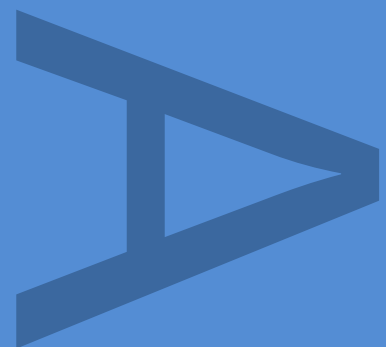


**GIMBERT ROAD, SOHAM,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION AND EXCAVATION**

FEBRUARY 2012



**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY
R11144**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND EXCAVATION AT GIMBERT ROAD, SOHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

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ABSTRACT

This document details the results of an archaeological evaluation, excavation and watching brief at the site of a proposed housing development located on land at Gimbert Road, Soham. This work was commissioned by CgMs consulting on behalf of Bloor Homes and was undertaken between November 2011 and January 2012.

Three phases were identified dating to the Late Bronze Age, Late Iron Age to Early Romano-British and early medieval periods.

A substantial waterhole containing a collapsed wooden revetment, was revealed with a contemporary burnt flint filled pit located adjacent. The waterhole contained later Bronze Age pottery, a large amount of animal bone and fragments of burnt flint, with a concentration of finds in the upper fills.

A number of northwest southeast aligned ditches containing Late Iron Age and 1st-2nd century AD pottery formed elements of a field system. Ditches of a subsequent early medieval field system on the same northeast southwest alignment contained 10th-14th century AD pottery. These were likely fields located between the areas of early medieval settlement identified through previous excavations to the north and south of the Gimbert Road site.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The site is located on the northern edge of the historic core of the town of Soham. Covering c. 0.66 hectares, it is bounded to the north-west by properties off Gimbert Road, to the north-east by the rear of properties off Hall Street, to the south-east by the rear of properties off Berrycroft and to the south-west by a footpath which leads from Berrycroft to an allotment garden (Fig. 1) (Plate 1).
- 1.2** An evaluation was carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology between the 28th and 29th November 2011 and comprised six trenches measuring 30m long and 2.10m wide. A proposed 7th trench was not excavated due to concerns over soil contamination at the northern end of the site which was addressed prior to the watching brief (Fig. 2).
- 1.3** Two foci of archaeological activity were identified. Towards the northern end of the site a Bronze Age presence was noted, and towards the southern end of the site Romano-British and early medieval activity was revealed.
- 1.4** Following discussions with Andy Thomas of the CCC Historic Environment Team it was agreed that an open area excavation was required to clarify the findings of the evaluation and to enable excavation of the significant archaeological remains.
- 1.5** The excavation was carried out between the 12th and 16th December 2011 and was targeted over the two areas of archaeological potential identified during the evaluation. This comprised of two trenches, measuring 30m long and 20m wide located towards the north-east and south-west ends of the development area (Fig 2).
- 1.6** Following the excavation, a watching brief was carried out at the northern end of the site on land previously identified as contaminated between the 12th and 17th of January. The works comprised of two trenches measuring 25m long and 1.5m wide located towards the north-east end of the site. Trenches 7 and 8 were excavated to the interface with natural geology. No archaeological features were identified (Fig 2).

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.1** Within its wider topographic setting, the site lies on a gravel peninsula on the southern edge of The Fens.
- 2.2** There are no natural watercourses on or near the site however, Soham Lode, an artificial continuation of the River Snail, lies c.450m west of the study site. Soham lies alongside Soham Mere, which formed an area of deep water in the later prehistoric and Roman periods.
- 2.3** The site lies on an area of 3rd Terrace Deposits overlying Middle Chalk (British Geological Survey sheet 188: Cambridge). There is a slight fall in height from the southern corner of the site from c.8m above Ordnance Datum (AOD) to the northern corner of the site at c.7m AOD.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1** Soham lies alongside Soham Mere, which formed an area of deep water in the later prehistoric and Roman periods. The fen-edge, within which the study site lies, forms the base for an archaeological landscape well known for its wealth of prehistoric, Iron Age and Roman settlement. An examination of data in the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) for sites within a 1km radius of the study site (otherwise known as the study area) shows that there are number of late prehistoric, Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and early Medieval sites and finds within this area.
- 3.2** Four Mesolithic tranchet axes were found in the general area of Soham (CHER 07098 at TL 59 73). A Neolithic stone axe (CHER 11019 at TL 599 737), a Neolithic axe and pestle (CHER 07087 at TL 59 73) and a Neolithic flint hammer (CHER 02097 at TL 60 73) were found in the vicinity of the study site. Early Neolithic pottery was also recovered approximately 200m east of the study site from Ten Bell Lane (CHER CB1809) and a small assemblage of worked flint was recovered roughly 200m to the south-east at Weatheralls Primary School, (CHER CB3363).
- 3.3** By the Bronze Age, settlement and related burial monuments were densely scattered along the fen-edge and on the fen islands (Hall and Coles 1994). Bronze Age settlement evidence has been identified on submerged sand islands at Eye Hill Farm and at Broad Hill. These sites are located c .2.5km north and north of Soham (Hall and Coles 1994).
- 3.4** Although, Bronze Age settlement evidence has not been identified within the vicinity of the study site, archaeological investigations at St Andrews House, c. 600m south of the study site, recorded a shallow ditch containing Bronze Age flint debitage (CHER CB15776 at TL 59299 73058). Cloverfield Drive c.600m north of the study site, recorded a Bronze Age waterhole (MCB 16867) very similar in form to that revealed during the Gimbert Road excavations. In addition, cinerary urns were found at Clipsel Fields (CHER 07090 at TL 59 73). The find was made in 1908 and although the grid reference places the find site c. 200m to the south of the study site the exact location of Clipsel Fields is unclear.
- 3.5** Iron Age activity in Soham appears concentrated on the higher and presumably better drained ground. Archaeological investigations at St Andrews House, c. 600m south of the study site, recorded a small concentration of Early Iron Age features consisting of two possible postholes, ditches and pits indicative of settlement dateable to the period 500-300BC (CHER CB 15776).
- 3.6** During the Roman period, Soham formed part of a complex and intensively settled landscape on the edge of the fens. Within the area

of the modern town however, there is relatively little evidence of where people lived at this time, the most notable being cemetery activity possibly of this date recorded c. 250m to the east of the site.

- 3.7** There is an increasing corpus of evidence for agricultural activity, particularly field boundaries and stray finds from a number of sites that indicate that the area was occupied and utilised for agricultural purposes during this period. Evidence for Roman pits was recorded during excavation towards the north-eastern area of the Parish Hall. Sherds of pottery found in the fills of these pits were of Roman date and lacked significant abrasion, suggesting in situ deposition (CHER CB2898).
- 3.8** The name Soham is Early Saxon in origin. According to Reaney, it is derived from the Old English Soegan Hamm or 'swampy' settlement or enclosure (Reaney 1943, 196).
- 3.9** It is likely that the street layout of Soham had its origins in the Late Saxon period. The earliest mention of Soham was recorded in a document dated AD972. There is 12th-century documentary evidence for an abbey built by St Felix which was burnt in AD870 by the Danes. Luttingus, a Saxon nobleman built a cathedral and palace at Soham around 900 AD, probably on the site of the present day Church of St. Andrews and adjacent land. St. Andrew's Church dates from the 12th century and traces of the Saxon Cathedral still exist within the church.
- 3.10** The population recorded in the Domesday Survey (1086) was fairly large with three manors totalling 71 people (heads of families). Several archaeological evaluations and excavations have uncovered Late Saxon and Saxo-Norman occupation in Soham, beginning in the 10th century, CHER CB 8558; CHER CB 14041; CHER CB 14110.
- 3.11** Several cemeteries of this period are known in the area, including one at St Andrew's Church in the core of the early town. Archaeological work at Pratt Street and Church Street/Station Road, within 300m to the south of the site, has recorded late Saxon/early medieval settlement evidence.
- 3.12** The core of the medieval town lay c. 375m to the south of the study site and the area of the site itself likely remained undeveloped until the 16th-18th centuries AD, the period during which Soham Mere was drained and brought into cultivation. Archaeological work at Cloverfield Drive (CHER CB 2139) to the north of the site has, however, demonstrated that pockets of settlement of medieval date occur along a spur of high ground running north from the historic town core.

3.13 Historic maps indicate that the site was not developed in the later post-medieval period with the exception of its north-eastern part, which was occupied by outbuildings by the late 19th century and now contains Croft House.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.1** The broad aim of the project was to preserve by record those archaeological remains under threat as a result of the proposed development and to define the character, date, extent and degree of survival of archaeological deposits in this part of Soham.
- 4.2** As stated, the evaluation revealed two foci of Bronze Age and Medieval activity. The specific objective of the subsequent excavation was to further define the character, date extent and degree of survival of this these deposits.

5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1** The work, which was undertaken in three stages, comprised of an initial evaluation phase of six 30m long and 2.10m wide trial trenches. The subsequent excavation comprised of two 30m long and 20m wide trenches. Following the excavation a watching brief took place on the northern part of the site which included the cutting of two further 25m long and 1.5m wide trenches. In all phases of work, excavation to the natural geology was carried out using a 360 tracked excavator with a toothless ditching bucket.
- 5.2** All aspects of the project were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologist's Code of Conduct, the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (2008), and Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (EAA Occasional Paper 14).

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

Introduction

- 6.1 The sequence of archaeological deposits will be described below from earliest to latest with reference to the three principal phases of activity identified, namely the late Bronze Age, Romano British and early medieval periods. Bronze Age features were concentrated to the north of the site within excavation Area 2 while the majority of Romano-British and Medieval field system ditches were concentrated towards the southern end of site within excavation Area 1 (Fig 3).

The Natural Geology

- 6.2 The natural geology (12) was a grey brown sandy silt glacial drift deposit over light blue grey silty clay.

The Bronze Age

- 6.3 A large waterhole and a burnt flint filled pit located roughly central to Area 2 were the only features of Late Bronze Age date encountered in the areas excavated. The pit and waterhole were likely to have been contemporary although no dateable evidence was recovered from the pit other than burnt flint. No direct evidence of occupation was revealed, yet the pottery, flint and faunal assemblages from the waterhole are indicative of nearby settlement activity.
- 6.4 The fill profile of Waterhole 29 indicated a fairly gradual silting, initially in standing water. The majority of the pottery was recovered from the upper fills of the feature and whereas animal bone was present throughout, although a notable concentration was present in the two top fills.
- 6.5 At the base of the waterhole against the north-west edge, a number of deliberately placed timbers formed a roughly constructed wooden revetment. (Fig 4, Plates 2 and 3). The wood was in poor condition and the revetment had partially collapsed into the base of the feature but the presence of a stake, and thin degraded horizontal elements indicate a partially wattled lining. As the wood was in poor condition, no evidence of tooling or faceting was apparent. However, the shape and dimensions of the largest timber element (66) indicated the use of natural un-worked wood for this structure. The timbers functioned as a revetment to stabilise the northwest edge of the feature to allow easier access to the water and slow the natural infilling process.
- 6.6 Waterhole 29 was sub-circular in plan, 4.1m wide and 1.52m deep with moderately steep stepped sides and a concave base (Figs 3 and 4) (Plate 4).
- Fill 73 was organic rich dark blue grey silty clay measuring 0.45m wide and 0.4m deep. The fill was located up against the northwest edge of the pit and derived

from the placing of material behind a revetment formed by timbers 66, 67 and 71 (Plate 2).

- Timber horizontal 66 measured 0.95m long and 0.1m wide and lay roughly north-south against the northwest edge of the pit (Fig 4, Plates 2 and 3). Thin fragmentary horizontal 71, measured 0.5m long and 0.05m wide and sat directly over 66 and was probably degraded wattling. Lying 0.2m to the northeast was stake 67, measuring 0.25m long and 0.05m wide, yet this showing no signs of working or faceting. The location of timbers 66, 67 and 71 indicate that a once more extensive wattle revetment of the northwest side had collapsed into the base of the feature. No indication of a revetment of the southeast edge of the feature was present.
- Fill 74 was a dark blue grey silty clay measuring 0.5m wide and 0.23m deep, containing occasional gravel inclusions. The deposit was concentrated against the southeast edge of the pit.
- Fill 68 was a dark blue grey silty clay measuring 1m wide and 0.25m deep, containing rare gravel inclusions and slight iron panning. This deposit yielded two fragments of cattle bone.
- Fill 50 / 39 was blue grey sandy clay with orange brown sandy lenses and measured 2.2m wide and 0.45m deep. The deposit was concentrated on the southeast side of the pit and was a gradual silting deriving in part from erosion of the natural sand feature edges. Three sherds of pottery dating to the Late Bronze age were recovered from this deposit as was a retouched blade of likely Neolithic date and a trimming flake. Of the sixteen fragments of animal bone recovered, all derived from cattle or cattle sized animals.
- Fill 49 was a mid bluish grey clay silt measuring 1.65m wide and 0.4m deep and derived in part from stabilisation of the clay feature edges on the northwest side. The deposit contained occasional flint gravel inclusions.
- Fill 44 was mid a brownish grey sandy silt measuring 3.85m wide and 0.28m deep and yielded three sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery and fourteen fragments of bone from cattle, pig a sheep sized animal.
- Fill 48 (same as 33) was a brownish grey sandy silt 3.7m wide, 0.1m deep which contained a high percentage of sub angular gravel possibly deriving from redeposited up cast material.
- Fill 43 (same as 32) was a mid grey brown sandy silt 3.5m wide and 0.26m deep. This deposit contained a lens of charcoal rich dumped material, indicating backfilling after the feature had gone out of use. Of the fifty three fragments of animal bone recovered, cattle, sheep/goat, pig, horse and red deer were represented.
- The uppermost fill of pit 29 was context 42 (same as 30 and 31), a mid grey brown sandy silt that measured 4m wide and 0.3m deep and was likely derived from gradual silting of the feature. Three sherds of flint tempered Late Bronze Age pottery were recovered from this fill, as were seven flint flakes, two flint cores and 25 fragments of burnt flint weighing 829g. From the thirty one fragments of animal bone recovered, cattle, sheep/goat and red deer were represented.

6.7 Pit 69 was sub-circular in plan with shallow sides and a moderate break of slope, measuring 0.6m wide and 0.21m deep.

- Fill 72 was mid reddish brown silty clay with occasional flint gravel that was 0.6m wide and 0.13m deep.

- Fill 70 was dark grey sandy silt fill with a high concentration of burnt flint fragments weighing 8.257kg (Figs 3 and 4) (Plate 4).

The Late Iron Age to Early Romano-British Period (1st-2nd century AD)

6.8 Evidence for Late Iron Age and Romano-British activity was in the form of a series of ditches located towards the eastern side of the site as defined as Boundary Line 1 (Fig 3). The boundary was composed of at least six distinct ditches which could be traced over at least 70m across the site. These ditches were on a shared north-east south-west alignment with an overall east-west width of 15m. The parallel ditches utilised a slight topographic rise and were likely flanked with associated banks and hedgerows. The ditches represent the maintenance, repair and re-emphasis of the same field boundary over time.

Boundary Line 1.

6.9 Ditch slots 19 and 65 formed a single ditch aligned northeast south west measuring 7m long (Fig 3).

- Ditch 19 was linear in plan with steep side and a concave base measuring 0.8m wide and 0.4m deep (Fig 5). Filled by 20, a mid brownish grey clay silt with occasional gravel inclusions (Plate 6). A single fragment of cattle bone was recovered from this deposit.
- Ditch 65 was linear in plan with gradual sides and a concave base measuring 0.5m wide and 0.15m deep (Fig 5). Filled by 64, a mid brownish grey clay silt with occasional gravel inclusions. A single residual reused fragment of a flint quern was recovered from this fill, as was a single horse bone.

6.10 Ditch slots 17 and 54 formed a single ditch aligned northeast southwest measuring 15m long (Fig 3).

- Ditch 17 was linear in plan with moderately sloping sides and a concave base measuring 0.95m wide and 0.15m deep (Plate 6). Filled by 18, a mid brownish grey clay silt with occasional flint gravel. Three sherds of late Iron Age pottery and two sherds of not closely dateable pottery were recovered from this fill (Brudenel, M. Pers Comm). Of the six animal bone fragments recovered cattle, sheep/goat, pig and red deer was represented.
- Ditch 54 was linear in plan with moderately sloping sides and a concave base measuring 0.35m wide and 0.19m deep (Fig 5). Filled by 53, a mid brownish grey clay silt with rare gravel inclusions. Ten fragments of animal bone were recovered representing cattle and sheep/goat.

6.11 Ditch 47 was linear in plan with steep sides and a flat base measuring 7m long, 1.2m wide and 0.5m deep and contained two fills (45 and 46) (Fig 5).

- Fill 46 was a firm dark grey brown sandy silt with rare sub angular flint inclusions
Fill 45 was a mid grey brown sandy silt with occasional flint gravel inclusions.
(Plate 7).

6.12 Ditch 52 was linear in plan with moderately steep sides and a concave base measuring 0.55 long, 0.35m wide and 0.15m deep (Fig 5). Filled by 51, a mid brownish grey clay silt containing occasional gravel inclusions.

6.13 Ditch 75 was linear in plan with unexcavated sides measuring 7m long and 0.6m wide.

6.14 Ditch slots 13, 34 and 36 formed a single ditch aligned northeast southwest measuring 62m long (Fig 3).

- Ditch 13 was linear in plan with gradually sloping sides and a concave base measuring 0.75m wide and 0.37m deep. Filled by 14, a firm mid grey brown clay silt with occasional flint gravel inclusions (Fig 5).
- Ditch 34 was linear in plan with moderately sloping sides and a concave base measuring 0.5m wide and 0.15m deep. Filled by 35, a mid grey brown clay silt with occasional flint gravel inclusions.
- Ditch 36 was linear in plan with gently sloping sides and a concave base measuring 0.6m wide and 0.25m deep. Filled by a mid grey brown clay silt with occasional flint gravel inclusions (Fig 5).

The Medieval Period (10th -14th century AD)

6.15 Early medieval activity was in the form north-east south- west aligned ditches defined as Boundary Line 2 (Fig 3). This boundary lay immediately to the west of the Romano-British ditches of Boundary Line 1 and shared the alignment of the earlier features.

Boundary line 2

6.16 Ditch slots 21, 27 and 40 possibly formed a single ditch measuring 63m long (Fig 3).

- Ditch 21 was linear in plan with moderately sloping sides and a concave base measuring 1.45m wide and 0.52m deep (Plate 8). Filled by 22, a mid grey brown clay silt that contained six sherds of pottery dated to the 10th-14th century and a single fragment of cattle bone.
- Ditch 27 was linear in plan with shallow sides and a concave base measuring 0.65m wide and 0.06m deep. Filled by 28, a mid yellowish brown sandy silt with occasional flint gravel inclusions. A sherd of residual Later Prehistoric pottery and a sherd of 13th-14th century jar was recovered from this fill.
- Ditch 40 was linear in plan with unexcavated sides measuring 2.10m long and 0.9m wide. Filled by 41, a mid yellowish brown sandy silt with occasional angular and sub angular flint gravel inclusions.

- Ditch 25 was linear in plan with moderate sides and a concave base measuring 0.85m wide and 0.18m deep. Filled by 26, a mid yellowish brown sandy silt with occasional flint gravel inclusions.
- Ditch 59 was curvilinear in plan with shallow sides and a concave base measuring 0.36m wide and 0.06m deep (Fig 5). Filled by 60, a firm mid grey brown clay silt with rare gravel inclusions.
- Ditch 61 was linear in plan with steep sides and a concave base measuring 7m long, 1.67m wide and 0.58m deep, with a terminus at the southwest end (Fig 5). Fill 62 was a mid yellowish brown sandy silt with rare gravel inclusions. Fill 63 was a dark grey brown clay silt with occasional flint gravel and heavy root damage. A single sherd of 13th century pottery was recovered from this deposit.

Undated features

6.17 A number of undated features were located towards the southern end of the excavation, within Area 1 (Fig 3). These consisted of two shallow amorphous pits were likely tree throw hollows. A shallow north-east south-west ditch with a posthole truncating the terminus shared the alignment of the ditches of Boundary Line 1 and Boundary Line 2 and may have belonged to either phase of activity. It is highly likely that these features were contemporary with one or more of the periods of activity detailed above but this remains unclear due to the lack of dateable finds or stratigraphic evidence.

- Pit 15 was sub circular in plan with gently sloping sides and a concave base, measuring 1.65m wide and 0.15m deep. Filled by 16 a mid grey brown clay silt with occasional flint gravel. This feature was a possible tree throw hollow.
- Pit 77 was sub circular in plan with shallow sides and a flat base, measuring 1.5m wide and 0.02m deep. Filled by 78, a mid grey brown sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions.
- Ditch 56 was linear in plan with gradually sloping side and a concave base, measuring 3.70m long, 0.5m wide and 0.25m deep (Fig 5). The ditch had a terminus at the northeast end that was truncated by post hole 58 (see below). Filled by 55, a mid brown sandy silt with rare gravel inclusions.
- Post hole 58 was sub circular in plan with steep sides and a concave base, measuring 0.5m wide and 0.45m deep (Fig 5). Filled by 57, a light grey brown sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions.

6.18 All archaeological features were sealed by grey brown clay silt subsoil (11) from which a two sherds of 12th-14th century pottery were recovered in Trench 4. The topsoil 13 was a dark grey brown sandy clay silt that was present across the whole site.

THE FINDS

7 LITHICS - BARRY BISHOP

Introduction

Archaeological investigations at the above site resulted in the recovery of twelve struck flints and a quantity of burnt flint fragments. This report follows the methodology and objectives encapsulated in both MAP2 and MoRPHE (English Heritage 1991; 2006). Its aims are to quantify and describe the material, assess its significance and to recommend any further work required for the material to achieve its full research potential. All metrical information follows the methodology established by Saville (1980). A full catalogue detailing the material's distribution within individual contexts is presented in Catalogue/Appendix 3.

Quantification

Type	Decortication Flake	Flake	Core	Retouched	Flint Quern Flake	Burnt Stone (no.)	Burnt Stone (wt.)
No.	2	6	2	1	1	25	9.086kg

Table 1: Quantification of Lithic Material

A total of eleven pieces of struck flint were recovered from five separate contexts. The assemblage included a single retouched implement, two cores and eight flakes. In addition, 25 pieces of unworked burnt flint weighing 829g from three separate contexts were also recovered. Two of the contexts, 31 and 42, produced relatively significant quantities, at 170g and 631g respectively.

Burnt Flint

A total of just over 9kg of burnt flint was recovered from 2 features, Waterhole 29 and Pit 69. The burnt flint from Pit 69, weighed 8.257kg. The burnt flint had been heated to variable degrees although it has all changed colour and become 'fire-crazed', consistent with heating in a hearth. None of the material had been worked or reused.

The burnt flint from Waterhole 29, weighed 0.83kg. Although the pieces from context 30 are small and most probably represent

incidentally incorporated waste from general hearth use, contexts 31 and 42 produced larger quantities that may represent the waste material from activities such as hot-stone cooking or from craft activities (eg Smith 1977, 111; Barfield and Hodder 1987; Barfield 1991; Jeffery 1991).

Struck Flint

The struck flint was manufactured from black or brown translucent flint. Their cortex indicates they were obtained as relatively small thermally fractured alluvial pebbles, such as are common in the vicinity. It was all in a good condition with only minor edge chipping or abrasion apparent. All of the pieces show some degree of recortication with the exception of the flake struck from a quern (see below).

Few typologically diagnostic pieces are present but overall it is likely that the assemblage was manufactured over a long period. One of the earliest diagnostic pieces comprises a blade from context 39 that has been serrated along both of its lateral margins. Serrated blades are most commonly found in Neolithic assemblages and are usually associated with the processing of plants, including cereals, although only very minor traces of edge glossing, an effect caused from cutting silica-rich plants such as cereals or rushes, could be detected.

The only other diagnostic piece consists of a flake from context 64 that had been struck from a flint quern. This is made from a good knapping quality unrecorticated brown flint. Its dorsal face retains both a patch of quern surface and several flake scars, indicating that the quern had been deliberately broken and flaked down. Fine spalling and damage to its longest margin, located on its distal end, suggests that this may have been used as a cutting implement. Flint querns are not commonly encountered during archaeological investigations but their main area of distribution lies along the eastern Fen edge, and here they predominantly date to the Bronze Age (Clark 1936, 44; Herne 1991, 52, figs 31-32; Healy 1996, 74, fig 43; 1998). They require large nodules of good-knapping quality flint for their manufacture and it has been suggested that many may come from the extensive resources of the Breckland. The majority of flint querns are fragmented and deliberately flaked down, and often have been burnt. Following their use as querns, they may have served as good-quality raw materials suitable for re-working into other tools, but it has also been suggested that the deliberate fragmentation of what are often seen as symbolically-charged implements may also have had a ritual or ceremonial significance, especially when burnt and/or deposited with some degree of formality (eg Hodder 1990; Lidström Holmberg 2004).

The remaining struck pieces are more difficult to categorise. Two cores are present; the one from context 31 consists of a large flake or 'quartered nodule' that has a series of small flakes removed from its cortical surface along two of its edges. The other, from context 30, comprises a thermally fractured alluvial pebble that also has numerous small flakes removed, this time from a single platform. Both have been rather simply and crudely reduced and defy close dating, although the degree of striking platform preparation on that from context 30 tentatively suggests it pre-dates the Bronze Age. The remaining flakes are equally difficult to ascribe dates to and it is possible they were made over a long period. They all represent knapping waste and no evidence of use is discernable. They have also all recorticated to some degree, and although this cannot be considered as conclusive, it does perhaps suggest that they belong with the earlier pieces rather than with the flake from the quern.

Significance

This assemblage is small but it does complement and extend understandings of the local prehistoric landscape during the Neolithic and Bronze Age. An almost continuous series of flint scatters have been identified in the Soham area and testify to intense prehistoric activity occurring in this area from at least the Mesolithic period and through to the Bronze Age (eg Edmonds *et al.* 1999; Mortimer and Connor forthcoming). This area has also produced evidence of numerous 'burnt mounds' and other fire-related features from along the developing Fen edge, suggesting that activities involving fire and the production of burnt flint were an important aspect of this occupation, at least during the Bronze Age when many of these burnt mounds appear to have been created.

Recommendation

Due to its size and paucity of chronologically diagnostic artefacts, this report and its accompanying database are all that is required of the material for the purposes of the archive and no further analytical work is proposed. It does, however, provide further evidence for occupation and can add to any future syntheses of the prehistory of this area

8 PREHISTORIC POTTERY - SARAH PERCIVAL

A total of twelve sherds weighing 86g were recovered from two features. The sherds are fragmentary and are poorly preserved. The pottery, which represents a minimum of three vessels, is all of later Bronze Age date with the exception of a single sherd from ditch [27], which is not closely datable.

Methodology

The assemblage was analysed in accordance with the Guidelines for analysis and publication laid down by the Prehistoric Ceramic Research Group (PCRG 2010). The total assemblage was studied and a full catalogue was prepared. The sherds were examined using a binocular microscope (x10 magnification) and were divided into fabric groups defined on the basis of inclusion types. Fabric codes were prefixed by a letter code representing the main inclusion present (F representing flint, G grog and Q quartz). Vessel form was recorded; R representing rim sherds, B base sherds, D decorated sherds and U undecorated body sherds. The sherds were counted and weighed to the nearest whole gram. Decoration, abrasion, residues, wear and condition were also noted.

Fabric

A total of three fabrics were identified. A single sherd in sandy fabric with occasional flint inclusions from ditch [27,] is in poor condition and is not closely datable within the prehistoric period. The remainder of the assemblage is flint-tempered in two fabric types. The first contains dense, coarse, crushed burnt flint inclusions (fabric F1) and the second moderate, fine to medium sized burnt flint pieces (fabric F2). Flint tempering is widely used from the earlier Neolithic through to the mid Iron Age. The presence of base sherds within this assemblage suggests that the sherds do not come from round based Earlier Neolithic bowls but are more likely to be later Bronze Age or earlier Iron Age.

Form

A single, simple rounded rim was found in the fills of waterhole [29]. Two base sherds were also found in the fills of the same feature. The base sherds are simple or slightly pinched out with vertical finger wiping to the exterior.

Deposition

The majority of the pottery including all the diagnostic sherds came from three fills within waterhole [29]. The undiagnostic sherd and two small flint-tempered body sherds were found in the upper fill of ditch [27].

Discussion

A later Bronze Age to earlier Iron Age date is proposed for the assemblage, suggested by the flat-based vessels with vertical finger-wiping and simple rounded rim, all in flint-tempered fabrics. The deposition of the pottery compares well with a large later Bronze Age assemblage from a shaft found along the line of the Fordham Bypass (Percival forthcoming) and is similar to that from a well or waterhole complex at Lingwood Wells, Cottenham which produced a small earlier Iron Age assemblage (Hill 1999).

Late Iron Age Pottery

Three sherds Late Iron Age pottery weighing 9g were recovered from the excavation. A further two sherds of not closely dateable later prehistoric pottery weighing 6g were also recovered. (Table 2). The Late Iron Age pottery comprised coarseware sherds that were not diagnostic. The sherds were small and fairly abraded and therefore may have been residual, Matt Brudenell (pers comm).

Context	Number	Wt(g)	Date
18	3	9	Late Iron Age
18	2	6	NCD

Table 2. Late Iron Age and not closely dateable (NCD) later prehistoric pottery by context

9 ROMAN POTTERY - KATIE ANDERSON

A small assemblage of Roman pottery totalling five sherds, weighing 50g was recovered from the excavation (Table 3). The pottery comprised sandy coarseware sherds, all of which are likely to have been produced locally. A single sherd from a sandy greyware jar was the only diagnostic sherd in the assemblage. The fabrics identified are earlier Roman in date; however, due to the lack of recognisable forms, the material can only be broadly dated mid 1st-2nd century AD. The sherds were generally small and abraded; therefore they may have been redeposited/residual.

Context	No.	Wt(g)	Date
20	1	3	Mid 1st-2nd AD
37	1	8	Mid 1st-2nd AD
45	1	25	Mid 1st-2nd AD
64	2	14	Mid 1st-2nd AD

Table 3: All Roman pottery by context

10 POST-ROMAN POTTERY - BERNI SUDDS

A total of ten sherds of post-Roman pottery were presented for analysis, dating from the 10th to 14th century. The pottery is tabulated below by context (Table 4).

Context	Code	Expansion	Date range	Sherd count	Forms
11	GRIM	Grimston-type ware	Late 12 th – 14 th century	2	Jug
22	NEOT THET MCW	St Neots-type ware Thetford-type ware Medieval coarseware	10 th – 12 th century 10 th – 12 th century 12 th – 14 th century	2 3 (1 vessel) 1	
28	MCW	Medieval coarseware	13 th – 14 th century	1	Jar
63	MISC GL	Unsources oxidized glazed sandy ware	13 th century	1	Jug

Table 4: Post-Roman pottery types

The St Neots-type ware and Thetford-type ware, recovered from ditch fill [22], represent the earliest post-Roman pottery recovered, dating from the 10th to 12th century. The same context also produced a small and abraded medieval coarseware dating from the 12th to 14th century. Ditch fill [28] contained a medieval coarseware jar but with a partial glaze and form indicative of a date during the 13th or 14th century. The green-glazed jug spout recovered from the subsoil [11] is probably a Grimston product, dating from the late 12th to 14th century. Finally, an unsourced oxidised glazed sandy ware jug sherd was retrieved from ditch fill [63]. The sherd cannot be readily paralleled to any of the main sources supplying the region but is of the highly decorated style and thus probably dates to the 13th or possibly early 14th century.

The post-Roman pottery is fragmented and in some cases quite abraded. Although attesting to the presence of activity of medieval date in the vicinity the small assemblage has little intrinsic value and

requires no further analysis. However, if any further work is undertaken a source should be sought for the oxidised glazed sandy ware jug.

11 FAUNAL REMAINS - KEVIN RIELLY

Introduction

The evaluation trenches followed by the two main areas of excavation provided evidence for Bronze Age through to medieval activity. A large Late Bronze Age waterhole was found in the northern part of the excavation area (Area 2), which was followed archaeologically by a series of Roman NE-SW orientated ditches and later by early medieval ditches coincidentally on the same alignment. The ditches were particularly concentrated in the southern part of the site (Area 1). The bones from this site were relatively well preserved, although some root etching was observed on most pieces, tending in a small number of bones towards complete surface erosion. There was also a generally high level of fragmentation. All of the bones were collected by hand. The various cut features provided a grand total of just 137 fragments (as shown in Table 5), with 115 arising from the aforementioned waterhole (pit 29). Three of the bones came from an undated fill within ditch 58 and will not be described further.

Phase	Late Bronze Age	Early Roman				Early Medieval
Feature	pit [29]	ditches [17]	[19]	[54]	[65]	ditch [21]
Species						
Cattle	48	1	1	1		
Equid	3				1	
Cattle-size	49	1				1
Sheep/Goat	6	1		6		
Pig	4	1				
Sheep-size	3	1		3		
Red deer	2	1				
Grand Total	115	6	1	10	1	1

Table 5: Counts of hand collected animal bone by feature.

Methodology

Each bone was recorded onto an animal bone database using Microsoft Access. This database is divided into various headings, as follows: - species, skeletal part, fragmentation (the proportion of the skeletal part represented), sex, age (a general age if possible, as well as teeth eruption/wear and epiphyses fusion), size and various modifications as butchery, burning, gnawing, preservation, working and pathology. Species could not be assigned to all the bones in these collections. This unidentifiable portion would be recorded according to size class, generally to cattle and sheep-size, these including ribs, fragments of long bone shaft and the majority of vertebrae. Tooth eruption/wear recording uses the method devised by Grant (1982), while the measurements are essentially taken from von den Driesch (1976). Measurable bones essentially include the majority that can be

classed as deriving from an adult individual. This includes complete limb bones, mandibles where the adult third molar is in wear and various limb bones with fused intermediate and/or late epiphyses e.g. distal tibia and proximal femur respectively. Age analysis is based on the aforementioned tooth data as well as epiphysis fusion. Approximate ages associated within the sequence of eruption/wear and fusion respectively are taken from Schmid (1972, 75 and 77) and Amorosi (1989, 98 and 99). Calculations of shoulder heights were based on multiplication factors given in Driesch and Boessneck (1974).

Description of faunal assemblage by phase

Late Bronze Age

This is represented by a single feature, a waterhole described as pit 29. Animal bones were found throughout the fills, although with concentrations in 42, 43 and 44 with 27, 49 and 14 fragments respectively. The bones in these fills followed the general preservation pattern described above, the majority showing some degree of root etching. In addition, there was a high degree of fragmentation, where for example the 9 cattle bones in 42 were created from reforming at least 40 fragments, while in 43 the 16 cattle bones were originally at least 90 pieces. Cattle form the major part of the pit assemblage, which in combination with the cattle-size component make up 84.3% of the collection. The description of the cattle and cattle-size bones as shown in Tables 6 and 7, demonstrate a wide distribution of skeletal parts, possibly representing at least 4 individuals. Note that the mandibles and loose teeth include one subadult, probably a 2nd year; two young adults, perhaps 3rd years; and one old adult, well over 5 years. There are few clues regarding the division of the carcass, with cut marks visible on just one bone, a humerus, with a knife mark on the medial surface of the distal end. This may relate to defleshing or possibly jointing. The line of the cut is fairly ragged and it can be conjectured that it was made with a flint implement.

The few measurements suggest the cattle were relatively small and thus comparable to various 'types' being exploited in this country up to the modern era. There is a single complete bone, a metacarpus, from which could be extrapolated a shoulder height of 1102.1mm. In addition it was possible to estimate the length of an incomplete horncore as being between about 100 and 200mm, and thus within the Short Horn/Medium Horn categories described by Armitage and Clutton-Brock (1976). The extrapolation was based on a comparison of basal dimensions (basal circumference of 131mm and maximum basal breadth of 44.3mm) with a large collection of complete horncores recovered from Roman levels at Drapers Gardens (Rielly in prep).

There are also minor quantities of equid, sheep/goat, pig and red deer. Each of these species may be represented by no more than one individual, all of which are probably adult, including the pig. The latter animal can be classed as young adult due to the very early wear (wear state 'a', after Grant 1982) of a maxillary third molar, perhaps aged no more than 2 years. In contrast, the equid is probably 10 to 11 year old, as indicated by the height of its mandibular molars (after Levine 1982). Each of these domesticates is rather small, clearly signifying typical unimproved type or types. The equid has an astragalus with a greatest height (GH) of 52.2mm which would be from a small pony sized animal, here extrapolating from articulations recovered from archaeological sites (PCA archive material). Finally the red deer bones include an antler fragment and a radius showing either the full use of a captured animal and/or the collection of dropped antlers, no doubt for craft purposes. This item does not show any working marks.

Skeletal part	N	Side	Age	Description
Skull	3			2 occipital and 1 temporal condyle
Horncore	1	1R	YA	base
Mandible	9	1L and 3R	3YA, 1A	3 M3 early wear ('a/b'), 1 M3 heavy wear ('I')
Loose teeth	5		1SA, 4A	1 M3 unw and 4 molars in heavy wear
Atlas	1			
Axis	1			
Scapula	4	2L and 1R		3 fused proximal ends
Humerus	5	2L and 3R		5 fused distal ends
Radius	6	3L and 3R	2A	3 fused proximal and 2 fused distal ends
Ulna	1	1R		
Metacarpus	3	2L and 1R	3A	3 fused distal ends
Pelvis	2	2R		2 fused acetabulum
Femur	1	1L	A	1 fused proximal end
Tibia	4	1L and 2R	1A	1 fused proximal and 1 fused distal end
Astragalus	1	1L		
Metapodial	1			

Table 6. Description of cattle bones from the Late Bronze Age pit 29, where L and R is left and right; SA is subadult, A adult and YA young adult; M3 is the adult third molar, unw is unworn and 'a/b' and 'I' refer to tooth wear stages after Grant (1982), and where N is the number of fragments.

Skeletal part	N	Description
Vertebra:		
Thoracic	1	unfused
Lumbar	3	1 fused and 2 unfused
Rib	12	1 proximal and 11 shaft pieces
limb bone fragments	33	

Table 7. Description of cattle-size bones from the Late Bronze Age pit [29], where N is the number of fragments.

Romano-British

Just 18 bones were divided amongst 4 ditches featuring the same range of species described from the previous phase. Sheep/goat is best represented; however, all 6 bones from ditch 54 are taken from the same sub-adult individual comprising the right scapula, left pelvis, both femurs, left tibia and left metatarsus. This is probably a late 1st or 2nd year animal based on the fusion of scapula and pelvis but lack of fusion of the remaining articular ends. The same deposit also contained a few sheep-size ribs, presumably part of the same individual. Each of the domesticates represented at this site would appear to be relatively small adults. Butchery is again limited to one bone, a cattle femur from ditch 19 with a heavy chop removing the medial extremity of the proximal head. This can be interpreted as the means employed to separate the bones in the pelvic joint. Red deer is represented by an antler crown fragment, most probably from an animal culled in its third year or later (antler ageing after Lawrence and Brown 1967, 131).

Early Medieval

There is just one cattle-size fragment, a rib, derived from ditch 21.

Conclusions

The noted high levels of fragmentation will undoubtedly have affected the relative abundance of the major domesticates, with preferential survival and recovery favouring cattle compared to sheep/goat and pig. However, it can be assumed that this bias is undermined to a certain extent by the generally good condition of the bones. A comparison with contemporary Late Bronze Age sites in the southern midlands reveals a predominance of cattle over the other two domesticates (Robinson and Wilson 1987), in particular shown by a large collection from Ivinghoe Beacon (Westley 1968), a Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age hillfort on the borders of Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire. Each of these site collections show a ratio of about 1.5:1 for cattle and sheep/goat (as described in Holmes and Rielly 1994, 530), and all demonstrate a rather low abundance of pig bones. The notable exception to this rule is Runnymede, where pig can provide, in certain areas of the site, as much as 45% of the domesticated bones (Serjeantson 1996, 219). The same site also

provided a range of cattle abundance from 20% to 58.1% (ibid). In general, however, cattle predominate, setting a pattern which continues in this south midland area well into the Iron Age period (see Albarella 2007, 394). Another aspect of the Late Bronze Age pattern is the rather poor exploitation of wild game, which can also be seen at this site (Holmes and Rielly 1994, 535 and Serjeantson 1996, 218).

In the next two phases, the quantities are too slight to provide any detailed conclusions. However, there is one interesting feature - the partial sub-adult sheep skeleton recovered from one of the Romano-British ditches. While no comment was made, during excavation, of its state of articulation, the fact that it formed the major part of the bones excavated from this ditch (apart from a cattle tibia fragment) as well as the absence of cut marks, suggests that it may represent the remains of a discarded carcass. The absence of various parts could possibly be explained by the noted fragmentation as well as the incomplete excavation of this ditch. Assuming its deliberate deposition, it can be envisaged that it was deemed inedible due to sickness or that it represents a structured i.e. 'special' deposit. The latter explanation has been used to describe a large number of similar 'burials' from rural sites in Southern England generally found in pits or ditches and unconnected to any obvious ritual behaviour as for example a cremation or burial ground. Such features principally date to the Iron Age (Hill 1995 and Morris 2008) although they also extend into the Roman-British period, as for example seen at the Dorchester By-Pass excavations in Dorset (Rielly 1997, 272).

12 ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT- VAL FRYER

Introduction and method statement

Excavations at Soham, undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA), recorded features of Late Bronze Age, Late Iron Age to Early Roman and medieval date. Samples for the retrieval of the plant macrofossil assemblages were taken from deposits within a Late Bronze Age waterhole (feature [29]) and from an adjacent pit (feature [69]), which was also probably of Late Bronze Age date. A total of seven samples were submitted for assessment.

The samples were bulk floated by PCA using standard methods (Kenward et. Al. 1980) and the flots were collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed in Appendix 4. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (1997) for the plant macrofossils and Kerney and Cameron (1979) for the mollusc shells. Most plant remains were charred, although sample 5 did contain a de-watered assemblage, with the macrofossils being denoted within the table by a lower case 'w' suffix. Modern roots and seeds were also recorded, along with shells of the burrowing snail *Cecilioides acicula*, within all but sample 5.

Results

Charred macrofossils were extremely scarce, although small fragments of charcoal/charred wood were present within all seven assemblages. Both fills from pit [69] (samples 8 and 9) contained cereals, including individual oat (*Avena* sp.) and wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains. Other charred plant remains included an intact wild radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*) siliqua (sample 1) and a possible black bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*) seed (sample 8). Sample 5, from the basal fill of waterhole [29] contained de-watered seeds of ruderal weeds as well as a number of de-watered tree/shrub macrofossils. Taxa noted included hemp-nettle (*Galeopsis* sp.), dead-nettle (*Lamium* sp.), buttercup (*Ranunculus acris/repens/bulbosus*), chickweed (*Stellaria media*), stinging nettles (*Urtica dioica*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), hawthorn (*Crataegus* sp.), sloe (*Prunus spinosa*) and bramble (*Rubus* sect. *Glandulosus*).

Although specific sieving for molluscan remains was not undertaken, shells were recorded at a low density within all seven assemblages. A small number of specimens were fragmented and very abraded, suggesting that they were possibly contemporary with the features from which the samples were taken. However, most shells were very well preserved, retaining both delicate surface structures and good coloration, and it was assumed that these were either intrusive with

the features fills (being introduced via the bioturbation of the deposits) or were derived from the relatively recent infilling of the upper layers within both the waterhole and the pit. It was noted that sample 5 contained only three very fragmentary shells.

Other remains were extremely scarce. Sample 8, from the upper fill of pit [69] contained small fragments of black tarry material and coal, both of which were almost certainly intrusive within the feature fill. Sample 5 contained de-watered water flea (*Cladoceran ehippia*) eggs and a small number of arthropod remains.

Conclusion and recommendations for further work

In summary, the de-watered material from the basal fill of waterhole [29] is almost certainly contemporary with the latter stages of the use of the feature, being of Later Bronze Age date. The composition of the assemblage appears to indicate that the area immediately surrounding the waterhole comprised rough grassland, with the feature itself probably being slightly overgrown by colonising woody shrubs.

Although pits containing burnt stone are often associated with either food preparation or other activities requiring the heating of large quantities of water, the current assemblages from pit [69] are particularly small (<0.1 litres in volume) and sparse, and neither can clearly be linked to a particular function. It is, therefore, suggested that the few charred remains which are recorded are probably derived from scattered detritus, which was accidentally incorporated within the feature fills.

As none of the current assemblages contain a sufficient density of material for quantification (i.e. 100+ specimens), no further analysis is recommended. However, a copy of this assessment should be included within any synthesis of data from the site.

13 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The Later Bronze Age

- 13.1** A large waterhole and a burnt flint filled pit were the only features of Late Bronze Age date encountered in the areas excavated. No direct evidence of occupation was revealed, yet the pottery, flint and faunal assemblages from waterhole 29 are indicative of nearby settlement activity.
- 13.2** Partially surviving timbers formed a revetment at the base of waterhole 29 indicating an investment in the construction and maintenance of this feature. Although few timber elements survive, it seems the structure had once a more substantial wattle lining or revetting, representing an attempt to stabilise the edges of the feature and to easier access to water.
- 13.3** The pottery assemblage recovered from waterhole 29 comprised of small abraded sherds concentrated in the upper fills, that were deposited during infilling of the feature.
- 13.4** Although in good condition, the struck flint was largely undiagnostic, with the most significant piece a residual Neolithic blade with slight traces of silica gloss. The remaining flint comprised of two cores and a number of knapping waste flakes. The tentative early date ascribed to these may indicate that they too are residual.
- 13.5** Animal bone was present throughout the fill of the waterhole and was in a generally good condition. Cattle bone predominated with one bone displaying evidence of butchery of meat bearing bones. Other domesticates such as sheep, pig and horse were represented pointing to a mixed pastoral land use. Exploitation of wild resources was evidenced with red deer bone and antler. The range and variety of the faunal assemblage would seem to add support to the evidence for settlement in the near vicinity. The presence of antler may be an indicator of seasonal activity.
- 13.6** The large amount of burnt flint recovered from the upper fills of waterhole 29 is likely to derive from activity associated with pit 69.
- 13.7** Burnt flint filled pit 69 was perhaps the truncated base of a burnt flint mound or hearth. The presence of burnt flint rich features is well documented for the Bronze Age, and their association with water for processes such as cooking is well attested.
- 13.8** In a wider context burnt mounds have been the subject of widespread attention and debate. They have been identified throughout most of Britain and Ireland and are prevalent locally along the fen edge and fen islands. Characteristically they comprise large burnt spreads, often associated with pits and are usually located close to water

sources. Most are interpreted as cooking locations although another frequently employed interpretation of the use of such sites is as steam or sauna baths. These types of features often seem to utilise excavated or natural hollows of a suitable size over which it is often suggested that tent-like structures were erected. Hot stones would be brought in and water sprinkled on them producing the steam.

13.9 Such sites also have possible ceremonial associations such as the deliberate placing of pottery and other objects in pits. Such special deposits, including the deliberate placement of food, animal and human remains, as well as what might loosely be termed rubbish and other everyday items, are often recorded from Late Bronze Age contexts and seem to reflect concerns with marking boundaries and entrances, as well as marking foundational or closing events.

13.10 The features excavated at Soham were similar to examples recorded on numerous sites around the fen edge (Edmonds *et al.* 1999). Whilst a range of artefact types were recovered during the excavation no obvious patterning or deliberate placement of pottery, flint or animal bone was recovered. Although animal bone was present throughout the fills of the feature, there was a notable concentration in the upper two fills. Whereas this material may not have been deliberately placed, the presence in association with dumped charcoal rich deposits points to possible change of use later in the infilling of the feature. The relative abundance of pottery bone and burnt flint in these upper deposits may indicate that settlement activity was encroaching onto what was previously agricultural land.

13.11 Previous excavations in Soham at Cloverfield Drive 300m to the south revealed a Late Bronze Age waterhole with a similar pattern of deposition of pottery and burnt flint in the upper fills of the feature to the Gimbert Road example. These were interpreted as potentially placed deposits specifically imported from the settlement area (Mortimer, R 2007). It is possible that the concentration of artefacts in waterhole 29, combined with charcoal rich dumps in the upper fills represent a deliberate and perhaps symbolic capping of the feature.

13.12 Further evidence for Bronze Age activity in Soham is scarce. Bronze Age and Early Iron Age field systems were recorded in excavations at St Andrews House and Wetheralls Close to the south, yet the closest contemporary settlement activity revealed to date is some 5km to the south at Fordham (Mortimer and Connor forthcoming).

13.13 Prior to the draining of nearby Soham mere the water table would have been much higher and during the winter months the ground may have been entirely waterlogged. The findings at Gimbert Road add to a picture of likely seasonal exploitation of agricultural land on the Soham Island at this date. The pottery and faunal assemblages recovered are significant enough to hint at settlement in the vicinity.

The Late Iron Age to Early Romano British Period (1st-2nd century AD)

- 13.14** Evidence for Late Iron Age and Early Romano-British activity was in the form of a series of north-east, south-west aligned ditches located towards the eastern side of the site (Fig 3). The parallel ditches utilised a slight topographic rise and were likely flanked with associated banks and hedgerows. The ditches appear to represent the re-emphasis over time of the same field boundary.
- 13.15** The pottery dating for Boundary Line 1 came from five small abraded sherds dating to the 1st or 2nd century AD. Significantly, Several sherds of Late Iron Age pottery were also recovered from ditch 17 which provides some evidence for a presence at Soham in the period which is otherwise poorly represented locally. Due to the poor condition of the sherds it was difficult to determine whether they represent earlier finds deposited residually in later features. However, the available dating evidence points to a series of field system ditches with an origin in the later Iron Age. The quantity of animal bone recovered from the ditches of Boundary Line 1 was too small to draw firm conclusions yet the predominance of sheep/goat suggests a continuation of the pastoral landscape use indicated by the Late Bronze Age faunal assemblage.
- 13.16** Roman activity in Soham has been revealed through a number of excavations and find spots. To the south of the site, pitting was revealed at an evaluation at the Old Parish Hall and a Roman ditch was recorded at Paddock street. Excavations 400m to the north at Cloverfield Drive, revealed a northwest southeast aligned ditch extending for 280m and containing 1st to 3rd century AD pottery (Mortimer 2005). The extrapolated continuation of this ditch extends through the Gimbert Road site, yet no trace of it was revealed in trenches 7 and 8 of the watching brief. However, the ditches of Boundary Line 1 are likely to form part of the same broad agricultural system. The Romano- British ditch at Cloverfield Drive was flanked by a parallel ditch possibly forming a trackway or drove. As stated, this was not present in the Gimbert Road excavations, yet it is possible the ditches of Boundary Line 1 defined the edge of a similar trackway, linking the various elements of a Romano-British field system on the higher ground of the island.

The Medieval Period

- 13.17** Early medieval activity was in the form of north-east south-west aligned ditches defined as Boundary Line 2 (Fig 3). This boundary lay just to the north west of the Romano-British ditches of Boundary Line 1 and shared the alignment of the earlier features. Moderately abraded pottery sherds dating from the 10th-to 14th century AD were

recovered from the ditch fill. Towards the north-east end of the boundary, a break in the ditch was formed by terminus 61. To the south of this shallow ditch 27 may have formed a corresponding terminus of an entrance. Curvilinear ditch 59 formed a slight in turn to the east, possibly acting as a means to control animal movement through this entrance and between different elements of an Early Medieval field system.

13.18 Early Medieval settlement activity is known from excavations as Pratt Street and Paddock Street to the south where Saxo-Norman enclosures, ditches pits and postholes were recorded. To the north excavations at Cloverfield Drive also revealed a small settlement developing from the 12th century onwards. The ditch identified at Gimbert Road likely represents part of field system located between the settlement activity identified to the south and north of the site. Little evidence for the function of this system was recovered with the animal bone, evidence was restricted to a single cattle bone rib. The presence of possible stock control is indicative of the continuity of the pastoral landscape revealed in the previous periods. Such continuity is also reflected in the shared alignment of the Romano-British and Medieval ditches. This may have been more a product of topographic constraints than referencing of earlier activity. Perhaps significantly the ditch alignments set out in the later Iron Age or Early Roman period are fossilised in the field boundaries and road layout of present day Soham.

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT REGISTER

Context Index					
Context	Cut	Type	Category	Trench number	Comments
1	1		Trench No.	1	
2	2		Trench No.	2	
3	2		Trench No.	3	
4	4		Trench No.	4	
5	5		Trench No.	5	
6	6		Trench No.	6	
10	10	layer	Topsoil	All	
11	11	layer	Subsoil	All	
12	12	layer	Natural	All	
13	13	cut	Ditch	2	
14	13	fill	Ditch	2	
15	15	cut	Pit	2	
16	17	fill	Pit	2	
17	17	cut	Ditch	2	
18	17	fill	Ditch	2	
19	19	cut	Ditch	2	
20	19	fill	Ditch	2	
21	21	cut	Ditch	2	
22	21	fill	Ditch	2	
23	23	cut	Ditch	2	
24	23	fill	Ditch	2	
25	25	cut	Ditch	5	
26	25	fill	Ditch	5	
27	27	cut	Ditch	5	
28	27	fill	Ditch	5	
29	29	cut	Pit	5	
30	29	fill	Pit	5	Same as 42
31	29	fill	Pit	5	Same as 42
32	29	fill	Pit	5	Same as 43
33	29	fill	Pit	5	Same as 48
34	34	cut	Ditch	4	
35	34	fill	Ditch	4	
36	36	cut	Ditch	4	
37	36	fill	Ditch	4	
38	29	fill	Pit	5	
39	29	fill	Pit	5	Same as 50
40	40	cut	Furrow	3	
41	41	fill	Furrow	3	
42	29	fill	Pit	Area 2	

Context Index					
Context	Cut	Type	Category	Trench number	Comments
43	29	fill	Pit	Area 2	
44	29	fill	Pit	Area 2	
45	47	fill	Ditch	Area 1	
46	47	fill	Ditch	Area 1	
47	47	cut	Ditch	Area 1	
48	29	fill	Pit	Area 1	
49	29	fill	Pit	Area 1	
50	29	fill	Pit	Area 1	
51	52	fill	Ditch	Area 1	
52	52	cut	Ditch	Area 1	
53	54	fill	Ditch	Area 1	
54	54	cut	Ditch	Area 1	
55	56	fill	Ditch	Area 1	
56	56	cut	Ditch	Area 1	
57	58	fill	Post Hole	Area 1	
58	58	cut	Post Hole	Area 1	
59	59	cut	Ditch	Area 1	
60	59	fill	Ditch	Area 1	
61	61	cut	Ditch	Area 2	
62	61	fill	Ditch	Area 2	
63	61	fill	Ditch	Area 2	
64	65	fill	Ditch	Area 1	
65	65	cut	Ditch	Area 1	
66	29	fill	Wood	Area 2	
67	29	fill	Wood	Area 2	
68	29	fill	Pit	Area 2	
69	69	cut	Pit	Area 2	
70	69	fill	Pit	Area 2	
71	29	fill	Wood	Area 2	
72	69	fill	Pit	Area 2	
73	29	fill	Pit	Area 2	
74	29	fill	Pit	Area 2	
75	75	cut	Ditch	Area 2	
76	75	fill	Ditch	Area 2	
77	77	cut	Pit	Area 1	
78	77	fill	Pit	Area 1	

APPENDIX 2: DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Plate 1. Site prior to machine stripping. Facing northwest



Plate 2. Timbers 66, 67 and 68 in waterhole 29 1m scale facing west.



Plate 3. Timbers 66, 67, and 68 with section ??? 1m scale facing north east.



Plate 4. Waterhole 29 in half section. 2m scale facing north east.



Plate 5. Burnt flint mound 69 pre excavation. 1m scale facing south.



Plate 6. Ditches 17 and 19. 1m scale facing southwest.



Plate 7. Ditch 47. 1m scale facing southwest.



Plate 8. Ditch 21 1m scale facing southwest.

APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

Project design originator	Mark Hinman
Project director/manager	Mark Hinman
Project supervisor	Nick Pankhurst
Type of sponsor/funding body	Consultancy
Name of sponsor/funding body	CgMs

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	CCC County Archaeology Store
Physical Archive ID	CGRS11
Physical Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Wood'
Digital Archive recipient	CCC County Archaeology Store
Digital Archive ID	CGRS11
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Survey'
Paper Archive recipient	CCC County Archaeology Store
Paper Archive ID	CGRS11
Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section','Survey '

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Investigations at Gimbert Road Soham
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Nick Pankhurst
Date	2012
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Place of issue or publication	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

Entered by	Nick Pankhurst (NPankhurst@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	5 January 2012

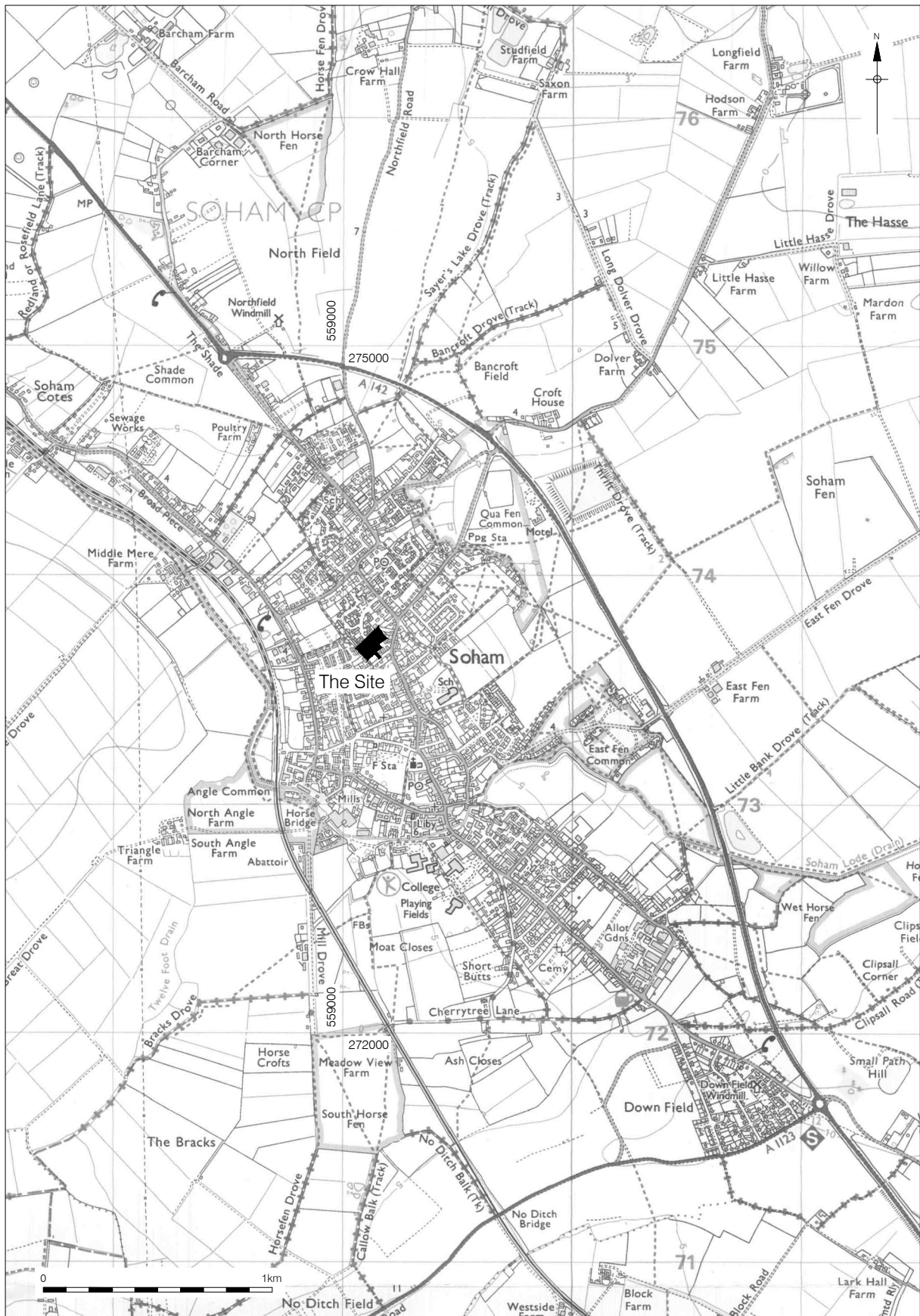
APPENDIX 4: ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS TABLE

Key to Table

x = 1 – 10 specimens xx = 11 – 50 specimens xxxx = 100+ specimens
 cf = compare w = de-watered fg = fragment WH = waterhole

Sample No.	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
Context No.	31	42	44	50	68	70	72
Feature No.	29	29	29	29	29	69	69
Feature type	WH	WH	WH	WH	WH	Pit	Pit
Cereals							
<i>Avena</i> sp. (grain)							x
<i>Triticum</i> sp. (grain)						xcf	
Cereal indet. (grain)							x
Herbs							
Asteraceae indet.					xw		
<i>Atriplex</i> sp.					xw		
Brassicaceae indet.							x
<i>Cirsium</i> sp.					xw		
<i>Fallopia convolvulus</i> (L.)A.Love						xcf	
<i>Galeopsis</i> sp.					xw		
<i>Lamium</i> sp.					xw		
Lamiaceae indet.					xw		
<i>Ranunculus</i> sp.					xw		
<i>R. acris/repens/bulbosus</i>				xw	xw		
<i>Raphanus raphanistrum</i> L. (siliqua)	x						
<i>Solanum</i> sp.					xw		
<i>Stellaria media</i> (L.)Vill					xw		
<i>Urtica dioica</i> L.					xxw		
Tree/shrub macrofossils							
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i> L.					xcffgw		
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L.					xw		
<i>Crataegus</i> sp.					xw		
<i>Prunus</i> sp.					xfrstfgw		
<i>P. spinosa</i> L.					xw		
<i>Rubus</i> sp.					xfgw		
<i>R. sect. Glandulosus</i> Wimmer & Grab					xw		
Other plant macrofossils							
Charcoal <2mm	xx	x	x	x	x	xxxx	x
Charcoal >2mm	x	x				x	
Charcoal >5mm	x						
Waterlogged root/stem				x	xxxx		
Indet.fruit stone frags.					xw		
Indet.seeds					x xw		
Indet.thorns (<i>Prunus</i> type)					xw		

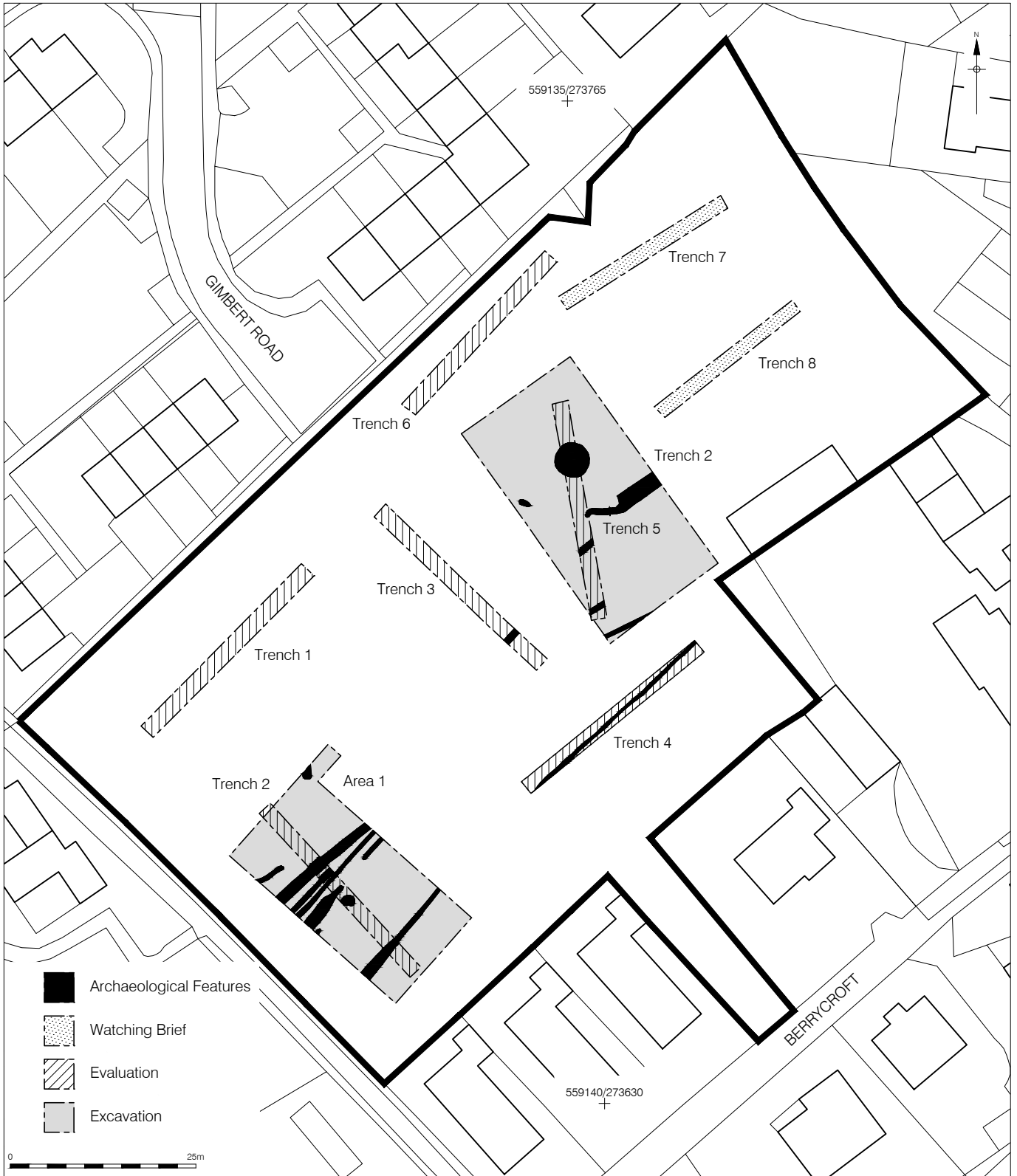
Indet.twigs					XW		
Wood frags. >10mm					XW		
Molluscs							
Woodland/shade loving species							
<i>Acanthinula aculeata</i>			X				
<i>Carychium</i> sp.	X		X	X			
<i>Clausilia</i> sp.				X			
<i>Discus rotundatus</i>			X	X	X		
<i>Oxychilus</i> sp.				X			
<i>Vitrea</i> sp.			X				
Zonitidae indet.			X				
Open country species							
<i>Pupilla muscorum</i>	X	X				XX	
<i>Vallonia</i> sp.	X	X	X	X	X	XX	X
<i>V. costata</i>		X	X	X	X	X	
<i>V. pulchella</i>		xcf					
<i>Vertigo pygmaea</i>	X		X			X	
Catholic species							
<i>Cepaea</i> sp.				X			
<i>Cochlicopa</i> sp.	X	X	X	X		X	X
<i>Nesovitrea hammonis</i>				X			
<i>Trichia hispida</i> group	XX	X	X	X		XX	X
Other remains							
Black porous 'cokey' material		X					
Black tarry material		X				X	
Burnt stone frags.						X	
Cladoceran ehippia					X		
Small coal frag.						X	
Waterlogged arthropods				X	X		
Sample volume (litres)							
Volume of flot (litres)	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
% flot sorted	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



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Figure 1
Site Location
1:25,000 at A4



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Figure 2
Trench Location
1:750 at A4

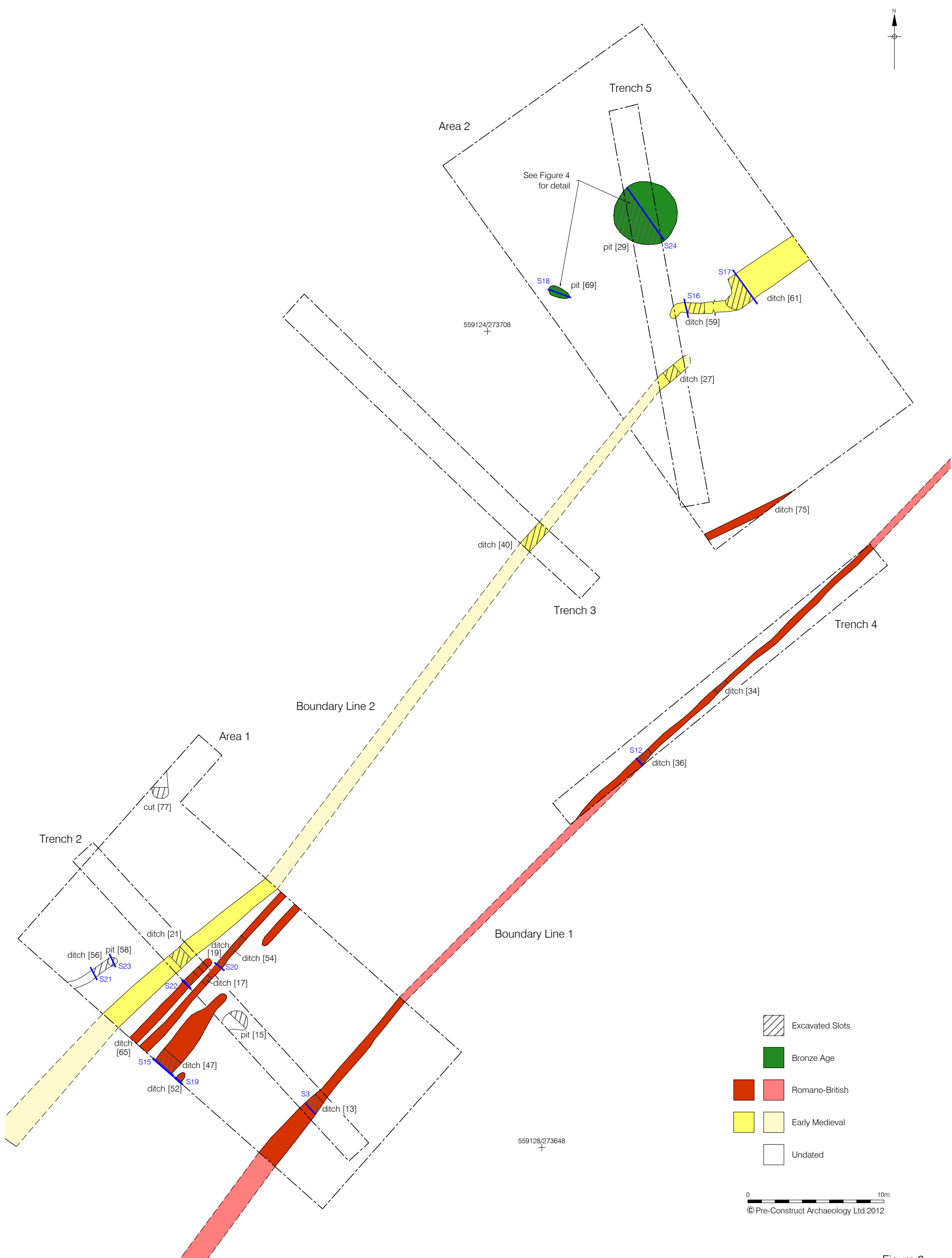
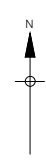
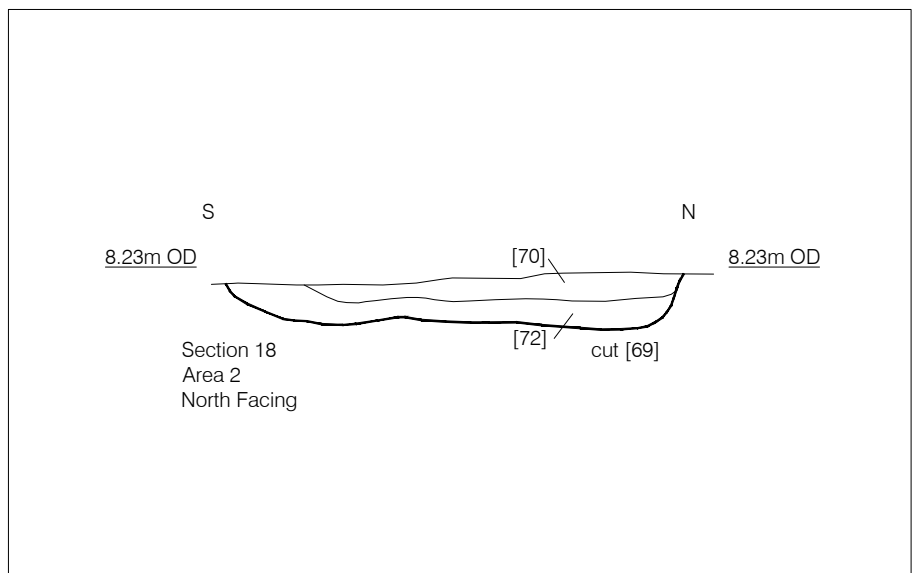
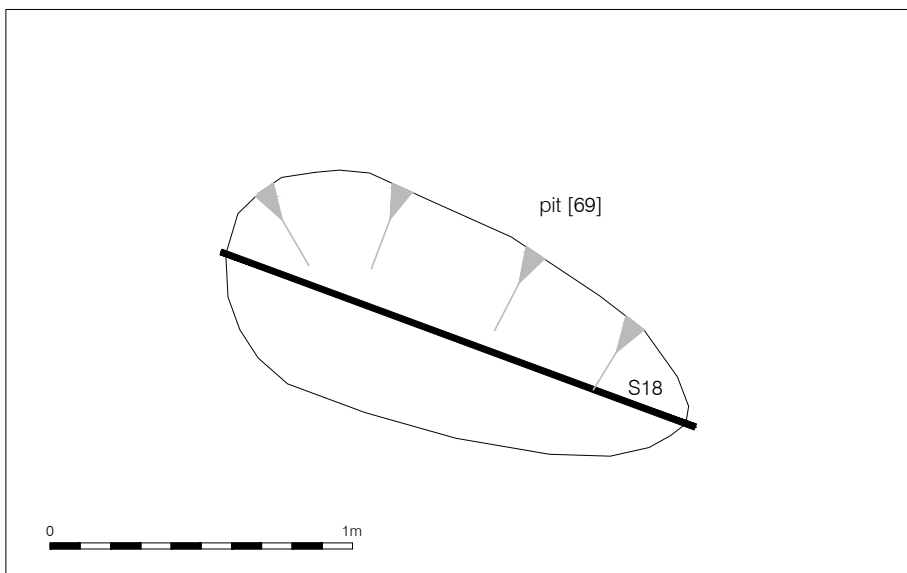
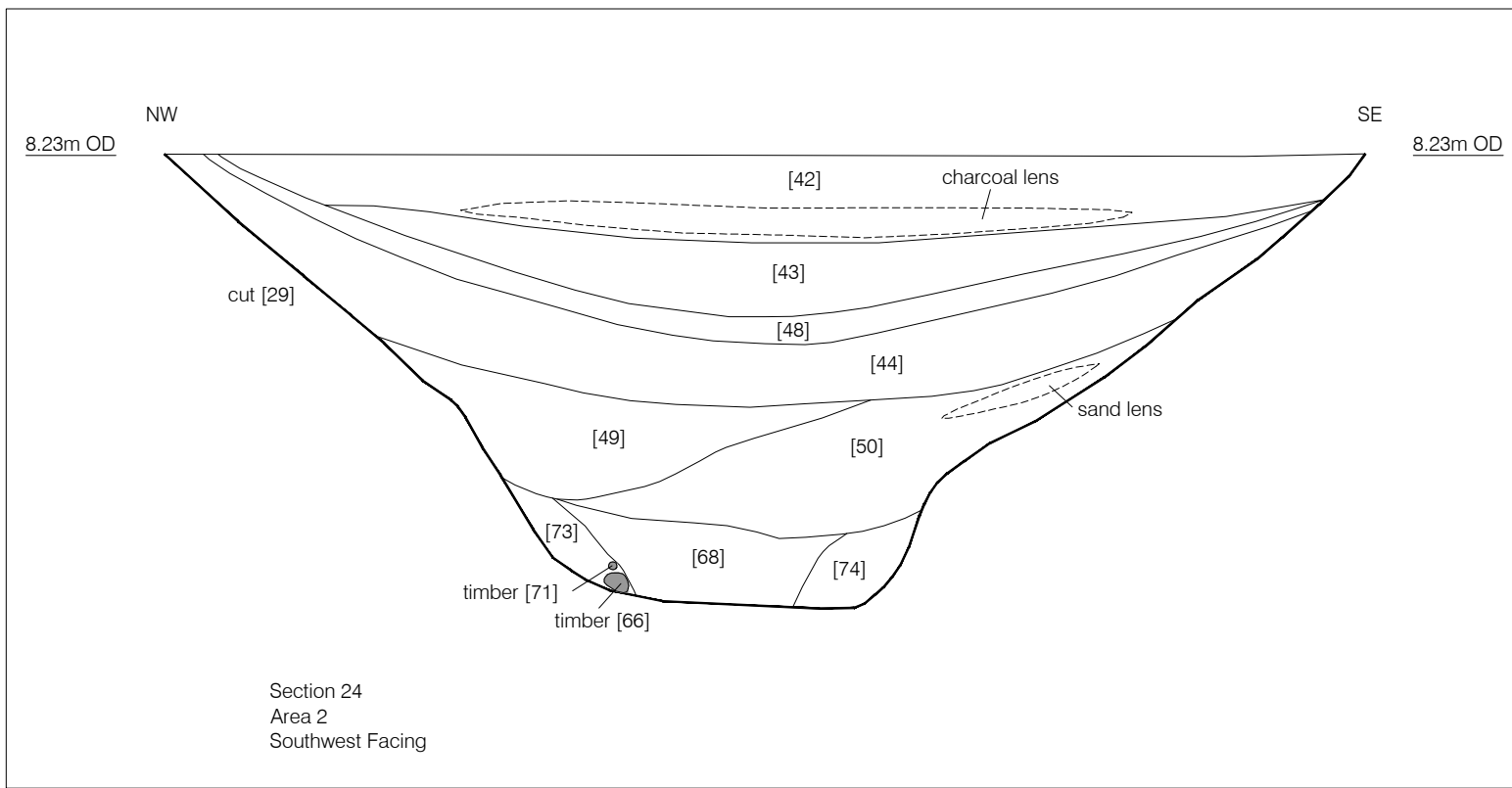
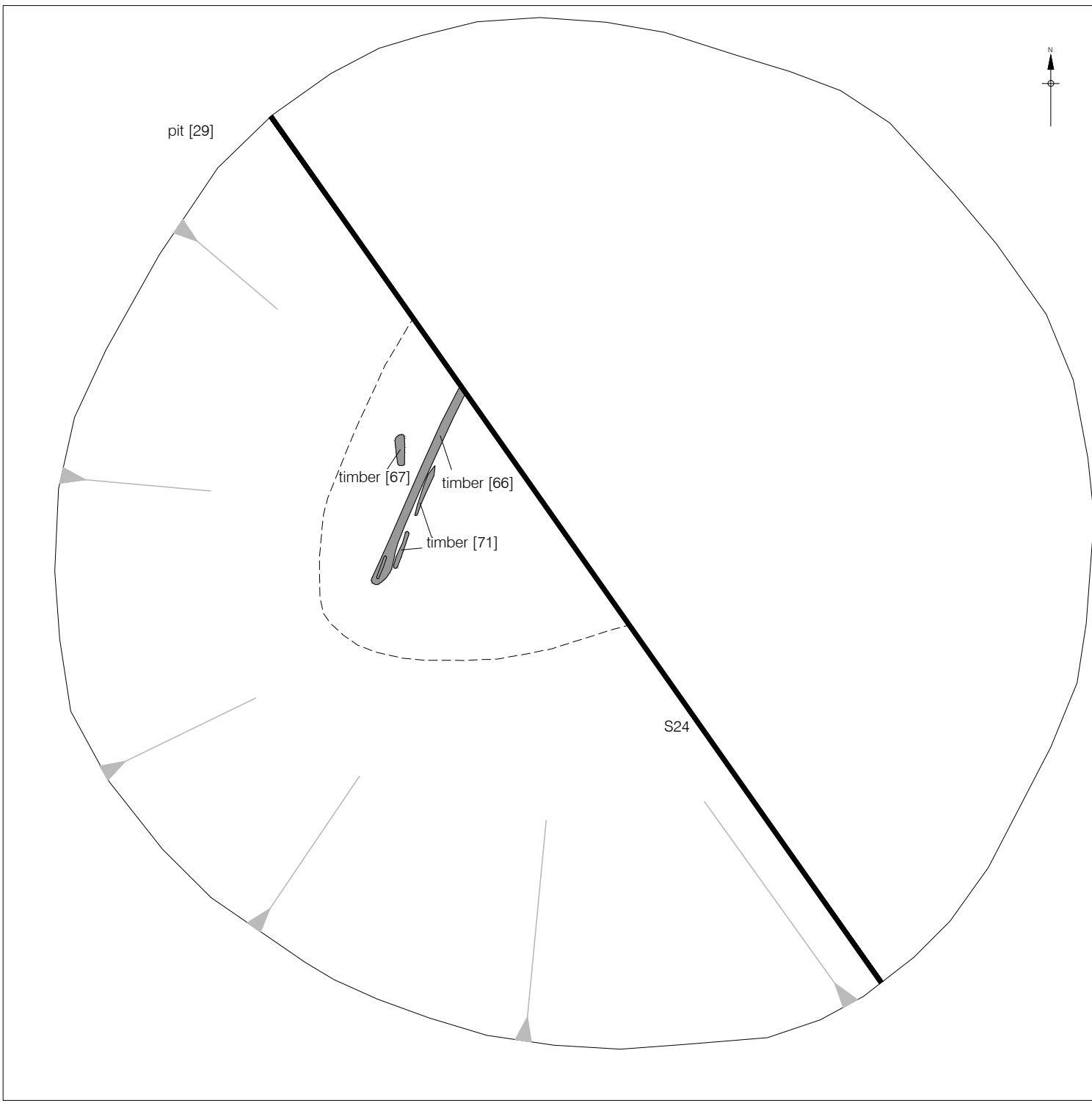
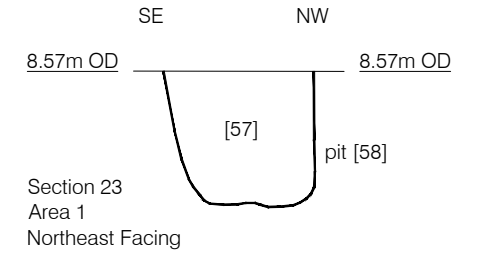
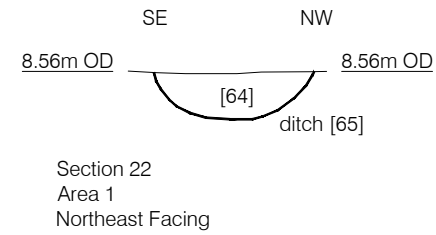
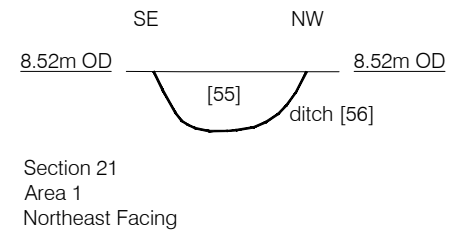
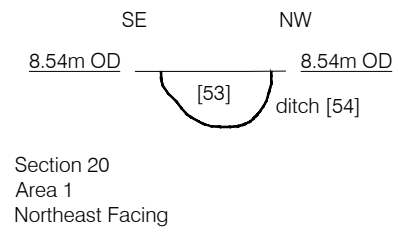
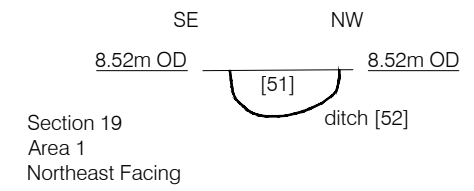
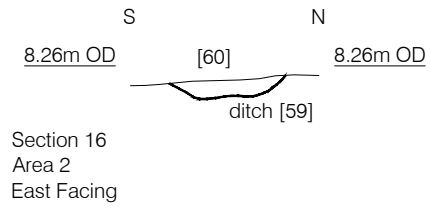
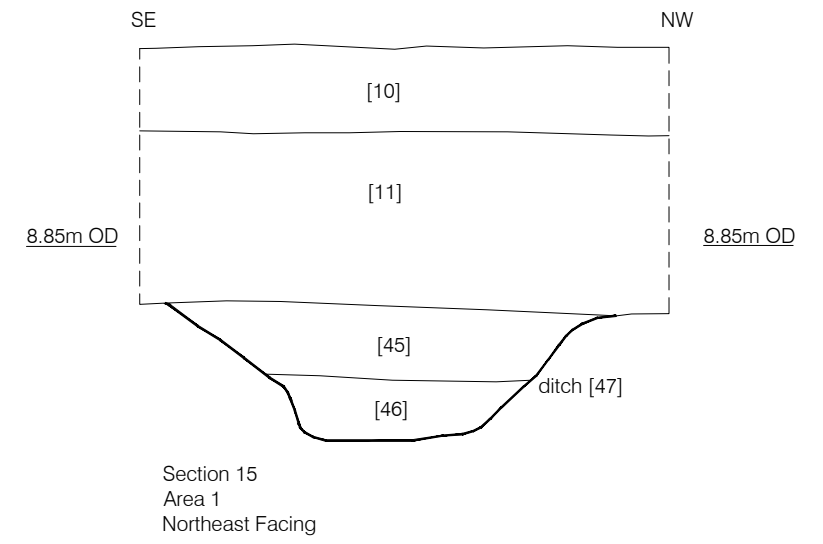
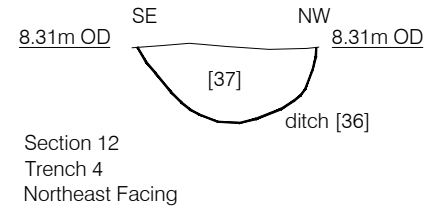
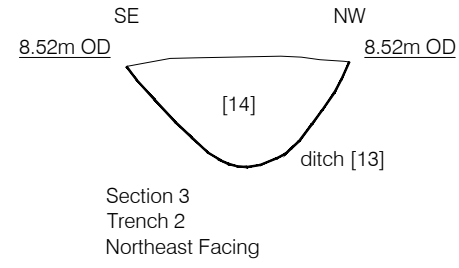


Figure 3
Trenches 2 - 5 and Area 1 & 2
1:250 at A3





PCA

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