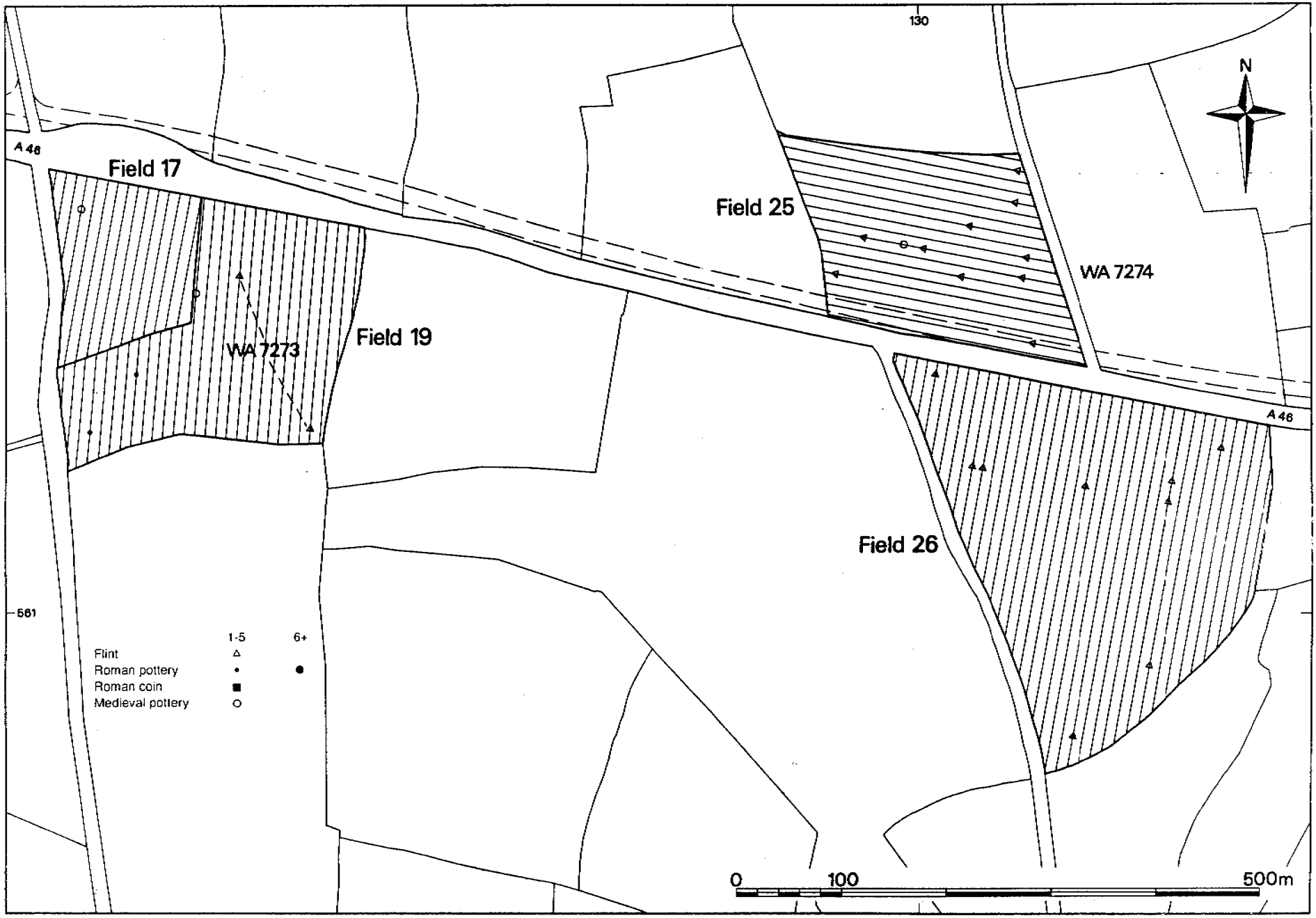


Fig. 1: Site WA 7274, Fieldwalking evidence

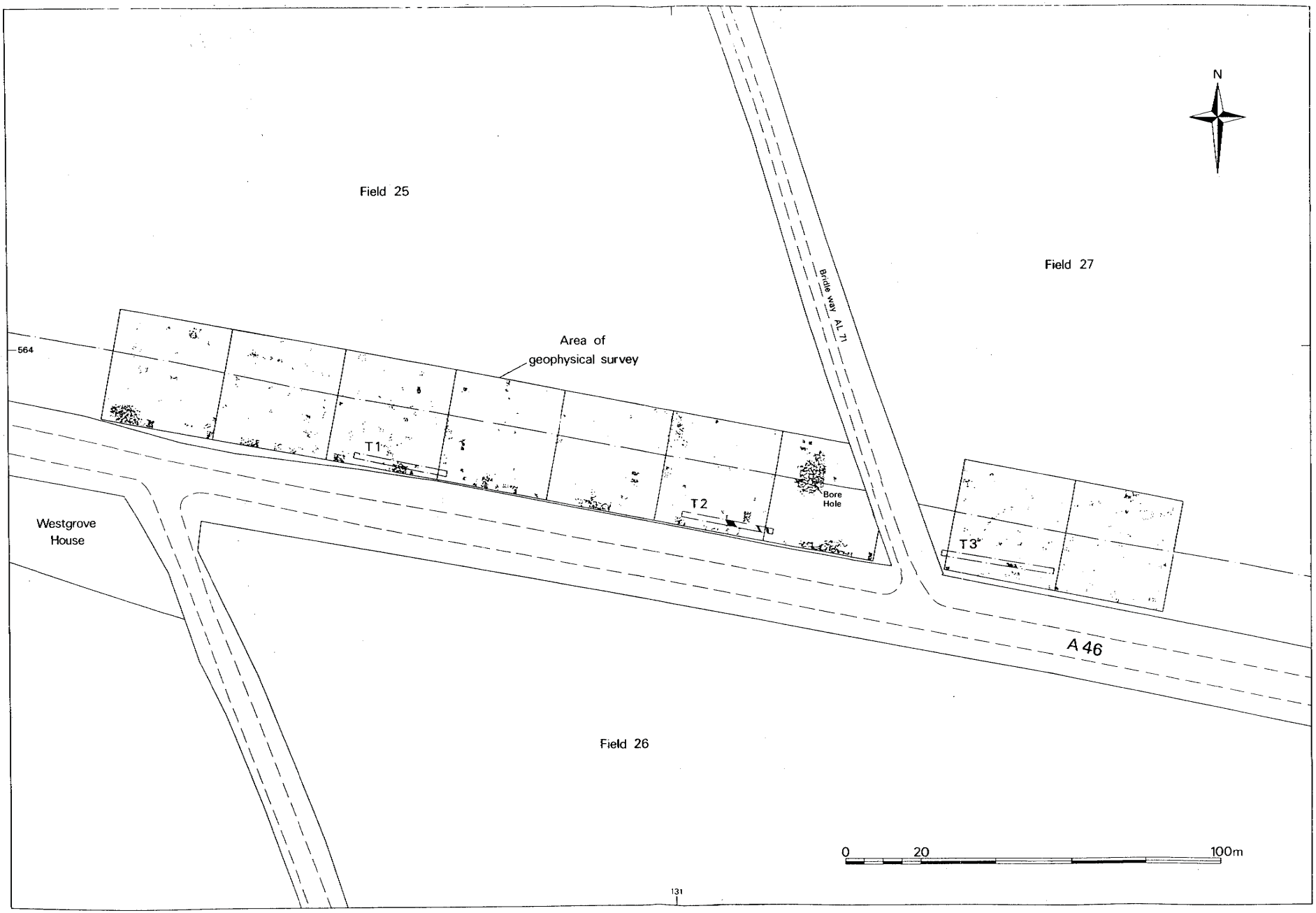


Fig. 2: Site WA 7274, Location of Trenches and Geophysical Survey (showing negative anomalies)

ROMANO-BRITISH SETTLEMENT (WA 7277)

2.4 North west of Drayton Barn Cottages, fieldwalking in Fields 59 and 61 revealed a Romano-British settlement marked by a dense scatter of pottery, coins and other material covering an area of 1.5ha just north of the Roman Road (Figs. 3-4) centred at SP15205595. Further field evaluation of the site, involving a magnetometer survey and the excavation of three trial trenches (Fig. 5), to confirm the extent of the site suggested by the finds distribution and to provide information on the character and state of preservation of the below ground remains was carried out in September 1994 (For detailed account see Appendix B).

2.5 The evaluation results tended to confirm the extent of the settlement suggested by the fieldwalking. The trial trenches revealed a high density of features and evidence for timber buildings, at least one of which had a tiled roof. The southernmost trench revealed the Roman road (WA 4757, see below), just north of the line of the parish boundary and 25m north of the existing road. There was some evidence of boundaries aligned on the road, although none of buildings fronting it. These cannot however be ruled out, although most of the possible structures located were on a different alignment.

2.6 The pottery from the settlement would seem to indicate occupation throughout the Roman period, perhaps commencing in the late 1st century AD. Much of the material would seem to be 2nd century with perhaps the greatest intensity of pottery discarded then. The presence of a few sherds of Oxfordshire colour coated ware indicated occupation in the late 3rd century or later, as does a Black Burnished ware beaded and flanged bowl, and several shell tempered sherds suggested occupation in the 4th century. The three coins were also of late 3rd/4th century date, one issued under Constantine I can be dated to 330-7AD. There was no obvious patterning of the material across the fieldwalking scatter with late Roman material apparently being fairly evenly spread across the area. The functional composition of the group, the proportion of fine wares (1.9%) and the absence of amphorae suggest that this was a rural farming settlement of no particular pretensions although the presence of vessel glass and a tiled building means the site was not at the very bottom of the socio-economic scale.

2.7 This settlement is a site of regional importance. Although quite a large number of Roman farmstead sites are known in the area, the majority lie on the gravel terraces of the Avon Valley where they show as cropmarks. A site on a clay soil such as this is rarer. In addition the evaluation suggested that its below ground remains are well preserved and that the site has a high potential for producing significant finds and faunal assemblages.

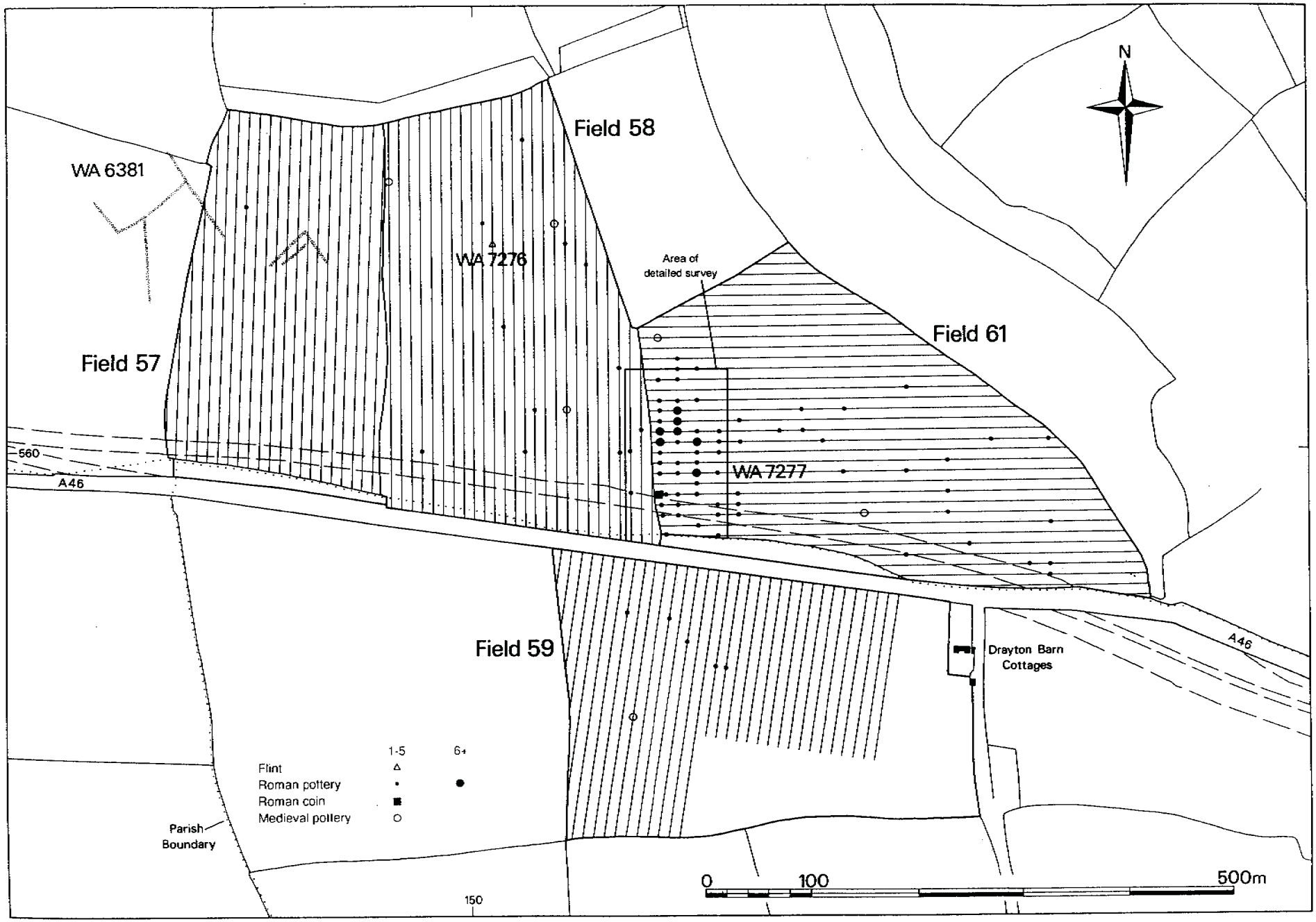


Fig. 3: Site WA 7277, Fieldwalking evidence

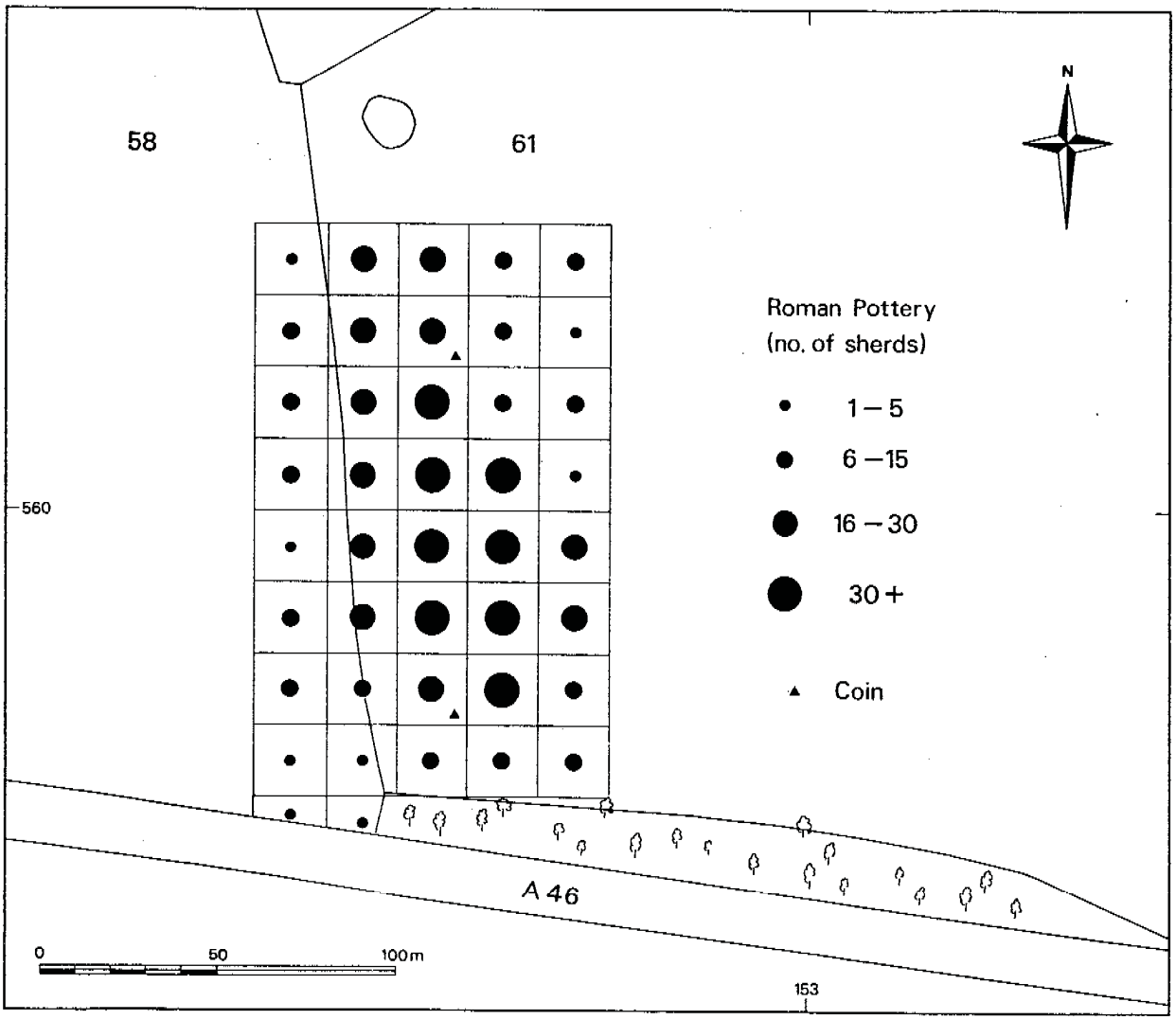


Fig. 4: Site WA 7277, Detailed fieldwalking evidence

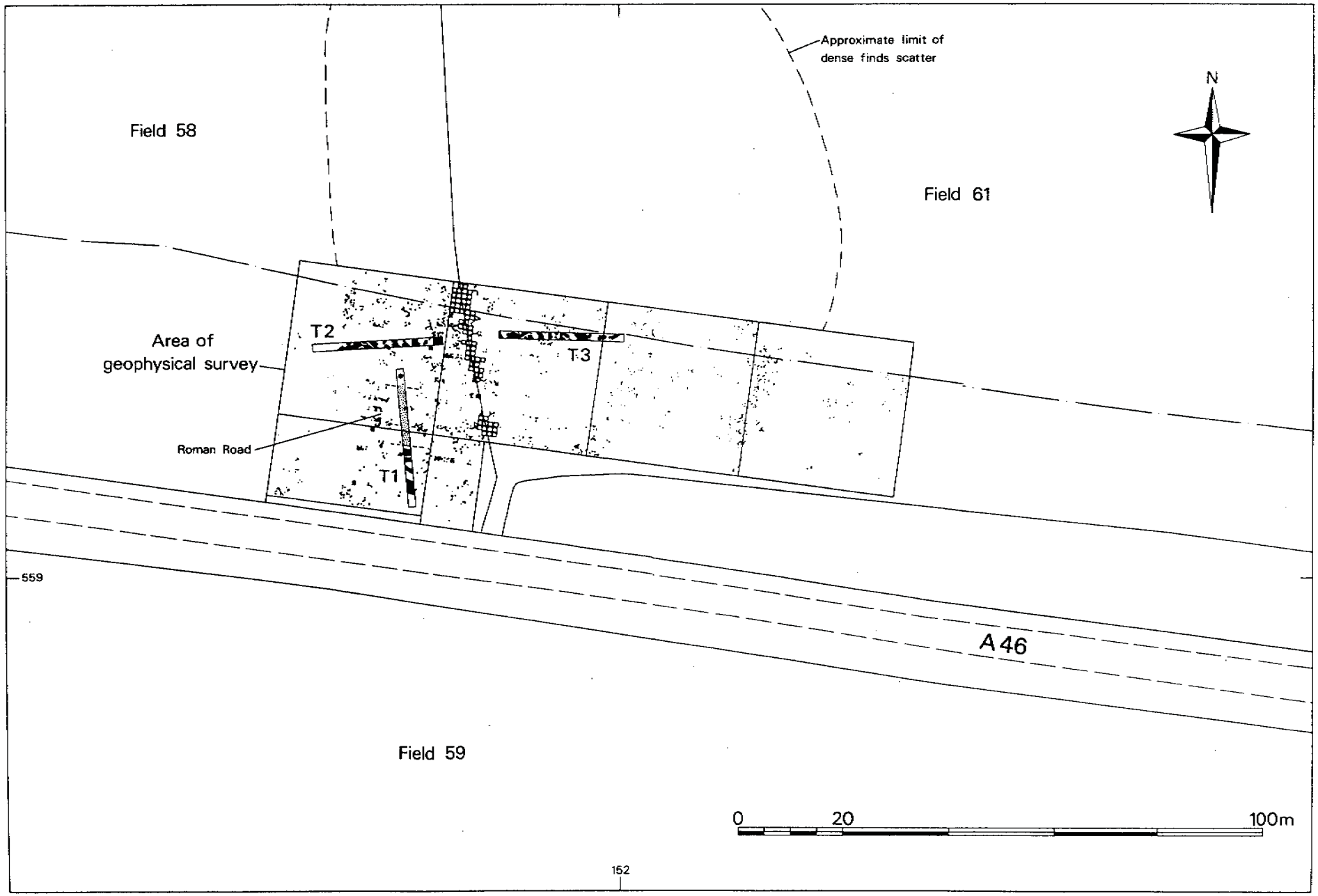


Fig. 5: Site WA 7277, Location of Trenches and Geophysical Survey (showing negative anomalies)

CROPMARK ENCLOSURES NORTH OF RED HILL (WA 4702)

2.8 North of the existing road at Red Hill (SP 1400 5620) in Field 50 an area of cropmarks (WA 4702) showed on air photographs (Fig. 6). These suggested the presence of an enclosure, a double ditched field boundary and a possible trackway running north east from the former Roman road. Fieldwalking over the cropmark produced nothing apart from a worked flint flake (WA 7275). However in Field 48 to the north west there was a scatter of Roman pottery increasing in density to the north towards a second group of cropmarks (WA 6360). It seemed probable that these cropmarks represent a Romano-British settlement and that the threatened cropmarks (WA 4702) were related to this settlement, the absence of material from over them indicating that they represented part of a field system rather than an occupation site. However it was also possible that they belonged to a settlement of earlier date, although their form, particularly the double ditched boundary, did suggest a Roman date. If the site was Roman it was also possible that there would have been buildings at the point where the cropmark abutted the Roman road. This lay outside the area available for fieldwalking. Because of this uncertainty further field evaluation was carried out in September 1994, involving a magnetometer survey to detect any further features associated with the cropmarks and the excavation of six trial trenches to elucidate their date, character and state of preservation (Fig. 7, for detailed account see Appendix C).

2.9 The evaluation found no trace of any features connected with the cropmarks and the only finds recovered were post medieval. It was concluded that the cropmarks had some non-archaeological explanation. With hindsight it can be observed that the cropmarks were only recorded on one occasion (in 1965) and the `double-ditched' element of the cropmark might be explained as a surface `envelope mark' caused by that year's cultivation. The conclusion that the WA 4702 cropmarks are non-archaeological does not affect the suggestion that there is a Roman settlement just to the north of the road corridor represented by the WA 6360 cropmarks and the scatter of Roman pottery found in Field 48, but it does not seem that this site extends into Field 50.

ROMAN ROAD (WA 4757)

2.10 The Roman road from the Fosse Way to Alcester was probably laid out by the Roman army in the early years of the conquest and has been in continuous use ever since. Within the study corridor the Roman road follows the general line of the modern road from Stratford as far as Trench Lane but then diverges, with the Roman road continuing straight, its line marked by the path just south of Oversley Hill Farm. However it appears that the two roads have diverged locally. The evaluation of the Roman settlement (WA 7277, see Appendix B) located the surviving remains of the Roman road along the south edge of the settlement but 25m north of the modern road. At this point the parish boundary between Billesley and Old

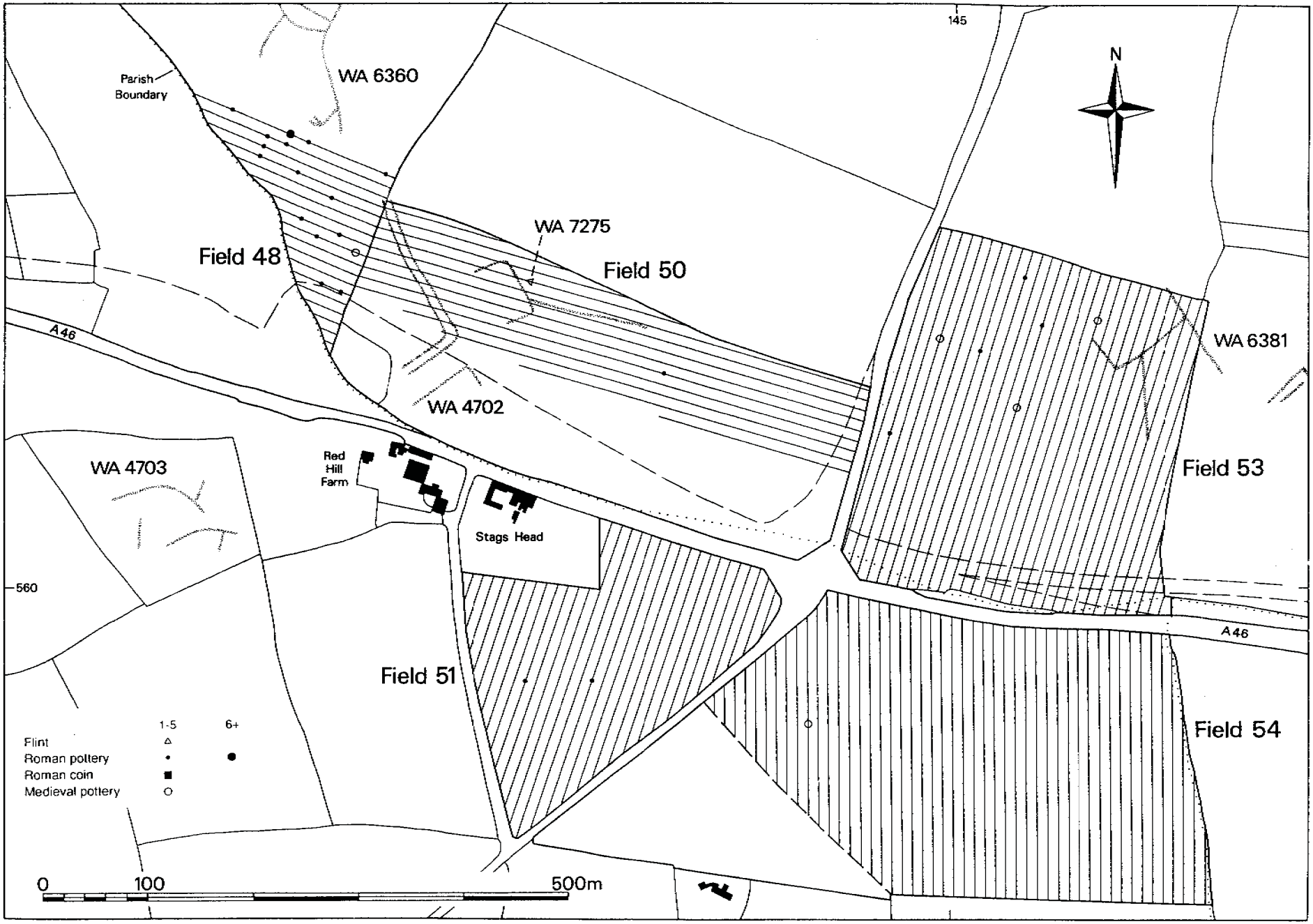


Fig. 6: Site WA 4702, Cropmarks and Fieldwalking evidence

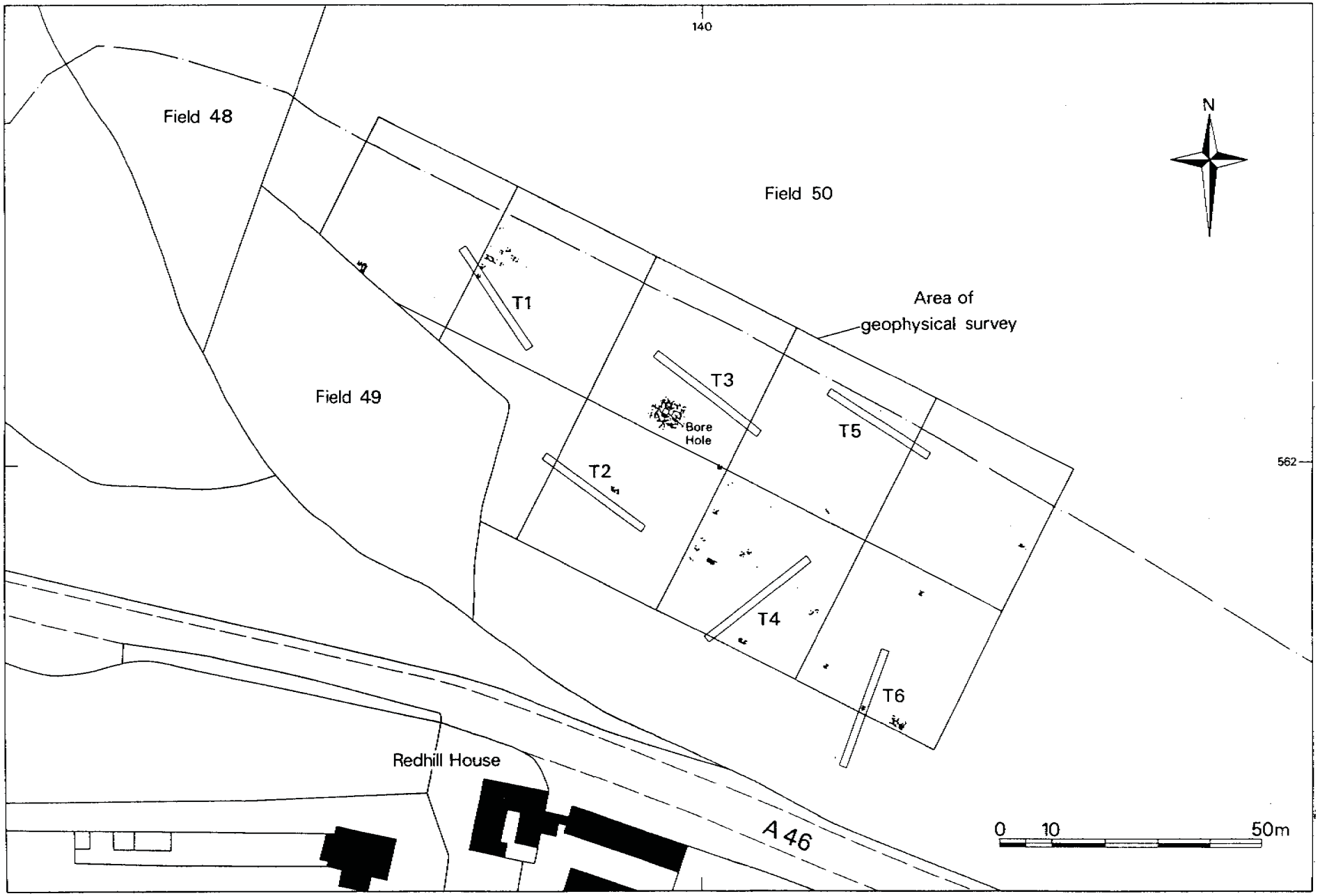


Fig. 7: Site WA 4702, Location of Trenches and Geophysical Survey (showing negative anomalies)

Stratford and Drayton runs just north of the modern road as it, and the boundary between Binton and Billesley, do in a number of places between Drayton Bushes and Red Hill (Figs. 3 and 6). It seems that the parish boundaries may have been laid out along the south edge of the earlier road line. The modern road has also moved slightly southwards in the Red Hill cutting, according to a map of 1823 (WRO CR 114A/190) which marks the strip to the north as 'old road'.

2.11 The excavated section of Roman road consisted of a limestone rubble surface 8m wide which had Roman pottery and animal bone trampled into it. To the south there was a layer of pebbles and rubble 4m wide which may have been another surface. The road sloped down to the south where there were a series of drainage ditches. To the north there was no ditch, perhaps to allow access to the settlement to the north.

2.12 The Roman Road is a monument of regional importance. However apart from the section excavated south of the Roman settlement (WA 7277) no definite physical remains of Roman date are known within the study corridor and it is probable that most will have been destroyed by later road improvements of various dates. The most likely place where undisturbed remains might survive is where the Roman and modern roads appear to diverge between Red Hill and Drayton Bushes. However it is possible that the preservation of the excavated section was exceptional because it lay in a relatively uncultivated corner of a field and that even over this stetch most of the surviving remains will have been destroyed by later cultivation. The magnetometer survey (Appendix B2) suggested that the surviving remains might not extend very far to the west.

3. IMPACT OF SCHEME AND PROPOSED MITIGATION

POSSIBLE LATE NEOLITHIC/EARLY BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENT (WA 7274)

3.1 At the possible late Neolithic/early Bronze Age Settlement east of Westgrove House, the road proposals would involve the destruction of a strip 20m wide x 270m long through the centre of the scatter just north of the existing road, the probable construction of a drainage balancing pond on the west side of the junction and the digging of a drainage outfall (No. 4) to the east, an impact to be classed as slight.

3.2 The evaluation of this site (Appendix A) concluded that no prehistoric features are likely to survive below the ground and that the site was therefore of local significance only. The contractor's topsoil stripping would be observed as part of an archaeological watching brief (See *Environmental Statement*, Vol. 1, Sect. 6, Part 2, para. 2.13) with a contingency allowance made for the investigation of significant features revealed.

ROMANO-BRITISH SETTLEMENT (WA 7277)

3.3 At the Romano-British Settlement north west of Drayton Barn Cottages, the proposals would result in the destruction by a new carriageway of a strip 15m wide through the southern part of the site, an impact to be classed as slight-moderate. This would be mitigated by a programme of archaeological rescue excavation of a strip measuring 15m x 120m to record the surviving remains in advance of construction. This would be carried out in conjunction with further excavation of the Roman road (WA 4757).

CROPMARK ENCLOSURES NORTH OF RED HILL (WA 4702)

3.4 An area of 1ha on the edge of the site would be destroyed by the proposed Red Hill cutting. However as the cropmarks are of non-archaeological origin no further action is proposed.

ROMAN ROAD (WA 4757)

3.5 The impact of the proposals on the Roman Road from Stratford to Alcester is potentially severe, but it is likely that over most of the length of the scheme remains of Roman date will have been destroyed by later road improvements of various dates. The most likely area where remains may survive is between Drayton Bushes and Red Hill where the Roman road appears to lie north of the modern road, and where the proposals involve a new carriageway on or near to its probable line.

3.6 Rescue excavation of sections of the road in advance of construction would be carried out in two places: in the vicinity of the Romano-British settlement (WA 7277) in conjunction with the excavation of that site; and in the vicinity of the proposed roundabout on the C100 Temple Grafton-Billesley road. Some contingency allowance would also be made for further investigation of well preserved sections of Roman road revealed during road construction as part of the archaeological watching brief (See *Environmental Statement*, Vol. 1, Sect. 6, Part 2, para. 2.13).

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Following archaeological field evaluations a revised assessment of the impact of the scheme on four of the eight archaeological sites affected can be made, along with revised proposals for mitigation of this impact.

4.2 A possible Late Neolithic/early Bronze Age settlement (WA 7274), probably surviving only as a flint scatter in topsoil, is a site of local importance that would suffer a slight impact. A watching brief during construction would be carried out with a contingency allowance for excavation if significant features were revealed.

4.3 A Roman settlement (WA 7277) is a site of regional importance that would suffer a slight-moderate impact. Rescue excavation would be carried out in advance of construction of the strip measuring 120m x 15m affected by the proposals. The work would be in conjunction with further investigation of the Roman road (WA 4757) in this area.

4.4 An area of Cropmark Enclosures north of Red Hill (WA 4702), thought to be associated with a Romano-British Settlement just to the north (WA 6360) was revealed by field evaluation to be of non-archaeological origin. No further action in mitigation is proposed.

4.5 The Alcester-Stratford Roman Road (WA 4757), a monument of regional importance, would be severely affected were it not for the fact that over most of its length surviving Roman remains will have been destroyed by earlier road improvements. Some remains may survive between Drayton Bushes and Red Hill where the Roman and modern roads diverge. Two sections of road in this area would be excavated in advance of construction: one in the vicinity of the Roman settlement WA 7277; the other in the vicinity of the proposed C100 Temple Grafton-Billesley Road roundabout. In addition a watching brief during construction would be carried out with a contingency allowance for further excavation if other well preserved sections of road were revealed.

4.6 Revised environmental impact table entries for these sites would be as follows:

A46 ALCESTER-STRATFORD IMPROVEMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT TABLE
GROUP 3: THE CULTURAL AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

SUB-GROUP	EFFECTS	PUBLISHED ROUTE	DO-MINIMUM	COMMENTS
Possible late Neolithic/ early Bronze Age settlement (WA 7274)	Partial Destruction	Destruction of 20m strip by carriageway and area by balancing pond (slight impact)	No change	Watching brief during construction with contingency for excavation of features revealed by construction
Romano-British Settlement (WA 7277)	Partial Destruction	Destruction of 15m strip by carriageway (slight-moderate impact)	No change	Rescue excavation in advance of construction
Cropmark enclosures north of Red Hill (WA 4702)	Partial Destruction	1ha destroyed by cutting (no impact)	No change	Non-archaeological. No further action
Alcester-Stratford Roman Road (WA 4757)	Partial Destruction	Potentially severe impact but most remains probably already destroyed	No change	Rescue excavation in two places before construction; watching brief with contingency for further excavation of features revealed by construction

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF A POSSIBLE LATE NEOLITHIC/EARLY BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENT (WA 7274)

A1. INTRODUCTION

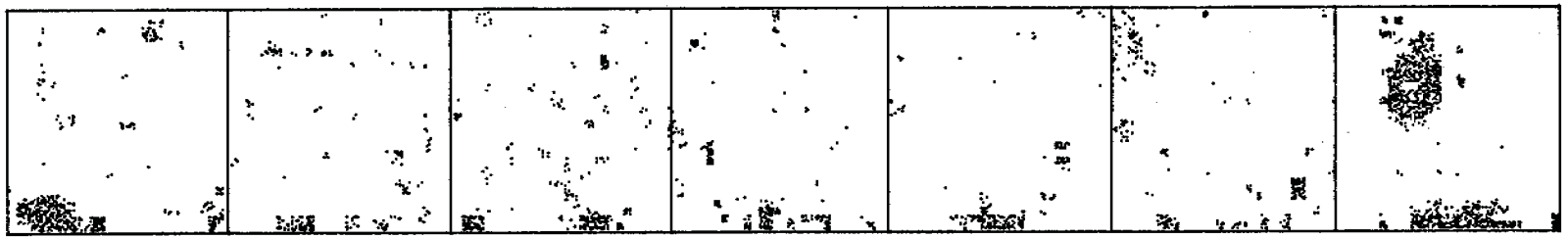
A1.1 East of Westgrove House, fieldwalking in Fields 25 and 26, produced a scatter of 18 worked flint fragments (plus one post medieval gun flint) concentrating in an area of 6ha (Fig. 1). Three or four of the fragments were patinated and two of these were of Mesolithic date. The majority of the fragments however were unpatinated. Among these there were three fragments, one a scraper, typical of the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age. There was one core of a type more commonly Mesolithic but not inconsistent with a late Neolithic date. There were also two pieces, one retouched, which were probably borers, and a retouched hammer stone. Although the group is rather small from which to draw conclusions it did appear that the scatter contained a significant late Neolithic/early Bronze Age component possibly from a settlement in this vicinity.

A1.2 If such a site contained features preserved below ground to any degree it would one be of national importance because of the rarity of settlement sites of this date. If, however, below ground features did not survive then it would be of much less importance. This site therefore required further field evaluation to allow a proper assessment of its significance. This work was carried out in October 1994 and involved a magnetometer survey of the threatened area using a gradiometer to detect features such as hearths, followed by the excavation of three trial trenches.

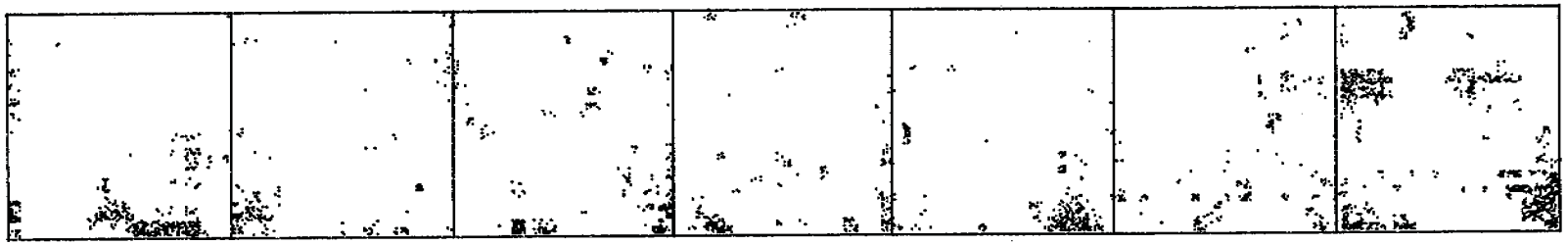
A2. MAGNETOMETER SURVEY

A2.1 Nine 30m squares and part squares were set out along a strip north of the existing road (Fig. 2). Seven squares lay in Field 25 to the west of the track to Walcote (BW AL71), the other two to the east in Field 27. These areas were surveyed using a Geoscan FM18 Gradiometer instrument which measures variations in the earth's magnetic field some of which are caused by hearths, kilns, buried ditches and other archaeological features. Readings were taken at 0.5m intervals along 1m traverses. The data were then processed using the computer program GEOPLOT 2.0 to reduce the effects of ferrous objects in the topsoil (despiking) and those caused by variations in the attitude of the instrument between traverses (destriping). The results are shown in Figs. 8-9 as dot density plots, showing (a) negative and (b) positive anomalies, and (c) as a trace plot.

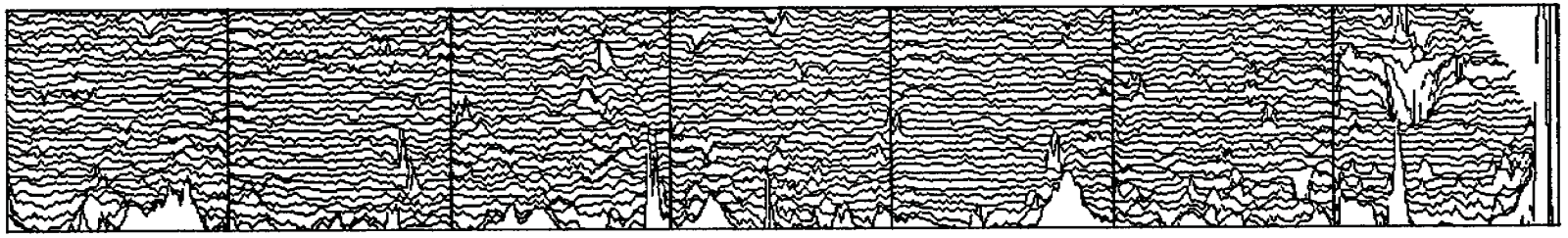
A2.2 The most prominent magnetic anomalies lay along the south edge of the survey area and in the easternmost square on the west side. However the former will have been caused by modern ferrous objects in the hedge along the edge of the field and the latter by a road



a. GEOPLOT Dot density plot, Negative anomalies
(Units Absolute, Min. -0.5, Max. -2, Contrast 1, Despiked, Zero mean traverse on)

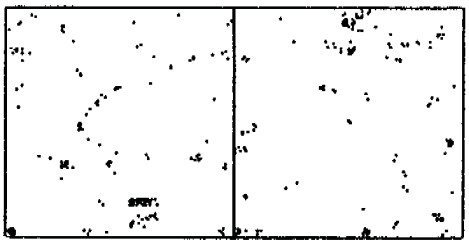


b. GEOPLOT Dot density plot, Positive anomalies (Units Absolute, Min. 0.5, Max. 3, Contrast 1, Despiked, Zero mean traverse on)

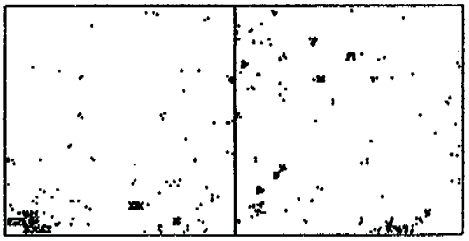


c. GEOPLOT Trace plot
(Units Absolute, Resolution 1.1, Despiked, Zero mean traverse on)

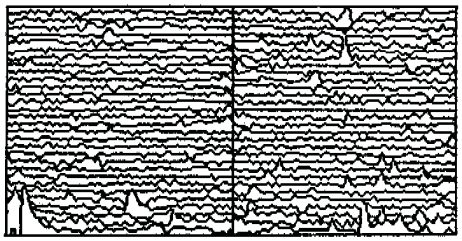
Fig. 8: Site WA 7274, Gradiometer Survey, 1. West side



a. GEOPLOT Dot density plot, Negative anomalies
(Units Absolute, Min. -0.5, Max. -4, Contrast 1, Despiked, Zero mean traverse on)



b. GEOPLOT Dot density plot, Positive anomalies
(Units Absolute, Min. 0.5, Max. 4, Contrast 1, Despiked, Zero mean traverse on)



c. GEOPLOT Trace plot
(Units Absolute, Resolution 3, Despiked, Zero mean traverse on)

Fig. 9: Site WA 7274, Gradiometer Survey, 2. East side

surveyors' bore hole. The only anomalies of possible archaeological significance were a series of faint parallel linear features running north west to south east. These, which barely stood out from the background, corresponded to the pattern of the medieval ridge and furrow visible on air photographs over this area.

A3. TRIAL TRENCHING

A3.1 Three trial trenches, each measuring 25m by 1.5m and aligned roughly east-west, were set out, two in Field 25 and one in Field 27 (Fig. 2). The topsoil and earlier ploughsoil were removed by a JCB using a 1.5m toothless ditching bucket. Further excavation of archaeological features then proceeded by hand. All three trenches contained a 0.75m depth of modern and earlier ploughsoils overlying the natural red clay of the Mercia Mudstone (100, 101, 200, 201, 300 and 301).

TRENCHES 1 AND 3

A3.2 Trench 1 contained only a modern field drain running north-south (101) and cutting the natural clay, while Trench 3 contained no archaeological features whatsoever.

TRENCH 2

A3.3 Trench 2 contained three roughly parallel ditches/gullies, running north west-south east, cutting the natural clay in the eastern half of the Trench. Two narrow gullies (202, 203), 2m apart, were located at the east end of the trench. Each was 0.50m wide by 0.10m deep with shallow sloping sides and rounded bases. The third gully (204) was set 6m further west and was much wider (1.80m) and deeper (0.20m). This had a shallow sloping north east side, a steeper south west side and a flat base. Further west a modern field drain (201) cut the natural clay.

A3.4 The three gullies (202-204) were on the same alignment as the magnetic anomalies and the ridge and furrow on the air photographs and they would appear to represent the remains of two furrows, the two narrow gullies belonging to the same one. The absence of similar furrows in the other trenches emphasises how far post war cultivation has eroded the ridge and furrow visible on the 1940s air photographs.

A4. CONCLUSIONS

A4.1 Neither the magnetometer survey nor the trial trenching produced any further evidence of prehistoric settlement, either in the form of below ground features or finds. Although there was a build up of 0.75m over the natural clay, the only archaeological features found were the

three gullies in Trench 2 which were the vestigial remains of furrows from ridge and furrow ploughing which would have belonged to the medieval open field system of Haselor. The furrows cut into the natural clay and it is likely that any surviving late Neolithic/early Bronze Age below ground remains had been destroyed by medieval and later cultivation.

A5. LIST OF FINDS

A5.1 FIELDWALKING

	Material	*Type*	*No.*
Field 25			
	Flint		9
	Pottery	Medieval	1
	Flint	Gun flint	1
Field 26			
	Flint		9

(Also post medieval/modern pottery, tile, brick, glass, clay pipe and slag)

A5.2 TRIAL TRENCHING

None

APPENDIX B: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF A ROMANO-BRITISH SETTLEMENT (WA 7277) AND ROMAN ROAD (WA 4757)

B1. INTRODUCTION

B1.1 North west of Drayton Barn Cottages (SP 1520 5600) transect fieldwalking in Fields 59 and 61 (Fig. 3) revealed a Romano-British settlement marked by a dense scatter of pottery, coins and other material just north of the Roman Road, covering an area of 1.5ha. This area was gridded out and fieldwalked in detail to plot the full extent of the settlement (Fig. 4).

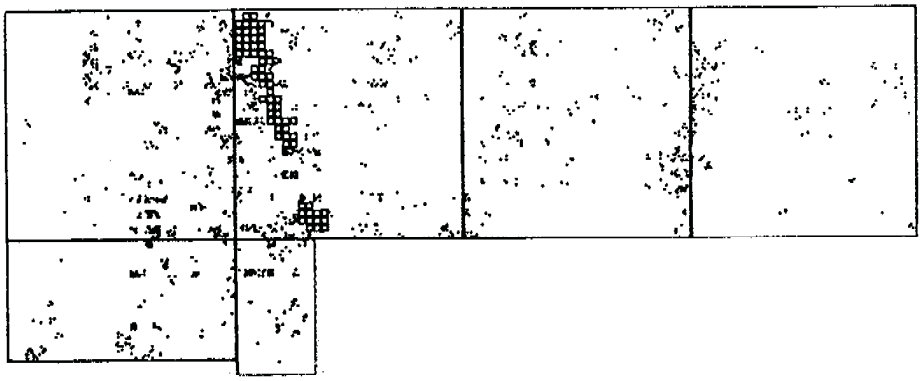
B1.2 Further field evaluation of the site to confirm the extent of the site suggested by the finds distribution and to provide information on the character and state of preservation of the below ground remains was carried out in September 1994. The work involved a magnetometer survey and the excavation of three trial trenches (Fig. 5).

B2. MAGNETOMETER SURVEY

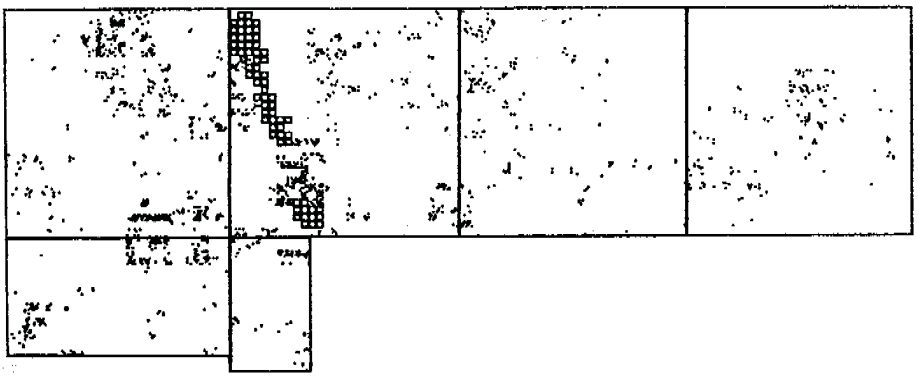
B2.1 A grid covering six 30m squares and part squares was laid out over the threatened part of the site (Fig. 5) and surveyed using a Geoscan FM18 Gradiometer instrument which measures variations in the earth's magnetic field some of which are caused by hearths, kilns, buried ditches and other archaeological features. Readings were taken at 0.5m intervals along 1m traverses. The data were then processed using the computer program GEOPLOT 2.0 to reduce the effects of ferrous objects in the topsoil (despiking) and those caused by variations in the attitude of the instrument between traverses (destriping). The results are shown in Fig. 10 as dot density plots showing (a) negative and (b) positive anomalies, and (c) as a trace plot.

B.2.2 The survey did not really succeed in identifying individual elements in the settlement plan, but there was a general increase in background disturbance corresponding to the extent of the dense finds scatter revealed by the fieldwalking, and this seems likely to mark the extent of the occupied area.

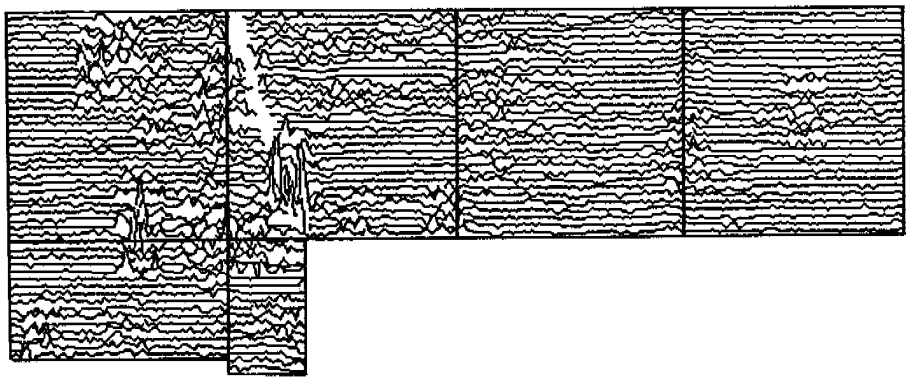
B2.3 A wide east-west linear anomaly in the south west part of the survey area proved on excavation to be a section of Roman Road. It is noticeable that the magnetic anomaly did not continue to the west edge of the area and it may be that the road had been ploughed out further to the west.



a. GEOPLOT Dot density plot, Negative anomalies
(Units Absolute, Min. -0.5, Max. -4, Contrast 1, Despiked, Zero mean traverse on)



b. GEOPLOT Dot density plot, Positive anomalies
(Units Absolute, Min. 0.5, Max. 4, Contrast 1, Despiked, Zero mean traverse on)



c. GEOPLOT Trace plot
(Units Absolute, Resolution 4, Despiked, Zero mean traverse on)

Fig. 10: Site WA 7277, Gradiometer Survey

B3. TRIAL TRENCHING

B3.1 Three trial trenches were dug, Trenches 1 and 2 in Field 58 and Trench 3 in Field 61 (Fig. 5). Trench 1 was aligned north-south across the parish boundary and possible line of the Roman road, while Trenches 2 and 3 were aligned east-west along the road corridor. Topsoil was removed from the trenches by JCB down to the level of archaeological survival and further sampling of archaeological layers and features was then carried out by hand. The archaeological features revealed were planned to scale and photographed in colour and in monochrome. Vertical sections were drawn to scale where appropriate and each archaeological context and its stratigraphic relationship was recorded using the standard Warwickshire Museum system.

TRENCH 1

B3.2 Trench 1 (Fig. 11) measured 26.5m x 1.5m. Beneath the topsoil (100) a number of layers and features were revealed.

B3.3 Towards the north end of Trench 1 a spread of medium-large limestone rubble 8m wide ran east-west across the site (102). This represented the surviving surface of the Roman road. Layer 102 was overlaid by a layer of clay loam (103), containing Roman pottery and animal bone, which was possibly the remains of material trampled into the surface. To the south there was a layer of small-medium pebbles and occasional limestone rubble (108) which sloped down to the south. This may have been part of an earlier or later road surface.

B3.4 Around 1.5m to the north of the road was a round pit/post hole (109). Immediately to the south of the road and parallel to it there was a ditch 1m wide with a steep sloping north edge (107). This in turn was located 0.20m to the north of another ditch (106), also parallel to the road and 1m wide. Around 1m further south yet another ditch (105), 0.75m wide and with steep sloping upper sides, ran north west-south east across the trench. A further 1.25m to the south a final ditch (104), 2.75m wide, was aligned east south east-west north west. Ditches 106 and 107 were almost certainly drainage ditches, of different dates, associated with the road. Ditches 104 and 105 may have had a similar function, although their alignments, particularly that of 105, were different and they may have belonged to enclosures south of the road.

B3.5 Layer 108 and the ditches south of the road were sealed by a layer of light olive brown clay loam (110) which was cut by a modern field drain (101) containing a ceramic pipe.

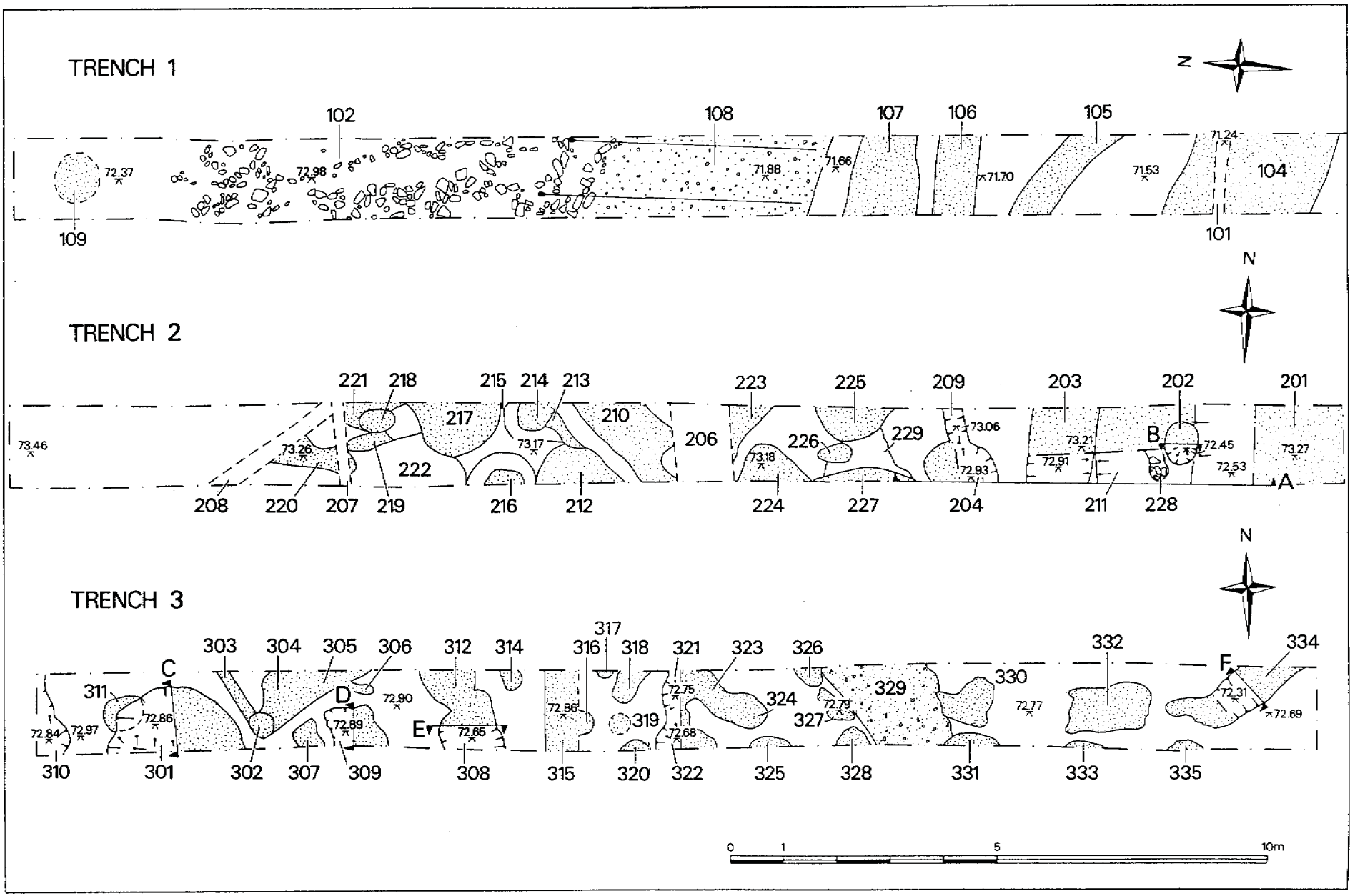


Fig. 11: Site WA 7277, Trenches 1-3

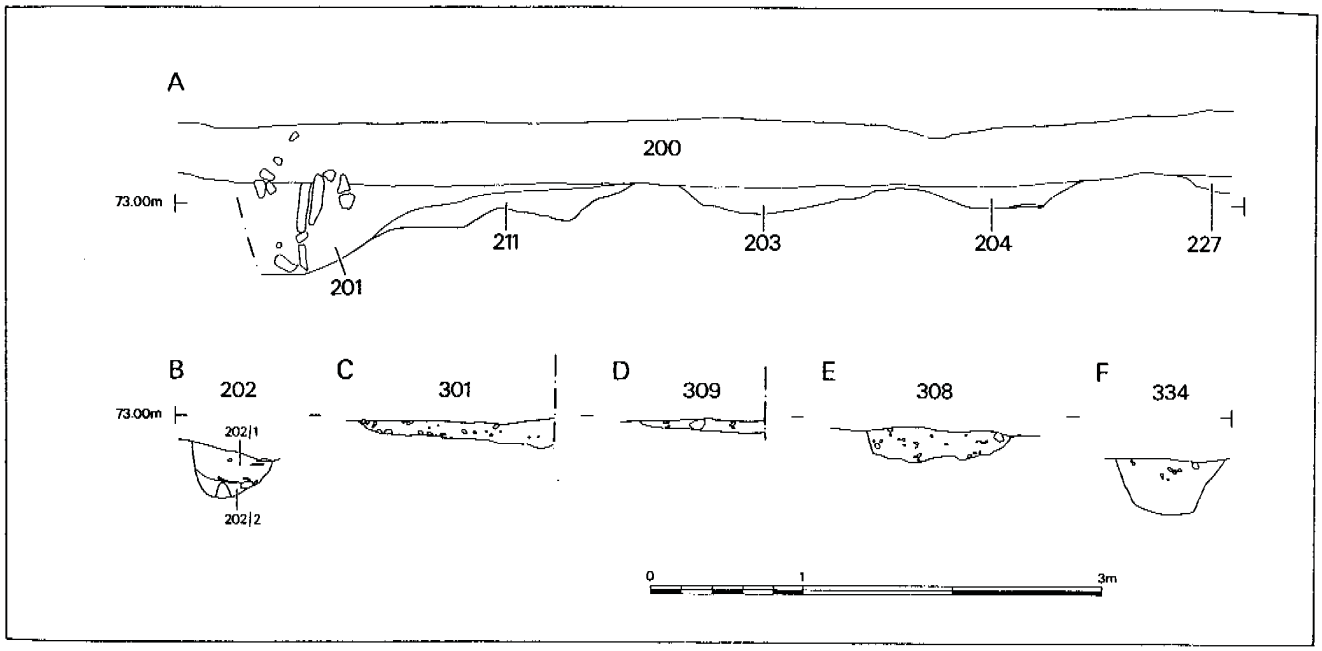


Fig. 12: Site WA 7277, Sections

TRENCH 2

B3.6 Trench 2 (Fig. 11) measured 25m x 1.5m. Under the topsoil (200) it contained a large number of features mostly of probable Roman date but petering out towards the west end of the trench.

B3.7 The natural clay was overlaid by a series of patches of brown clay loam (215, 222 and 229) and these were cut by a number of pit/hollows (212, 214, 216, 217, 220, 226 and 227/205) filled with brown clay loam, lighter than the normal dark greyish brown fill of most of the other features; none of the pit/hollows produced finds, and they may have caused by tree roots or trampling wet ground.

B3.8 At the east end of the trench there was a series of north-south Roman ditches, presumably marking a major boundary running back from the Roman road. Ditch 211 was at least 1.75m wide and at least 0.3m deep. Its profile suggests it may have been recut (Fig. 12, Section A). Cutting its west side there was a probable, stone packed posthole (228), perhaps for a fence along the ditch. Ditch 211 was at least partly filled before being cut by another ditch (201) along the same line, to a depth of 0.7m (201). The west edge of the new ditch was also cut by a sub-circular, steep sided post hole (202), 0.50m across (Fig. 12, Section B), perhaps for

a replacement fence. Ditch 201 was eventually filled with medium-large limestone rubble (201/1). About 0.5m west of 211 there was another shallower ditch (203), 1.3m wide by 0.2m deep, also on the same alignment (Fig. 12, Section A).

B3.9 Ditch 203 cut the east edge of a possible oven or hearth (204) consisting of a shallow pit lined with burnt clay (Fig. 12, Section A). A gully (209) ran north from 204, although their relationship was uncertain. To the west of 204 there were two probable pits (224 and 225), and to the west of these a ditch running north west-south east (223) met another running north east-south west (210), possibly forming the corner of a structure on this alignment (although it is possible that the straight south west edge of 210 was formed by a modern field drain). To the west of 210 there was a small hollow (213), and to the west of that there was another hollow (219) and a pit (221), the latter cut by a posthole (218).

B3.10 The Roman and probable Roman features were cut by a series of field drains. Feature 206 was a ditch running north-south, 1.1m wide and packed with loose limestone rubble. About 6.5m to the west there was a narrower gully (207), on the same alignment and also packed with limestone rubble. Running across 207 there was another gully (208) packed with vertically set limestone slabs with a limestone capping. These presumably represent post-enclosure agricultural improvements of the late 18th or 19th century.

TRENCH 3

B3.11 Trench 3 (Fig. 11) measured 24m x 1.5m. Under the topsoil (300), it contained a high density of probably Roman features, a large proportion of which actually produced Roman material.

B3.12 In the middle of the trench there was one north-south gully (315) on the same alignment as the ditches in Trench 2 at right angles to the Roman road. However a number of other features were aligned at 45 degrees to this. At the east end of the trench there was a gully (334; Fig. 12, Section F) aligned north east-south west, and to the west of this there was a spread of rubble (329), possibly a floor surface, whose western edge ran north west-south east. Along the west side of 329 there was a row of three hollows (326, 327 and 328) which may have marked a wall line. The possible surface 329 was cut by two pits (330 and 331) which may have been associated with three further pits just to the east (332, 333 and 335).

B3.13 Towards the west end of the trench the was another group of features that may have belonged to the south corner of another structure aligned north west-south east/ (although its apparent form may be due to modern field drains). Runing north east-south west there was a possible beam slot (305) with a pit (304) to the north west, terminating in a post hole (302). Running north westwards from 302 was a gully (303) which could have been another beam slot, but it might also have been a modern plough cut (It was on the same alignment as a

definite plough cut (313, not on plan) to the east). To the west of these features was a pit/ditch (310) and a hollow (311) which was cut by a large shallow pit (301; Fig. 12, Section C). To their east there was a group of pits (307; 308, Fig. 12, Section E; 309, Fig. 12, Section D; and 312), and a small hollow (306).

B3.14 Further structural evidence was found in the centre of the trench where there was a group of four possible post holes (314, 316, 317 and 319) which may have belonged to a building or other structure in this area. To the east of the post holes there was a cluster of irregular pit/hollows (318, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324 and 325)

FINDS

B3.15 The finds from the trial trenches included pottery (404 fragments), animal bone (92 fragments), a stone whetstone, iron nails (11) and a hoop, a bronze brooch spring and roof tile (29 fragments) [For a full list see below, B5]. The fieldwalking and evaluation both produced large quantities of material and it is clear that further excavation of the site would produce a significant finds assemblage from which much important information about the settlement itself and Roman activity in the area could be deduced. The quantity of stratified roof tile from the trenches was sufficient to suggest that there was at least one building in the settlement with a tiled roof and the survival of animal bone was such as to show that a significant faunal remains assemblage could be gathered from the site.

B4. CONCLUSIONS

B4.1 The results of the evaluation tended to confirm the extent of the settlement suggested by the fieldwalking. In addition the trial trenches produced evidence for a number of timber buildings, sufficient roof tile to suggest that there was at least one building in the settlement with a tiled roof, and evidence for a possible rubble floor.

B4.2 The pottery from the site would seem to indicate occupation throughout the Roman period, perhaps commencing in the late 1st century AD. Much of the material would seem to be 2nd century with perhaps the greatest intensity of pottery discarded then. The presence of a few sherds of Oxfordshire colour coated ware indicated occupation in the late 3rd century or later, as does a Black Burnished ware beaded and flanged bowl, and several shell tempered sherds suggested occupation in the 4th century. The three coins found were also of late 3rd/4th century date; one issued under Constantine I can be dated to 330-7AD. There is no obvious patterning of the material across the fieldwalking scatter with late Roman material apparently being fairly evenly spread across the area. The functional composition of the group, the proportion of fine wares (1.9%) and the absence of amphorae suggest that this was a rural

farming settlement of no particular pretensions although the presence of vessel glass and a tiled building means the site was not at the very bottom of the socio-economic scale.

B4.3 Although the site had been cut about by later field drains, generally the preservation of features was good, with small features such as post holes surviving, along with a number of layers over the natural. Animal bone also survived in a good enough condition to suggest that further excavation of the site could produce a significant faunal remains assemblage. The quantities of finds recovered generally suggest that a large and informative assemblage of material culture would be produced by such further work.

B4.4 Trench 1 confirmed the suggested existence of the Roman Road (WA 4757) just to the north of the line of the parish boundary and 25m north of the existing road. There was some evidence of boundaries aligned on the road, although none of buildings fronting it. Their presence cannot be ruled out, although most of the possible structures located were on a different alignment. The survival of the road here suggests that other sections may survive between Red Hill and Drayton Bushes where the parish boundaries lie north of the existing road. The road was very well preserved in Trench 1, but it is possible that this preservation is exceptional and due to the fact that the trench was in the corner of a field that may not have been much cultivated. The magnetometer survey suggested that the road may not survive much further to the west.

B5. LIST OF FINDS

B5.1 FIELDWALKING (TRANSECT)

	Material	*Type*	*No.*	
Field 57				
	Pottery	Roman	1	
Field 58				
	Flint		1	(WA 7276)
	Pottery	Roman	14	
	Pottery	Medieval	4	
Field 59				
	Pottery	Roman	5	
	Pottery	Medieval	1	
Field 61				
	Pottery	Roman	153	
	Coins	Roman	1	
	Glass	Roman	3	
	Pottery	Medieval	2	

(Also post medieval and modern pottery, clay pipe, glass, iron, tile and brick)

B5.2 FIELDWALKING (GRIDDED)

Material	*Type*	*No.*
Roman	Pottery	721
Roman	Coins	2

Glass	Roman	14
Iron	Bucket loop	1
Tile	Roman	19
Tile	Uncertain	423
Tile	Medieval/post med	87
Pottery	Post med/modern	66

(Also animal bone, shell, nails, slag, slate, post medieval/modern ironwork and clay pipe)

B5.3 TRIAL TRENCHES 1-3

Context	*SFNo*	*Material*	*Type*	*No.*
100		A.Bone		1
103		A.Bone		3
200		A.Bone		13
201/1		A.Bone		5
202/1		A.Bone		9
203/1		A.Bone		1
204/1		A.Bone		2
300		A.Bone		1
301/1		A.Bone		4
302/1		A.Bone		2
309/1		A.Bone		11
321/1		A.Bone		1
322/1		A.Bone		28
323/1		A.Bone		2
324/1		A.Bone		4
327/1		A.Bone		3
332/1		A.Bone		2
200		Brick		1
201/1		Brick		1
309/1	1	Bronze	Brooch Frag	1
101/1		Iron	Nail	1
200		Iron	Nail	2
202/1		Iron	Nail	1
300		Iron	Nail	2
300	4	Iron	Hoop Frag	1
301/1		Iron	Nail	1
302/1		Iron	Nail	1
305/1		Iron	Nail	1
309/1		Iron	Nail	1
322/1		Iron	Nail	1
0		Pottery		10
100		Pottery		13
103		Pottery		15
200		Pottery		89
201/1		Pottery		19
202/1		Pottery		48
202/2		Pottery		2
203/1		Pottery		54
204/1		Pottery		8
211/1		Pottery		1
225/1		Pottery		1
300		Pottery		51
301/1		Pottery		16
302/1		Pottery		4

Context	*SFNo*	*Material*	*Type*	*No.*
305/1		Pottery		6
306/1		Pottery		1
307/1		Pottery		2
308/1		Pottery		17
309/1		Pottery		9
310/1		Pottery		1
321/1		Pottery		2
322/1		Pottery		15
323/1		Pottery		4
324/1		Pottery		2
327/1		Pottery		3
331/1		Pottery		4
332/1		Pottery		2
333/1		Pottery		3
334/1		Pottery		1
335/1		Pottery		1
200	2	Stone	Whetstone	1
322/1	3	Stone	Jet Frag	1
100		Tile		2
200		Tile		4
300		Tile		15
301/1		Tile		1
307/1		Tile		1
321/1		Tile		2
324/1		Tile		1
331/1		Tile		2
332/1		Tile		1

APPENDIX C: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF CROPMARK ENCLOSURES NORTH OF RED HILL (WA 4702)

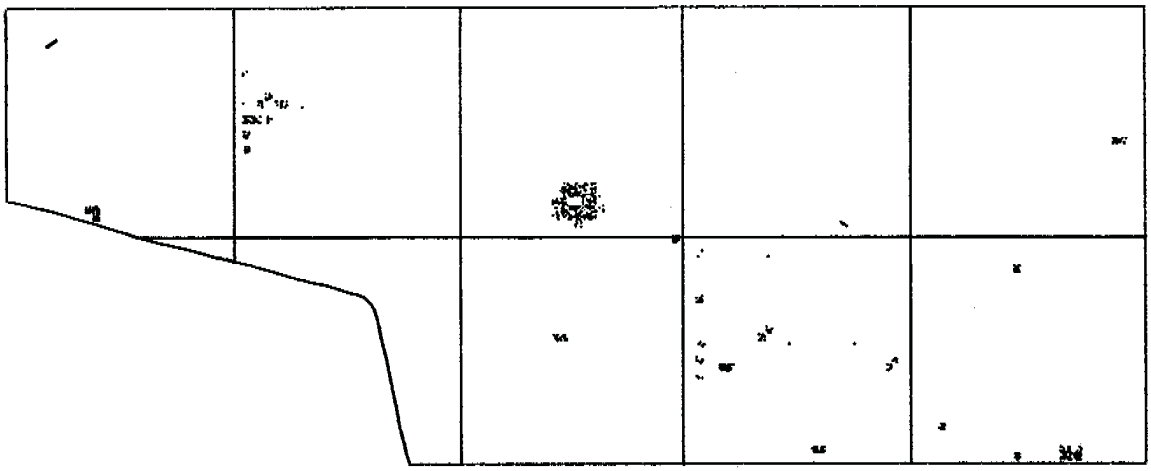
C1. INTRODUCTION

C1.1 North of the existing road at Red Hill an area of cropmarks (WA 4702) showed on air photographs taken in 1965 by J. Pickering (SMR SP1356/A-C). These suggested the presence of an enclosure, a double ditched field boundary and a possible trackway running north east from the former Roman road (Fig. 6). Fieldwalking over the cropmark in Field 50 produced nothing apart from a worked flint flake (WA 7275). However in Field 48 to the north west there was a scatter of Roman pottery increasing in density to the north towards a second group of cropmarks (WA 6360). It seemed probable that these cropmarks represent a Romano-British settlement and that the threatened cropmarks (WA 4702) were related to this settlement, the absence of material from over them indicating that they represent part of a field system rather than an occupation site. However it was also possible that they belonged to a settlement of earlier date, although their form, particularly the double ditched boundary, suggested a Roman date. If the site was Roman it was also possible that there would have been buildings at the point where the cropmark abutted the Roman road. This lay outside the area available for fieldwalking. Because of this uncertainty further field evaluation was proposed and carried out in September and October 1994 involving a magnetometer survey to detect any further features associated with the cropmarks and the excavation of six trial trenches to elucidate their date, character and state of preservation (Fig. 7).

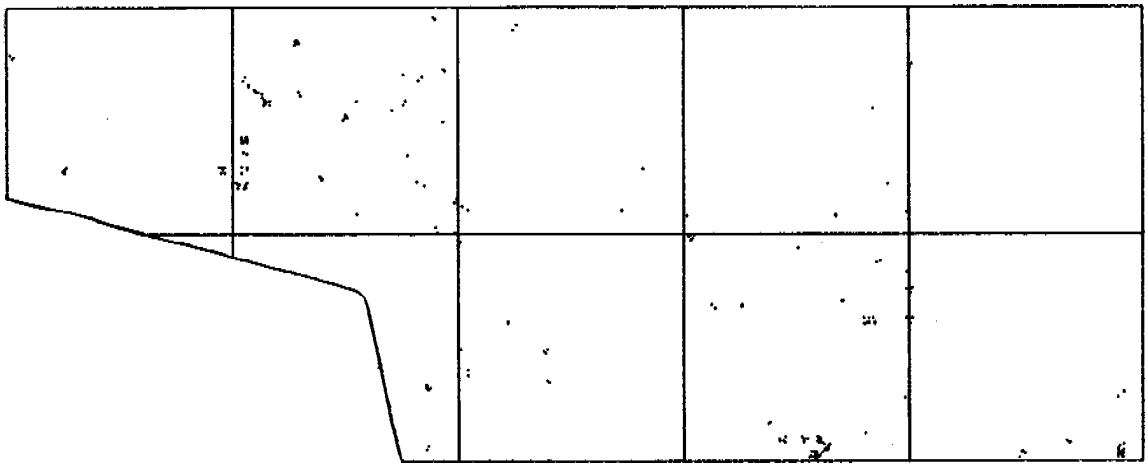
C2. MAGNETOMETER SURVEY

C2.1 A grid covering nine 30m squares and part squares was laid out (Fig. 7) and surveyed using a Geoscan FM18 Gradiometer instrument which measures variations in the earth's magnetic filed some of which are caused by hearths, kilns, buried ditches and other archaeological features. Readings were taken at 0.5m intervals along 1m traverses. The data were then processed using the computer program GEOPLOT 2.0 to reduce the effects of ferrous objects in the topsoil (despiking) and those caused by variations in the attitude of the instrument between traverses (destriping). The results are shown in Fig. 13 as dot density plots, showing (a) negative and (b) positive anomalies, and (c) as a trace plot.

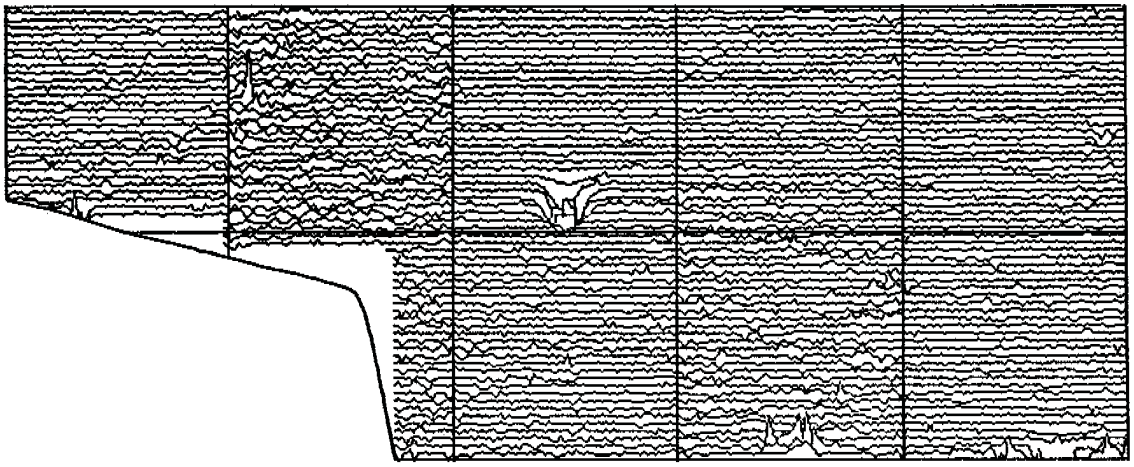
C2.2 The most prominent magnetic anomaly, in the centre of the area, was caused by a road surveyors' borehole. Most of the others, particularly the ones along the southern edge of the area, were probably caused by modern ferrous disturbance. The only anomaly of possible archaeological origin was a possible linear feature, running south west-north east in the north west part of the survey area.



a. GEOPLOT Dot density plot, Negative anomalies
(Units Absolute, Min. -3.5, Max. -6, Contrast 1, Despiked, Zero mean traverse on)



b. GEOPLOT Dot density plot, Positive anomalies
(Units Absolute, Min. 2, Max. 6, Contrast 1, Despiked, Zero mean traverse on)



c. GEOPLOT Trace plot
(Units Absolute, Resolution 4, Despiked, Zero mean traverse on)

Fig. 13: Site WA 4702, Gradiometer Survey

C3. TRIAL TRENCHING

C3.1 Six trial trenches were laid out in Field 50, north of Redhill House and the Stag's Head, each measuring 25m by 1.5m (Fig. 7). The trenches were sited to cover the whole area of the cropmarks, with Trench 1 designed to investigate the area of magnetic anomaly revealed by the gradiometer survey in the north west part of the survey area, and Trench 6 set across the possible line of the Roman road (WA 4757).

C3.2 The topsoil was removed from the trenches by a JCB using a 1.5m toothless ditching bucket and further excavation was then carried out by hand. All the trenches contained a modern topsoil layer (0.23-0.3m deep) and an earlier ploughsoil (0.20-0.38 deep) overlying the natural Lower Lias clay (light olive brown/strong brown clay). The only manmade features recorded were a series of modern field drains on various alignments (Trench 1, 103 NNW-SSE and 104 NE-SW; Trench 2, 203 and 204, both N-S; Trench 3, 303 N-S; Trench 4, 403 NW-SE; Trench 5, 503 and 504, both N-S; Trench 6, 603 and 604, both N-S).

C3.5 No trace of archaeological features that might have caused either the cropmarks or the magnetic anomaly was unearthed in any of the trenches. The only artefacts recovered were all of post medieval date and even these were very few in number.

C4. CONCLUSIONS

C4.1 The evaluation found no trace of features connected with the cropmarks. The only finds were post medieval. It must be concluded that the cropmarks had some non-archaeological explanation. The 'double ditched' element might be explained a surface 'envelope' mark caused by that year's cultivation, and with hindsight it can be observed that the cropmarks were only recorded on one occasion (in 1965).

C4.2 The conclusion that the WA 4702 cropmarks are non-archaeological does not affect the suggestion that there is a Roman settlement just to the north of the road corridor represented by the WA 6360 cropmarks and the scatter of Roman pottery found in Field 48, but it does not seem that this site extends into Field 50.

C4.2 No trace was found of the Roman Road. The parish boundary between Binton and Billesley does lie north of the existing road at the east end of Field 50 but rejoins the road east of the survey area and it appears that the Roman road may do the same.

C5 LIST OF FINDS

C5.1 FIELDWALKING

	Material	*Type*	*No.*
Field 48			
	Pottery	Roman	25
	Pottery	Medieval	1
Field 50			
	Flint		1
	Pottery	Roman	1
Field 51			
	Pottery	Roman	2
Field 53			
	Pottery	Roman	5
	Pottery	Medieval	3
Field 54			
	Pottery	Medieval	1

(Also post medieval/modern pottery, tile, glass clay pipe and slag)

C5.2 TRIAL TRENCHES 1-6

Context	*Material*	*Type*	*No.*
401	Iron	Nail	1
300	Pottery		1
401	Pottery		1

APPENDIX D: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Amphora	A type of large Roman pottery jar, normally for wine, olive oil or fish sauce
Artefact	Man-made object
Black Burnished ware	A type of Romano-British pottery made in Dorset
Borer	Flint tool used for boring holes in hides, bone, wood etc
Bronze Age period	About 1700 bc - 600 bc
Colour coated ware	A type of Roman pottery whose surface is covered with a thin clay layer or slip of a different colour from the main fabric.
Cropmark	Indication of buried archaeological (or other) feature revealed by differential growth or ripening in crops. Best seen from the air.
Geophysical survey	A method of non-destructive prospection for archaeological sites by measurement of factors such as variations in the magnetism or electrical resistance of the ground caused by buried archaeological features.
Gradiometer	A type of magnetometer with two detectors for differential measurement which diminishes the effect of local background interference or daily fluctuations in the earth's magnetic field.
Iron Age period	About 650 bc - 43 AD
Magnetometer	A geophysical instrument which measures the earth's magnetic field some variations in which are caused by buried archaeological features such as hearths, ditches or pits.
Medieval period	1066 AD - 1500 AD
Mesolithic period	About 8500 bc - 3500 bc
Neolithic period	About 3500 bc - 2500 BC
Patina	Surface coating
Post Medieval period	1500 AD - 1900 AD
Roman/Romano-British period	43 AD -410 AD
Scraper	Flint tool used for scraping hides, bones, wood etc
Shell tempered ware	A type of pottery whose fabric contains crushed fragments of shell