

Northern Archaeological Associates

**AN INVESTIGATION OF ROMANO-BRITISH ENCLOSURES AT
SWAYTHORPE FARM, KILHAM, E. YORKSHIRE**



Undertaken on behalf

of

JSR FARMS LTD

NAA 98/42

July 1998

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FOR

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) on behalf of JSR Farms Ltd. Southburn, Drifffield, during groundworks for solid floor straw-based beef housing at Swaythorpe Farm, Kilham, East Yorkshire, between 11th and 22nd March 1998. The farm stands at just over 100 metres OD. on the upper chalk of the Yorkshire Wolds. Groundworks involved the stripping and leveling of 1.4 hectares on the south side of the farm (Area A), stripping approximately 1 kilometre of new farm track along the east side of Broach Dale (Area B), and an area of 1600 sq. metres for a new beet pad on the eastern side of the track (Area C).

The deserted medieval village of Swaythorpe lies just north of the farm, and beyond it, a little further to the north-east is a cropmark of a large polygonal enclosure of probable prehistoric date. Several ring ditches and rectilinear field systems are also known in the vicinity, and a long linear feature runs from the north-east to the south-west across area A. This feature, recorded by the SMR as a possible trackway proved to be a boundary ditch.

Extensive remains of Romano-British date were found in Area A. Part of what could be a 'ladder' settlement with three (or possibly four) enclosures was linked to the boundary ditch on the north side. Within this the remains of three structures were examined and recorded and three pits excavated. One structure was probably a screen or shelter for wintering stock, another, which may have been attached to, or within a larger building, was probably a latrine. Evidence suggesting that occupation had lasted for some time on the site came from one enclosure where a crop-drying oven had been constructed over the silted-up ditch. After this structure had fallen into disuse and been leveled, two children and an infant had been buried in successive graves, followed by a cremation, all within the same small area. Two other cremations were also found, one of these, buried in a late Roman native-style pot is an unusual and important find. Material retrieved from the structures and pits shows the site was occupied between the mid-3rd and the late 4th century AD. The long linear boundary ditch recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record is likely to be of contemporary date. A single roman roof tile (Tegula) incorporated into the paving around the latrines implies the likely presence of a more 'Romanised' building close by, either ruined or in use. In this location the most likely building of such status would be a villa.

The new farm track (Area B) was only available for recording for one day before site plant obscured the visible features. A substantial enclosure ditch was noted at TA 0413 6834 running along the track for 64 metres. It appeared to be part of an

enclosure lying on the higher ground to the east. A single shard of calcite-gritted pottery retrieved from the filling could be either roman or iron-age in date. Two parallel, much narrower ditches joined the southern end of this enclosure from the SW.

Further along the track at TA 0417 6807, where it turned sharply towards the valley bottom, a pit alignment crossed running E-W. Another ditch ran parallel to this half-way down the steep slope to the valley floor. Two round pits were noted adjacent to it. No dating evidence was recovered from any of these features.

The beet pad (Area C) lay on a slope in the corner of a field at TA 0417 6841. No archaeological features were observed.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report represents the results of an archaeological watching brief of groundworks for a solid floor straw-based beef housing, a new farm track and a new beet pad at Swaythorpe Farm, Kilham, East Yorkshire (TA 0388 6883). The watching brief was undertaken between 11th and 22nd March 1998 by Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) on behalf of JSR Farms Ltd. Southburn, Driffield.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken as a condition of planning consent for the development (application M.2033K). The archaeological condition was attached to the planning permission by The East Riding of Yorkshire Council on the advice of the Humber Archaeology Partnership SMR office in anticipation that groundworks might encounter archaeological deposits.

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.1 The site lies about 100m above O.D. just below a high ridge which overlooks the Great Wold Valley (Fig. 1). It commands a fine view southwards down Broach Dale.
- 2.2 The natural subsoil within the area of the development is the upper chalk of the of the Yorkshire Wolds. The chalk is frost fractured to a depth of about 0.5m. This rubble layer contains numerous small natural pockets of fine reddish brown loam. Towards the south-east corner of site A, a colluvial deposit comprised of fine chalk gravel mixed with loam overlies the frost-fractured rubble and fills the valley of Broach Dale below.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The site lies just to the south of the deserted medieval village of Swaythorpe and within its associated open fields.
- 3.2 The surrounding area contains the remains of many features of prehistoric and Roman date (Fig. 2). To the north-west of the deserted medieval village a double-ditched

polygonal enclosure, 150m in diameter commands the apex of the ridge. This important site is likely to be of Iron Age or late Bronze Age date. Numerous prehistoric burials and Romano-British field systems are also known from aerial photographs, together with several long linear features which link to enclose much larger areas. One of these which crosses site A from north-east to south-west was recorded by the SMR as a possible trackway but proved on excavation to be a boundary ditch.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The development involved the stripping and transportation of topsoil and the excavation of large amounts of chalk subsoil. Two bulldozers, a 360° excavator and two large dumper trucks were used in the operation. 1.4 hectares were stripped and leveled on the main site just south of the farm (Area A). A 4m-wide strip of topsoil was also removed for approximately 1 kilometer along the east side of Broach Dale to lay a new farm track (Area B), and a sloping area, 80m x 20m at TA 0417 6841 was also stripped to form a new beet pad (Area C).
- 4.2 The machine operation was monitored continuously from Monday to Saturday noon each week and some excavation in advance of the work was done at weekends and during the second week. All visible features in area A were planned at a scale of 1:100, although due to the speed of machine work and the use of a toothed bucket some smaller features such as post holes may have been missed. Photographs were taken and more detailed plans and section drawings done of important features. Finds were recorded by context.
- 4.3 Features along the line of the new farm track (Area B) were recorded in a single day before they were obscured by the passage of site plant. Sampling by excavation was not possible in this area

5.0 RESULTS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

Area A (Figs. 3 - 6)

- 5.1 A long linear feature, known from aerial photographs crossed the south-east corner of the site at 45°. This was a boundary ditch (72), 2m wide, with a wide 'U' shaped profile, 0.3m deep. Although the aerial plot indicates possible recutting further to the north-east, there was no evidence for this in the section exposed on the site. There was however a small break in the ditch, 0.5m wide, towards the north-east end.
- 5.2 A group of three (or possibly four) rectilinear enclosures, linked to the boundary ditch, may form part of a 'ladder' settlement extending beyond the site to the north (Fig. 3). The enclosure ditches were between 0.8m and 1.2m wide and were cut between 0.2m and 0.25m into the chalk subsoil with 'U' shaped profiles. A 7.5m-wide gap, marked an entrance on the western side, and another gateway between two enclosures had subsequently been ditched across (04).

- 5.3 After this blocking ditch had been allowed to silt up a small crop-drying oven (11) had been built into the fill. Only the 'T' shaped flue remained, filled with dark silt. Two graves had then been cut in succession through this layer. The earlier (13) contained the skeleton of a child, *c.* 9 years old and possibly male (find no. 12AA) lying on its left side in a flexed position, with its head to the east. The later grave (20) contained the extended skeleton of a younger child, *c.* 4 years old and possibly female (find no. 19AA), with its head to the north. Skull fragments (find no. 12AB) and other bones belonging to a new born infant were also found in the fills of both graves indicating the presence of a third burial. A small cache of cremated human bone (44), was found buried in the upper fill of the crop-drier flue, close to the head-end of the later grave.
- 5.4 Three deposits of cremated bone (contexts 17 & 23) were found elsewhere on the site. One of these (23) was that of a human adult buried inside a pot. This pot, of which only the lower half survived, was a flat-based, calcite-gritted jar, very similar to the Knapton or Huntcliffe types associated with the settlement. In East Yorkshire the practice of cremation is normally associated with more 'Romanised' settlements of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. This example, buried in a late 'native' style pot is therefore an unusual and important find.
- 5.5 Two structures lying within the enclosures were examined. One of these (69) first appeared as a semi-circular depression adjacent to the eastern boundary ditch, 4m wide, filled with heavy chalk lumps mixed with dark brown loam (26). Excavation proved it to be a shallow ledge cut into the slope, with a steep edge forming an arc on the uphill side. Features similar to this occurring at Welton Wold were associated with screens of small posts, behind which cattle may have sheltered, eroding the chalk to create this kind of depression. In this case the heavy chalk lumps in the fill may have come from a screen wall. Traces of a footing for a similar wall (29) were noted adjacent to it on the south. Pottery, bone and a fragment of glass (find no. 26AB) were found in the layer filling the depression.
- 5.6 A second structure consisted of two parallel trenches (31 & 33), 4.5m long, and originally 1m wide and between 0.4m and 0.5m deep, cut into the chalk on a north-south alignment (Fig. 4). Both of these had been narrowed to approximately half their original width by the addition of rubble packing. This had formed a paved revetment, providing a vertical edge to each trench on the east and south sides only, the opposing sides being left rough as originally dug. At least a dozen sheep metapodial bones, some with articulated toe bones, were found scattered together with part of a broken pot along the bottom of one of the trenches (30), indicating that it had been open during use. Similar trenches with paving on one side were found in association with an aisled building at Welton Wold, and have been interpreted as latrines. At Swaythorpe a row of four post-holes (60, 62, 64 & 66) running alongside, and to the west of trench 33 may have been part of an associated building. At the other side of this screen or 'wall' were two shallow slots (67 & 68), each filled with a distinctive geyish-brown silt (27AA & 28AA). The paving material around the latrines included a fragment of beehive quern (find no. 49AB) and a Roman roof tile or 'Tegula' (find no. 49AA). This tile may indicate the presence of a more 'Romanised' type of building in the vicinity, possibly a villa.

- 5.7 Six pits were identified and planned on the site. Two of these (35 & 43) were fully excavated and a third (15) was sectioned. Pit 15 had been cut through the silt in one of the enclosure ditches. The polished mount of a carved jet finger ring (find no.14AA) was recovered from its fill.
- 5.8 The fill (34) of Pit 35 produced a quantity of pottery and animal bone. The pottery dated to the second half of the 4th century AD, and human infant bones may also have been present. Limpet shells suggested that some sea food was being imported into the site. The pit also yielded several other finds including a fragment of whetstone (find no.34AA), two thin bronze bracelets with a disc brooch (find no. 34AB) and two fragments of jet (find no.34AC). One of the jet fragments showed signs of cutting and polishing, indicating that it may have been imported to the site as a raw material. The two bracelets and brooch were found together surrounded by a dark stain. Most likely they had been inside a small container, perhaps a purse, made of organic material.
- 5.9 Context 43 was a small, very round, vertical-sided pit adjacent to the latrine area. Originally it could have been dug for storage, then subsequently used for rubbish. Two layers of black fill (40 & 42) were separated by a hard floor of compacted crushed chalk (41), suggesting a possible re-use of the pit for storage. A quantity of pottery dating to the late 3rd or early 4th century AD. was recovered from the lower fill. Other finds included a whetstone (find no. 42AB) and a pestle made of chalk marl (find no.42AA).
- 5.10 Finds from elsewhere on Site A included a fragment of millstone (find no.21AA) and two coins (find nos. 36AA & 22AA). Coin 36AA was recovered from the fill (36) of the eastern boundary ditch (37) and was of Constantine I issued between AD 330-41. Coin 22AA was from a 'blanket' layer in the area of the latrine and was of Julia Mamaea (mother of Severus Alexander, issued between AD 222-35).

Area B (Fig. 7)

- 5.11 Part of an enclosure ditch (73) was cut by the new farm track at TA 0413 6834. It entered from the east and followed the line for 64 metres before turning back. The ditch was 1.5m wide and formed a double curve, consistent with being part of a double enclosure situated on the rising ground to the east. Two parallel, much narrower ditches (77) joined its south-west corner from the southwest. A single shard of calcite-gritted pottery came from the upper fill of the enclosure ditch. This could be either Roman or Iron Age in date.
- 5.12 Further along at TA 0417 6807 a pit alignment (75) crossed the track running E-W. Four of the pits were revealed, each 1.0m x 2.0m and set 1.0m apart. They were filled with a fine reddish-brown loam, consistent with slow natural silting. No datable material was recovered.
- 5.13 A ditch (79), 2.0m wide, was noted running parallel to the pit alignment about 20 metres to the SW, halfway down the steep valley side. Two round pits (81 & 83), both about 3.0m in diameter, were visible, one on each side of it. No dating evidence was recovered.

Area C

5.14 There were no archaeological features in area C.

6.0 SPECIALIST REPORTS

Small Finds

by Lindsay Allason-Jones

Copper Alloy

1. Two fragments of a strip bracelet with a circular hole at both terminals with a short, copper alloy peg still surviving in one hole. The shallow, convex face is decorated with chip-carved oval panels separated by incised transverse grooves arranged in groups of four. Both terminals have suffered some slight damage but the bracelet is otherwise complete. A small fragment of leather is attached to the shank. (See Colchester: Crummy 1983, fig. 46, no. 172 1, for comparable decorative motifs on a bracelet from a context dated to AD *c.*320 - *c.*450). *SWA98.34AB.34a*; Int. diam: 54mm, W: 1mm, T: 4mm. **Fig. 8, 1**

2. Length of rectangular-sectioned wire folded in half and tapering slightly to one end. The other end has broken across a hook and is covered in iron residue. The shank has traces of adhering leather. Possibly a distorted bracelet (cf Allason-Jones and Milet 1984, Type 18, 128). *SWA98.34AB.34b*; L: 144mm, W: 2mm T: 1mm.

3. Oval disc with a curved strip attached by corroded leather. *SWA98.34AB.34c*; Disc: 24 x 21mm, T of strip: 1mm, W of strip: 2.5mm

Iron

4. Narrow strip with parallel sides, pierced at one end by a disc-headed rivet. *SWA98.42AA*, L: 134mm, W: 11 mm, T: 4mm, Diam. of head of rivet: 16mm

5. Rectangular strip broken across a large rivet hole. *SWA98.22AB*; L: 75mm, W: 20mm, T: 4mm, hole: 7mm. **Fig. 8, 2**

6. Fragment of a curved plate of which only one short straight edge survives. *SWA98.32AA*; L: 40mm

7. Nail with a disc head. *SWA98.34a*; Diam of head: 16mm, L: 30mm

8. Nail with a disc head. *SWA98.12a*. Diam of head: 14mm, L: 24mm

9. Nail with a disc head. *SWA98.12b*. Diam of head: 26 x 19mm, L: 82mm

10. Nail with a disc head. *SWA98.44b*; Diam of head: 14mm, L: 54mm

11. Nail with a bar head. *SWA98.26b*; head: 17 x 6mm L: 40mm
12. Nail with a bar head. *SWA98.34c*. head: 19 x 7mm, L: 59mm
13. Nail shank. *SWA98.27*; L:23mm
14. Nail shank. *SWA98.34b*; L:30mm
15. Nail shank. *SWA98.44a*; L:54mm
16. Nail shank. *SWA98.26a*; L:43mm

Stone

17. Waisted cylinder of chalk marl with rounded ends. The wear pattern at one end suggests that this was used as a pestle but with a backwards and forwards motion inside a curved bowl rather than a pounding action. As the wear is uniformly smooth it would further appear that the pestle was used in a stone or wooden bowl rather than a mortarium. The chalk marl may come from a local source. *SWA98.42AA*; L: 84mm, Diam: 38-45mm. **Fig. 8, 17**

18. Two fragments of a micaceous sandstone hone of oval section and with curved ends. The surviving end has a deep groove around the edge. *SWA98.34AA*; Surv. L: 90mm, T: 32mm

19. Complete gneiss hone of rectangular shape and section. *SWA98.42AB*; L: 98mm, W: 27mm, T: 21mm

Jet/Shale

20. Fragment of a finger ring of jet with a plain oval panel. The shank appears to have been oval in section. This simple form of finger ring is common on Romano-British sites, especially along the east coast. Although jet became particularly popular in the late 3rd and 4th centuries AD, some jet carving was being carried out in the 2nd century and a close parallel to this finger ring was found in a 2nd century context in the excavations at Wellington Row, York (Allason-Jones 1996, no. 170). (See also Allason-Jones 1996, no. 167; Allason-Jones and Miket 1984, no. 7.92). *SWA98.14AA*. 14; Panel: 14 x 11mm. **Fig. 8, 20.**

21. Block of shale sheet with no original edges but possible scratched decoration on one face. Such fragments are difficult to assign with confidence to a specific type of object but may come from table tops, trays or inlay; all three of these categories are likely to have been considered luxury goods in the 2nd to 4th centuries of Roman Britain. (See Allason-Jones 1996, 46; Lawson 1975, 241-75). *SWA98.34AC.34*; 41 x 34mm

Discussion

This small assemblage can be categorized as domestic but with an emphasis on personal adornment rather than kitchen equipment. The bracelets and jet finger ring, in particular, are indicators of the presence of women. Jet has a noticeable link with the female population of Roman Britain, both in the type of object found and the fact that while the graves of women often include objects of jet very few jet artefacts have been found in association with male

graves or specifically male activities. This bias may reflect the religious beliefs of a section of the community. (See Pliny Natural History 36; Allason-Jones 1996, 17).

None of the artefacts can be firmly dated but a mid- to later-Roman date could be reasonably inferred.

The coins

by R.J. Brickstock

The excavations at Swaythorpe in 1998 produced two coins, of the third and fourth centuries AD:*

1. SWA 98, Context 22

Julia Mamaea (the mother of Severus Alexander)

Denomination: Denarius Reference: RIC 343

Obverse: [IVLIA M]AMAEA [AVG]

Reverse: IVNO CONSERVA[TRIX] Juno standing left, holding patera and sceptre;
at her feet, a peacock.

Date of issue: AD 222-35 Condition: slightly worn

Diameter: 18.5mm Weight: 2.6g Die-axis: 6 o'clock

**Surface analysis using EDXRF (Energy dispersive x-ray fluorescence) indicates the presence of roughly equal proportions of silver and copper, a result consistent with the considerably-debased nature of the currency apparent by the second quarter of the third century.

2. SWA 98, Context 36

Ruler: Constantine I Reference: as RIC 7 Trier 522

Obverse: [VRBS ROMA]

Reverse: Wolf and Twins (mint-mark illegible)

Date of issue: AD 330-41 Condition: unworn

Diameter: 13.5mm Weight: 1.0g Die-axis: 6 o'clock

This coin is now in rather brittle condition and has suffered considerable abrasion (reducing its maximum diameter), but nonetheless presents the appearance of a regular issue. EDXRF analysis, however, reveals an extremely high concentration of lead in the surface alloy (perhaps three times the quantity of copper) and also a significant presence of tin. The small change by this date was essentially a copper coinage, containing only a very small amount of silver (little more than 1% on average), though the alloy frequently contained a proportion of lead (perhaps as much as 15%). Lead corrosion products concentrated on the surface of the coin might be expected to lead to misleadingly-high EDXRF results, though perhaps not to the degree here encountered. It is possible that, despite appearances, this coin is actually a copy: its date therefore might be a little later than suggested, since such copies appear to have been produced in huge numbers to fill a hiatus that occurred in the supply of small change to the province of Britannia in the years c.AD 341-46.

Reference: RIC = Roman Imperial Coinage, ed. Mattingly and Sydenham *et al.*.

* A third object, retained by Lyndsay Allason-Jones, is not a coin.

** I am indebted to Leesa Vere-Stevens (Department of Archaeology, Durham) for EDXRF analyses of these coins.

Romano-British pottery

by Peter Didsbury

Introduction

A total of 395 sherds of pottery, weighing 9,622 grams, and having a combined rim EVEs total of 5.65, was recovered from the excavations. There were, in addition, 3 fragments of tile, brick and fired clay, weighing 18 grams.

Two principal components are discernible in the pottery assemblages: East Yorkshire greywares, primarily Holme upon Spalding Moor products (hereafter HOSM), and calcite gritted wares of proto-Huntcliff and Huntcliff types. The maximum possible date-range for the material is thus from the second quarter of the third century AD until the first quarter of the fifth. Narrower ranges for deposition in each context can, however, be suggested, and there is also a little evidence of probable second-century activity in the vicinity of the site (see further below).

The overall distribution of the material is shown in the table below:

Context	Ware	Sherds	Weight	EVEs
002	Grey	1	12	0.04
	Calcite-gritted	1	10	
003	Grey	6	49	0.05
	Calcite-gritted	5	23	
005	Calcite-gritted	1	61	0.07
007	Grey	1	29	0.04
	Calcite-gritted	1	88	
014	Grey	17	161	0.06
	Calcite-gritted	18	65	0.03
016	Grey	1	3	
	Calcite-gritted	4	25	
019	Calcite-gritted	2	27	

Context	Ware	Sherds	Weight	EVEs
021	Grey	2	119	0.13
	Calcite-gritted	6	35	
022	Grey	32	589	0.62
	Calcite-gritted	43	777	0.28
	Crambeck grey	2	49	0.06
	Tile/brick	2	16	
025	Grey	1	38	0.10
026	Grey	2	20	0.06
	Calcite-gritted	17	260	0.06
027	Grey	1	3	
030	Grey	4	51	
	Calcite-gritted	12	587	0.20
032	Grey	16	395	0.42
	Calcite-gritted	16	224	0.33
034	Grey	4	32	0.08
	Calcite-gritted	89	2251	0.56
	Oxidised	1	15	
	Fired clay	1	2	
042	Grey	18	1234	0.55
	Calcite-gritted	57	2020	1.62
	Samian	1	10	0.05
045	Calcite-gritted	1	7	
046	Grey	2	20	
	Calcite-gritted	1	7	
047	Grey	1	2	
U/S	Grey	3	139	
	Calcite-gritted	4	356	0.23
	Unclassified medieval 2		129	

Notes on the context assemblages

Contexts not mentioned below contain no usefully diagnostic material

002

The greyware is a rim fragment most probably from a third-or fourth-century wide-mouthed bowl.

022

The HOSM greywares contain a pedestal-footed bowl with neck cordon (cf Throlam 99, 100), and an everted rim jar (cf Hasholme 6). A simple-rimmed dish with external rim-groove, not HOSM fabric, is a long-lived form. An everted rim jar in sandy greyware has a rim similar to those employed on Gillam types 125-127, which date from c. 130-170.

The Crambeck greyware is a straight-sided flanged bowl.

The calcite-gritted wares contain simple dish/bowl forms, with jars of both proto-Huntcliff and Huntcliff types (one example of each).

The TPQ for deposition in this assemblage is in the period AD340-360, when the fully developed Huntcliff jar became available. The diagnostic HOSM forms were both produced at fourth-century kilns, and Crambeck greyware was first produced c. AD 270/280, perhaps not distributed outside its immediate production area until the earlier fourth century.

These considerations suggest that the assemblage probably represents fourth-century deposition, ending after AD 340-360 and conceivably in the early years of the fifth century.

025

The only sherd is a greyware necked jar/bowl in a course, black fabric, the high density of which is characteristic of late fourth-century wares in the region.

030

The greyware is represented by body sherds only. The calcite-gritted wares include a large fragment of a jar which probably falls within the Knapton-type formal range. The optimum date for this vessel is probably third century.

032

The calcite-gritted wares contain two jars of Rudston 198, from a later third- or fourth-century context. These jars, which resemble Dales-type wares, may be local imitations of the latter form, or derive from long-lived East Yorkshire forms in the "native" tradition.

The HOSM wares include two jars which resemble "storage" versions of common HOSM products. Similar vessels are found in third-century contexts at Faxfleet B (69, 73).

The HOSM wares include two jars which resemble "storage" versions of common HOSM products. Similar products are found in third-century contexts at Flaxfleet B (69, 73).

Deposition within this context need not necessarily continue into the fourth-century.

034

The date of this group is clearly defined by the calcite-gritted wares, which consist almost entirely of fully-developed lid-seated Huntcliff jars and bowls, with a single example of a simple-rimmed dish. Deposition after AD340-360 is indicated.

042

The greywares are principally of HOSM type, the only diagnostic forms being two straight-sided flanged bowls, a form which was probably made throughout most of the production period.

The calcite-gritted wares are entirely different in their composition from those in [034], since they contain no fully developed lid-seated Huntcliff forms. Instead, the jars in this context are comparable to the proto-Huntcliff forms found in the lower well deposit at Rudston, which Rigby considers to have been deposited in the period AD 295-330/340.

A samian form 31 fragment dates to after AD 150 (as late as c. 250 if from East Gaul).

046

These few sherds are difficult to date with confidence but the greyware is in a fabric which occurs in the second century in the region (see 014 above).

Summary

The site assemblage principally consists of a range of common regional forms dating to the later third and fourth centuries, and showing the common signs of normal domestic use, such as external sooting and residues.

Considerable portions of some individual vessels are extant, notably in contexts [034] and [042], suggesting that these may have functioned as sites of primary deposition. In context [022], the weathered nature of the material suggests it may have spent some considerable time on the surface before reaching its final place of deposition.

There would seem to be a clear chronological distinction between contexts [032] and [042], on the one hand, and [022] and [042], on the other. Deposition in the former contexts does not appear to continue beyond the mid-fourth century.

There is also evidence of activity resulting in ceramic deposition in the vicinity in the late Iron Age and earlier Roman period. Residual material of this period is most convincingly evidenced in context [014].

Human skeletal remains

by Dr. J. Langston

Inhumations

Child's skeleton 12AA

Age at death

The vertebral arches are fused to the vertebral bodies within the lumbar spine indicating that the child was older than *c.*6 years at death. As there is no fusion at any epiphysis death occurred before *c.*12 years, but developmental fusion between the ischial and pubic bones, which normally occurs at around the age of 7-8 years, shows the child was older than this. The most accurate estimate of age is from dental development which in this case is consistent with child died at *c.*9 years of age.

Sex

Whilst it is accepted that sexing immature remains is fraught with difficulty, and thought by some to be impossible, the morphology of the pelvis suggests this child is a possible male (following Schutkowski's criteria). Unfortunately the morphology of the mandible is not indicative of either sex. Whilst maleness is a possibility there can be no certainty about this.

Skeleton 19AA

Age at death

There is no fusion in any epiphyses and the ischium and pubis are still separate bones indicating a child younger than 7-8 years at death. Additionally, the vertebral arches are not fused to the vertebral bodies, and the basi-occiput remains unfused, both of which are indicative of an age of less than 6 years (although the fact that the left and right sides of the arches are fused together suggests an age of greater than 3 years). Dental development is generally found to be the most accurate method of ageing juveniles and from this it can be stated that this child was around 4 years old at the time of death.

Sex

The morphology of the pelvis is suggestive of a possible female (Schutkowski, 1993). Unfortunately the mandible is too abraded to assess for sexual dimorphism and cannot be used.

Infant bones

A number of infant bones were also found in Contexts 12 and 19. Their size suggests they are from one and the same baby, but there is a possibility that they come from more than one infant (although there was no duplication of material). Unfortunately no dental remains were recovered and the state of tooth development cannot be used for ageing. However,

comparison with reference material (bone size and morphology) suggests that this baby died within the first three months of life. The sex of the infant is unknown.

Cremation

Context 23AA (in pot)

These fragments vary in colour between buff brown and blue grey with occasional black charring. The wider range of colouration indicates incomplete oxidation and a probable lower temperature, less efficient burning.

The cremation remains were washed through a 2mm sieve and stones/pebbles removed by hand prior to drying. There was apparently little loss of very small fragments of bone & bone dust (few were visible in the wash-through from the sieve). Following drying the bone fragments were passed through 10mm and 5mm sieves and the residues weighed.

There is evidence of human bone in this cremation: among the recognisable fragments were pieces of skull, molar and pre-molar teeth roots (adult), a maxillar fragment, the articular surface of a distal humerus, three phalangeal fragments, a fragment of acetabular rim, pieces of long bone shaft (both large and small diameter i.e. femur/tibia/humerus and radius/ulna/fibula are represented).

The small total volume of these remains indicate that a complete individual is *not* represented here. However, there is no replication of bone parts so this sample represents the partial remains of (at least) one adult. There are also at least two recognisable burnt animal bone fragments in this context (species unidentified)

Context 17AA

Cremated bone treated as above. None can be definitely identified as human. However, the size, condition and colour of the fragments are very similar to those in Context 23AA.

Context 44AA

Cremated bone treated as above. Recognisable human bone fragments include pieces of skull (unfused sutures). There are also numerous unidentifiable fragments of long bone shaft (large and small diameter). There are no indications as to sex or age at death.

Also included in this context are at least two fragments of burnt animal bone (species unidentified).

Conclusions on the cremated remains

The volumes/weights of bone in each context is small and none represents the remains of a complete individual.

The fragments are small but there is an absence of very tiny fragments and bone dust (as evidenced by the wash-through material). This probably indicates selective picking of cremated remains from the pyre for burial, with no deliberate breaking of bone.

The colour of bone fragments indicates incomplete oxidation consistent with a lower temperature burning. Whilst skull fragments are seen in three contexts, and long bone shaft fragments in all four, there is a lack of certain other bones. Only one context (SWA98:23) contains teeth roots (which tend to survive, especially at lower temperatures), and there is no evidence of vertebral fragments (either bodies or processes). Only three phalangeal fragments were noted in total, and only two pieces of bone with articular surface. This perhaps suggests very selective retrieval of material for burial with much of the body being left at the pyre site or buried elsewhere.

Fragments of burnt animal bone were found in two contexts (SWA98:23 and 44). Species have not been identified.

Animal Bone Assessment

by L.J. Gidney

Introduction

This assemblage was recovered from a watching brief at Swaythorpe Farm, Kilham, E. Yorks. Extremely large areas were stripped, revealing extensive remains of Romano-British date. Few archaeological features could be excavated due to the speed of the development. The site appears to have been a relatively low status farm occupied during the late third and fourth centuries AD. It was probably associated with a larger villa complex.

Methods

For this assessment, the hand recovered bones in each bag were scanned and the following information recorded by context for cattle, sheep/goat and pig, if present: Fused Bone; Unfused Bone; Zones; Lower Jaw; Loose Teeth, Measurable Bone. These categories give an indication of the presence of ageable bones and confirm the impression gained of the general level of preservation. Fragments were usually only counted as identifiable if they encompassed a recognisable 'zone', as defined by Rackham (unpubl.). The presence of species other than cattle, sheep/goat and pig was noted. Cattle and sheep size ribs and vertebrae are referred to by the categories Large Ungulate and Small Ungulate respectively.

Results

Preservation of the animal bones was moderate. The base rich soil has caused leaching of the surfaces of the bones, obscuring butchery and gnawing marks and rendering measurements inaccurate. Context 34 was notable for the good preservation of young sheep bones, suggesting the admixture of organic refuse to provide a more neutral burial environment.

Ten contexts produced faunal remains. The most commonly identified species were: cattle, found in seven contexts; sheep, found in eight contexts and horse, found in six contexts. Pig was present in only one context. Context 34 produced the greatest quantity of animal bone and the greatest range of species with red deer, domestic fowl, a small mammal, limpet and possible human infant present, besides cattle, sheep and horse. No dog bones were found but clear evidence of canid gnawing was seen on bones from three contexts, and probable gnawed bones in several other contexts.

The cattle remains include a high proportion of teeth, which can be indicative of poor preservation of the surrounding jaw bone and redeposition of teeth as "background" detritus. The bones appear adult and are mostly fused, the only unfused elements seen being those that fuse latest in life.

Sheep remains appear more abundant than those of cattle. Context 30 is particularly interesting as it produced eleven sheep metapodials with most of the articulating toe bones. There are two right fore and hind legs indicated compared to three fore left and four hind left legs. Three of the metatarsals have fine knife marks on the proximal anterior surface. This is easily done when trying to cut the foot off the carcass at the proximal metatarsal joint. The presence of carpal bones from two fore legs indicates that some fore legs were disarticulated through the two rows of carpals, rather than at the proximal metacarpal, again this is an easy mistake to make. All the epiphysial ends on the metapodials and phalanges were fused, indicating these sheep were probably in excess of two years old at death. A further, smaller, concentration of sheep metapodials is present in context 42. These metapodials will give an indication of the stature of the sheep farmed here. There are several jaws present in context 34 with the teeth indicating a range of ages present from lambs to elderly culls.

The horse bones are all from small, pony-sized animals, though no bones are sufficiently intact for the withers height to be estimated. The epiphysial ends present are all fused, indicating the animals were all adult at death. Several bones appeared to have been gnawed by dogs but there were no obvious signs of butchery.

Red deer was represented by one antler from context 34. This is a shed antler with the beam and one tine present, it has disintegrated into several pieces. The burr of the coronet has been chopped off all round.

One fragment from context 12, submitted as possible bird bone from a child burial is, in fact, an infant human bone from the burial, not a bird bone. A further probable infant human bone was seen in context 34.

The only bird bone found was of domestic fowl, from context 34. Molluscs were sparse with a land snail, *Helix* sp., from context 26 and limpet shells from context 34.

Interpretation

This is a small collection of faunal remains in mediocre condition. Nonetheless this group suggests some interesting trends in livestock exploitation. The dry chalk grasslands may

have been more suitable for raising sheep and horses, rather than cattle and pigs which have higher water requirements.

The sheep feet from context 30 are an interesting collection, though perhaps an unexpected find in the fill of a latrine trench. There are several possible explanations. Firstly, they could be primary butchery waste discarded before the rest of the carcass was dismembered. Secondly, the feet could originally have been left in the skins and subsequently discarded as the first stage of preparing skins for curing. Thirdly, they could have been stockpiled as the raw material for bone roofing pegs and been dumped as surplus to requirements. None of these suggestions adequately explains the nature of the findspot. Stale urine was used in the fulling of wool but this has no connection with dismembered sheep feet. The sheep jaws from context 34 will provide the best evidence from this assemblage for the age structure of the slaughter population.

There is no evidence, at this stage, to suggest that the horse bones represent human food waste. The putative gnawing marks may rather suggest that fallen horses were procured for kennels. If the dogs were not kept confined, they will have been the agent responsible for the distribution of the horse bones.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This watching brief has been able to record a substantial amount of archaeological information from a site now largely destroyed by the development. However with the kind co-operation of the farm management and the plant contractors several features were examined in detail and a written, drawn and photographic record of the site was obtained within the limited time available.
- 7.2 The enclosures in Area A appeared to have been part of a farm occupied during the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. Its relatively low status is evident from the nature of the structures built and the high proportion of native type, hand-made pottery, although the bracelets, jet finger ring and coins point to a modicum of wealth enjoyed by the occupants. It is possible that the enclosures are related to, or even part of a larger villa complex. The long linear boundary ditch crossing Area A could also be part of a wider land division belonging to such a villa.
- 7.3 It has been particularly useful to identify features on this site which have occurred on other Roman rural sites in the region, in particular the cattle screen or shelter, and the latrines.
- 7.4 The sequence of burial rite, from flexed to extended inhumation, and then to cremation may be significant, but parallels need to be identified elsewhere before any conclusions can be drawn. The cremation buried in a late Roman native-style pot may be unique to the region and is an important find.
- 7.5 There was insufficient evidence to date either the enclosure or the pit alignment in Area B, however their positions have been recorded for future reference.

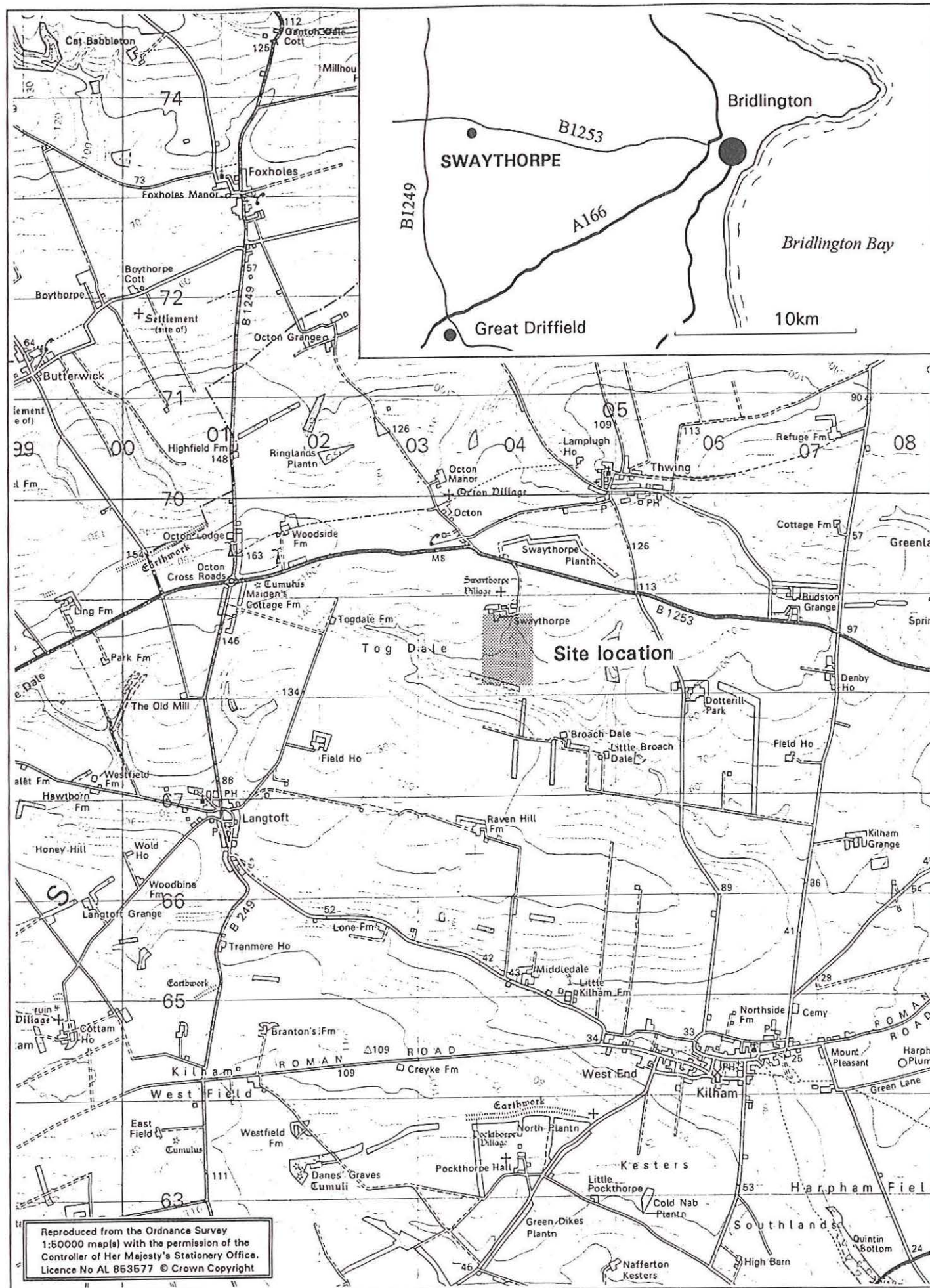
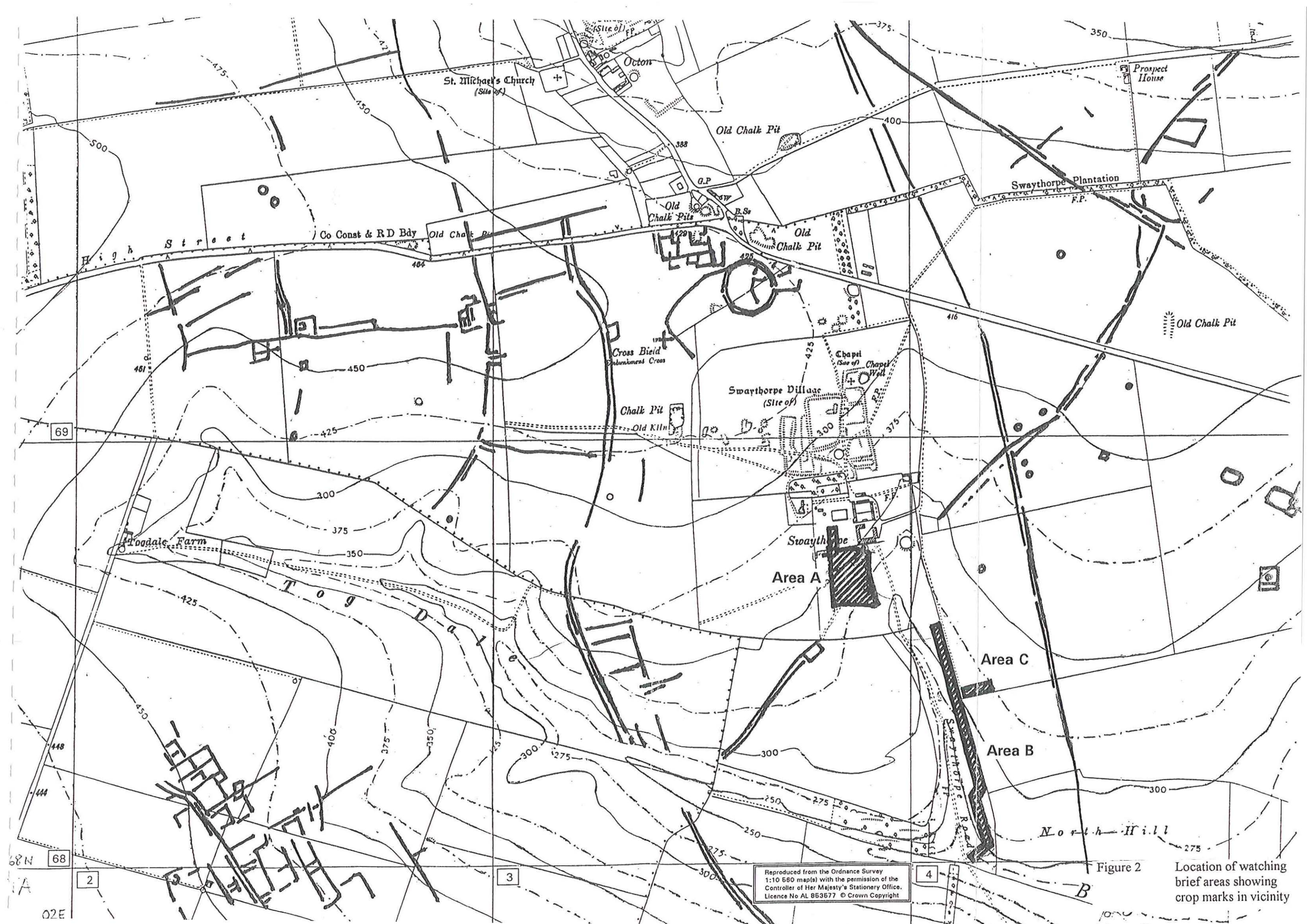


Figure 1 Site location



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Figure 2

Location of watching
 brief areas showing
 crop marks in vicinity

SWA 98
AREA A



20m

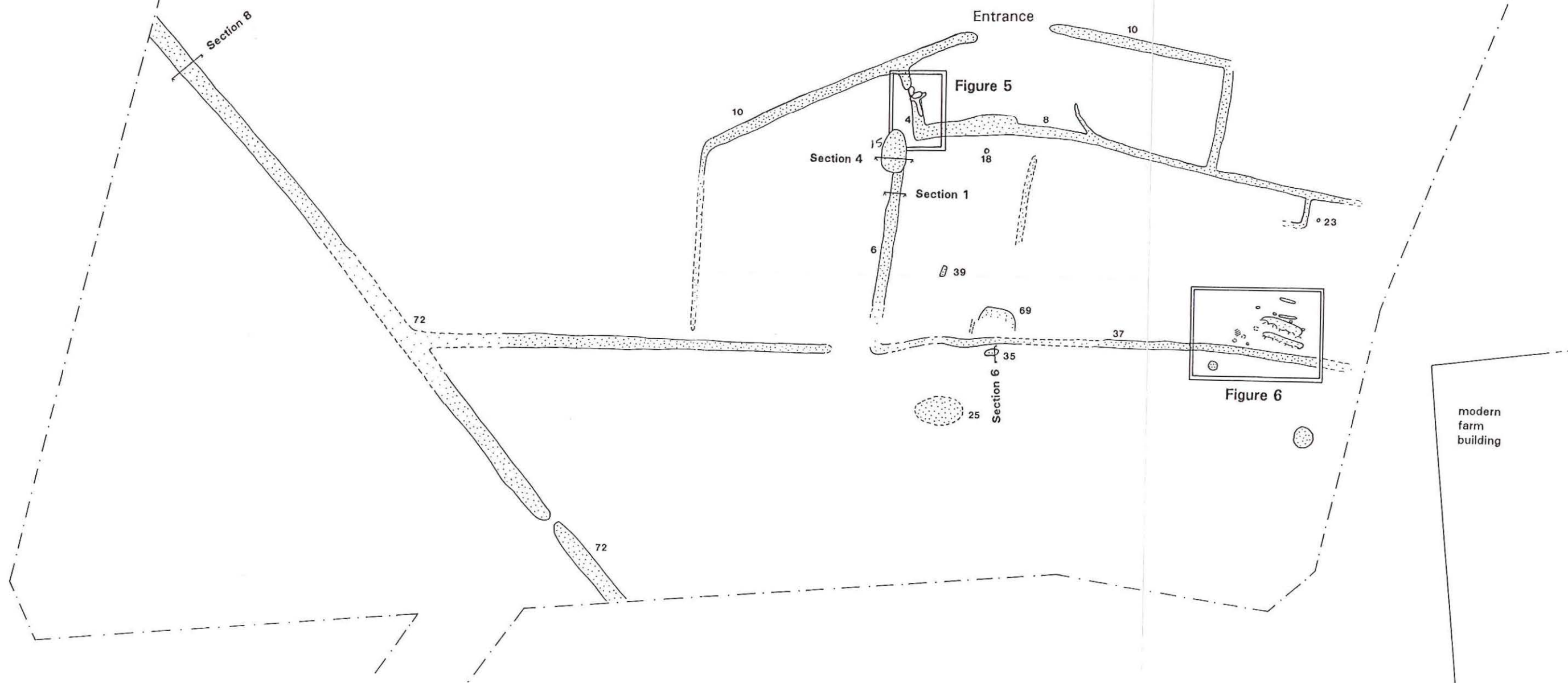


Figure 3

Feature locations
in Area A

SWA 98
AREA A

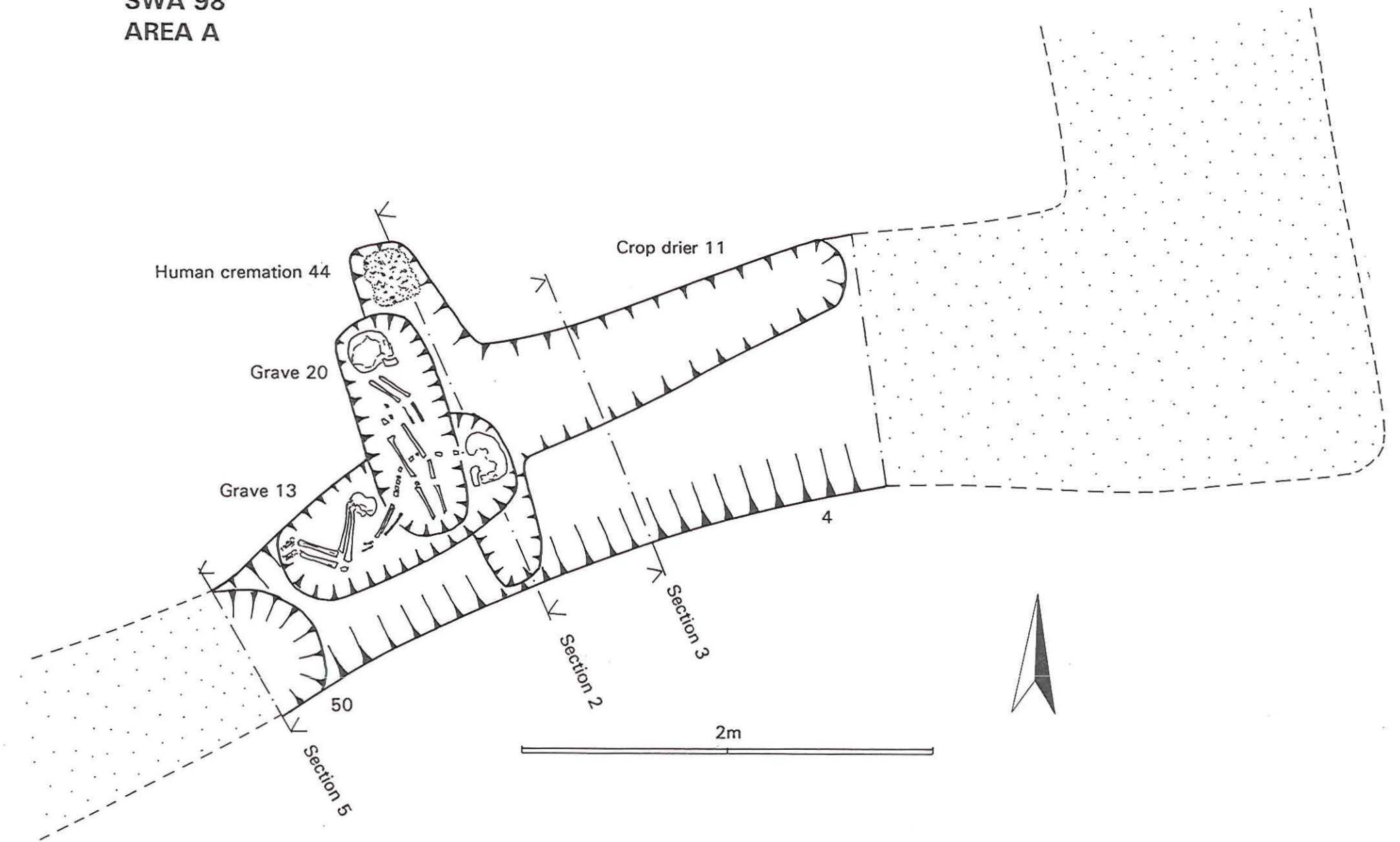


Figure 4 Detail of graves, crop drier and ditches (Area A)

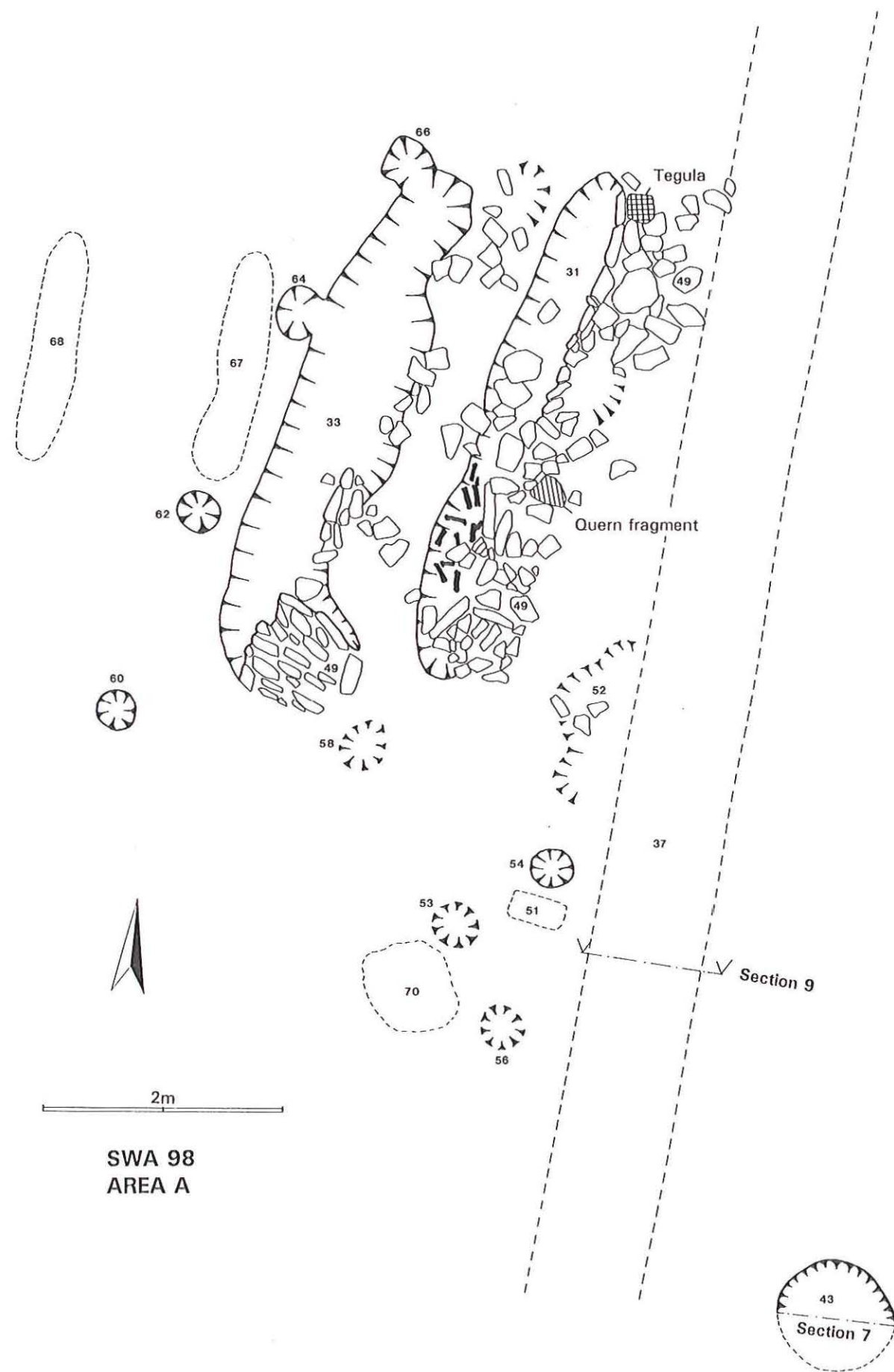
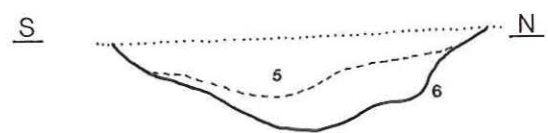
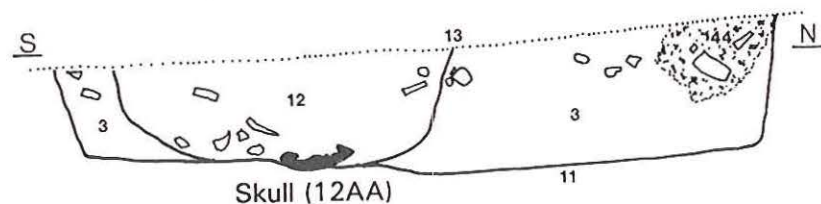


Figure 5 Detail of latrine trenches

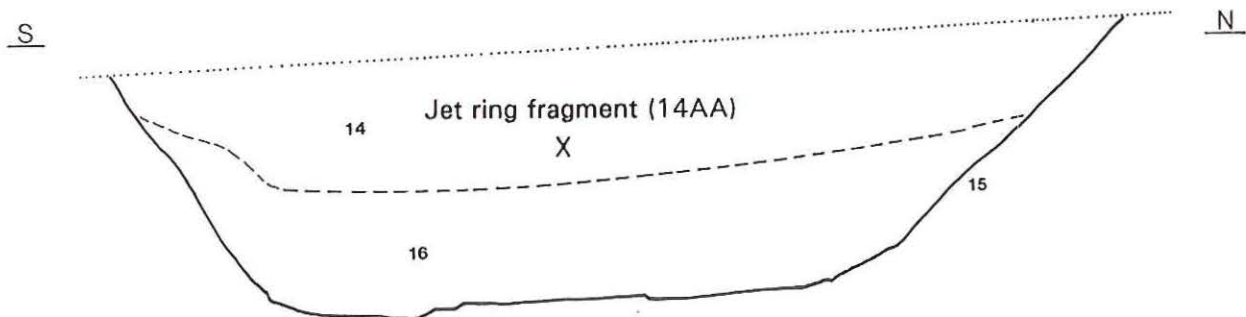
Section 1 Ditch 6



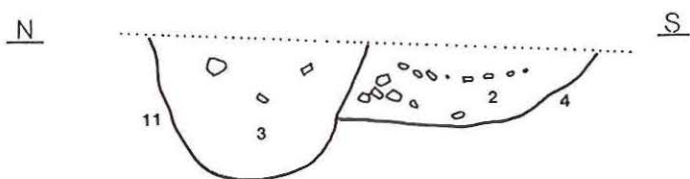
Section 2 Crop drier flue 11 and Grave 15



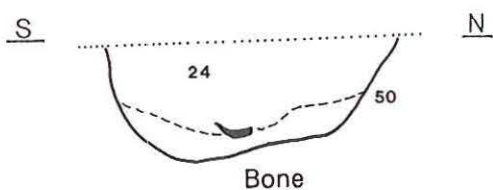
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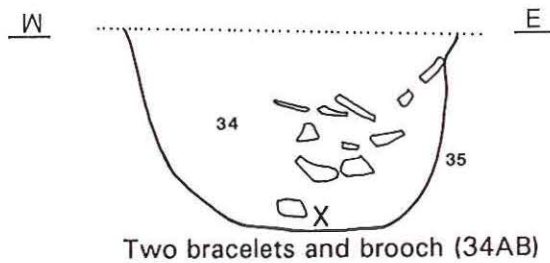
Section 3 Crop drier flue 11 and Ditch 4



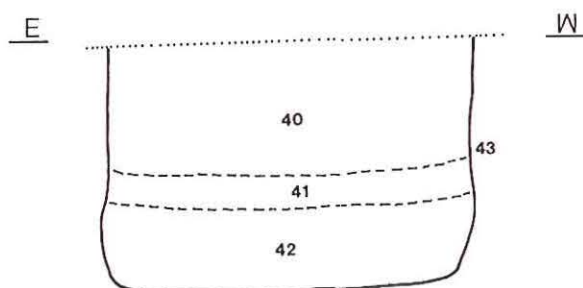
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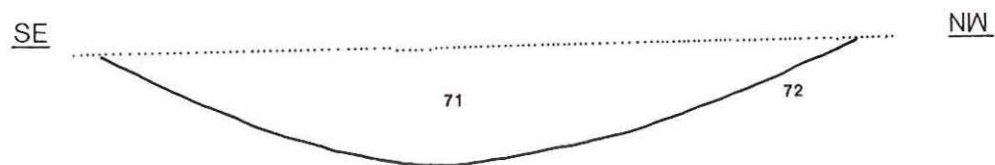
Section 6 Pit 35



Section 7 Pit 43



Section 8 Long boundary ditch 72



SWA 98
SECTIONS

Section 9 Ditch 37

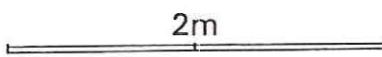
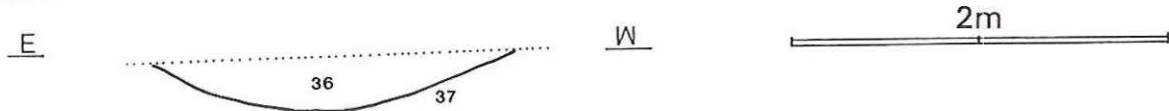


Figure 6 Sections

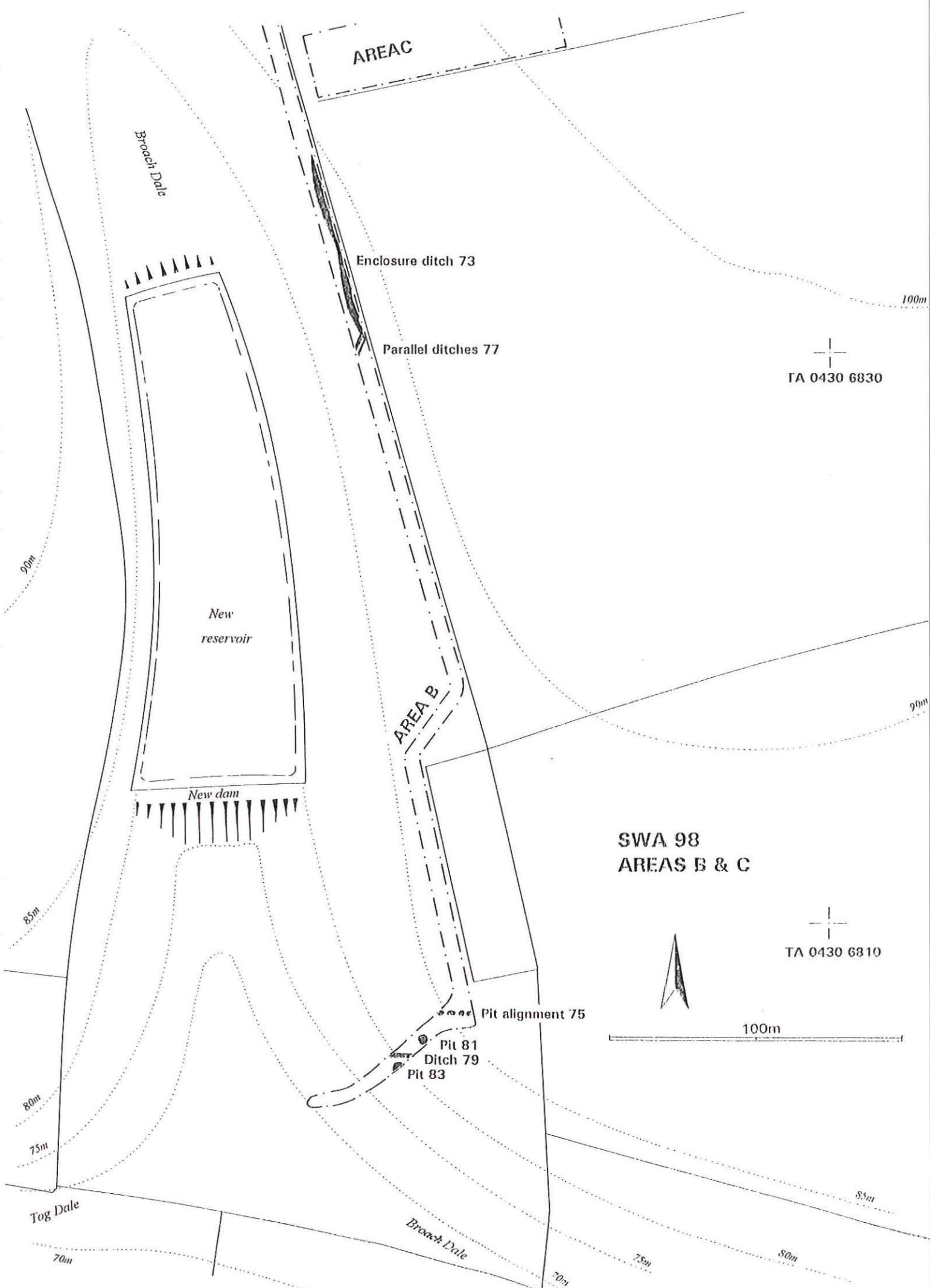
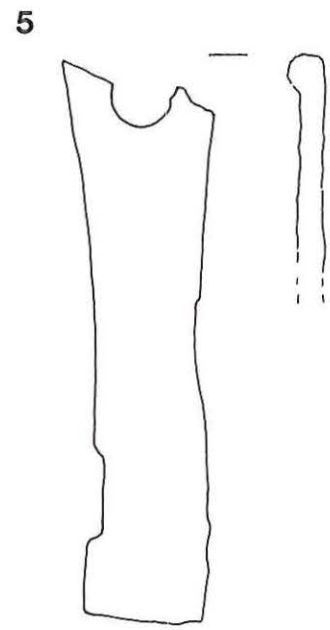
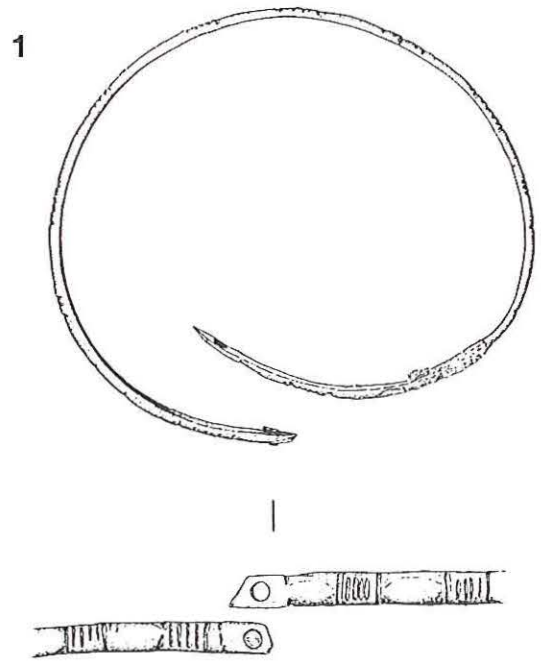


Figure 7 Feature locations in areas B & C



(drawn from x-ray)

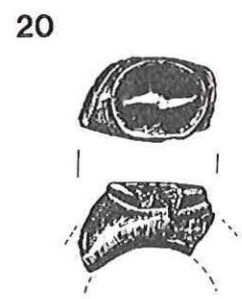
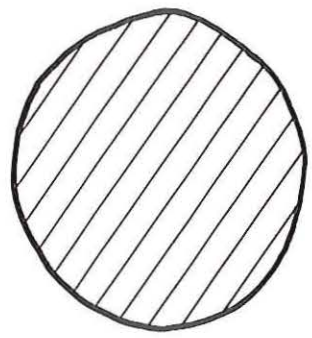
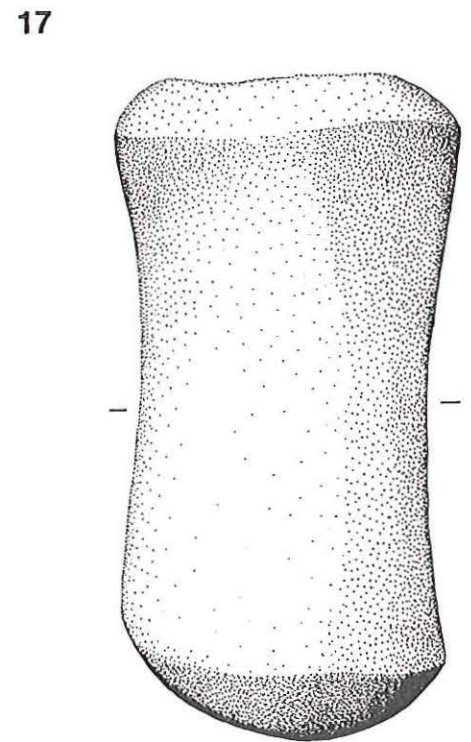


Figure 8 Illustrated finds (1:1)

8.0 ARCHIVE

- 8.1 The context, illustrative and photographic archive associated with this watching brief have been deposited with the Sewerby Hall Museum, Bridlington, East Yorkshire.
- 8.2 With the permission of the landowner, JSR Farms Ltd. the finds recovered during the watching brief have been donated to the museum as part of the site archive.

9.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 NAA would like to thank Clive Wood of JSR Farms for his co-operation throughout the excavation and to members of the East Riding Archaeological Society (ERAS) who gave voluntary assistance in excavating and recording features. Thanks are owed to Mr. Ken Umpleby of Weaverthorpe who assisted with a metal detector during part of this watching brief.

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APPENDIX I

CONTEXT CATALOGUE

Context	Description
01 Ploughsoil	Dark brown chalky loam
02 Fill of ditch 04	Brown chalky loam
03 Fill of flue 11	Blackish brown loam
04 Ditch cut	Shallow 'U' shaped ditch across gateway
05 Fill of ditch 06	Brown chalky loam
06 Ditch cut	'U' shaped ditch running E-W between enclosures
07 Fill of ditch 08	Brown chalky loam
08 Ditch cut	Ditch (not sectioned) running N-S between enclosures
09 Fill of ditch 10	Brown chalky loam
10 Ditch cut	N-S ditch (not sectioned) forming western boundary
11 Flue cut	'T' shaped flue of crop-drier
12 Fill of grave 13	Brown chalky loam
13 Grave cut	Grave of child (find no.12AA)
14 Upper fill of pit 15	Brown chalky loam
15 Pit cut	Large oval pit cutting W end of ditch 06
16 Lower fill of pit 15	Chalk rubble
17 Cremated bone	Cache of cremated bone in pit 18
18 Pit cut	Very small shallow pit
19 Fill of grave 20	Dark brown chalky loam
20 Grave cut	Grave of child (find no.19AA)
21 Colluvial deposit	Fine chalky loam filling broad natural channel
22 Blanket layer	Brown chalky loam over latrine area
23 Cremated bone in pot	Base and lower half of pot containing human cremation
24 Fill of ditch 50	Brown chalky loam
25 Fill of pit	Dark brown chalky loam (removed by machine, not defined)
26 Fill of depression 69	Dark brown chalky loam with larger lumps of chalk
27 Fill of slot 67	Greyish brown silt
28 Fill of slot 68	Greyish brown silt
29 ?Wall footing	Small group of chalk lumps forming a vague line
30 Fill of latrine trench 31	Fine brown loam with chalk rubble
31 Latrine trench cut	Eastern trench with revetment in latrine complex
32 Fill of latrine trench 33	Fine brown loam with rounded chalk lumps
33 Latrine trench cut	Western trench with revetment in latrine complex
34 Fill of pit 35	Dark brown chalky loam
35 Pit cut	Oval pit adjacent to cattle shelter 69
36 Fill of ditch 37	Brown chalky loam
37 Ditch cut	Wide 'U' shaped ditch running N-S forming eastern boundary
38 Fill of ?pit 39	Brown loam
39 ?Pit cut	Small oblong pit or natural pocket
40 Upper fill of pit 43	Blackish brown loam
41 Middle fill of pit 43	Compacted fine chalk gravel
42 Lower fill of pit 43	Blackish brown loam
43 Pit cut	Round, vertical-sided pit adjacent to latrine area

44 Cremated bone	Cache of cremated human bone in upper fill of crop-drier 11
45 Fill of ditch 73 (area B)	Brown chalky loam
46 Fill of depression 52	Brown chalky loam
47 Fill of ?post hole 53	Brown chalky loam
48 Fill of deep post hole 54	Brown loam with traces of decayed timber
49 Paved revetments	Flooring and revetments in latrine area
50 Ditch cut	Butt end of ditch next to gateway, blocked later by ditch 04
51 Chalk pad	Small oblong pad of crushed chalk in latrine area
52 ?Eroded depression	Irregular depression in latrine area
53 Cut for ?post hole	Shallow ?post hole in latrine area
54 Cut for deep post hole	Deep round post hole in latrine area (?in group 84)
55 Fill of ?post hole 56	Brown chalky loam
56 Cut for ?post hole	Shallow ?post hole in latrine area
57 Fill of ?post hole 58	Brown chalky loam
58 Cut for ?post hole	Shallow ?post hole in latrine area
59 Fill of post hole 60	Brown chalky loam
60 Cut for post hole	Southern post hole of row in latrine area (in group 84)
61 Fill of post hole 62	Brown chalky loam
62 Cut for post hole	South central post hole of row in latrine area (in group 84)
63 Fill of post hole 64	Brown chalky loam
64 Cut for post hole	North central post hole of row in latrine area (in group 84)
65 Fill of post hole 66	Brown chalky loam
66 Cut for post hole	Northern post hole of row in latrine area (in group 84)
67 Cut for slot	Eastern slot west of latrine area
68 Cut for slot	Western slot west of latrine area
69 Eroded depression	Semicircular depression within cattle screen or shelter
70 Burnt area	Small patch of burnt chalk in latrine area
71 Fill of ditch 72	Brown chalky loam
72 Cut for ditch	Long boundary ditch crossing site A from NE to SW
73 Cut for ditch (area B)	Enclosure ditch (not sectioned) cut by new farm track
74 Fill of pits 75 (area B)	Fine brown loam
75 Cut for pits (area B)	Four pits (not sectioned) of pit alignment
76 Fill of ditches 77 (area B)	Brown chalky loam
77 Cut for ditches (area B)	Two parallel ditches (not sectioned) joining enclosure 73
78 Fill of ditch 79 (area B)	Brown chalky loam
79 Cut for ditch (area B)	Ditch (not sectioned) parallel to pit alignment 75
80 Fill of pit 81 (area B)	Brown chalky loam
81 Cut for pit (area B)	Round pit (not sectioned) on north side of ditch 79
82 Fill of pit 83 (area B)	Brown chalky loam
83 Cut for pit (area B)	Round pit (not sectioned) on south side of ditch 79
84 Posted structure	Group of post holes (60, 62, 64, 66, & ?54) around latrines

APPENDIX II

SMALL FINDS AND SAMPLES CATALOGUE

Number	Description
12AA	Skeleton of child (about 9 years)
12AB	Fragments of infant skull
14AA	Polished mount of carved jet finger ring
17AA	Cache of cremated bone
19AA	Skeleton of child (about 4 years)
21AA	Fragment of millstone
22AA	Coin (c220 AD)
22AB	Iron object
23AA	Lower half of pot containing adult human cremation
26AA	Charcoal sample
26AB	Fragment of glass
27AA	Soil sample from fill of slot 27
28AA	Soil sample from fill of slot 28
29AA	Sample of mortar
30AA	Cache of sheep shinbones
32AA	Iron object
34AA	Fragment of ?whetstone
34AB	Two thin bronze bracelets and a disc brooch (found as a group)
34AC	Two fragments of jet (one worked)
36AA	Coin (c330 AD)
36AB	Rubbing stone
42AA	Pestle
42AB	Whetstone
44AA	Cache of cremated human bone
48AA	Sample of wooden post
49AA	Tegula
49AB	Fragment of beehive quern