

# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

**REDHILL FARM PHASE II,  
WELLINGBOROUGH, NORTHANTS  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION  
Stage 3**

**SEPTEMBER 1996**

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY**

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*Abstract*

*Further archaeological trial excavation and metal detector survey carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land to the east of Great Harrowden Road, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire confirmed that the Iron Age and Roman remains, mostly comprising ditches and pits, were severely truncated and partly destroyed by extensive nineteenth-century ironstone quarrying.*

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological evaluation carried out for the Borough Council of Wellingborough by Northamptonshire Archaeology in June 1996 on land to the east of the Great Harrowden Road, Wellingborough, Northants identified Iron Age and Roman remains which had been damaged by nineteenth-century quarries (Webster et al 1996).
- 1.2 Further archaeological work, comprising a metal detector survey and trial excavation was requested by the county heritage branch in a Brief issued in summer 1996. The discovery of a single Iron Age bronze coin by previous evaluation led to speculation that the site may have had ritual significance or high status.
- 1.3 The additional work was undertaken in September 1996 in order to establish the extent and character of the surviving archaeological remains, together with assessing the type and status of the site.

2. METAL-DETECTING SURVEY

- 2.1 Prior to excavation the area was surveyed using a metal detector. A single Roman coin was found, together with post-medieval debris.

- 2.2 After the trenches were excavated a metal detector was used over archaeological features and the spoil heaps. An additional Roman coin was found.

### 3. EXCAVATION

- 3.1 A trench measuring 10.50m by 9.30m was excavated across the southern half of the former evaluation trench 3 (Fig 1, Trench 4). The trench was positioned to provide a wider context for the small pit (3/08) which contained the Iron Age coin (Webster et al 1996, 7). A further five trenches, each 20m long and 1.5m wide, were opened around the larger excavation.
- 3.2 Trench 4 Excavation confirmed the sequence of stratification noted in trench 3 of the earlier evaluation, with the natural Northampton Sand with Ironstone bedrock located beneath a thin topsoil and up to 1m of nineteenth-century quarry fills. This quarrying activity has severely truncated the surviving archaeological features.
- 3.3 The enclosure ditch identified in the previous evaluation (3/07) was traced across the trench and a 90% sample of its fill was excavated (Fig 2, 4/07). The ditch was 0.90m wide and had very steep sides tapering to a flat base, some 0.40m deep. A small quantity of animal bone formed the only finds. The other ditch noted in the earlier evaluation (3/06) proved to be a natural fissure within the ironstone bedrock.
- 3.4 To the south of the ditch four pits, including two partly investigated by the earlier evaluation, were fully excavated (4/04, 08, 09 and 11). They were all roughly oval in shape and ranged in size from 1m by 0.55m to 2m by 1m. Four possible postholes (4/05, 06, 10 and 12) were also found. They were sub-rectangular and up to 0.45m by 0.35m. None of these features was more than 0.12m deep. Pit 4/04 contained a small assemblage of late Iron Age and early Roman pottery; the other features could not be dated, except for posthole 4/12 which contained a sherd of medieval pottery.

- 3.5 Trenches 5-9 All of the other trenches contained evidence of nineteenth-century quarry disturbance which has probably destroyed earlier archaeological features, with the exception of the base of a small pit (6/04) at the southern end of Trench 6 (Fig 2).

Trench No	Depth of topsoil (mm)	Depth of quarry fill (mm)
5	200	600-900
6	200	300
7	200	500-550
8	200	650-800
9	200-240	600-810

#### 4. FINDS

- 4.1 Pottery A small group of late Iron Age and early Roman pottery was collected from pit 4/04. Most is shell-tempered, with isolated grog-tempered and sand-tempered wares. Diagnostic pieces are limited, although one small rim fragment is early Roman in form. An Iron Age sherd is decorated with a groove, below which the exterior is heavily burnished. A single sherd of late Iron Age pottery was found in pit 4/08.

- 4.2 In addition there are two fragments of medieval pottery, one from a posthole in Trench 4 (4/12) and a sherd of Midland Purple Ware (c.1380-1550) from quarry fill in Trench 6 (6/05).

CONTEXT	NUMBER	WEIGHT (g)	CERAMIC DATE
4/04	12	114	IA/RB
4/08	1	4	IA
4/12	1	16	medieval
6/05	1	13	medieval
TOTAL	15	147	

- 4.3 Other Finds None of the other finds from the excavation suggest ritual activity or high status.

4.4 Two Roman bronze coins were found during the metal detector surveys; both were unstratified. They were identified by Mr M Curteis, Northampton Museum and are:

- 1 Allectus - AD 293-96 (Aurelianus), Rev: illegible
- 2 Valens - AD 367-75, as Carson & Kent 328,  
Rev: SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE Minted in Lyons

4.5 A single ceramic bead (dia 22mm) was found within pit 4/04 and a spindle-whorl in the spoil heap from Trench 7 may be of late Iron Age or early Roman date. The spindle-whorl is crudely made and sub-circular in shape with an off-centre perforation (Dia: 32mm, Height: 22mm, Wt: 24g). In addition a small group of animal bone (112g) was collected from archaeological features.

4.6 A corroded eighteenth-century farthing, clay tobacco-pipe fragments (not retained) and glassy slag was recovered from quarry fill.

## 5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The poor preservation of archaeological remains does not permit an assessment of the type and status of the site.

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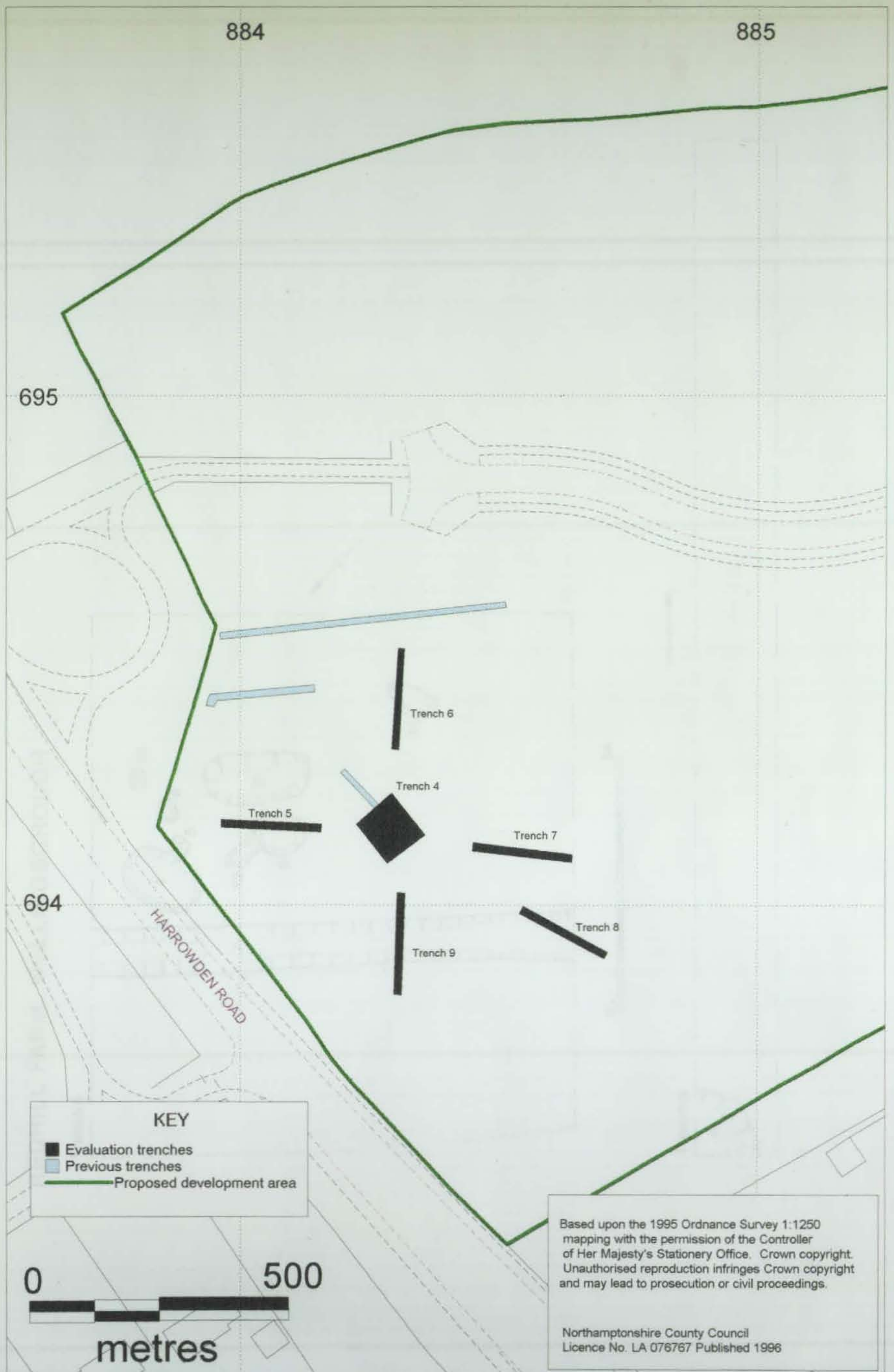
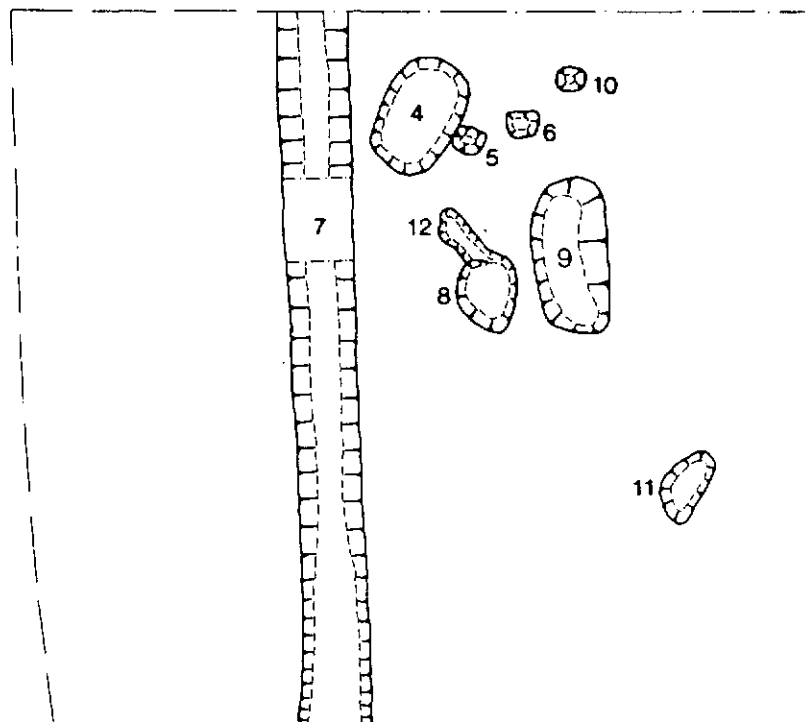


Fig 1

# REDHILL FARM, WELLINGBOROUGH

Trench 4



0 5m

Trench 6





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