

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Area G, Manor Farm,
Kempsford, Gloucestershire**

**An archaeological excavation
Draft Publication Report**

By Danielle Milbank and Joanna Pine

Site Code: MFK10/96

(SU 1760 9800)

**Area G, Manor Farm,
Kempsford, Gloucestershire**

**A Draft Excavation Report
For Aggregate Industries UK Ltd**

by Danielle Milbank and Jo Pine
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

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April 2011

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with a contribution by Steve Ford

Report 10/96

Introduction

This report documents the results of archaeological excavation carried out in advance of gravel extraction known as Area G at Manor Farm, Kempsford, Gloucestershire (SU 1760 9800) (Fig. 1). It comprised a trapezoid-shaped plot of land covering c.4.4ha within a much larger overall quarry complex.

Model condition 55 from circular 11/95 has been attached to the planning permission for the quarry (CT.6788/D; CT.6788/A). This condition relates to archaeology and requires a programme of archaeological excavation and recording in advance of extraction as the site is considered to have high archaeological potential. The work is required under PPG16 (1990) and the County Council's policy on archaeology (although it is acknowledged that *Planning for the historic environment* (PPS5, 2010) has now superseded PPG16). As a result of the inevitable damage to or destruction of archaeological deposits during the extraction of gravel, a formal programme of archaeological excavation was required for the site. The specification for excavation was approved by Mr Charles Parry, Senior Archaeological Officer with Gloucestershire County Council, in order to satisfy the archaeological condition placed on the planning permission.

Danielle Milbank supervised the fieldwork with the assistance of Natasha Bennett, Steve Crabb, Tim Dawson and Jacqueline Pitt, between 30th September and 15th October 2010. The archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd but it is anticipated that it will be deposited with Corinium Museum, Cirencester in due course. The site code for this phase of the work is MFK 10/96.

The quarry is located between the villages of Kempsford and Whelford to the south-east of RAF Fairford (Fig. 1). Area G lies on the north-east edge of the complex (Fig. 2), at an average height of c. 74m above Ordnance Datum. The Thames flows past some 2km to the south, with the Coln around 800m to the east. Geological maps (BGS 1974) indicate that the underlying geology is first terrace gravels, which were observed during fieldwork.

Archaeological background

Archaeological interest in the Manor Farm site arose from features identified on aerial photographs and subsequently evaluated (OAU 1991). The cropmarks on the quarry site itself (though none were noted for area G) included linear features on at least three alignments.

Evaluation (OAU 1991) carried out in the area following the assessment of aerial photographic evidence demonstrated the presence of archaeological deposits in the adjacent areas and concluded that these were likely to be field boundaries and enclosures of Roman date. Subsequent investigations to the south-west (Hindmarch 2003; Hammond 2003; Hammond and Taylor 2004; Hancocks 2004; Hammond *et al.* 2005) and west (Cass and Taylor 2010; Lewis and McNicoll-Norbury 2010) revealed an extensive and well ordered pattern of landscape division, largely of Roman date, comprising field boundaries and trackways, with evidence of development of the pattern over time (Fig. 2). The margins of these extensive enclosed areas appear to have been reached on Area F immediately to the west of the current site.

At Stubbs Farm, only around 1.5km to the south-west (Fig. 2) the linear cropmarks of the field system with trackways described above, continue and incorporate a further rectangular enclosure and a sub-circular enclosure, which have been excavated (Cromarty *et al.* 2007). That site consists of a complex multi-ditched circular enclosure some 50m across, uncertainly dated, perhaps Iron Age but still in use until the early Roman period, and a Roman double-ditched quasi-rectangular enclosure of similar proportions to the south; an extension of this latter enclosure cut across the circular enclosure. Almost all the dating evidence here points to the 2nd century AD, the site almost certainly did not extend to the end of the Roman period. Further evaluation in the north-west of that area (i.e., south-west of the area reported below), showed the presence there of at least two buildings, one with masonry foundations, representing a modest Romanized farmstead. Field systems associated with this farm have also been explored, and showed a familiar pattern of a late Iron Age field layout being replaced in the early 2nd century by a more regular network of tracks and fields. These field systems continue to the south and east.

Evidence for Iron Age and Roman occupation has also been recorded in the wider area, at sites such as Lechlade (Boyle *et al.* 1998), Somerford Keynes, Whelford Bowmoor, Thornhill Farm and Claydon Pike, and results from a number of these sites have been brought together for publication (Miles *et al.* 2007). Extensive Iron Age and Roman occupation has also been excavated at Horcott to the west (Pine and Preston 2004).

Results

The excavation covered an area of approximately 4.4 hectares. The complete area stripped is shown in Figure 3. Topsoil and overburden were removed by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket to expose the uppermost surface of archaeological deposits. All archaeological deposits were cleaned and excavated by hand. All discrete features were half sectioned as a minimum, postholes being fully excavated. A sample of over 5% of linear features were excavated. All termini and intersections were examined.

The excavation revealed evidence of post-medieval field boundaries and undated gullies, pits (probably tree-holes) and a small cluster of postholes (Fig. 3). The paucity of dating evidence was a problem across the whole site, as noted in previous areas of excavation (Hammond *et al.* 1993). The paucity of datable evidence in Area G may be explained by the fact that this area appears to be well away from the main focus of settlement to the south-west. Manuring sometimes brings pottery and other finds into outlying fields but it appears not in this case.

Phase by phase summary

Finds of any sort were rare. Site phasing is based on pottery in the case of one ditch, metalwork evidence in one case and landscape logic for other features. A complete list of excavated features with a summary of the phasing evidence forms Appendix 1.

Post medieval

At the north-west of the excavation area, an existing field boundary (an overgrown ditch), aligned SE–NW, was cleared of undergrowth and silt as part of the stripping process. Parallel to this at a distance of 0.60m to the east was narrower ditch (20200). This was *c.* 250m long, 0.95m to 1.20m wide and 0.28m deep on average, with a concave profile (Pl. 1). It was excavated in 8 slots (11005–8, 11013–15 and 11026). Eight sherds of pottery of 19th–20th century date were recovered from slot 11015 (fill 11072).

On the southern side of the field, *c.*2m from an existing boundary, and again parallel to it, ditch 20201 (Pl. 2) was recorded on a NE–SW orientation, with an entrance gap at the north-east extreme. This was *c.* 200m long, between 0.86m to 1.30m wide and between 0.12m and 0.28m deep. It was excavated in 11 slots (11000–2, 11017–23 and 11025) which showed the ditch to have a shallow concave profile. Given its orientation and

proximity to the existing boundary on the same axis this feature although undated is considered to be an earlier version of the existing boundary and thus late post-medieval in origin.

Postholes

A cluster of postholes (11028–32) were recorded at the north edge of the excavation. These were oval in plan, all around 0.3m by 0.4m across, and extremely shallow, between 0.01–0.07m deep. Two fragments of post-medieval square headed nails were recovered from posthole 11031 (fill 11081). These postholes likely represent the remnants of a late post-medieval building such as a storage shed or possibly a shepherd's shelter.

A small oval posthole 11009 was recorded close to ditch 20200 (slot 11007). This was undated and was 0.39m by 0.35m and 0.24m. It is possibly associated with the laying out and construction of this linear boundary

A shallow ephemeral gully 20202 was recorded on a east-west axis for c.6m at the north edge of the area. It was extremely shallow, just 0.07m deep and was truncated by ditch 20200 (Fig. 4). Thus it is earlier than this feature (19th-20th century) but no tighter dating can be given. Again, its relationship to the existing field boundary suggests it is not especially old.

The same can be said of treeholes 11027 and 11010/12: it could be argued that the trees were felled to facilitate the construction of the ditch and the likely accompanying bank that was located between this ditch and the recently grubbed out ditch. However treehole 11027 contained a flint flake of Mesolithic or early Neolithic date. There is a possibility that this dates the feature but it may be residual or intrusive in deposition. Treehole 11027 was oval in plan, 1m by 0.80m and 0.20m deep and was truncated by ditch 20200.

Undated

A burnt out tree hole 11016, filled with fire reddened clayey silt (11073) was recorded together with shallow pit 11026. Treehole 11016 was 1m by 0.80m and 0.10m deep. Pit 11026 was oval in plan, 0.58m by 0.48m and 0.10m deep. It contained sheep/goat bones but no dateable finds.

Modern

A rectangular pit, 11011, which was 1.60m by 1.45m and 0.45m deep. Its mixed sand and gravel lower fill suggests this is a machine excavated geo-technical test pit.

Finds

The Pottery

The excavations produced just eight sherds of pottery, all from ditch 11015 (11072). Six sherds of white glazed china of 19th-20th century date were recovered together with two residual sherds of early post-medieval glazed earthenwares, probably made at Ashton Keynes.

Struck Flint by Steve Ford

A single struck flint was recovered from treebole 11027 (11077). The piece was a narrow flake and was patinated white but otherwise in good condition. About 1/3 remaining cortex was present on the dorsal surface with previous narrow flake scars also present. The piece is of Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic date but may be residual in the context in which it was found.

Animal Bone

A small amount of animal bone was recovered from context 11026 (11076). A total of 40 fragments were present for analysis, weighing 136g. The preservation of all remains was generally very good, with very little fragmentation and surface damage noted. A single sheep/goat skeleton was represented, including many skeletal elements, primarily vertebrae, sacrum, and pelvis. No evidence of butchery practice (i.e. cut marks to the bone) was observed, and no further information could be derived from these animal skeletal remains.

Metalwork

Two iron nails were recovered during this phase of work, both from context 11031 (11081), one was a small nail and the other a larger clinch nail with a square head.

Charred Seeds by Jo Pine

Five samples from a series of deposits were submitted for an analysis of their palaeoenvironmental remains. The samples had been subjected to standard water flotation techniques. The flot was examined under a low-power binocular microscope at a magnification of x10.

Charred plant macrofossils were present in only two flots, from samples 51 and 54 (Appendix 2), and these were only individual grains, and likely redeposited in treeholes hence providing no meaningful interpretable information. No charcoal was present in any of the flots but they all contained moderate amounts of snail shells, any of which could be modern intrusions.

Conclusions

No cut features of archaeological significance were revealed during this phase of archaeological works, all the features were late post-medieval (where datable) or of natural origin, although a single struck flint was recovered. This current phase of works seems to have verified the easterly limit of both the Roman and Iron Age field systems previously identified, this borderland lying to the east in Area F (Lewis and McNicoll-Norbury 2010).

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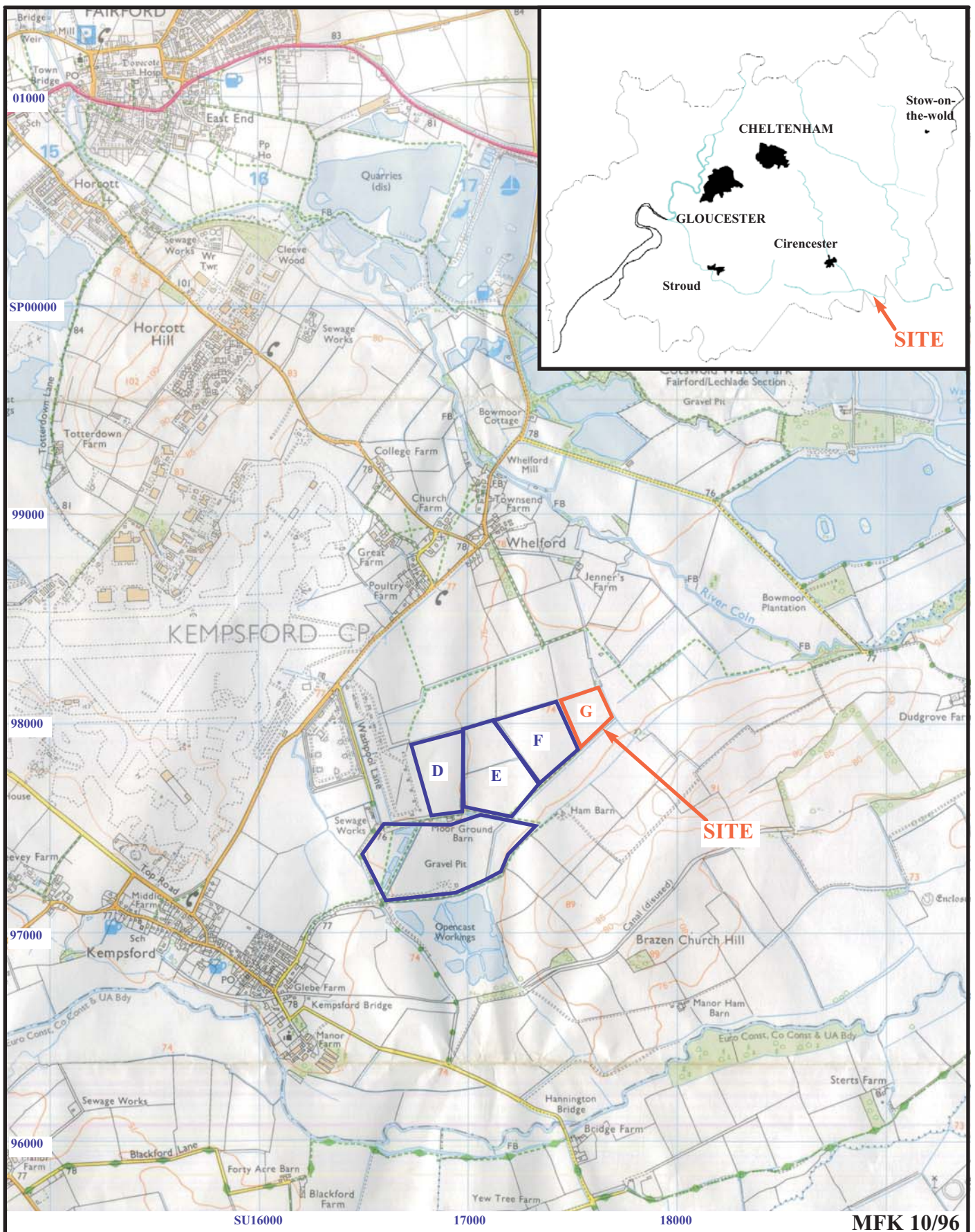
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APPENDIX 1: Catalogue of all excavated features

<i>Group</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>Dating Evidence</i>
20201	11000	11050–1	Gully	Post-medieval	Spatial
20201	11001	11052	Gully	Post-medieval	Spatial
20201	11002	11053	Gully	Post-medieval	Spatial
20202	11003	11054	Gully		
20202	11004	11055	Gully		
20200	11005	11056	Ditch	Post-medieval	Associated ceramics
20200	11006	11057	Ditch	Post-medieval	Associated ceramics
20200	11007	11058, 11063	Ditch	Post-medieval	Associated ceramics
20200	11008	11059, 11064	Ditch	Post-medieval	Associated ceramics
	11009	11060–2	Posthole	Post-medieval??	Spatial
	11010	11071	Pit/treehole	Post-medieval?	Spatial
	11011	11065–6	Pit	Modern	Form
	11012	11067	Pit/treehole	Post-medieval?	Spatial
20200	11013	11068	Ditch	Post-medieval	Associated ceramics
20200	11014	11069–70	Ditch	Post-medieval	Associated ceramics
20200	11015	11072	Ditch	Post-medieval	Pottery
	11016	11073–4	Pit	?	
20201	11017	11085–6	Ditch	Post-medieval	Spatial
20201	11018	11087	Ditch	Post-medieval	Spatial
20201	11019	11088–9	Ditch	Post-medieval	Spatial
20201	11020	11090	Ditch	Post-medieval	Spatial
20201	11021	11091	Ditch	Post-medieval	Spatial
20201	11022	11092	Ditch	Post-medieval	Spatial
20201	11023	11093	Ditch	Post-medieval	Spatial
20201	11025	11095	Ditch	Post-medieval	Spatial
	11026	11075–6	Pit	?	
	11027	11077	Pit/treehole	Post-medieval?	Spatial
	11028	11078	Posthole	Post-medieval	Associated metalwork
	11029	11079	Posthole	Post-medieval	Associated metalwork
	11030	11080	Posthole	Post-medieval	Associated metalwork
	11031	11081	Posthole	Post-medieval	Metalwork
	11032	11082	Posthole	Post-medieval	Associated metalwork

APPENDIX 2: Catalogue of archaeobotanical taxa.

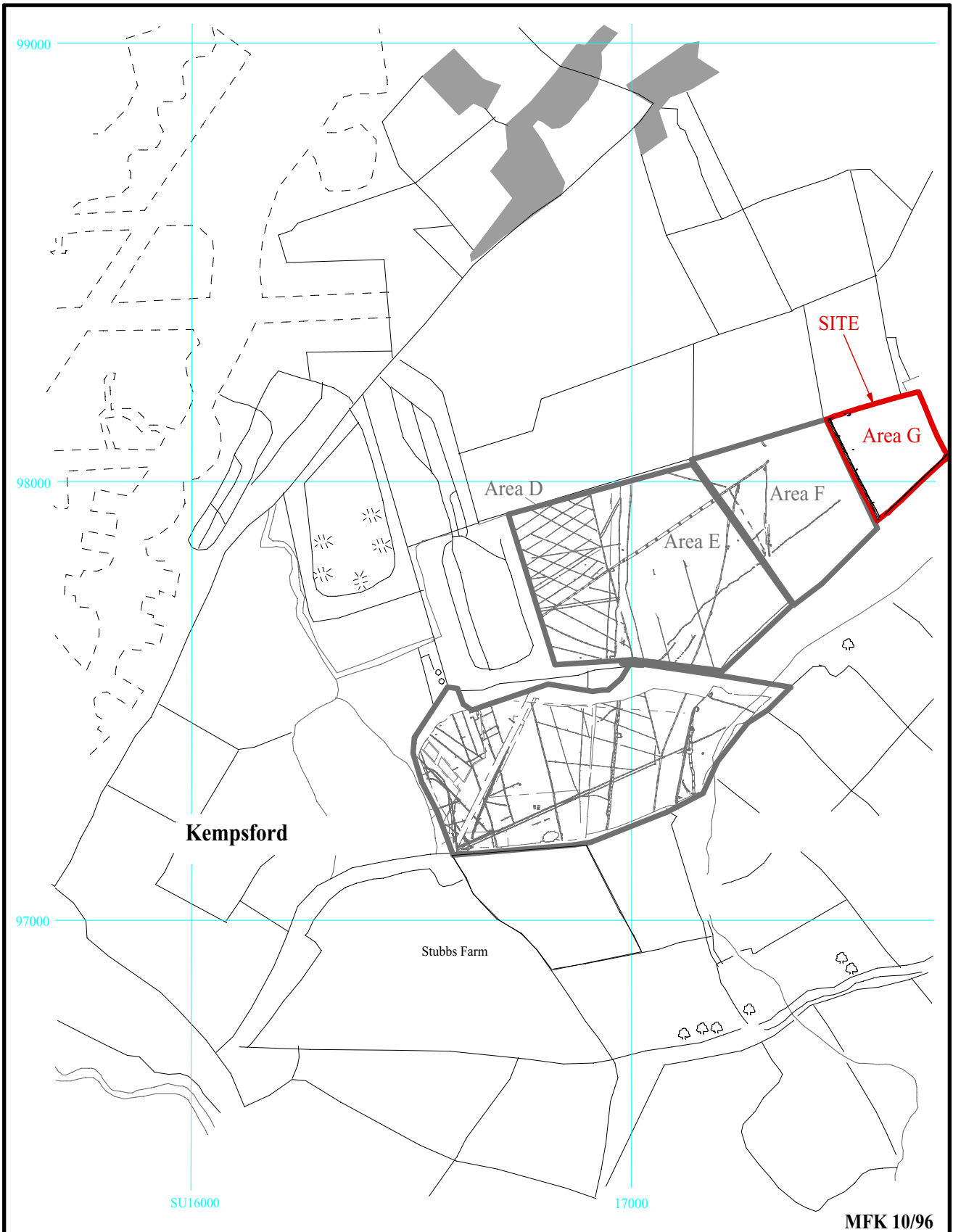
<i>Sample</i>	51	54	
<i>Cut</i>	11016	11027	
<i>Context</i>	11073	11077	
<i>Type</i>	Tree	Pit/tree	
LATIN BINOMIAL			COMMON NAME
<i>Chenopodium</i> spp./ <i>Atriplex</i> spp.	1	-	Goosefoot/ orache
Indeterminate Cereal	-	1	



**Area G, Manor Farm, Kempsford, Gloucestershire, 2010
Archaeological Excavation**

Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Kempsford and within Gloucestershire.

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Kempford

Stubbs Farm

Area D

Area E

Area F

Area G

SITE

SU16000

17000

MFK 10/96

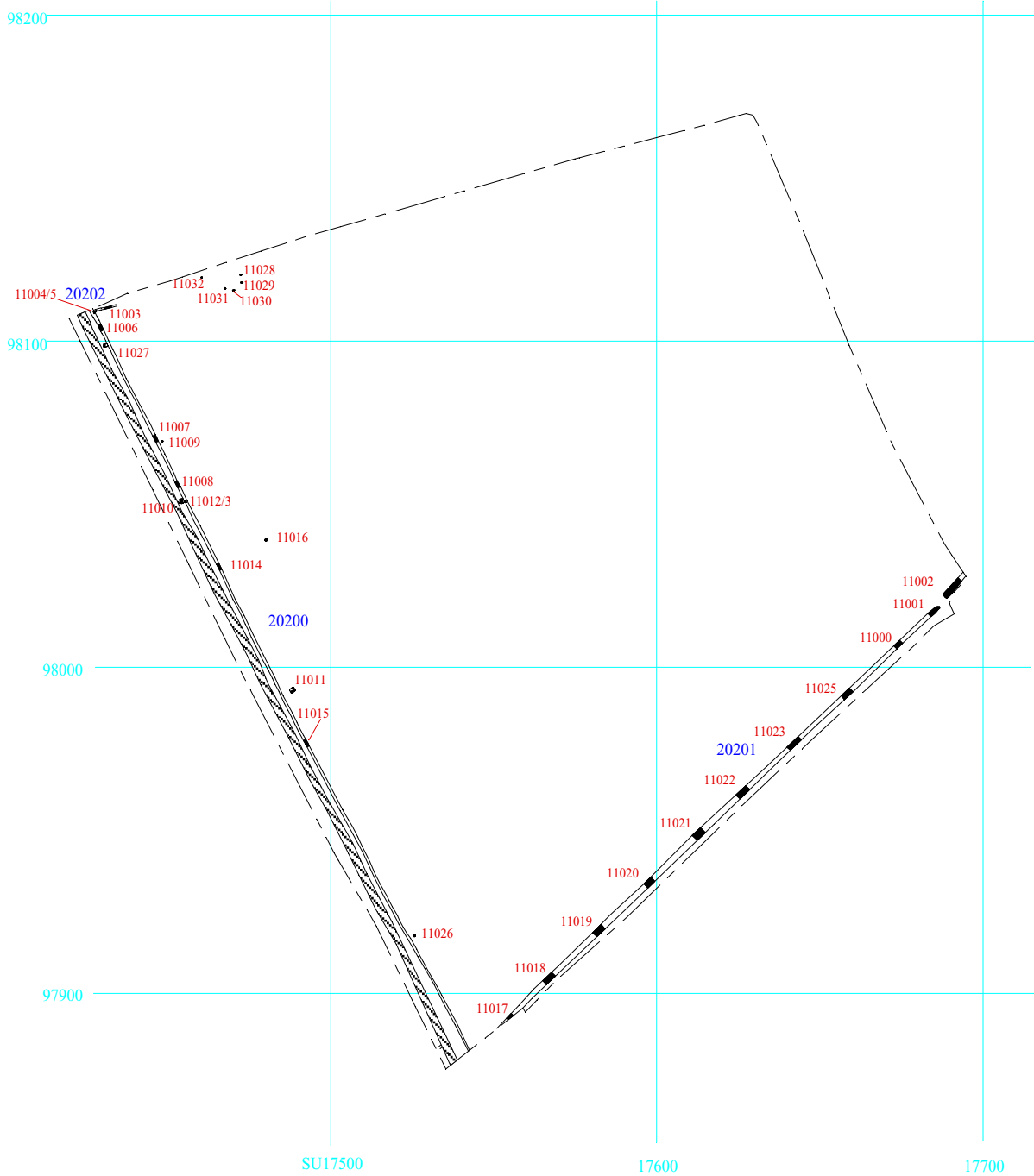


**Area G, Manor Farm, Kempford,
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Figure 2. Location of Area G and previous excavation areas



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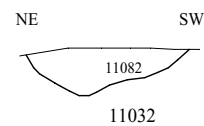
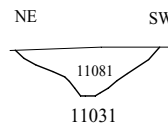
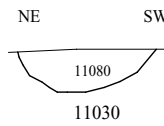
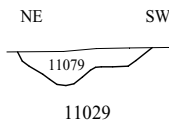
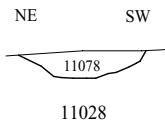
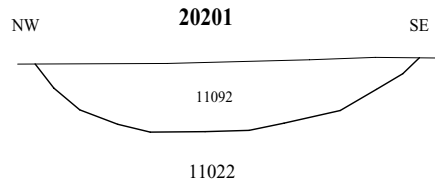
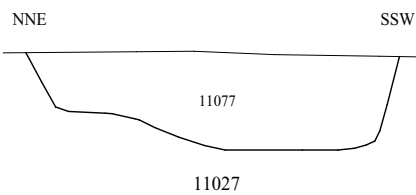
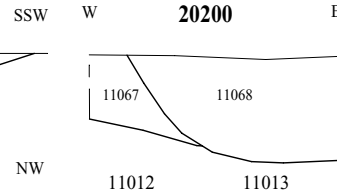
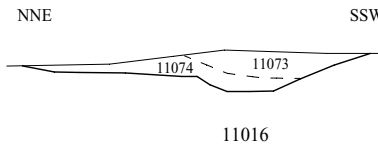
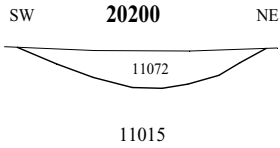
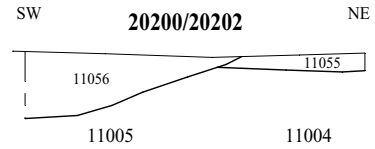
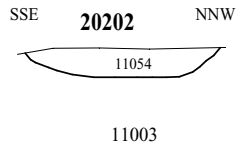
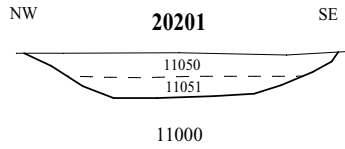


**Area G, Manor Farm, Kempford,
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Figure 3. Plan of stripped area showing all features



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Gloucestershire, 2010
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Figure 4. Selected sections.



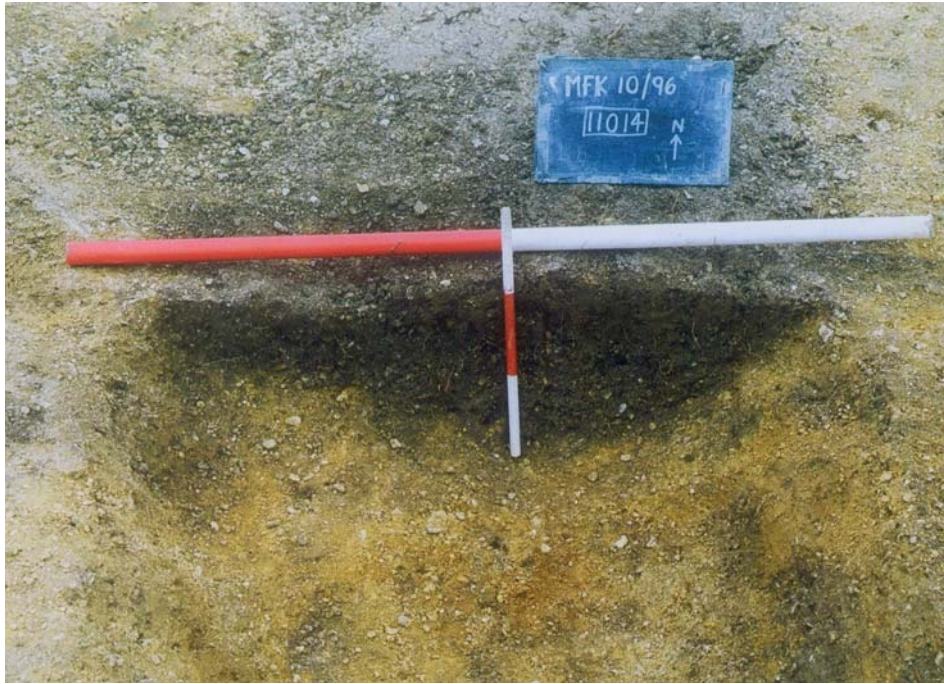


Plate 1. Ditch 20200, slot 11014, looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 2. Ditch 20201, looking west.

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**Area G, Manor Farm, Kempford, Gloucestershire, 2010
Archaeological Excavation**

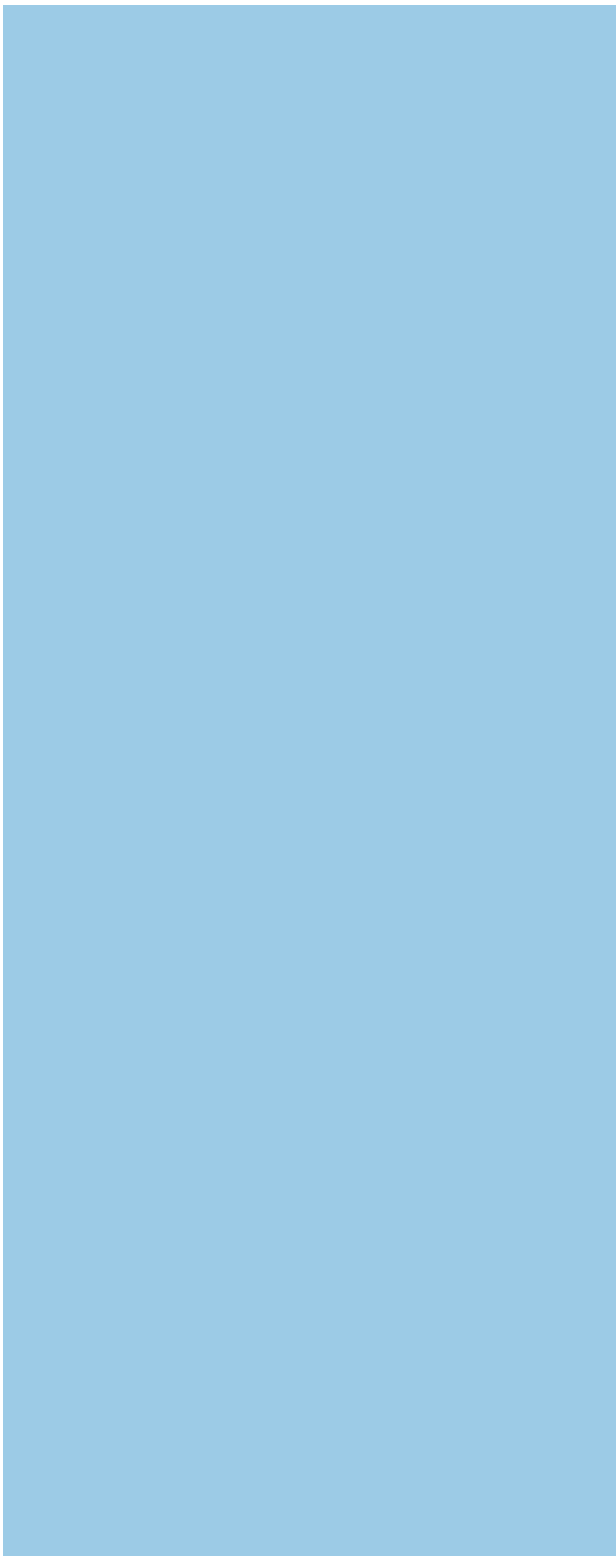
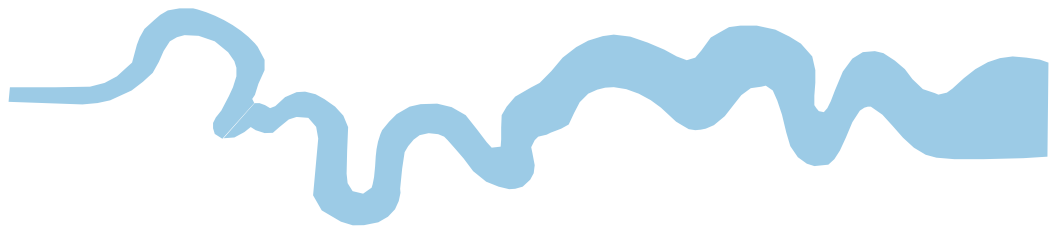
Plates 1 and 2.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late -----	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle -----	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early -----	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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