

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT  
AT HOME FARM, BISHOP'S CLEEVE, GLOS**

**REPORT ON THE RESULTS  
OF AN  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

by  
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for  
Concept Project Management

on behalf of  
Queen Street Properties (Midlands) Ltd

September 1993

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CAT Report 93134

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September 1993

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## GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

### **Anglo-Saxon**

Taken here as the period from the end of the Roman era c.400 to the Norman Conquest (1066).

### **Archaeology**

For the purposes of this project archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

### **CAT**

Cotswold Archaeological Trust

### **GCC**

Gloucestershire County Council

### **Iron Age**

The first period in which iron was the predominant metal. In Britain it is dated between c.700 BC to the Roman conquest in AD 43.

### **Medieval**

Taken here as the period from the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) to c. AD 1500.

### **NGR**

National Grid Reference given from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

### **OD**

Ordnance Datum; used to express a given height above sea-level.

### **Post-medieval**

The period following the Medieval period. From c. AD 1500 to the Industrial Revolution.

### **Romano-British**

Term used to describe a fusion of indigenous late Iron Age traditions with Roman culture. It is traditionally dated between AD 43 and c. AD 400.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The following report presents the results of an archaeological field evaluation within a proposed development area at Home Farm, Bishop's Cleeve, Gloucestershire.

1.1.2 The project study area is centred upon NGR: SO 9580 2775 and consisted of a plot of land covering 0.89 hectares comprising the farmyard, its paddocks and part of an adjoining field.

1.1.3 The evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeological Trust on 9th-14th September 1993 on behalf of Concept Project Management. The project was executed in accordance with the "Specification for Archaeological Field Evaluation" prepared by Cotswold Archaeological Trust (CAT 1993) and approved by the County Archaeological Officer. Two monitoring visits were made by staff of the County Archaeological Service during the course of the evaluation.

## 1.2 Project brief and specification

1.2.1 The project design as prepared by CAT outlined the principal aim of the evaluation as being to determine whether any archaeological remains were present within the proposed development area.

1.2.2 Any archaeological features discovered during the evaluation process were to be recorded in plan and sampled by hand excavation in order to determine their preservation and importance.

1.2.3 The execution of these aims would allow an informed decision to be made on the effect of the proposed development on any archaeological remains, whilst allowing the preparation of a suitable mitigation strategy.

1.2.4 The stated methodology of the work was to excavate 180 square metres (approximately a 2% sample of the total area) within the footprint of the proposed development. This would take the form of six trenches, four 20m long by 1.8m wide, one 15m long by 1.8m wide and one 5m long by 1.8m wide (see Figure 2).

1.2.5 Topsoil and other non-significant overburden was removed by mechanical excavator to the top of archaeological levels, or where these were absent, to the top of natural deposits.

1.2.6 Illustrations within this report are restricted almost entirely to general trench plans with profiles of sampled features. Only a single section drawing (Trench 5) provided sufficient information to justify its inclusion within this report. A full drawn record was undertaken of each trench where archaeological deposits were present. These are held with the site archive and are available for consultation upon request.

### **1.3 Geology and topography**

1.3.1 The village of Bishop's Cleeve lies upon deposits of sand above the Lower Lias. The study area itself occupies a relatively flat area of land at an approximate OD height of 54m. Slight, generally amorphous earthworks are visible in the fields to the west of the farm buildings.

### **1.4 Archaeological background**

1.4.1 Bishop's Cleeve has been the subject of considerable recent archaeological field evaluation.

1.4.2 No known finds or sites have been recorded within the bounds of the study area itself, although it is situated within an area that has previously revealed Iron Age and Romano-British settlement features, including a possible late Roman masonry building immediately to the west of the study area.

## **2 EVALUATION RESULTS**

### **2.1 Roman and Saxon Features**

2.1.1 A number of linear features were located cut into the natural sands in Trenches 1 and 2. On the well-drained sands the function of these ditches is unlikely to have been for drainage and probably rather represent a series of enclosure ditches and land boundaries.

2.1.2 In Trench 1 the features consisted of a complex series of small ditches and gullies. Analysis of the pottery (see Appendix 2) suggests that these were predominantly of fourth century date. Three gullies; [106], [108], [116], yielded undiagnostic sherds that could date anywhere from the second century through to the fourth century. Their relationship with other features in Trench 1, however, suggests that they were also of fourth century origin, although occupation must clearly have been present in the vicinity from the second century onwards.

2.1.3 A large northeast-southwest ditch [204] (1.3m wide) containing at least one sherd of Saxon pottery amongst a quantity of fourth century Romano-British material was revealed across the western end of Trench 2. This proved to be the last in a series of three ditch-cuts on the same alignment. A second ditch [207] (1.4m wide) abutted [204] from the northwest. Both ditches were sampled through the hand excavation of narrow sections which revealed the profile and total depth of each feature. The relationship between the features indicated that [207] was contemporary with [204], rather than any of the earlier phases of ditch. No dating evidence was recovered from either of the earlier phases and consequently the possibility cannot be ruled out that they represent previously existing late-Roman land boundaries still used during the Saxon period, rather than merely representing earlier phases of Saxon boundary unrelated to late-Roman landuse.

2.1.4 Quantities of artefactual material were recovered from the fills of most features sampled. This material was predominantly of fourth century date, although mid-late second century and Saxon ceramics were also present. Two masonry blocks were also recovered from the subsoil in this trench and may represent debris from the possible building located during Gloucestershire County Council excavations immediately to the west of the study area.

### **2.2 Medieval Features**

2.2.1 The only certain medieval feature revealed during the course of the evaluation consisted of a gully [404] aligned east-west in Trench 4. A narrow slot at the base of this feature suggested that the gully may have represented the foundation trench for a fence-line. A second, parallel, gully [412] located in the same trench may be of similar date and function.

2.2.2 Only two sherds of stratified medieval pottery were recovered during the course of the evaluation, both from the fill of [404].

### **2.3 Post-Medieval and Modern Deposits**

2.3.1 Post-medieval and modern activity was generally restricted to the eastern part of the study area, although a modern post-setting and a shallow post-medieval sand extraction scoop were present in Trench 3.



2.3.2 A gully containing pitched stone and modern brick was revealed in Trench 4, along with a small cut containing charcoal and slag, and four pig burials. Almost two hundred pigs are buried in this paddock as a result of successive outbreaks of swine-fever earlier this century.

2.3.3 A number of very large, deep pits were revealed in Trench 5. These would appear to be the result of post-medieval/early modern sand extraction.

### 3 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 The evaluation has established that archaeological remains are present within the study area and has established the character of these, i.e. Romano-British, Saxon and medieval gullies and ditches, probably representing enclosures and land boundaries. The Roman features appear to be of fourth century date, although residual second century pottery indicates earlier occupation in the vicinity.

3.2 The results of the evaluation suggest that the Romano-British and Saxon features are restricted to the southern and central part of the pasture field immediately west of the farm buildings. It is worth mentioning, however, that sand-pitting and the erection of post-medieval/modern buildings will have had an adverse effect on the survival of Romano-British features outwith the pasture field. Similarly although medieval activity was encountered only in the paddock north of the farmyard, identical constraints exist regarding its survival within the area of the farmyard and southern paddock.

3.3 The bulk of the finds consists of Romano-British pottery sherds recovered from the subsoil in Trenches 1 and 2, although these at least may in part have originated from archaeological deposits truncated through cultivation. Taken together with Roman the pottery from the ditches and gullies this material is suggestive of a well-appointed habitation, more like a Frocester-type villa than a rural farmstead (see Appendix 2). The possible masonry building located by the GCC evaluation work to the west of the study area may represent a candidate for such a structure.

3.4 The sherd of Saxon pottery recovered from ditch [204] suggests continuity of occupation into the sub-Roman period and may represent the perpetuation of a fourth century boundary, although no pottery was recovered from the earlier phases to prove a Roman origin. Other examples of continuity from the end of Roman Britain to Saxon England can be cited in Gloucestershire, of which the best-known is Withington (Finberg 1955). Evidence of Saxon continuity is also of interest because Bishop's Cleeve is known to be the site of a late 6th century cemetery (Heighway 1984, 231).

3.5 The results of the evaluation suggest that the archaeological features present within the study area are of medium archaeological importance, particularly if associated with Romano-British occupation of no little status and indicative of continuity into the Saxon period. The remains uncovered in this evaluation are clearly part of a larger site which appears to spread to the south and west. The distribution of features discovered in this and the earlier evaluation suggests that the Roman ?villa or farmstead and its associated fields/paddocks spread over an area of approximately 2ha. The western limit of the site appears to have been determined by the G.C.C evaluation; the eastern extent has possibly been found in this project. It is uncertain how far the settlement extends to the north and south.

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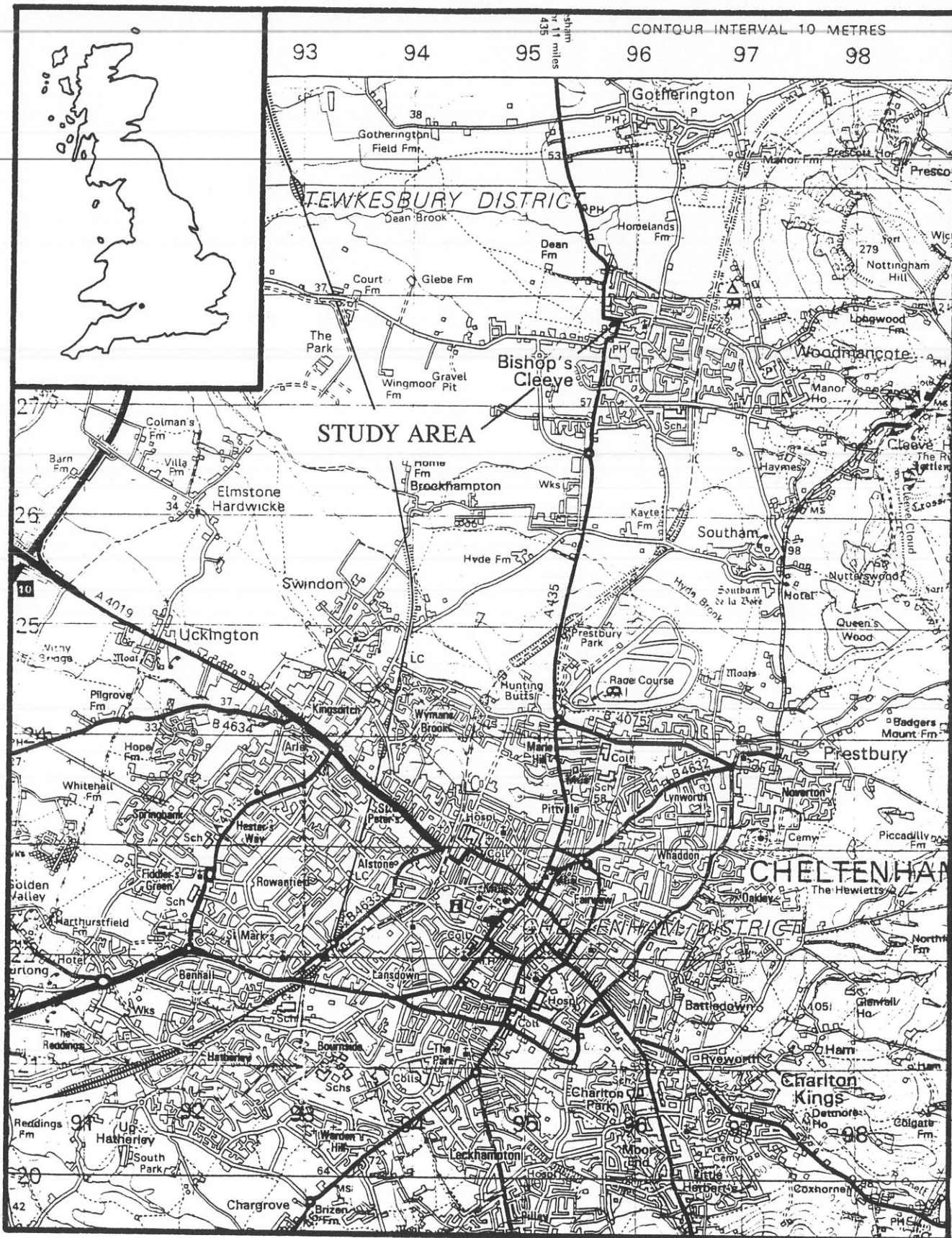
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#### 5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Morris Plant Hire



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LOCATION MAP

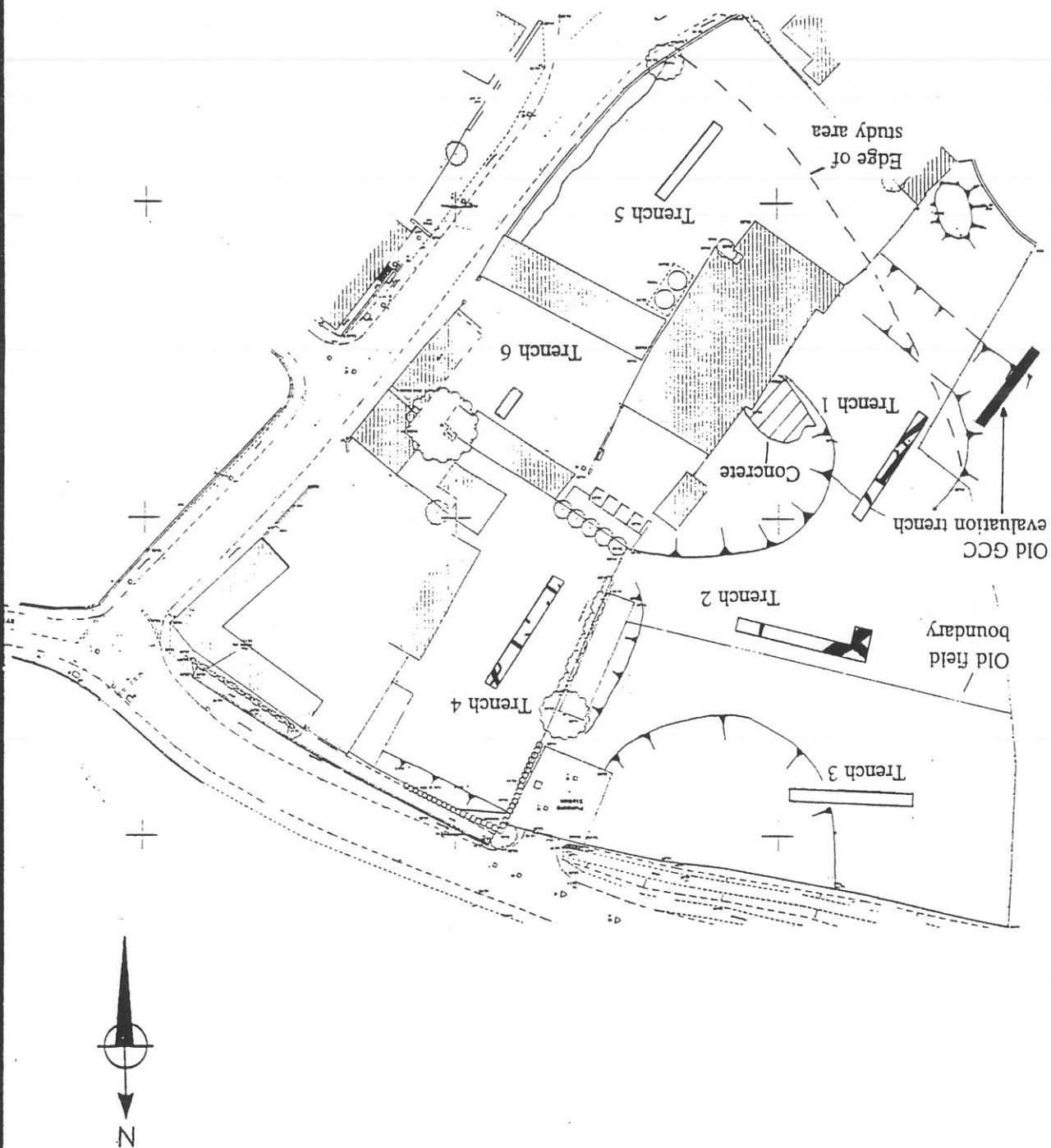
FIG 1

FIG 2

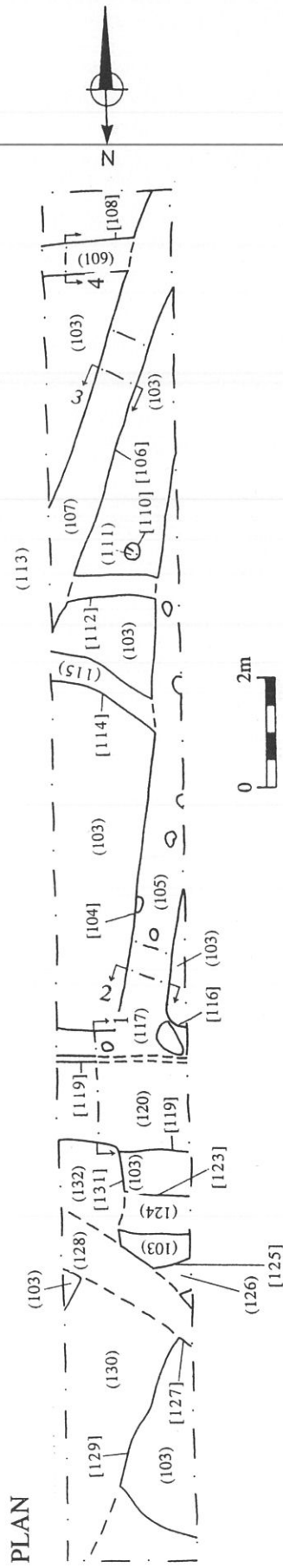
Location of trenches  
showing archaeological features

BISHOPS CLEEVE  
HOME FARM SITE

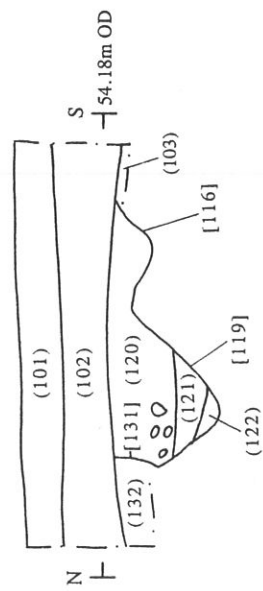
0 50m



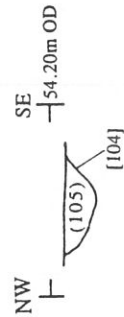
HOME FARM, BISHOPS CLEEVE, GLOS  
TRENCH 1



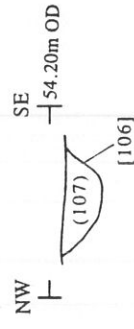
1 F119 and F116 W facing section



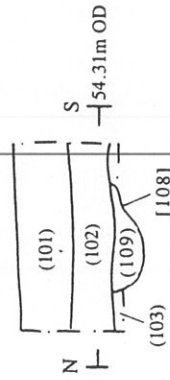
2 F104 NE facing section



3 F106 NE facing section



4 F108 W facing section

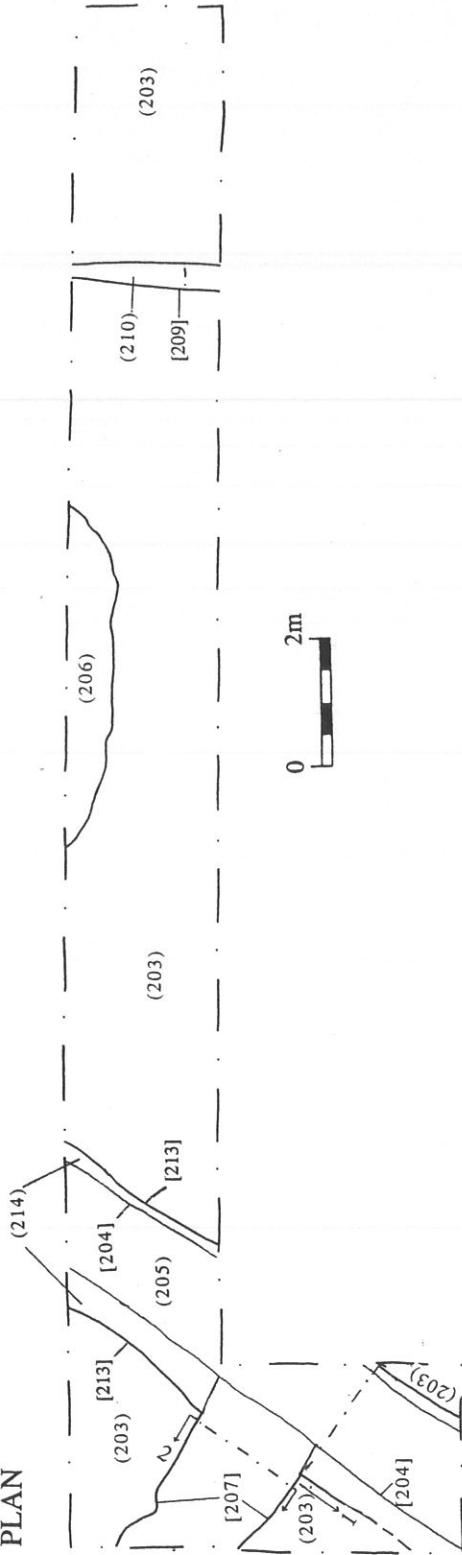




HOME FARM, BISHOPS CLEEVE, GLOS

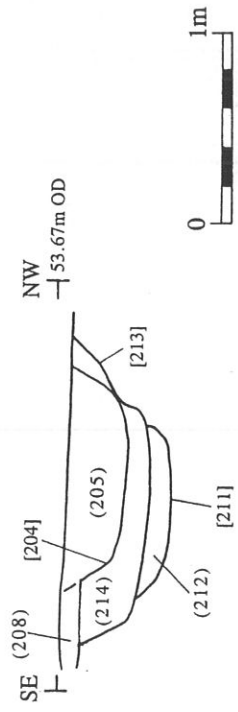
TRENCH 2

PLAN



1

F204 and F211 SW facing section



2

F207 SE facing section

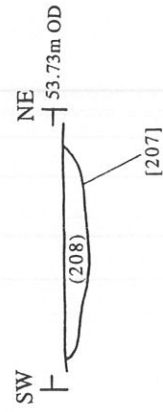
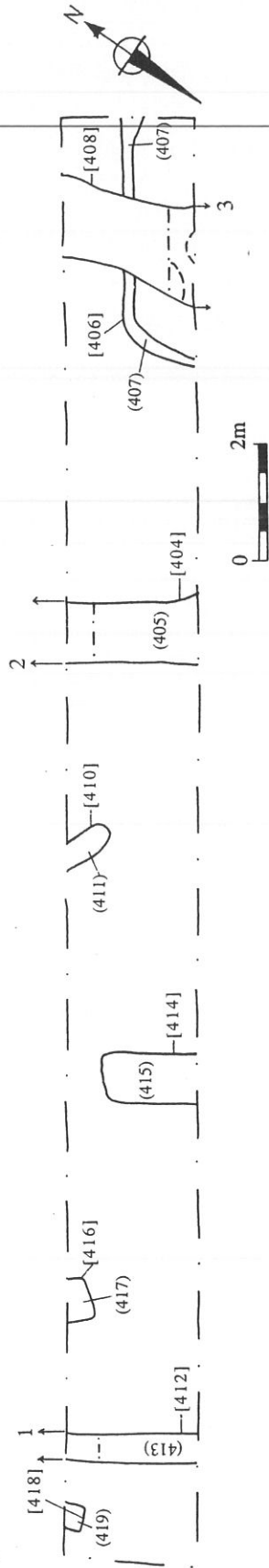


FIG 4

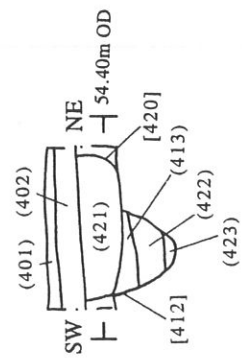
FIG 4

HOME FARM, BISHOPS CLEEVE, GLOS  
TRENCH 4

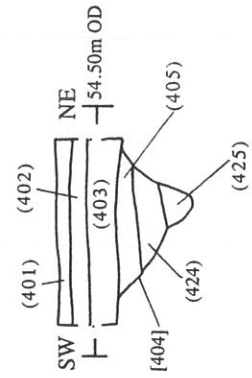
PLAN



1 F420 and F412 SE facing section



2 F404 SE facing section



3 F408 NW facing section

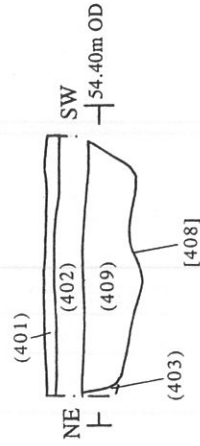


FIG 5

FIG 5



HOME FARM, BISHOPS CLEEVE, GLOS  
TRENCH 5

W facing section

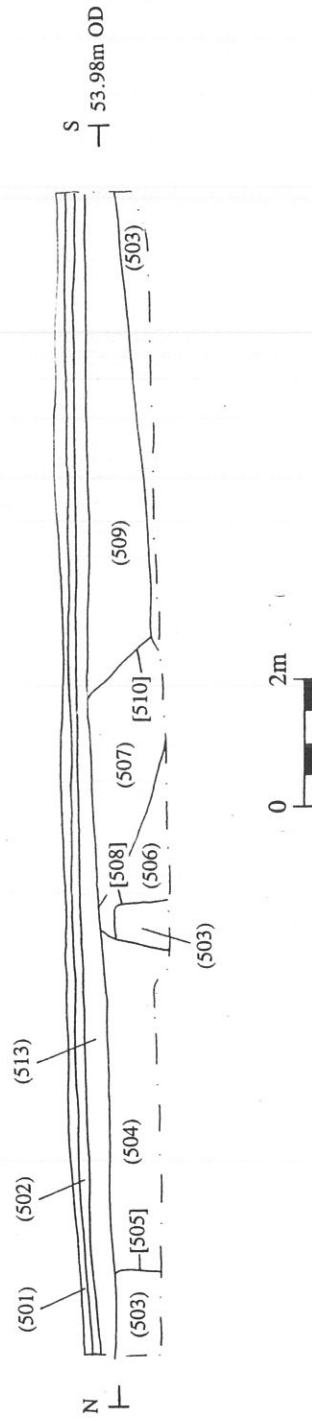


FIG 6

FIG 6

## APPENDIX 1

Note: Stratigraphic descriptions are given from the earliest to latest deposits. Cut features are designated by square brackets thus: [113], all other deposits are in round brackets (114). All widths and depths given for archaeological features in this report refer to surviving dimensions only.

### Trench 1 (Figure 3)

Undisturbed orange-yellow clayey sand (103) was encountered at an average depth of 0.55m (54.1m OD) from the modern ground surface. A complex array of negative features representing a series of inter-connected ditches and gullies was cut into the sand, each filled with a homogeneous grey silty sand.

In the southern part of the trench these features consisted of two roughly parallel gullies [104], [106] running approximately north-south. Both had a similar 'U' -shaped profile and similar (though fluctuating) dimensions, averaging out at 0.65m wide. Sections cut through the gullies revealed them to be 0.20m and 0.27m deep respectively.

A single post-hole [110], 0.1m in diameter was present between the two gullies. This feature still had traces of stone packing in the fill, but had been badly truncated, surviving only to a depth of 0.15m.

An east-west gully [108], 0.6m wide by 0.20m deep abutted [106] at the southernmost extent of the trench; while [104] and [106] were linked together by a further two narrow gullies [112] and [114]. These latter gullies were between 0.25 and 0.3m wide, but were not sampled during the course of the evaluation.

At its northern extent feature [104] terminated in a narrow east-west gully [116], some 0.6m wide by 0.25m deep. This gully ran parallel to a larger ditch [119] which survived to 1.0m wide by 0.7m deep, although it was cut away on its northern edge by feature [131]. No stratigraphic relationship was ascertainable between [116] and [119], although ceramic evidence suggests that they may be broadly contemporary.

North of ditch [119], another gully [123] (0.6m wide) ran across the trench on a parallel alignment. This gully terminated in the ill-defined cut represented by feature [131]. This latter feature also cut ditch [119] to the south and intersected with gully [127] to the north, although it proved impossible to ascertain a stratigraphic relationship in this latter case.

A 0.7m wide ditch [129] ran from the north-east corner of the trench on a similar alignment to gullies [104] and [107]. The ditch terminated in a narrow northwest-southeast gully [127], some 0.45m wide. This gully was also abutted by a similar narrow (0.48m wide) gully [125] running southwest into the section. At the northernmost extent of the trench an east-west ditch [133], of unknown dimensions, ran into the western edge of [129].

Romano-British ceramics were recovered from the majority of the features sampled. The pottery report suggests that the complex of features in this trench is of fourth century date; although the finds from several features were not sufficiently diagnostic to attribute a precise date and could originate at any time from the mid-late second century through to the fourth century.

The natural sand (103) and the archaeological features were all sealed with a layer of dark grey sandy silt [102], 0.2-0.4m thick. This material contained quantities of Romano-British pottery (with a date range from the second to fourth century), tile and occasional fragments of masonry. Several sherds of post-medieval pottery were also recovered indicating that this layer had been subject to a degree of mixing at some point in the past. No archaeological features were identifiable within this layer, indicating either that the gullies and ditches were cut prior to the deposition of this layer or that it has been subject to sufficient disturbance to obliterate any traces of them

within it; perhaps as a result of relatively short-lived cultivation.

Layer (102) was itself sealed beneath up to 0.4m of clean silty sandy topsoil (101).

## **Trench 2**

(Figure 4)

Undisturbed sands (203) were encountered at an average depth of 0.6m (53.76m OD) from the present ground surface. These sands were cut by two substantial ditches, one running northeast-southwest [204], the other [207], running northwest-southeast and terminating in the western edge of the former. The fills of these ditches were the same grey silty sands present in the gullies and ditches in Trench 1.

Excavation of ditch [204] revealed it to be the second recut of a primary ditch on the same alignment. The earliest ditch [211] consisted of a flat-bottomed cut at least 0.7m deep, of which only the bottom 0.15m survived. This was recut by a shallower ditch [213] some 2m wide by 0.55m deep. This ditch was in turn recut by ditch [204] which at 1.3m wide by 0.3m deep was the both the narrowest and shallowest of the ditches.

Dating evidence including at least one sherd of handmade Saxon pottery was recovered from the fill of ditch [204] amongst an assemblage of late-fourth century Romano-British pottery.

A section was also hand-excavated through ditch [207] to test its relationship with [204]. This ditch proved to be very shallow, surviving only to a depth of 0.16m, and contemporary with [204] rather than the earlier phases of ditch.

At the eastern end of the trench a narrow steep-sided gully [209], 0.3m wide by 0.25m deep, was hand-sectioned. No artefactual material was recovered from this gully, although two fragments of animal bone were found. The fill of this feature consisted of a silty dark grey sand indistinguishable from the fills of features proven to be of Roman or Saxon date.

A shallow amorphous depression (206) within the natural sands was also sampled. This proved sterile of artefactual or ecofactual material and probably represents a natural feature. A small sub-circular depression gave the initial impression of an archaeological feature, but contained only rodent bones, suggesting that it was in fact no more than the remains of an animal burrow. Root holes from a now vanished tree were present throughout the trench.

Both the archaeological features and the natural depression were buried beneath a homogeneous silty sand deposit (202) with an average depth of 0.4m. As in Trench 1 this material may represent a cultivation horizon as no differentiation could be made of any features surviving within it. Quantities of Romano-British pottery ranging in date from the second to fourth century were recovered from this layer.

Sealing the band of dark grey silty sand (202) was a sandy loam topsoil (201) containing rare post-medieval and modern pottery and animal bones.

## **Trench 3**

(No figure)

Undisturbed natural sands were reached at an average depth of 0.35m (53.5m OD) from the present ground surface. The trench was located so that the eastern half sampled a large semi-circular feature [305] visible as a 0.7m deep depression in the modern ground surface. The stratigraphy in the western end of the trench consisted of 0.2m of grey silty sand (303) below 0.1m of topsoil (301). A modern post-setting [306], 0.2m in diameter by 0.6m deep was cut through the subsoil into the natural sands in the western end of the trench.

Within the depression, the natural sands were sealed with a mixed sandy loam (302) infill up to 0.25m thick,

sealed immediately beneath a thin topsoil. Ceramics recovered from within the fill of the depression suggest that it represents the results of post-medieval/early modern sand extraction.

#### **Trench 4** (Figure 5)

Undisturbed natural sands (426) were encountered at an average depth of 0.4m (54.25m OD) throughout the trench.

The basic stratigraphy revealed in this trench consisted of a layer of grey sandy clay (403) immediately atop the natural sands. This layer was in turn sealed by a 0.2m thick layer of brown subsoil (402), below a thin topsoil (401).

The earliest feature encountered within this trench consisted of an east-west gully [404], 0.74m wide by 0.45m deep, running across the width of the trench. Hand-excavation of the gully revealed a change in profile, to a much steeper-sided and narrower cut at the base, that may represent a slot to support a fence-line. Artefacts recovered from this gully were restricted to two sherds from a medieval green-glazed pitcher.

A second, narrower gully [412] was present towards the southern end of the trench on a parallel alignment to [404]. This feature, 0.4m wide, survived to a depth of 0.36m, but had been truncated by pig burial [420]. No dating evidence was recovered from this gully. Stratigraphically both gullies [404] and [412] appeared to be cut directly into the natural sands from beneath layer (403).

A variety of later features were present within the trench, all cut through layer (403) and sealed by (402). Four shallow rectangular cuts ([414], [416], [418] and [420]) were present within the trench. These represent some of the 190 pigs buried within the paddock as a result of swine-fever earlier this century.

A wide gully, [408], ran east-west across the northern end of the trench. This feature contained a linear alignment of pitched limestone blocks and modern brick. An additional small cut [410] contained charcoal, burnt stone and slag. This appeared to be of modern origin although no precise dating evidence was recovered from within its fill.

#### **Trench 5** (Figure 6)

Natural sands were encountered at a depth of approximately 0.5m (53.98m OD) from the modern ground surface. At this depth, however, most of the trench had been previously disturbed through post-medieval sand extraction activities and sections of natural sand survived only at either end of the trench and at one point towards the centre. These post-medieval features were recorded in plan, whereafter additional machine-excavation was undertaken to remove the post-medieval infill in order to ascertain whether any archaeological deposits relating to earlier historical periods survived at greater depth within the trench.

An additional 0.75m of post-medieval infill was removed before machining was stopped as natural sands had begun to reappear along the base of the trench. Three post-medieval features [505], [508] and [512] were still present in the base of the trench, but the remaining areas of the trench were empty of archaeological features. No further excavation was undertaken as there appeared little chance that earlier archaeological deposits would be present below the surviving depth of the post-medieval pits.

Ceramics recovered from the pits suggest a late eighteenth/nineteenth century date for the sand extraction.

**Trench 6**  
(No figure)

This small trench was excavated within the farmyard itself. Undisturbed natural sands (603) were present at a depth of 0.4m from the modern ground surface and were sealed immediately beneath a 0.35m thick layer of rubble make-up (602) for the concrete surfacing (601).

The absence of any soils atop the sands suggest that they may have been deliberately removed prior to the laying of the concrete surface, and that they would, in any case have been of no great depth.

## APPENDIX 2

### The Pottery By Jane Timby

#### Summary

The archaeological evaluation at Home Farm, Bishops Cleeve produced a small assemblage of some 160 sherds of pottery. Most of the material was recovered from Trenches 1 and 2 with very small amounts from Trenches 4 and 5. The majority of the pottery was Roman in date with the emphasis being towards the later Roman period and this all came exclusively from Trenches 1 and 2. Most of the wares represented are likely to date to the 4th century. Diagnostic types include Oxfordshire colour-coated wares, Dorset black-burnished wares (BB1), copies of BB1, Severn Valley ware, wheelmade Malvernian wares, Dressel 20 amphora and late shelly ware. The latter in particular would indicate a date in the last quarter of the 4th century. A few sherds, such as two pieces of samian (Drag. 38 and ?33) and other odd sherds would indicate that there was some earlier occupation at the site from at least the mid-late 2nd century. The assemblage is of particular interest in that continuity of occupation into the early Saxon period is indicated by the presence of at least one, possibly two, sherds of handmade Saxon pottery.

The sherds in general, are moderately well-preserved showing some edge abrasion and in the main fairly well-broken sherds typical of material from rubbish deposits of a non-primary nature. The range of Roman wares are typical of those found in "villa" type domestic assemblages and the continuity into the Saxon period serves to emphasise that this is probably the type of site present here. Villa sites in this general area are increasingly showing more cultural evidence of sub-Roman occupation compared to more urban locations. Parallels can be cited at Frocester (Gracie and Price 1979) and Withington (Finberg 1955). Evidence of Saxon continuity is also of interest at Bishops Cleeve because it is known to be the site of a late 6th century cemetery (Heighway 1984, 231).

A few sherds of later material were also recovered including the spout of a Medieval glazed pitcher and Post-Medieval glazed earthenwares. Several pieces of very broken ceramic flat tile/ brick were present including at least three pieces of Roman tegulae. Pieces of red sandstone tile were also noted.

#### Catalogue:

Abbreviations: SVW - Severn Valley ware; BB1- Dorset black-burnished ware; Ox cc - Oxford colour-coated ware; fabric 1: BB1 copy, sandy fabric; fabric 2: fine micaceous sandy ware; Malv : Malvernian ware; fabric 3: other

bs- bodysherd

Roman unless otherwise stated. PM - Post Medieval; M- Medieval

U/S

1bs fabric 3; 6bs SVW; 1 bs Saxon organic-tempered ware.

#### Trench 1

u/s: x30bs, 2 rims tankards SVW; 9bs, 1 jar rim, 2 lid Malv; Drag. 38 Samian; 1bs Dressel 20 amphorae; 3bs, 1 jar rim BB1; 4bs, 1 rim fabric 1; 4 bs, 1 rim fabric 3; 1 rim ?bowl Medieval Malvernian ware; partially glazed handle-Post-Medieval.

(105): 1bs Samian ??Drag.33; 10bs, 2 tankard, 1 jar rim SVW; 4bs BB1; 1bs, 1jar rim Malv; 2bs fabric 2; 1bs, 1 rim shelly ware; 1rim bowl, 1bs fabric 1.

(107): Rim SVW, 1bs BB1.

(109): 1bs SVW; 1bs Malv; 1 bs fabric 2.

(117): 4bs SVW; 1bs fabric 1

(120): 3 bs fabric 1; 1bs shelly ware; jar rim SVW; 1bs fabric 3

(121): 3bs SVW 1bs cc, 1bs Ox cc; 1bs fabric 2; 1bs fabric 3.

(124): SVW x1 tankard handle

(130): Ox cc indented beaker rim; 2bs fabric 1; 11 bs fabric 2; 1bs, 1 rim Malv.

#### Trench 2

(202): 1bs fabric 1; 1bs SVW; 2bs Malv; 1bs fabric 2; 1 bs fabric 3

(205): 1bs Ox cc, Young 1977, form C51; 12bs, 2 rims jars SVW; 1bs, jar rim shelly ware; 2bs fabric 1; 2bs fabric 3; 1bs fabric 2; fragmentary piece of handmade jar rim in a coarse limestone-tempered ware with sparse iron. Possibly Saxon or early Medieval.

#### Trench 4

405: Glazed limestone-tempered ware spout from Medieval pitcher; 1 abraded bs. date ?

409: 1bs fabric 3; x2 PM glazed earthenware; x1 fired clay

411: 2 glazed earthenwares?pot/ pipe Post-Medieval-modern.

#### Trench 5

2bs blue and white "china", 1bs glazed earthenware ?pot/pipe Post-Medieval-modern.

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