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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

## Linwood, River Rase Improvement Scheme

*South Branch Site TF 1265 8825  
Site Code: LRRS 02  
LCNCC Museum Accn No.: 2002.200*

### Archaeological Watching Brief

Report prepared for The Environment Agency

by Geoff Tann

**LAS Report No. 587**

**May 2002**

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Highways & Planning  
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# Linwood, River Rase Improvement Scheme

## South Branch Site

### Archaeological Watching Brief

NGR: TF 1265 8825

Site Code: LRRS 02

LCNCC Museum Accn No.: 2002.200

#### **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief during groundworks for flood defence works identified a series of backfilled drainage ditches representing at least two phases. The ditches were thought to be of post-medieval date. An area of burnt sand (earlier than most of the ditches) was investigated but produced no dating evidence. The thin layer may represent the site of a substantial hedge maintenance bonfire.*

#### **Introduction**

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned in January 2002 by The Environment Agency to conduct an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for a flood storage reservoir on land north of Legsby Road, Linwood, Lincs. (Figs. 1 and 2). The watching brief was required by Lincolnshire County Council. Groundworks were monitored by Geoff Tann for LAS on 19th and 20th February 2002.

#### **Site Location and Description**

The Environment Agency is improving the protection of Market Rasen from river flooding by creating water storage areas upstream of Market Rasen on both the River Rase and its 'South Branch'. This has affected other sites, which have been the subject of previous archaeological investigations and reports (Williams 2000; Johnson 2000; Bunn and Palmer-Brown 2001; McDaid 2001).

The South Branch site is located on the south bank of the River Rase, 2km SE of Market Rasen. The site was formerly the western part of Market Rasen & District Golf Club golf course, and replacement golf holes have been constructed at an alternative location. The potential flood area (75 year event) will cover 10.8 ha along the river valley, but the area affected by construction of an embanked flood storage reservoir and minor diversion of the river was 5.5ha. This area included about 2ha of major disturbance, and about 3.5ha affected to a lesser extent by landscaping. Material for the flood storage area on the South Branch site was obtained from the excavation of the River Rase flood storage area.

#### **Archaeological Background**

Archaeological discoveries in the Market Rasen area include at least two foci for a Roman pottery industry which flourished in the second and third centuries AD. Kilns have been excavated south of the town on both the west and east sides of Linwood Road. Further kilns were discovered in Linwood parish, in the 1960s, south of the present flood defence groundworks. The potential for additional kilns or other features associated with Roman pottery manufacture is high in the vicinity of this site.

The South Branch site was landscaped during construction of the golf course, and it was unknown if archaeological remains were present.

## **The Watching Brief**

### ***Method***

Turf and topsoil was removed by a 360° machine with ditching bucket from an area c. 90m x 20m alongside the western boundary of the site (Pl. 1). The resultant surface was examined, and visible features were recorded, using context numbers assigned by LAS. A plan was prepared at a scale of 1:100, relating the features to the boundary and to temporary pegs sited by the contractors. Land drains were plotted where the drain trench or pipe was readily visible, but no attempt was made to trace their full courses.

After recording of the stripped surface, a 1m deep trench was excavated by machine along the eastern edge of the cleared area, in order to remove any land drains which were present. The trench was excavated with sloping sides, but it was possible to identify ditch fills, and this information was recorded to complement that gained from the surface.

### ***Results*** (Fig. 3)

At the northern end of the monitored area, about 0.25m of topsoil was present, overlying a yellow sand **802**. This increased further up the slope to the south, and 0.7m was removed at the SW corner. The greatest variable depths appeared to be the result of the topsoil merging with a similarly coloured underlying deposit of ditch fill, but small pockets of surviving subsoil may also have been removed.

The most extensive feature recorded was a 1.5m wide NW-SE aligned ditch **800**, backfilled with a dark brown/black loamy sand **801** (Pl. 3). A 50m length of this ditch was revealed, cutting the backfill of ditch **812**, but otherwise earlier than the other ditches and land drains. In the deeper trench, the rounded base of **800** was found to be 0.5m below the stripped surface (Pl. 4). This feature may have been a precursor of the existing western site boundary, on a different alignment.

The earlier ditch **812** was much less evident, and was only visible where it contained iron-panned sand lumps. It seemed to be aligned west-east, but may have curved at the western side of the site; it was 1m wide, but as it was not seen in the deeper trench, no information was recovered as to its depth and profile. Its plotted course does not appear to be influenced by either the existing hedge boundary or ditch **800**.

Three parallel ditches had been excavated across the backfilled **800**. Their alignment was almost at 90° to the existing boundary hedge, and this may be evidence for them respecting that boundary. Ditches **814** and **840** were only 6m apart, and may have acted as barriers either side of a track across the field; the spacing between **814** and **809** (to the north) was 12m, and the additional discontinuous ditch **830** was 13m to the south of **840** (Pl. 5). No other associated ditches were seen, suggesting that

they did not form part of an extensive series. Ditch **809** was 0.8m wide, with a pointed base 0.35m below the stripped surface (Pl. 6). Its fill **810** was a black sandy loam with infrequent burnt flint fragments. **814** was 1m wide, but was not seen in the deeper trench. **840** was 1.5m wide, 0.6m deep, with a pointed base; its fill contained root and twig remains (Pl. 7). The parallel but very different feature **830** was 2m wide, but was not seen in the deeper trench.

A 2.5m wide zone of dark brown sand **837**, coinciding with the change of slope, was interpreted as a backfilled ditch **836**. The deeper trench crossed it at an angle, exposing a grey clay fill about 0.6m deep, with a surrounding zone of leached white sand (Pls. 1 and 8).

To the north of ditch **809**, an 8m length of a NW-SE aligned 0.6m wide ditch **811** was visible (Pl. 3). Its alignment was roughly similar to parts of ditch **800**, but no association was suspected. At its southern end, it was overlain by a 0.05m thick spread of heat-affected red/orange sand **807** (Pls. 9 and 10). The spread extended over an area about 8m x 6m, but it had been disturbed by ditch **809** and several land drains; some material may have been redeposited. A single small piece of ironpan concretion was found with the discoloured sand, but there were no indications as to the cause of the feature. It may represent a post-medieval bonfire during routine hedge maintenance, perhaps for a boundary alongside ditch **800**.

Numerous small irregular patches of black sand, particularly to the south of the stripped area, were thought to mark the positions of removed bushes or saplings. These were not investigated. An area of dark brown clay **805** near the northern end, coinciding with a concentration of land drains and near various ditches, seemed to be alluvium (Pl. 9). Beside the river, an excavation for the new flood defence works had exposed the soil profile beyond the NE limit of the monitored area. A photograph of this was taken for record purposes (Pl. 11).

### **Conclusion**

The area stripped for this soil storage heap affected no significant archaeological features. The natural valley crossing the golf course to the west of this site, probably a former tributary stream, seems to have remained a natural drain, and has directed water across this site (Pl. 12). As a direct result, artificial drainage on this side of the river has clearly been a preoccupation for many years.

### **Acknowledgements**

LAS is grateful for the co-operation received from The Environment Agency (especially Mark Bowlt and James Atkinson), and their contractors, Fox Plant. Illustrations were prepared by Mick McDaid. The report was collated and produced by Jane Frost.

Geoff Tann  
Lindsey Archaeological Services  
9th May 2002



## References

- Bunn, D. and Palmer-Brown, C. 2001 *Fluxgate Gradiometer Survey: Land at Market Rasen Golf Club and Racecourse, Lincs.* Pre-Construct Geophysics report, July 2001.
- McDaid, M. 2001 *River Rase Improvement Scheme, Land formerly part of Market Rasen Golf Club and Race Course: Archaeological Evaluation.* LAS Report No. 548, August 2001.
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- Williams, M. 2000 *River Rase Improvement Scheme: Archaeological Evaluation.* LAS Report No. 484, November 2000.

## Archive Summary

Correspondence

Developer's plans

Field plan

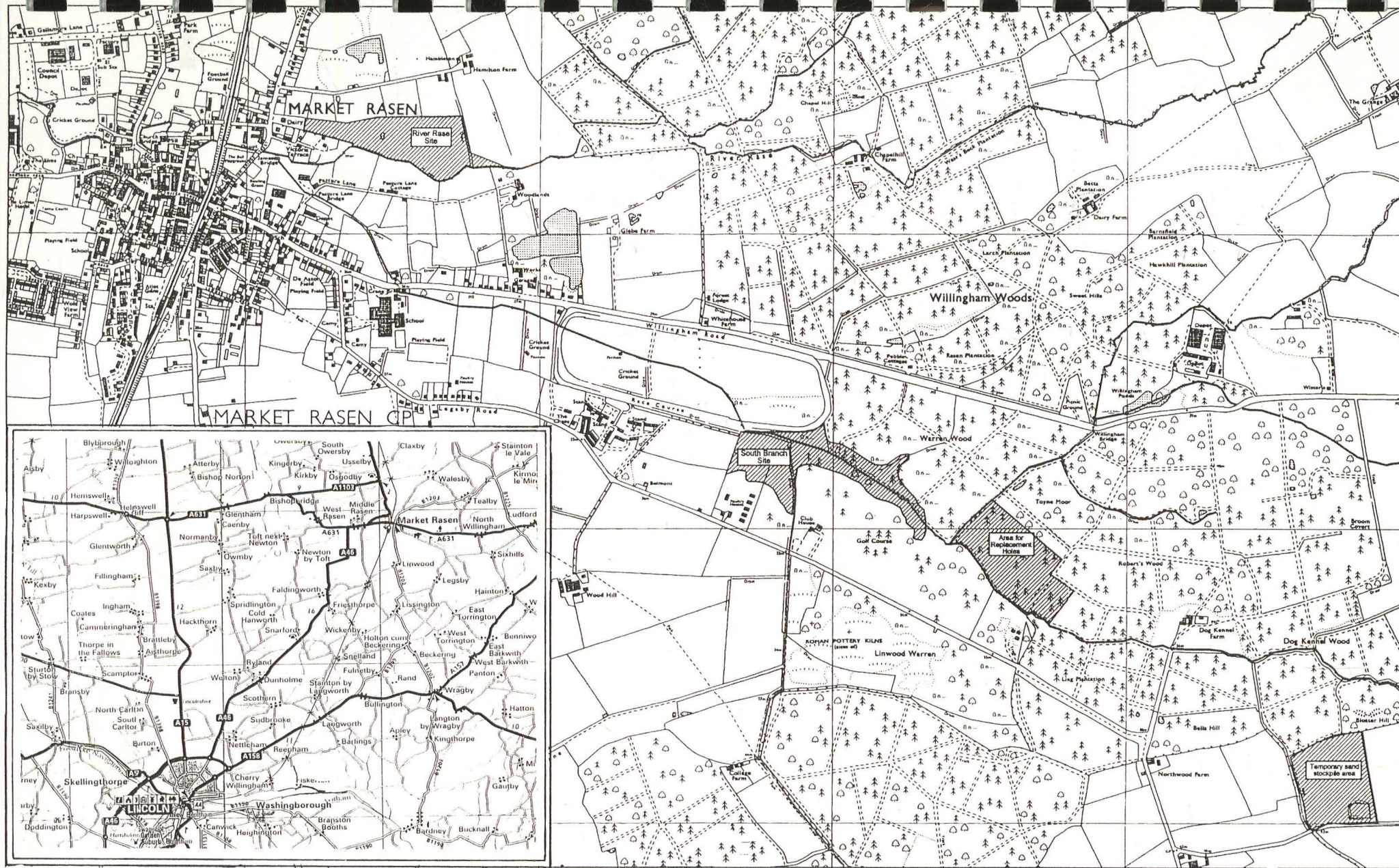
Photographs: LAS colour print film nos. 02/18/00-24 (including those used in this report).

**THE APPENDICES**

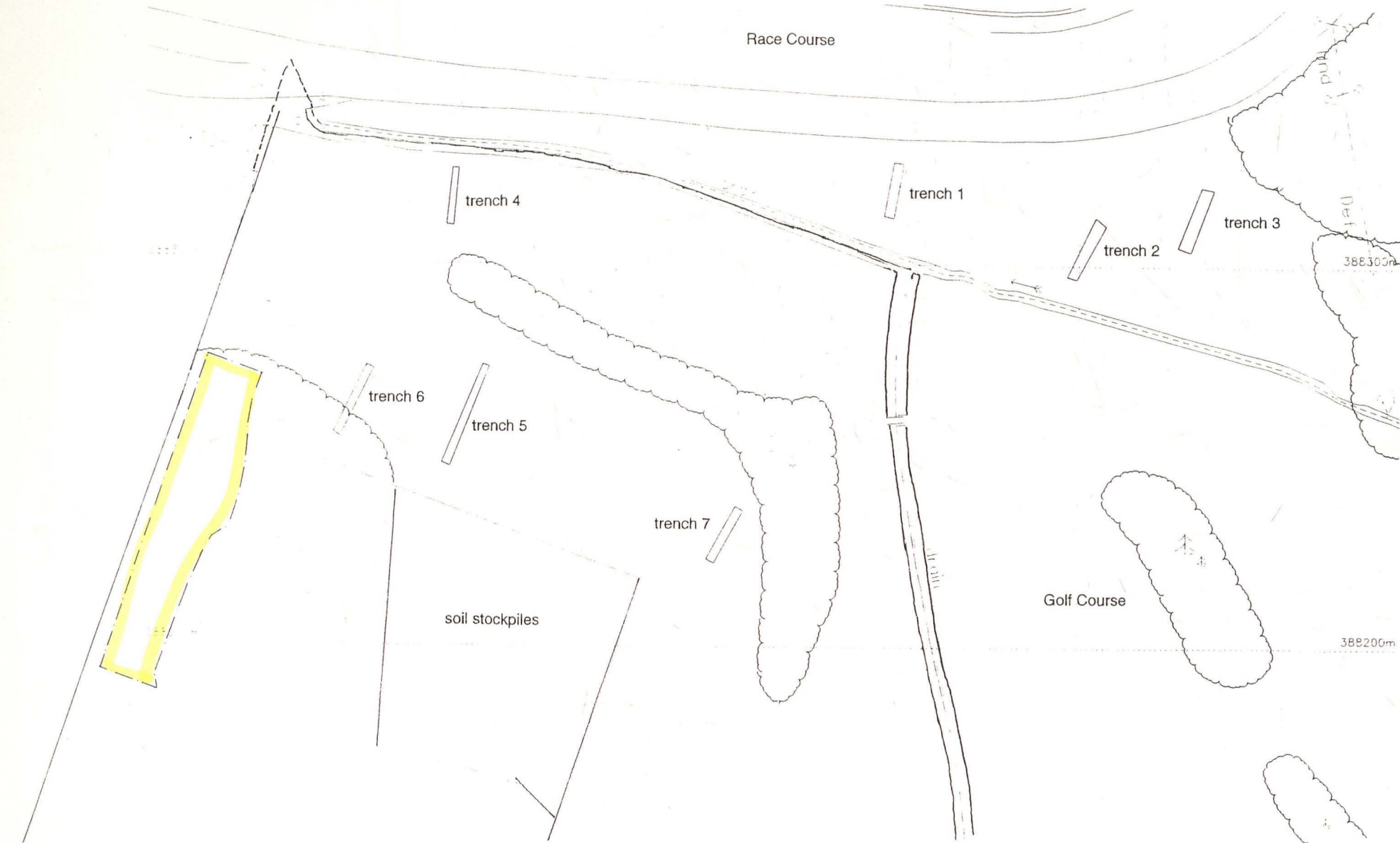
## River Rise, South Branch Context Summary

Context No.	Type	Relationships	Description
800	ditch	fill by 801, cuts 813	0.5m deep, 1.5m wide, rounded profile, north-south aligned
801	fill	fill of 800, cut by 809, 814, 840	mixed yellow sand and brown/black loamy sand
802	layer	below all	yellow sand natural
803	layer	cut by 800, over 805	brown clay
804	layer	below 803	orange/yellow sandy clay
805	layer	over 802, below 803	dark brown clay
806	fill	fill of 811, below 807	dark brown sandy clay
807	layer	above 806, 808	burnt yellow clay with charcoal
808	?treehole	cuts 802, below 807	black sand
809	ditch	filled by 810, cuts 801	0.8m wide, 0.35m deep, pointed base; east-west aligned
810	fill	fill of 809	black silt, with burnt flints
811	ditch	filled by 806, cuts 802	0.8m wide, SE-NW aligned
812	ditch	filled by 813, cuts 802	1m wide, east-west aligned
813	fill	fill of 812, cut by 800	iron panned yellow sand
814	ditch	filled by 815, cuts 801	0.75m wide, east-west aligned
815	fill	fill of 814	dark brown sandy clay
816	?treehole	cuts 802	black sand
817	?treehole	cuts 802	black sand
818	?treehole	cuts 802	black sand
819	?treehole	cuts 802	black sand
820	?treehole	cuts 802	black sand
821	?treehole	cuts 802	black sand
822	?treehole	cuts 802	black sand
823	?treehole	cuts 802	black sand
824	?treehole	cuts 802	black sand
825	?treehole	cuts 802	black sand
826	?treehole	cuts 802	black sand
827	?treehole	cuts 802	black sand
828	?treehole	cuts 802	black sand
829	?treehole	cuts 802	black sand
830	ditch	filled by 831, 832; cuts 802	2m wide, east-west aligned, with western terminal
831	fill	fill of 830	black/dark brown sand
832	fill	terminal fill of 830	black/dark brown sand
833	?treehole	cuts 802	black sand
834	?treehole	cuts 802	black sand
835	?treehole	cuts 802	black sand
836	ditch	filled by 837, cuts 838 and 802	3m wide, NE-SW aligned
837	fill	fill of 836	dark brown sand with black sand patches
838	layer	cut by 836, above 839	dirty brown sand
839	layer	below 838	orange sand
840	ditch	filled by 841, cuts 801	1.5m wide, 0.6m deep, pointed base; east-west aligned
841	fill	fill of 840	contains roots and twigs

## THE FIGURES



**Fig. 1** Location of the River Rase Improvement Scheme (based on a plan supplied by the Environment Agency, dwg. ref. NHB30958/200. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 10002165).



**Fig. 2** Location of the area monitored during topsoil stripping (based on a plan showing the positions of the previous archaeological evaluation trenches. Dwg. ref. MSE LA/MSE/1709-1).

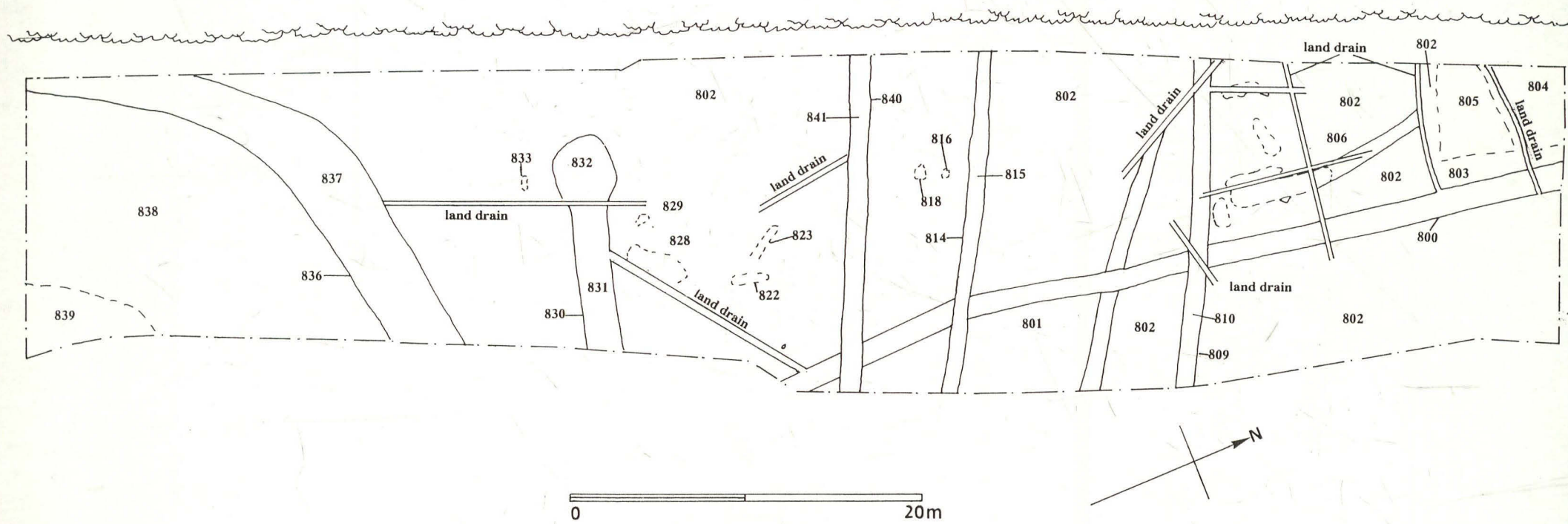


Fig. 3 Plan of features seen after removal of topsoil (McDaid and Frost, after Tann).

**THE PLATES**





PI. 1 The monitored area, after topsoil stripping (looking south, with the western site boundary hedge to the right).

PI. 2 A deeper trench was excavated along the eastern edge of the stripped area (looking NW, with the grey fill of 836 visible in the trench sides).





**Pl. 3** Dark fills of the backfilled ditches contrasted with the sand. Ditch 800 crosses the photograph from left to right; ditch 809 runs between the red peg and the hedge, and part of ditch 811 is visible behind 800. Looking NW.



**PI. 4** Dark fill at the broad, rounded base of ditch 800 showing in the deeper trench (below the peg), with the pointed base of 840 in the trench side (left). Looking south.

**PI. 5** Ditch 809 crosses the immediate foreground, beside burnt sand 807. The two ditches parallel to 809 (814, 840) cross the centre of the stripped area, and may mark the line of a track. Ditch 812 runs at an angle from the bottom right. (Looking SE).





Pl. 6 Dark fill of ditch 809 showing in the side of the deeper trench (looking west; the concrete fence post right of the rolled fence marks a recent field subdivision).

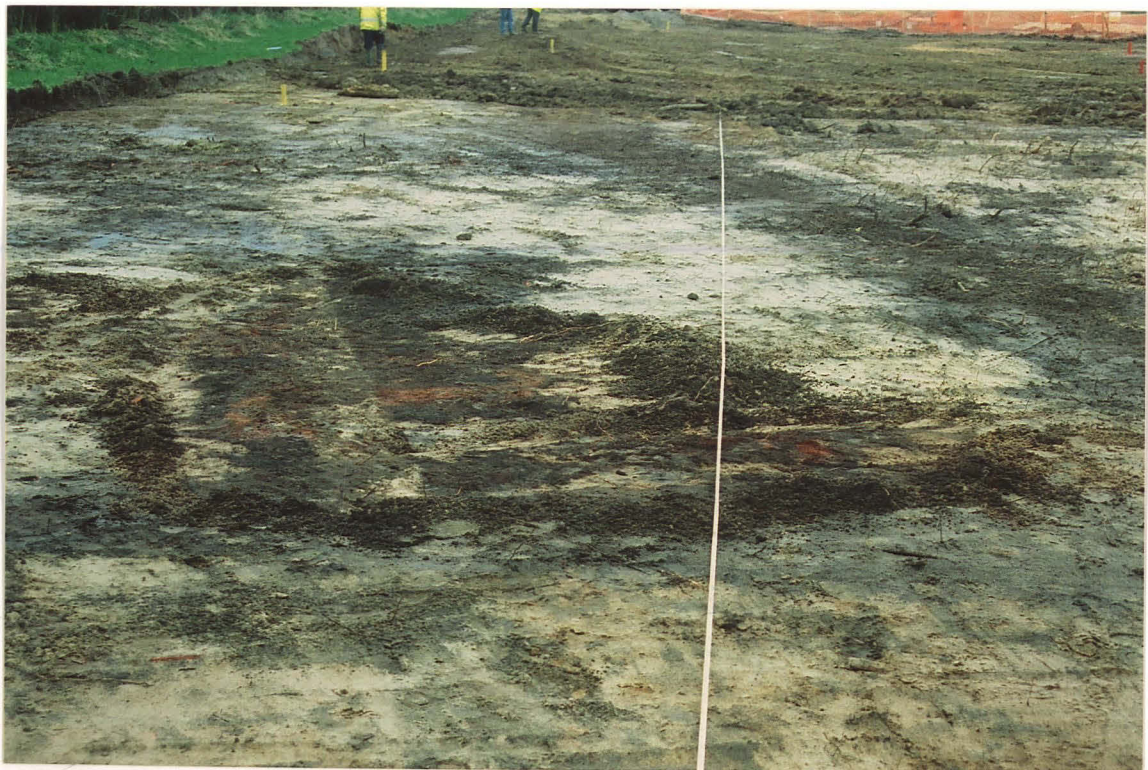
Pl. 7 Dark sandy silt, filling ditch 840 (looking east).





Pl. 8 Ditch 836 at the change of slope, visible in the side of the deeper trench (looking west).

Pl. 9 Area of red burnt sand 807, removed by ditches and land drains (looking north across ditch 809 in foreground, with ditch 800 to right).





**Pl. 10** Detail of the red burnt sand layer 807, with straight edges cut by later land drain (looking west).

**Pl. 11** Soil profile at the northern side of a trench excavated for new flood defence structures, north of the monitored area (looking NE).





Pl. 12 Natural ground undulations in the golf course to the west of the monitored area, showing former valleys. Looking NW, before completion of the topsoil stripping.