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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

**Land off Mill Lane, Middle Rasen
Archaeological Evaluation**
Planning Application: 99/P/0297
Site Code: MMR00
NGR: TF 0899 8899

Report for

Mrs A E Naylor & Mrs P M Fussey

**LAS Report No.: 451
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Summary

In June 2000 two 15m long archaeological evaluation trenches were excavated at the above site. Archaeological remains dating from the 13th century were discovered in Trench 1. A property boundary ditch and associated postholes were present suggesting small-scale settlement along the current line of the A46. Archaeological remains in Trench 2 were limited to a single posthole.

Introduction

Two trenches were excavated on behalf of Mr D. Fussey in accordance with general requirements set out in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* published by the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council (1998).

Site Description

The 0.8ha application site was located on the south side of the A46 (Figs 1 & 2), bounded by Mill Lane to the south. At the time of these excavations the site was given over to pasture.

Archaeological Background

Middle Rasen is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086. At that time it was divided between two ecclesiastical parishes and two townships. The application site lies in Middle Rasen Drax at the south end of this settlement and appears to be an area rich in earthwork remains, some of which may include house platforms. A desk top study identified the possibility of settlement remains along the A46, and it was considered that the proposed development might disturb medieval settlement remains on the site

Aims and Objectives

In general terms the purpose of the evaluation was to

- establish the presence or absence, quality and extent of archaeological remains and their location within the development area
- gather sufficient information to enable an assessment of the potential significance of any archaeological remains to be made and the impact which development will have upon them
- enable an informed decision to be made regarding the future treatment of any archaeological remains and consider any appropriate mitigatory measures either in advance of and/or during development

Method

The two trenches each 15m x 1.8m were excavated using a JCB fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. All archaeological works were carried out by a team of 2 experienced archaeologists, including a Site Director.

Topsoil was removed to the first recognisable archaeological horizon (Pl.1). The trenches (Pls. 2,3,4 & 5) were then hand-cleaned to reveal features in plan and selected excavation of features was carried out in order to achieve the objectives outlined above.

A full written (single context) and photographic record was made during the excavations, along with a plan of each trench and section drawings of one side. All recorded deposits were assigned context numbers by LAS who operate a standard context recording system, developed by its staff over the past 20 years, based on MOLAS and CAS formats.

Results

Trench 1 (Figs 3 & 4)

The topsoil, **115** was a 0.20m deep dark grey silty sand which overlay **116**, a 0.19m deep mid grey brown silty sandy subsoil with frequent iron panning, occasional sub-rounded stones and charcoal flecks. Beneath this deposit was **125**, a 0.10m thick dark grey brown silty sand with occasional stones. All the above mentioned deposits were above **117**, the mixed light yellow and orange natural sands.

Immediately beneath the topsoil, and cutting **125** was a shallow depression, **126** containing a single fill **127**, a mid brown silty sand with moderate charcoal flecks and iron panning. This may represent the remains of ridge and furrow.

All features in this trench with the exception of **118** and **126** were sealed by **125**. Only partially exposed within the trench was a shallow pit **106** (Pl.8). It had a length greater than 1.50m, a width greater than 0.68m and a maximum depth of 0.20m. It contained a single fill, **107**, a soft grey brown silty sand containing occasional sub-angular limestone fragments, charcoal flecks and iron pan. 13th-15th and late 17th - 18th century pottery and animal bone were recovered from this deposit.

Two possible postholes, **100** (Pl.6) and **102** (Pl.7) were identified to the north of **106**. However no real function, form or structure could be deduced from their location. Posthole **100** was 0.50m in diameter and 0.16m deep. It's fill, **101** a soft grey black silty sand contained a single sherd of 14th - 15th century glazed pottery. Posthole **102** measured 0.34m in diameter, had a depth of 0.14m and again contained a single fill, **103** a dark grey black silty sand with a few charcoal flecks and small gravels. A small quantity of animal bone was recovered from this deposit. **103** cut **104** (Pl.7), a small irregular-shaped feature. It had a width of 0.40m and a

maximum depth of 0.19m. It contained a single fill **105**, a mottled orange brown soft sand with rare charcoal flecks and occasional sub-angular gravels.

A sub-circular pit **120** (Pl.12) was partially exposed in the southern half of the trench. It had a length greater than 0.50m, a maximum width of 0.60m and a maximum depth of 0.83m (which is not fully represented in Fig.3). The uppermost deposit, **121** was a 0.12m thick loose dark grey silty sand. Below this was **122** a 0.15m deep layer of mid grey sand. Sealed by **122** was **123** a 0.10m thick mixed orange and yellow sand, probably redeposited natural. Underlying **123** was **124** a dark grey silty sand with a maximum depth of 0.10m. No finds were recovered from any of the deposits contained by pit **120**, which lay adjacent to and cut a rectangular pit **111**.

Pit **111** (Pl.10) contained three fills, the uppermost of which **112** was a mixed dark grey and mid orangey yellow sand. One post-medieval sherd of pottery was recovered from close to the surface with a 12th century jug fragment retrieved from a more secure depth. Below **112** was **108** (Pl.9) a complete articulated horse skeleton lying on its left side with the head to the south. Surrounding **108** was **113**, a dark brown organic material which contained no finds. Below **113** was **114** a light yellow and grey redeposited sand which probably slumped into the pit before the burial of the horse, the result of the instability of the natural sands due, in part, to the high water table.

Located to the north of **111** was **109** (Pl.11), a N-S aligned ditch with a length greater than 5.00m, a maximum width of 0.67m and a depth greater than 0.27m. Only partial excavation of the feature was possible due to the high water table. Only a single fill, **110**, was excavated, a mottled grey, orange and brown silty sand. Animal bone was recovered from this deposit. One further feature **118**, was identified at the north end of the trench however standing water within the trench made further investigation impossible. The upper fill of **118** was **119**, a mid brown grey silty sand containing areas of iron pan, occasional small sub-angular stones and charcoal flecks. Late 17th – 18th century pottery was recovered. More modern disturbance of land drains and a rubbish pit was also noted.

Trench 2 (Figs 3 & 4)

The topsoil in this trench, **200** comprised a thick brown silty loam, 0.71m thick. One 12th century sherd of pottery was recovered. Below **200** was **204**, a 0.20m deep brownish grey subsoil with occasional small sub-rounded stones, underlying which was **201**, the mixed orange and grey natural sand.

Located at the south of the trench was a possible posthole **202** (Pl.13). It measured 0.34m in diameter, had a maximum depth of 0.18m and contained a single fill **203**, a loose black silty sand, from which no finds were recovered.

Discussion and Conclusion

The desk-top study identified the possibility of medieval remains in the area of the site, specifically the possibility that a raised area in the vicinity of Trench 2 represented a house platform. Excavation however revealed a distinct lack of finds of any period (one would expect relatively large amounts of material of medieval date within this type of deposit) and it would appear more likely that this material (200) represents little more than a dump of topsoil removed and redeposited for some other purpose.

Trench 1 revealed a ditch (109) lying perpendicular to the road along with two associated postholes and part of an oval pit. All of these features appear to be settlement related, with the artefactual evidence indicating domestic activity from at least as early as the 13th century. The ditch may represent a property boundary, possibly a division of the medieval street frontage based on the current position and orientation of the A46. It is worth noting that this area of the site is currently prone to waterlogging and there remains the possibility that ditch (109) may have served purely as a drainage feature or may indeed have functioned in a dual drainage/boundary role. Excavations were not possible closer to the road as access for vehicles onto the site would have been compromised. However the possibility of additional archaeological remains in the form of buildings is duly noted.

The burial of a young horse (108) in Trench 1 may have been interred during or around the period of the 12th century; the later 17th-18th potsherd being intrusive, located as it was in the uppermost part of the fill. Alternatively the burial may have occurred in the post-medieval period, the 12th century pottery being present in the material used to backfill the grave. A local source suggested that a smithy once existed on the site but gave no indication of date.

A depression at the north end of Trench 1 (126) may be interpreted as the remains of ridge and furrow agriculture. Although no date was established for this feature, it was located stratigraphically above (and hence later than) the boundary ditch (109). This may imply a shift in focus for this part of the site from domestic habitation to more general agricultural practise towards the end of or beyond the medieval period.

The general archaeological focus appears to be towards the A46, the remains thus far identified representing small plots. The results of the excavations in Trench 2 suggest that the diverse topography evident at the southern end of the site may be (at least in part) the result of post medieval disturbance rather than representative of features relating to medieval habitation.

Acknowledgements

LAS would like to thank Mr D Fussey for his cooperation during these excavations. Fieldwork was carried out by the author, assisted by Jeremy Mordue. This report was edited by Naomi Field and produced and collated by Jane Frost.

Sue Farr
August 3rd 2000

Land off Mill Lane, Market Rasen (MMR 00) Context Summary

Context	Type	Description	Finds
Trench 1			
100	C	Posthole	
101	F	Fill of 100	pot
102	C	Posthole	
103	F	Fill of 102	animal bone
104	C	Natural feature	
105	F	Fill of 104	
106	C	Pit	
107	F	Fill of 106	animal bone, pot
108	Sk	Horse skeleton	
109	C	Ditch	
110	F	Fill of 109	animal bone
111	C	Pit containing 108	
112	F	Fill of 111	pot
113	F	Fill of 111	
114	F	Fill of 111	
115	L	Topsoil	
116	L	Subsoil	
117	L	Natural	
118	C	Linear	
119	F	Fill of 118	pot, floor tile
120	C	Pit	
121	F	Fill of 120	
122	F	Fill of 120	
123	F	Fill of 120	
124	F	Fill of 120	
125	L	Silty sand	
126	C	Depression	
127	F	Fill of 126	
Trench 2			
200	L	Topsoil	pot, brick
201	L	Natural	
202	C	Posthole	
203	F	Fill of 202	
204	L	Subsoil	

Pottery Archive MMR00

context	cname	form type	sherds	vessels	decoration	part	description	date
101	LSW3	jug	1	1		base		14 to 15th
107	MEDLOC	jug	1	1		BS	quartz fabric with moderate fe	13 to 15th
107	SLIP	bowl	1	1	trailed dec	BS	worn	late 17 to 18th
107	STSL	closed	1	1		BS		17 to 18th
112	NSP	jug	1	1		BS		12th
112	STSL	closed	1	1	red slip;trailed dec	BS		late 17 to 18th
119	BL	?	1	1		base		late 17 to 18th
119	STSL	hollow	1	1	feather dec	BS	worn	late 17 to 18th
200	EMLOC	jug	1	1		rim	everted rim with collar;amber splashed glaze	12th
200	SNLOC	jar?	1	1		base	reduced quartz fabric	11 to 12th

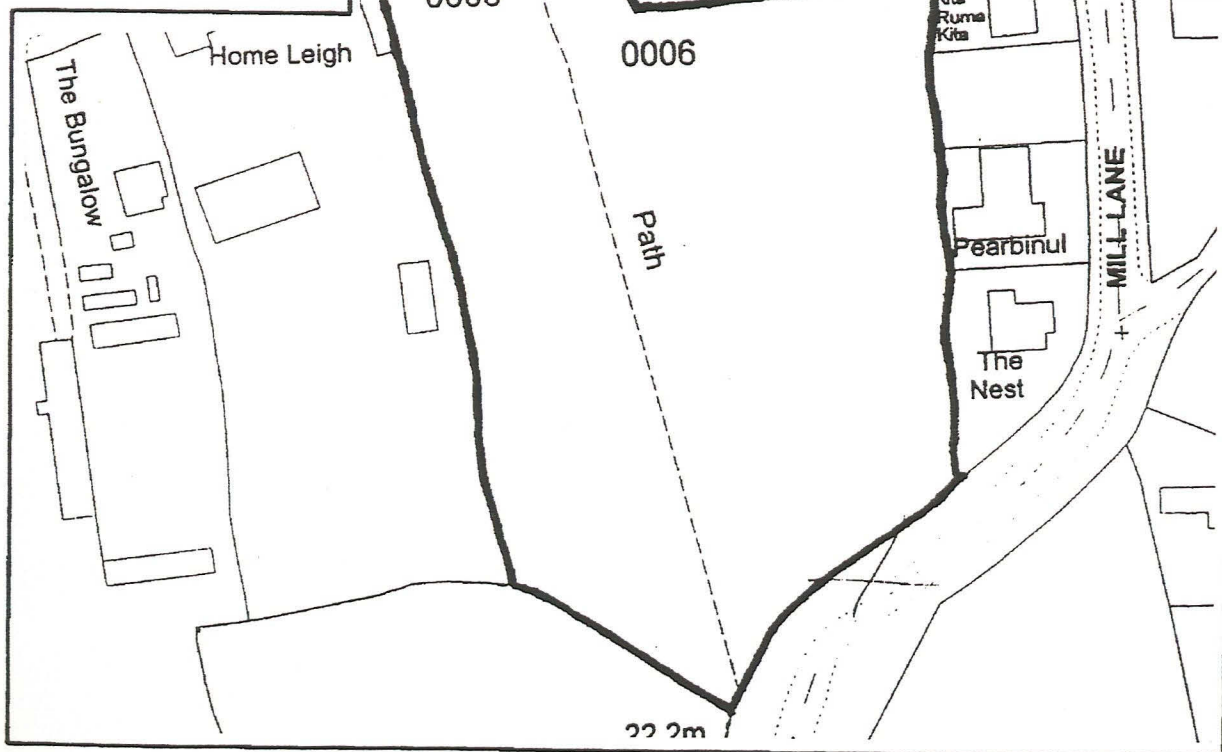
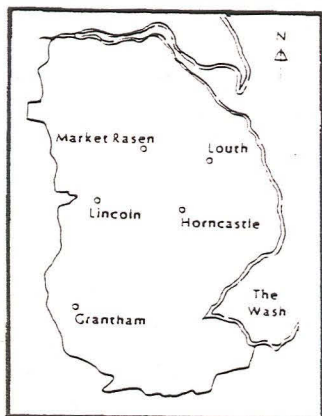
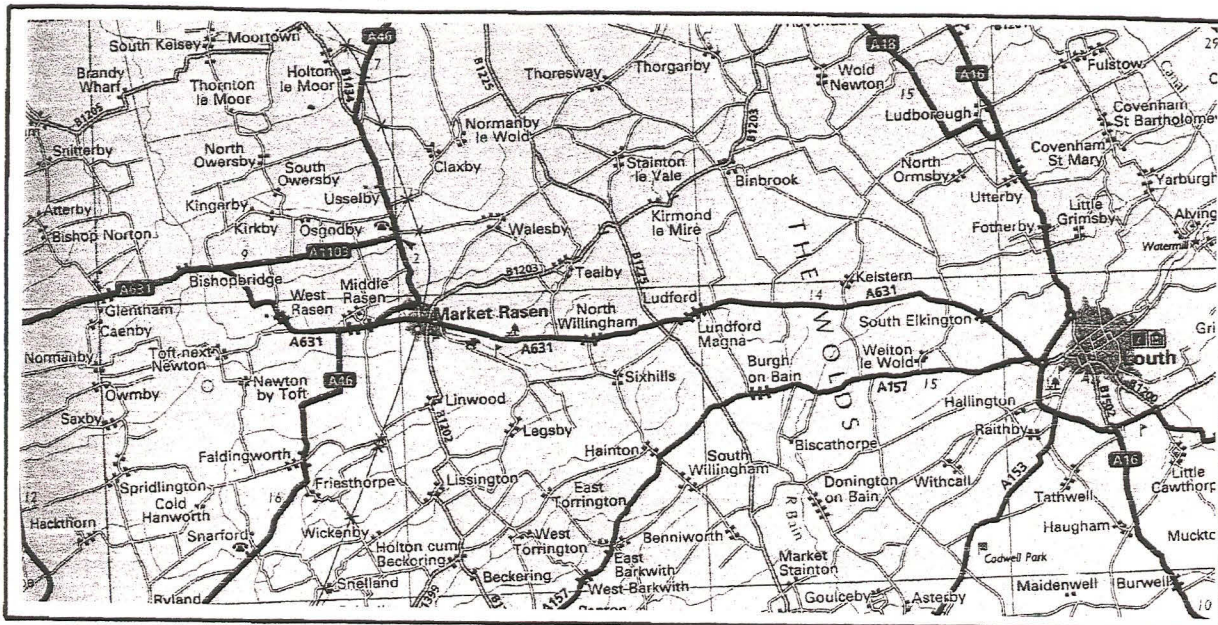


Fig. 1 Location of site. (Reproduced from the 1:25 000 OS map with the permission of the Controller of HMSO, © Crown Copyright. LAS licence number AL 50424A)

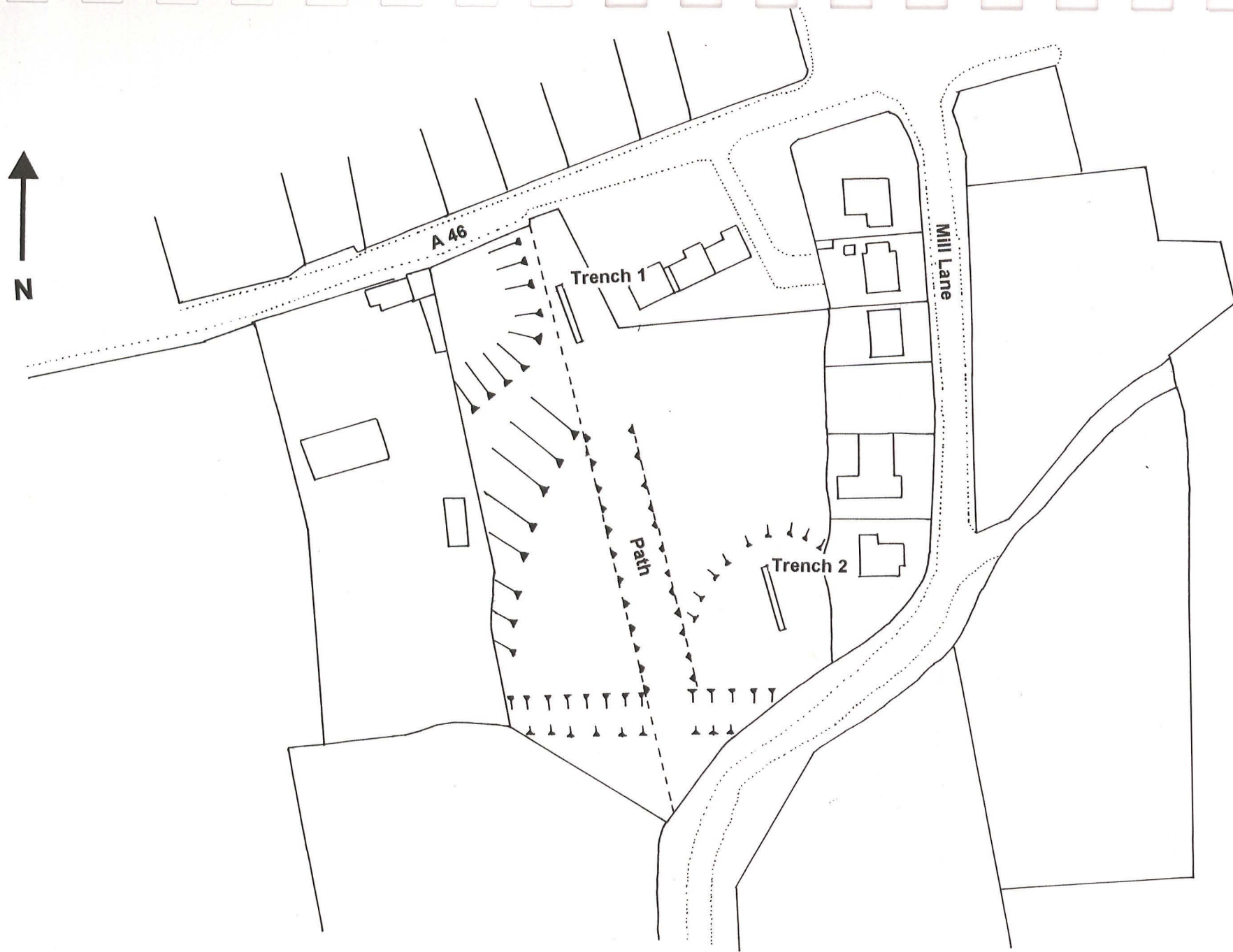


Fig. 2 Location of trenches and earthworks on the site, based on a 1:1,250 plan supplied by the client. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS license No. AL 50424A.

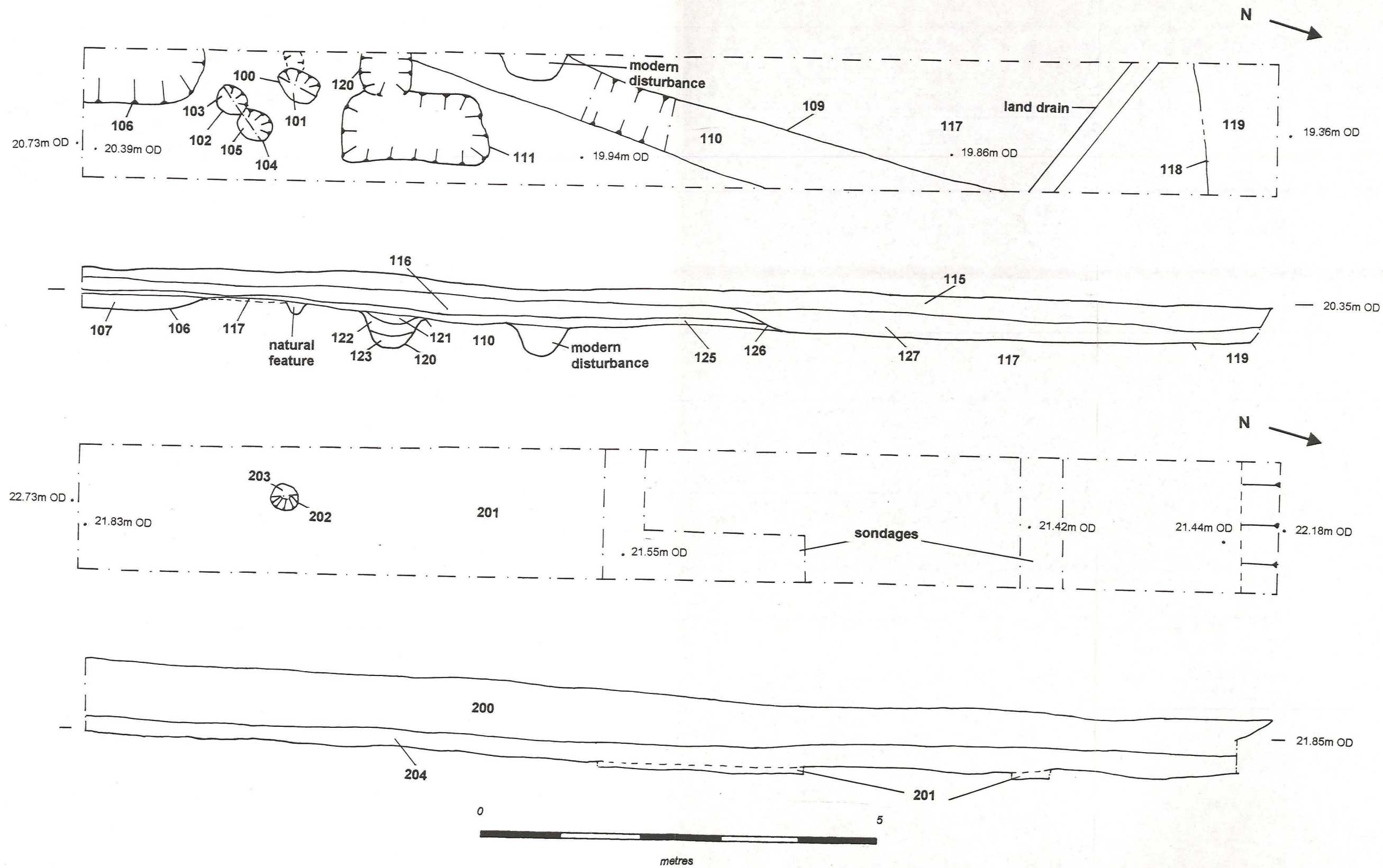


Fig. 3 Plans and sections of Trenches 1 and 2.

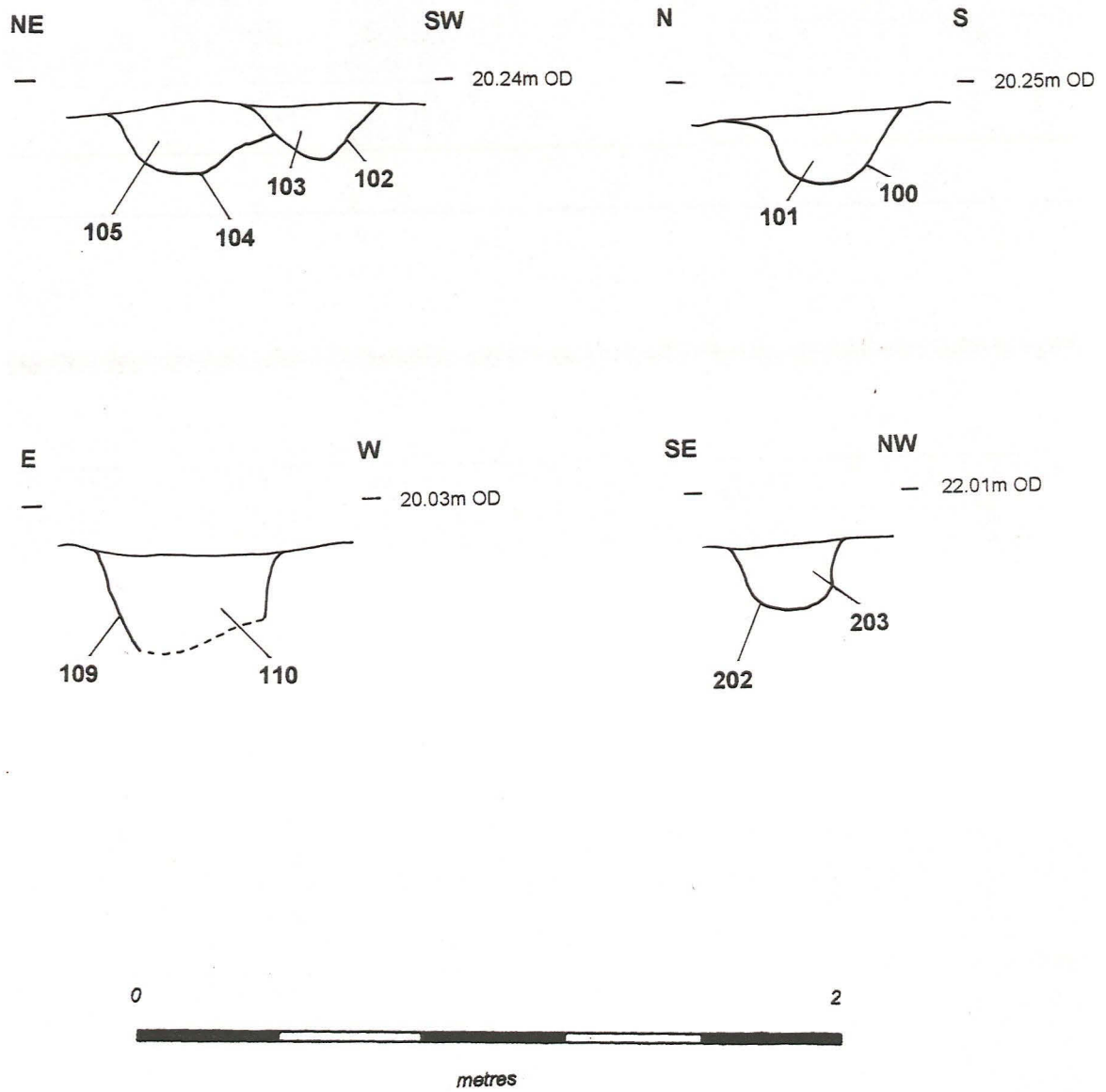


Fig. 4 Sections of selected features.



Pl. 1 Machine excavation of trenches under archaeological supervision.

Pl. 2 Hand excavation of archaeological features.





Pl. 3 Trench 1, looking south-west. Scales 2m.

Pl. 4 Trench 1 section, looking south, note waterlogging in foreground. Scales 2m & 1m.

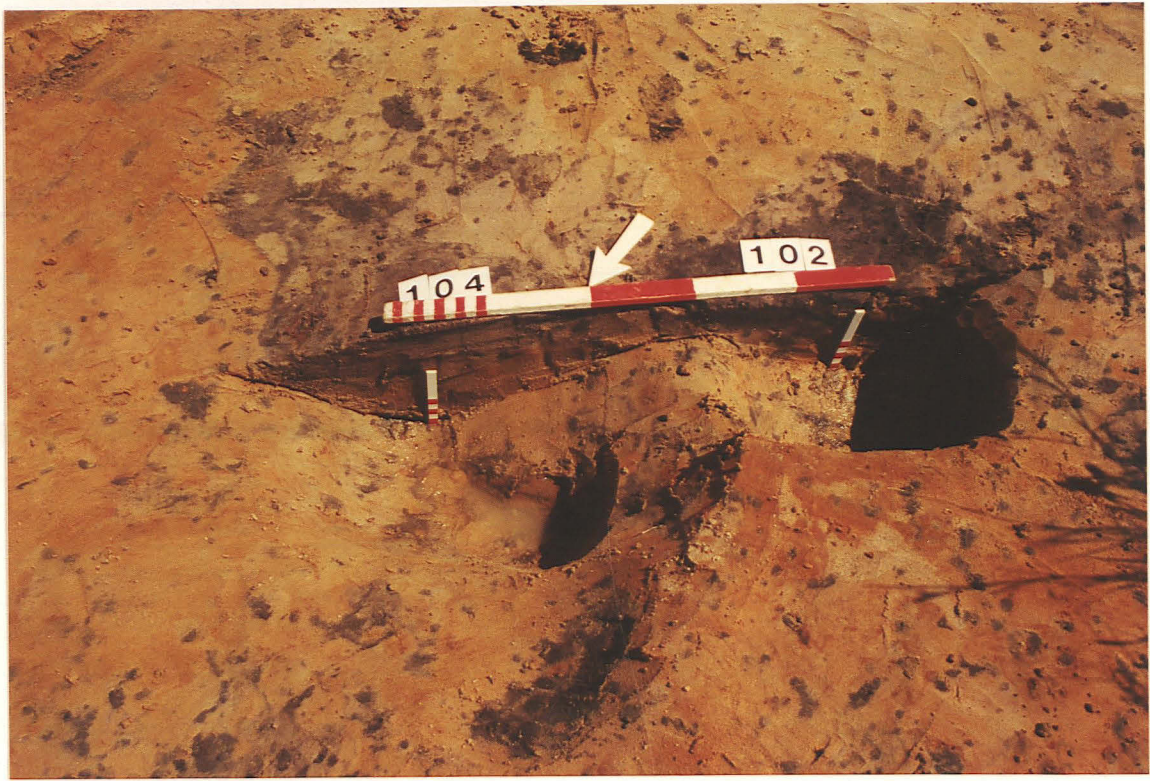




Pl. 5 Trench 2, posthole 202 visible in foreground, looking north.
Scales 2m.

Pl. 6 Posthole 100, looking east. Scales 0.50m & 0.25m.

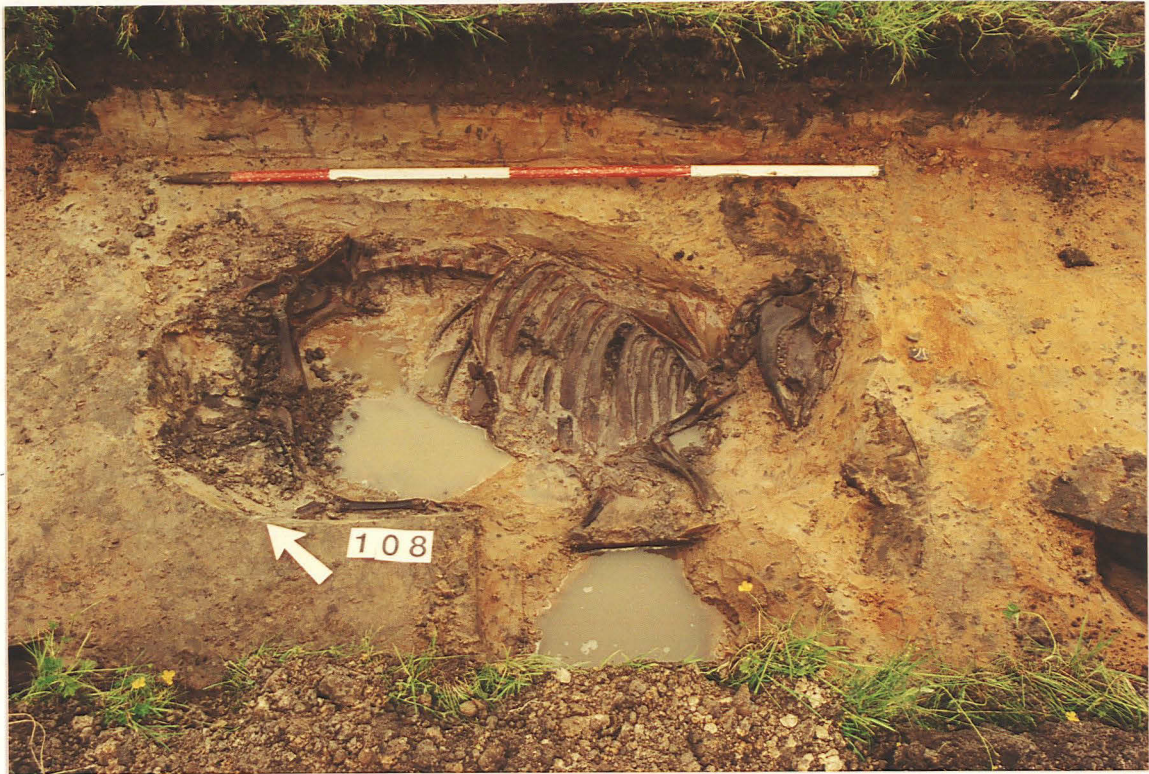




Pl. 7 Posthole 102 & feature 104, looking south-east. Scales 0.50m & 0.10m.

Pl. 8 Feature 106, looking south-west. Scales 1m & 0.50m.





Pl. 9 Horse skeleton 108, looking north-east. Scales 2m.

Pl. 10 Pit 111, looking north-east. Scales 2m & 0.25m.

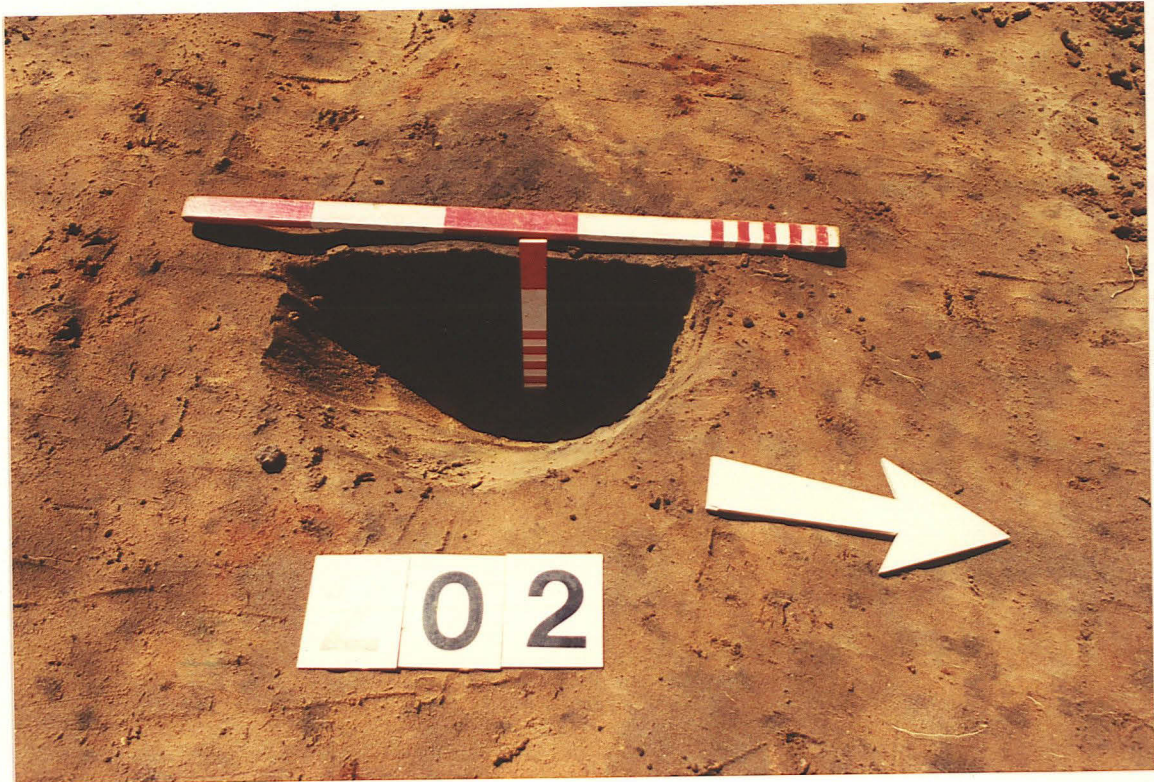




Pl. 11 Ditch 109, looking south-east, collapsing sides the result of a high water table. Scales 1m & 0.25m.

Pl. 12 Pit 120, looking south-west. Scales 1m & 0.50m.





Pl. 13 Posthole 202, looking west. Scales 0.50 & 0.25m.