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# **EVALUATION EXCAVATION AT MANOR FARM, GUILDFORD**

by the

**Guildford Archaeology Group**

of the

**Surrey Archaeological Society**

**Interim report - 1998**

**SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD  
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

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**March 1999**

# **INTERIM REPORT ON EXCAVATIONS AT MANOR FARM, GUILDFORD DURING SEPTEMBER 1998**

**by the**

**GUILDFORD ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP of the SURREY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

## **SUMMARY**

Excavation of two small trenches across linear anomalies found by a resistivity survey located three ditches, apparently parallel within the width of the trenches, and Romano-British in date. One ditch was partially overlain by a spread of flints thought to be the footings for a wall and also of Romano-British date. Small but significant amounts of prehistoric pottery were recovered but no contemporary features were found.

## **BACKGROUND**

During October 1997 members of the Guildford Archaeology Group walked some 50ha ploughed land in advance of possible development by the University of Surrey of an extension to the present Surrey Science Research Park. A scatter of pre-historic, Romano-British and medieval pottery was located on the plateau of a small hill (SU96654954). Expert reports have since been obtained and the results have been submitted to the Surrey Archaeological Society Bulletin. In summary, the prehistoric pottery can be dated to the late Bronze Age. Some 91% of the Romano-British pottery were local Alice Holt / Farnham products and date from the late 1<sup>st</sup> and early 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries with a few pieces suggesting occupation until c.AD200. The medieval pottery was also locally made, being either Alice Holt or coarse border ware with a suggested date range of the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The compact nature of the scatter, particularly of the Romano-British pottery, suggested the presence of a settlement site in the vicinity.

A resistivity survey carried out by SP Dyer MIFA showed slight anomalies (see report) and the excavation reported here involved testing one of these anomalies.

## **AIM AND PURPOSE OF THE EXCAVATION**

The purpose of evaluation trenches was to determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits underlying the pottery scatters, to assess their character and level of preservation, but not to unnecessarily interfere with any remains. The evaluation was intended to be minimally invasive and minimally destructive. The information gained may be of value in assisting with the formulation of an appropriate response or mitigation strategy to any planning applications for development in the area.

## **METHODOLOGY**

All excavation was carried out by hand. Two trenches were laid out and their positions are shown in figure 1. They were each located to cross one of the long axes of one of the sub-rectangular anomalies noted on the resistivity survey (figure 2). In each trench the plough soil was removed to reveal apparently undisturbed yellow clay.

Three linear features could then be seen cutting the clay and these were excavated in order to gain information about their nature. Once it became clear that they were ditches which, by reference to the resistivity survey, appeared to stretch for at least 50m the decision was taken by the Director to excavate their infill in order to obtain dating evidence.

One ditch in trench 1 appeared to have been recut and a small extension, 2m x 1m, to the trench was excavated in the same manner to clarify this point. The extension revealed a spread of flint nodules which was not disturbed. An attempt to gain some information about the extent of this spread by augering outside the trench to the south was made.

The policy for finds collection was that all finds were retained until washed and at that point modern (late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century) pottery and glass, all of which came from the topsoil, was discarded.

The trenches were back-filled by machine.

All finds of pottery, glass, building material and flint have been washed; bone and metal have been dry brushed. A very limited number of pieces of pottery have been spot dated and information on species for certain pieces of bone sought to inform this report. All retained finds will be subjected to further examination when appropriate.

## **SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

### **Trench 1 (10 x 2m)**

The ploughsoil was found to overlie yellow clay, bearing a few modern plough marks, at a depth of 20 - 25cm. A sondage (20 x 20cm) dug into the clay to a further depth of 50cm showed no evidence of human activity and for the purpose of this excavation the clay was considered to be undisturbed natural. Romano-British pottery and smaller amounts of medieval and Bronze Age pottery were recovered from the ploughsoil.

Two linear features, both of which proved to be ditches, cut the clay and a number of large flint nodules lay on the clay between these features. The full width of ditch 1 was not exposed. A small, ill-defined area of flint, decayed greensand, decayed chalk and burnt greensand lay on the clay to the east of ditch 2 (figure 3).

The fill was removed from ditch 1 giving maximum depth cut into the clay of 35cm. This depth was slightly reduced within the width of the trench with the primary silt (108) present only in the northern portion of the ditch. The profile exposed suggests that, if symmetrical, about half the original width of the ditch was located within the trench - if this is so the original width of the clay cut would have been approximately 3m. (figure 4). Romano-British and Bronze Age pottery were recovered from all excavated contexts.

The full U-shaped profile of ditch 2 was exposed within the trench giving a width which varied between 1.3m at the northern baulk and 2.0m at the southern (figure 5). This alteration in width of the ditch suggests recutting although no evidence of such was seen in section. The ditch had a maximum depth into the clay of 50cm which reduced to 25cm at the northern baulk in a similar manner to ditch 1, possibly suggesting that the position

may have been close to a terminal. Romano-British and Bronze Age pottery were again recovered from both layers of ditch fill. The primary silt of this ditch produced a large portion of a cordoned jar which could be late LIA but is more likely to represent a continuation of that tradition after the Roman invasion and to date to 43 - 60AD (Malcolm Lyne, pers comm) (figure 6a). This provides dating evidence for the last cut or clearing of the ditch.

The extension to this trench is described under trench 3 below.

### **Trench 2 (6 x 2m)**

The ploughsoil was found to overlie yellow clay, bearing a few modern plough marks, at a depth of 20 - 25cm. One linear feature crossed the trench and proved to be another ditch, the full width of which was only exposed in the southern portion of the trench. The maximum depth of the exposed length was 40cm and the width 1.3m. Romano-British and Bronze Age pottery were recovered from all contexts within the trench.

This ditch also produced pottery from the primary silt, in this case a class 1:12 cordoned jar (70 - 100AD) and a class 1A narrow mouthed jar (70 - 150AD) (figure 6b), both from kilns in the Farnham area. Most unusually, there appears to have been an attempt to mend the latter jar in antiquity, possibly with some sort of resin and this substance will be submitted to Dr John Evans at the University of East London for analysis.

### **Trench 3 (2m x 1m)**

The intention of extending trench 1 was to clarify the alignment of ditch 2. The ploughsoil in this small area was removed rapidly by spading but Romano-British and Bronze Age pottery was recovered from it. The continuation of ditch 2 was located but removal of the fill revealed a small area of flint nodules (figure 7). These nodules were tightly packed and keyed together but no mortar or other binding material appeared to be present. One straight edge was exposed within the trench as was a short length of a probable opposite edge. Augering indicated that this feature continued for some 2m to the south of the trench at a consistent width and may have represented footings for a

wall. This context and its underlying silt were not further disturbed; it is therefore not certain whether more than a single layer of flints remained *in situ*.

The depth of the ditch into the clay was 70cm and this progressive deepening adds evidence to the view that the terminal lay close to the northern extent of trench 1.

Within the fill of the ditch was a small collection of bones and teeth from two individual bovines and at least two sheep or goats (Pat Nicolaysen, pers comm). Several of the bones show signs of butchery and with them was a rim sherd from a late 1<sup>st</sup> / early 2<sup>nd</sup> century flagon. This deposit appeared to come from a level below the flint footing. However, despite no cut for the putative wall footing having been recognised during excavation the possibility must exist that the deposit may have come from such a cut.

Loose flint nodules found within the fill of ditch 2, in the plough soil and on the surface indicate probable damage of any structure by ploughing.

## THE FINDS

Small but significant amounts of prehistoric pottery were recovered from all contexts. The majority, tempered with calcined flint either alone or with quartz sand or grog, appears to be Bronze Age in date and includes a possible sherd from a collared urn. One context produced a number of sherds of pot, including one burnished inside and out and possibly from a shouldered bowl and thought to be IA, possibly EIA (Phil Jones, pers comm).

The great majority of the pottery recovered is RB and appears from preliminary examination to date to the late 1<sup>st</sup> to early 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries. A small amount of Romano-British tile was recovered but not sufficient to suggest a high status building in the immediate vicinity.

## CONCLUSIONS

The three ditches appear, within the very short lengths exposed in the trenches, to be parallel and to be of mid-1<sup>st</sup> to mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century date. Their relative positions are indicated in figure 8. They are not sufficiently substantial to be defensive in nature and the amount of pottery and small deposit of rubbish suggests a domestic context. Conclusions drawn from such small areas must necessarily be tentative but ditch 2 could be the enclosure ditch to a mid-1<sup>st</sup> century peasant farmstead. Ditch 3 would then represent a slightly later expansion or shift in position of this settlement and the flint nodules the remains of the footings for the wall of a sub-rectangular building either belonging to, or post dating this second phase.

Information from a local resident suggested that the subsoiling which took place in the 1950s or 1960s was interrupted when the machine hit something solid which it was unable to break up. If this information is accurate, further solid remains may be present in the field. However, subsoiling could be expected to have caused disturbance to a depth of about 60cm. The clay subsoil in the areas excavated did not appear to have been disturbed and the report of subsoiling in this area seems unsubstantiated.

The source of the prehistoric pottery is unclear but the amount is significant, particularly from a site on London Clay.

## CONTENTS AND LOCATION OF ARCHIVE

The site archive including context sheets and section and plan drawings, photographs and slides will remain in the possession of the Excavations Director until a report on the site is complete. The finds, which amount to one finds box (20 x 10 x 8"), will remain either in the possession of the Excavations Director or anyone appointed to provide any expert opinion or analysis until a report on the site is complete. On completion of the report the archive will be deposited with the Surrey Archaeological Society at Castle Arch, Guildford.

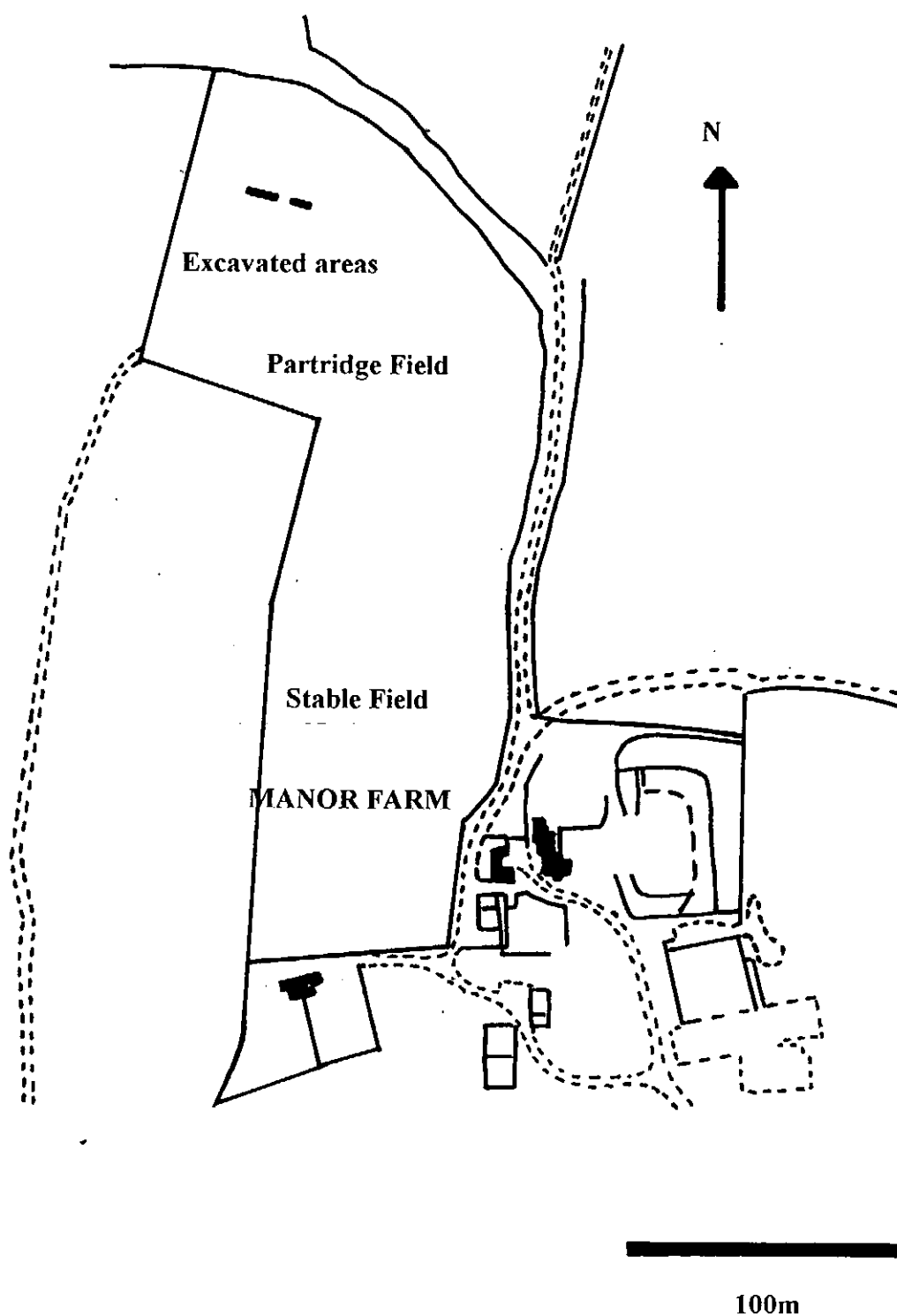


Figure 1. Location of areas excavated during September 1998 by the Guildford Archaeology Group at Manor Farm, Guildford.



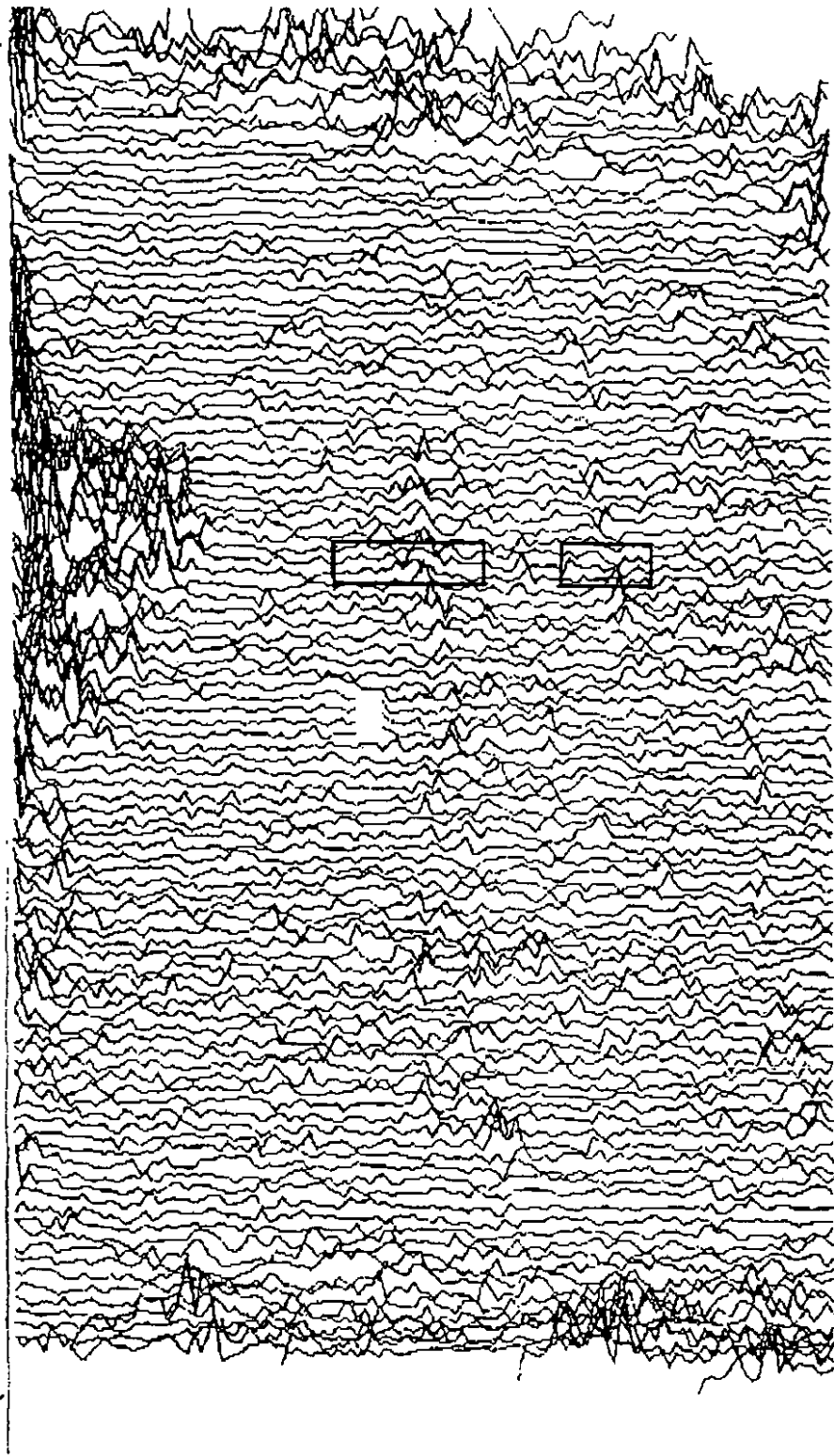


Figure 2. Location of trenches relative to anomalies located during geophysical (resistivity) survey by SP Dyer.

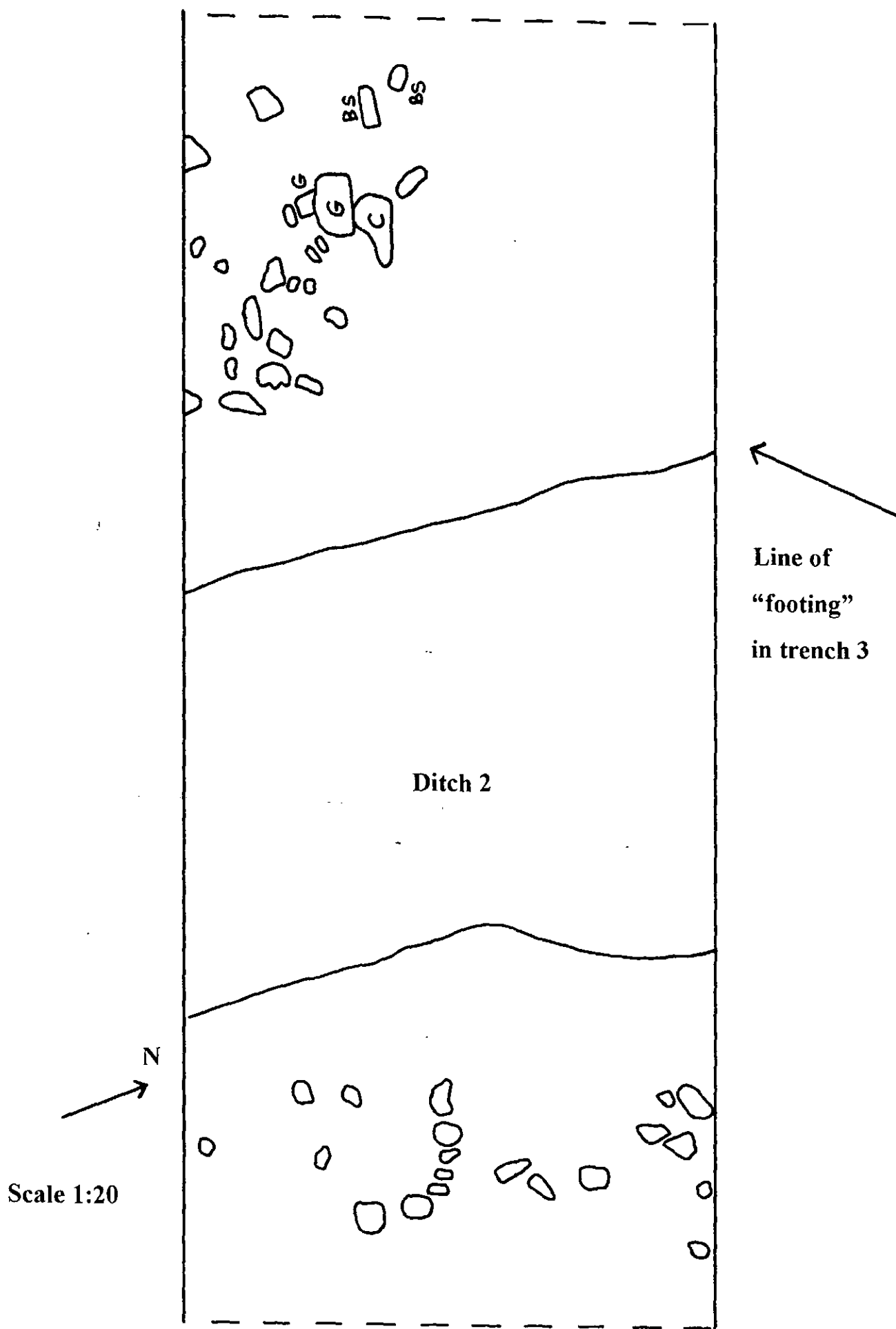


Figure 3. Plan of part of trench 1 showing position of flint ( ), decayed chalk (C), or greensand (G) and burnt sandstone (BS) on undisturbed clay (105).

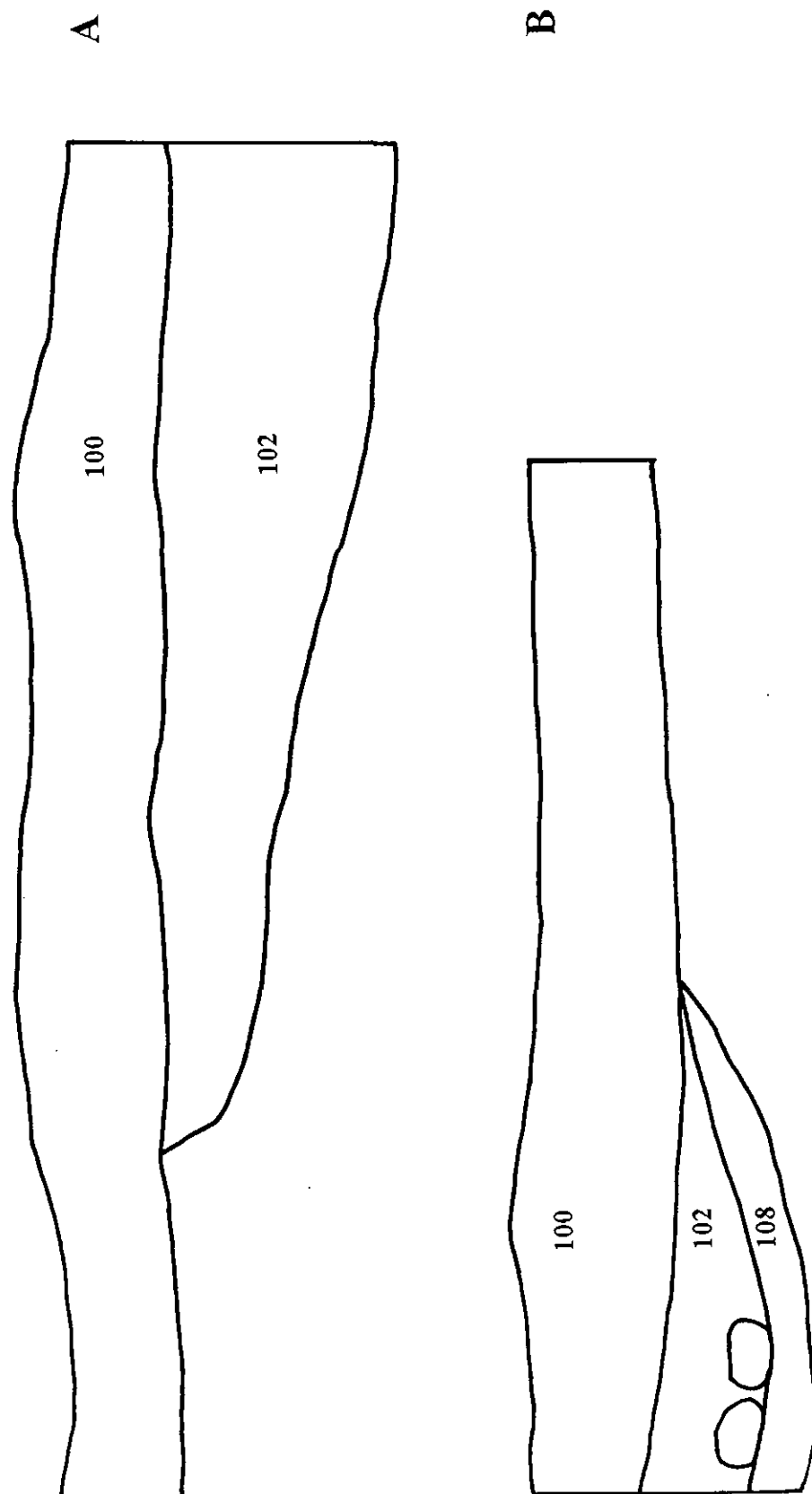


Figure 4. Trench 1. Section drawings for ditch 1: A - south section, B - north section. Scale 1:10. Manor Farm, Guildford 1998.

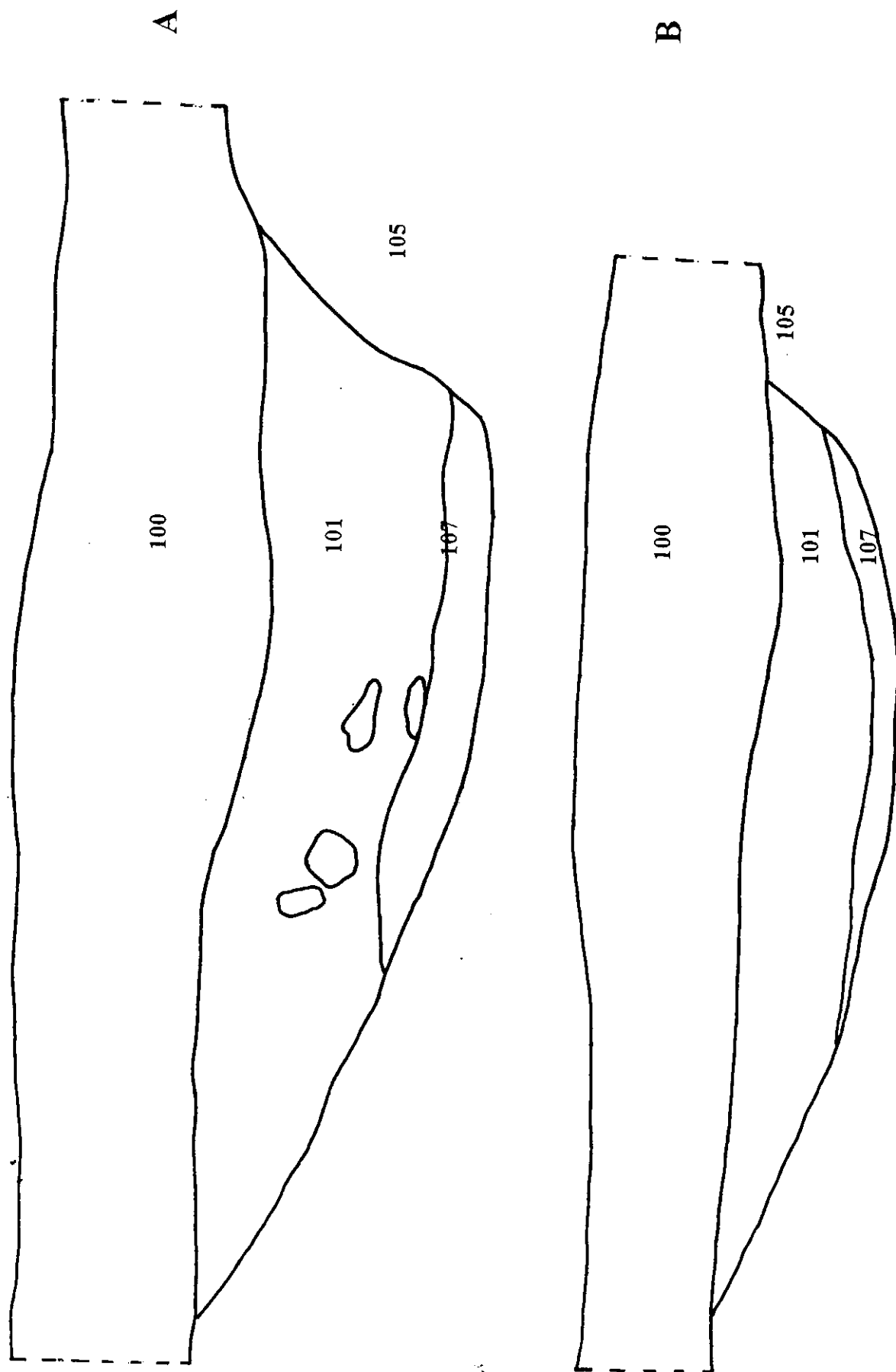
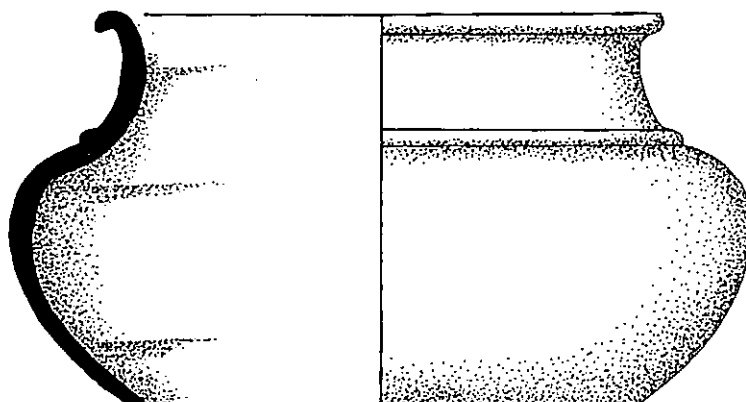
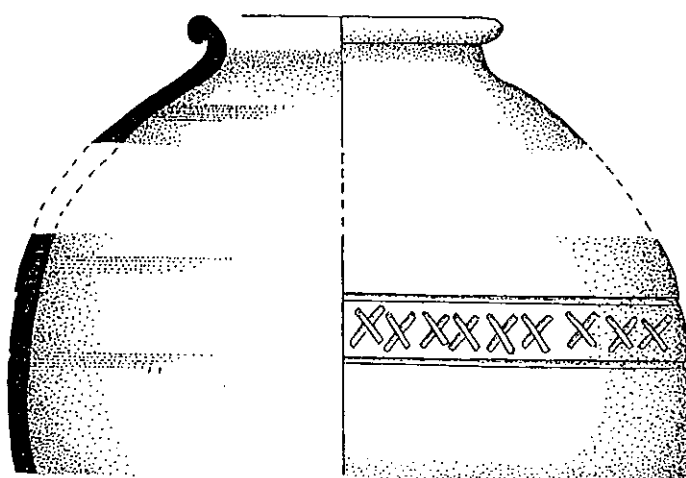


Figure 5. Trench 1. Section drawings for ditch 2: A - south section, B - north section. Scale 1:10. Manor Farm, Guildford 1998.

(a)



(b)



Scale: 1/2

Figure 6. (a) Cordonned jar (context 107) and (b) narrow mouthed jar (context 202) from Manor Farm, Guildford. Drawings by Alan Hall.

Trench 3

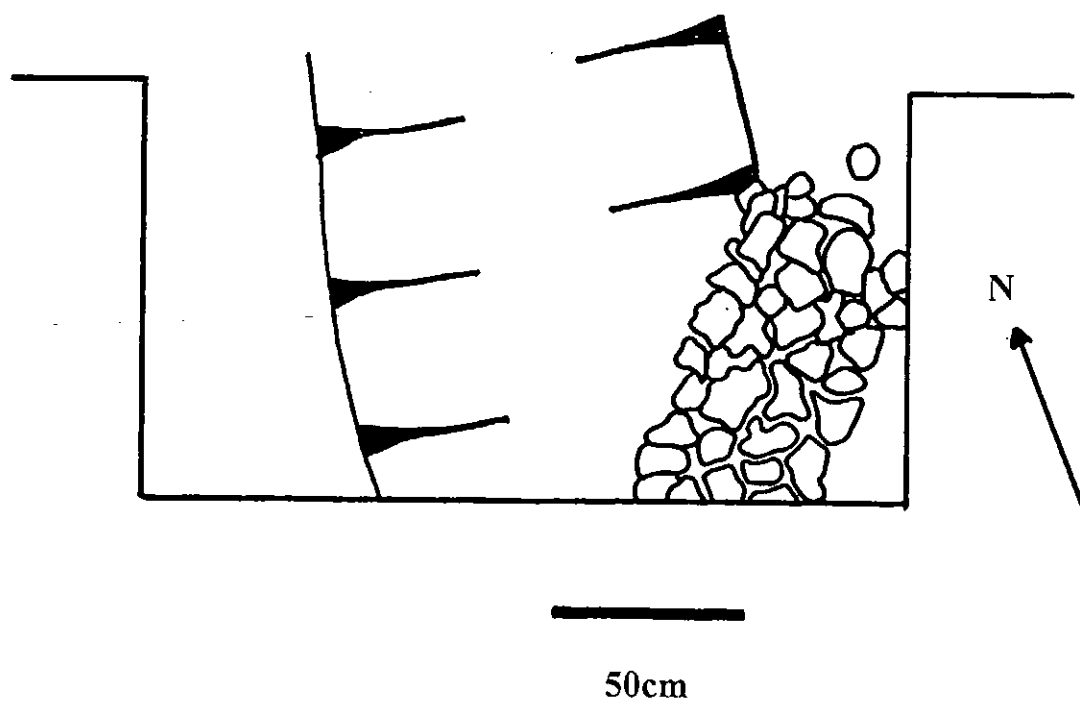
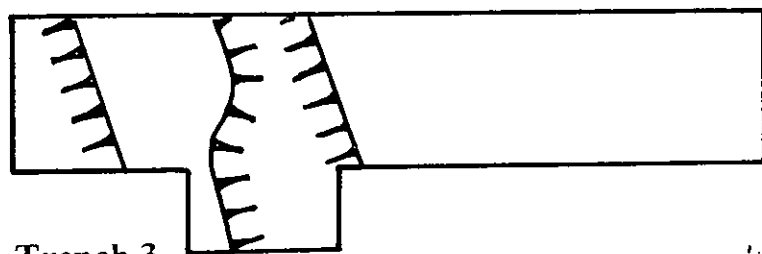


Figure 7. Trench 3. Plan showing flint nodules of possible wall footing overlying ditch 2.

Manor Farm, Guildford.

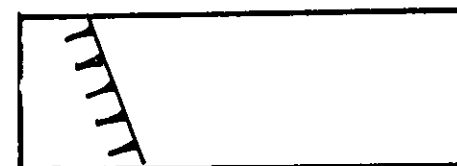
Guildford Archaeology Group, 1998

Trench 1



Trench 3

Trench 2



2m

Figure 8. Relative positions of (left to right) ditches 1,2 and 3. Manor Farm, Guildford 1998.