

**SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**EVALUATION EXCAVATION
AT MANOR FARM, GUILDFORD**

by the

Guildford Archaeology Group

of the

Surrey Archaeological Society

Interim report - 1999

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East of Guild

INTERIM REPORT ON EXCAVATIONS AT MANOR FARM, GUILDFORD DURING SEPTEMBER 1999

by the

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

SUMMARY

Further investigation into the nature of the ditches found during 1998 confirmed suggestions from a reinterpretation of the resistivity survey that part of a sub-circular enclosure some 80m in diameter was situated in the field under threat of development. Two of the three ditches were found some 35m SW of their known position. Within the enclosure further structural evidence was found in the form of two linear clay features set at right angles and a scatter of large flint nodules. A trench located outside the line of the enclosure ditches failed to find any signs of occupation.

Residual Bronze Age (BA) pottery was found throughout the area but all features appear to date from the latest Iron Age (IA) to the early 2nd century AD. A brooch found in an unstratified context is of a type dated cAD 65 - 80.

An attempt to locate the undated trackway excavated by Dr AJ (Tony) Clark on an extension of its apparent alignment and at a point where a geophysical anomaly was noted failed to reveal anything of interest.

BACKGROUND

Following the discovery of a concentration of Romano-British (RB) pottery during fieldwalking in advance of possible development small scale excavation took place in

1998 and has been the subject of a previous report. Briefly, three parallel ditches, all apparently dating to between the mid - late 1st century and the mid 2nd century AD and enclosing an occupation area which included at least one sub-rectangular building with flint foundations were located. Bones, mainly cattle and bearing signs of butchery, and sherds from a class 1A narrow mouthed jar (cAD70 - 150) which had been mended using birch resin were among the more interesting finds.

AIM AND PURPOSE OF THE EXCAVATION

The purposes of further excavation were:

- 1) to assess the preservation of archaeological contexts in a different area of the field
- 2) to attempt to gain some judgement of the size of the enclosure
- 3) to assess evidence of activity in one small area outside the enclosure
- 4) to locate an undated trackway excavated by Dr AJ Clark on an extension of his alignment

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 intended planning applications for development in the area.

METHODOLOGY

All excavation was carried out by hand. Two trenches were laid out, trench 5 in a position to section two of the ditches located in 1998 and trench 4 outside the area presumed to be enclosed by the ditch series. A third trench (trench 6) was excavated across the extended alignment of the trackway excavated in 1985. The positions of trenches in Partridge Field (1-5) are shown in figure 1 and all trenches excavated in 1998 and 1999 in figure 4.

In trench 5 two linear features were seen cutting the clay. One of these appeared to be an extension of the inner ditch located in 1998 and, since no dating evidence had been found for this feature, that portion located within the trench was excavated to its full depth.

The policy for finds collection was that all finds were retained until washed and at that point modern (late 19th and 20th 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. All retained finds will be subjected to further examination as appropriate.

During excavation the spoil heaps were subjected to scanning by metal detector and detection over other areas of the field with recovery of finds at no more than half plough depth.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

In trenches 4 and 5 the ploughsoil was found to overlie yellow clay, bearing a few modern plough marks, at a depth of 20 - 25cm. For the purpose of this excavation the clay was considered to be undisturbed natural. RB pottery and smaller amounts of medieval and BA pottery were recovered from the ploughsoil.

Trench 4 (10 x 2m)

The only feature located in this trench was a linear cut filled with water-washed pebbles, mainly flint, and cut into the natural clay subsoil. The depth of the feature was 35cm but the full width was not exposed within the trench. No dating evidence was obtained but the feature, which ran down-slope is likely to have been a land drain of relatively modern

date. Only a few sherds of pottery, mainly of RB date were recovered from the ploughsoil thus confirming the view that the trench lay outside the main focus of RB activity

Trench 5 (10 x 2m)

Removal of ploughsoil located two linear features which, by comparison with the results of the geophysical survey, seemed to represent continuations of the two inner ditches found in 1998. The upper fill of the outer of these two (central ditch, 1998) contained an accumulation of large flint nodules suggesting the presence of structural remains in the immediate vicinity. Since the latest cut or cleaning of this ditch had been dated in 1998 by the presence of a large portion of a cordoned jar dating to 43 - 60AD (Malcolm Lyne, pers comm) it was not fully excavated.

This inner ditch did not produce any dating evidence in 1998 and a narrow sondage was therefore dug across that portion which was located within the trench. If the profile of the ditch is symmetrical, it was U-shaped and the overall width would appear to be approximately 5m. This is wider than estimated from the section excavated in 1998 (3m) but in neither case is it certain what portion of the width was located within the trench. The section showed several silting episodes and pottery recovered appeared to be mid-1st century in date.

To the east of these ditches, but presumably within the outer ditch located in 1998, were found slight remains of a possible sub-rectangular building. A linear clay feature 1.6m long, but not fully exposed within the trench, and 0.2m wide lay with a similar feature at right angles at one end. Whether these represented part of a foundation or the base of a wall is uncertain but a further scatter of large flint nodules immediately to one side may have been related to this feature.

Residual prehistoric pottery was found in most contexts but all the features appear mid- to late 1st century in date.

Plan and section drawings of this trench are shown as figures 2.

Trench 6 (5 x 2m)

A spade dug trench some 0.6m deep failed to produce any evidence of the trackway excavated in 1985 at a position tentatively identified by geophysical survey and on an alignment determined at that date.

THE FINDS**The pottery**

The pottery, with that from the excavation which took place in 1998, has been submitted to Dr Malcolm Lyne for report. His verbal comments date the RB pottery recovered in 1999 to between the mid-1st to the early 2nd century. It is uncertain whether the earliest of this pottery should be dated to the late IA or whether it represents a continuation of the tradition after the Roman invasion.

The brooch

The brooch has been the subject of a report by Joanna Bird FSA which reads as follows:

“Two-piece copper alloy brooch, complete except for most of the pin and a small part of the spring. The centre of the bow has been bent and slightly damaged, but otherwise the metal is in good condition. The brooch is of the Colchester BB type, and has a lug behind the head with two holes to carry the axial bar and external chord of the spring. The side-wings are decorated with vertical mouldings; the bow, curved in section, has a rib running from the head almost to the plain foot. There is a notch at the head between the rib and the lug, and a triangular piercing in the catchplate. The type is dated cAD 65 - 80.”

A drawing of the brooch appears as figure 3.

CONCLUSIONS

In general terms these findings confirm those of the previous year. The amount of prehistoric pottery, and the relatively unabraded nature of the sherds, suggests that although no features were found, an occupation area had existed in the immediate vicinity.

The two inner ditches from 1998 were located and their position confirms the reinterpretation of the geophysical survey results as showing that a portion of a sub-circular enclosure approximately 80m across lies within the field under investigation. Again, structural evidence for a sub-rectangular building was found outside these ditches, but within the presumed line of the slightly later outer ditch located in 1998.

The presence of at least two sub-rectangular buildings, one of which had either flint foundations or a flint cill wall, in the later phase of the enclosed settlement suggests a sound economic base. Whilst arable agriculture would not be impossible the presence of lighter greensand or chalk soils in the immediate vicinity suggests that other resources were being utilised. Stock raising is one possibility but timber production is at least as likely.

The results of work in advance of development at Alpine Avenue, Tolworth lead the excavators to suggest that this late IA site on London clay may represent a production centre subordinate to an estate centre, possibly the contemporary site at Percy Gardens in Old Malden (Hawkins & Leaver (1999), *SyAC* 86, 141-149). At Tolworth Court Farm excavation this year has located another late IA / early RB site which appears, on as yet slight evidence, to have fulfilled a role in a stock raising economy. This latter site, situated between Alpine Avenue and Percy Gardens, and also located on London clay, may be related to the same socio-economic unit. Is it stretching available evidence too far to see administrative units similar to the late Saxon "multiple estate" exploiting London - and possibly also Weald - clay from "parent" settlements on lighter soils at this early date?

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.

Figures 2 and 3 were drawn by Alan Hall to whom I am most grateful.

Judie English

September 2000

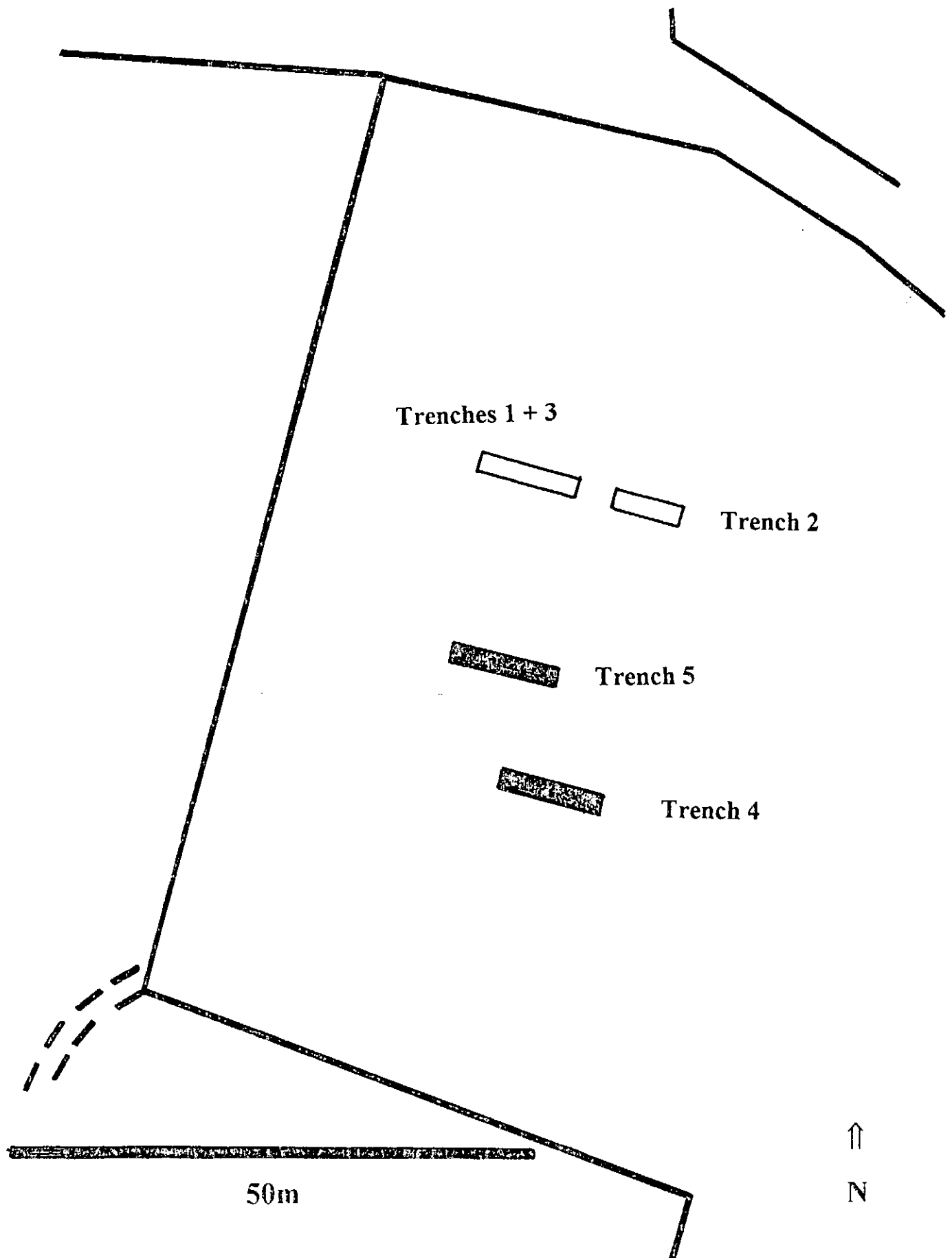


Figure 1. Position of trenches excavated in Partridge Field, Manor Farm, Guildford in 1998 (open) and 1999 (filled).

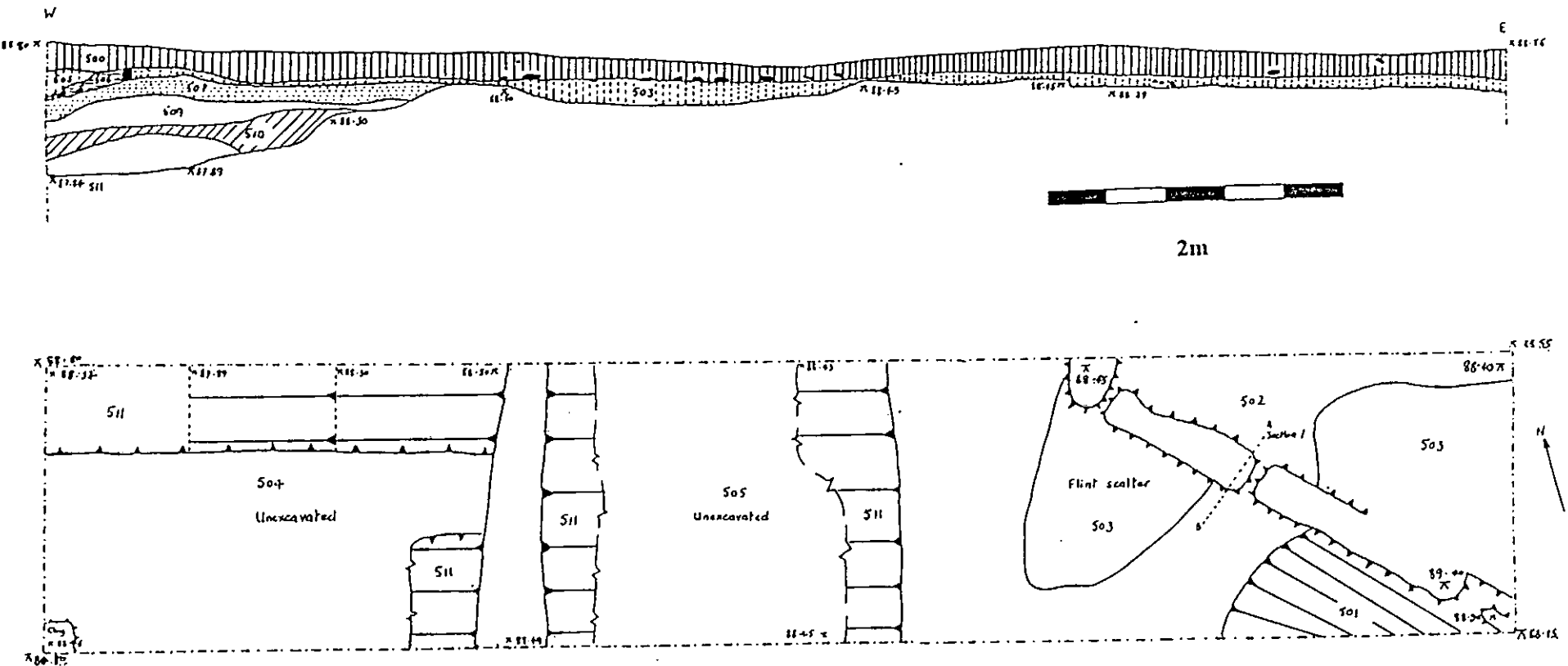


Figure 2. Plan and section of trench 5, Manor Farm, Guildford, 1999.

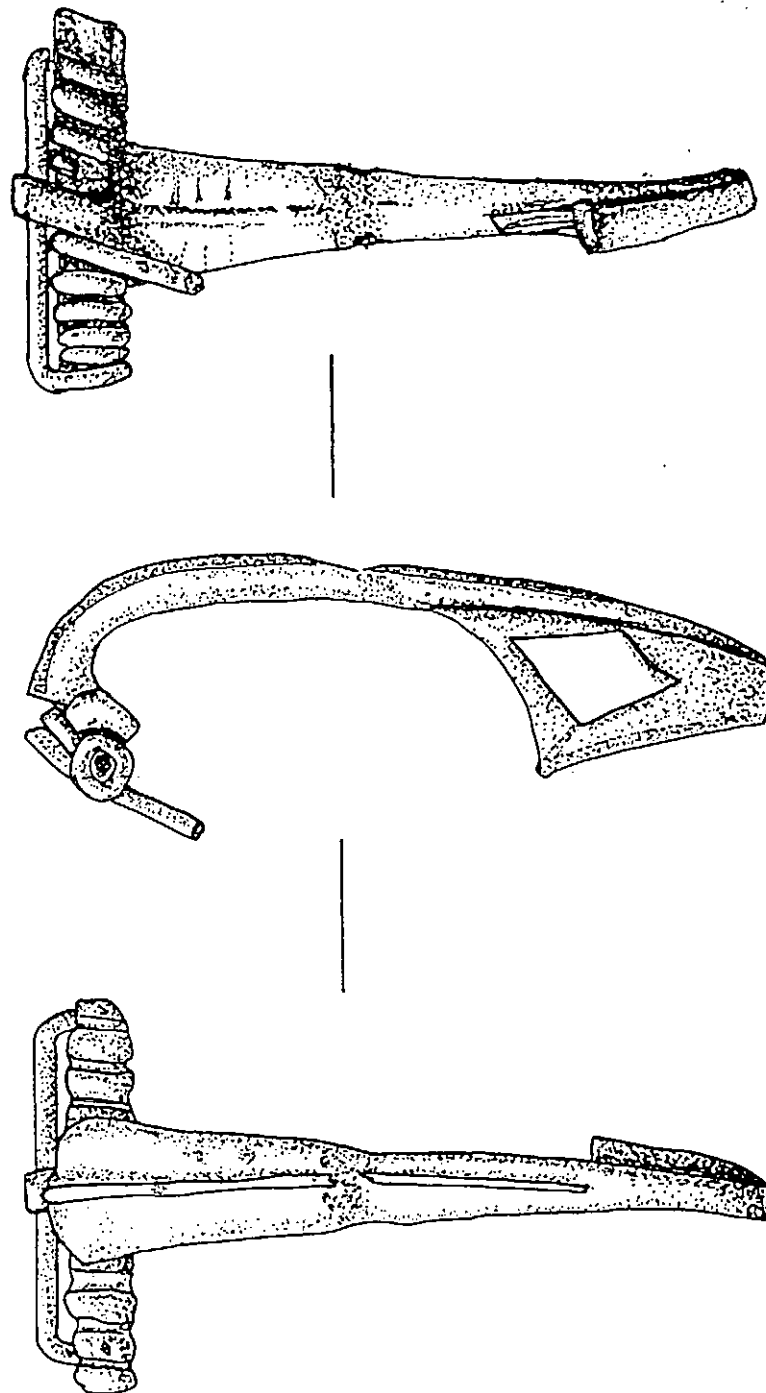


Figure 3. Romano-British brooch dated c.60-85AD recovered from ploughsoil at Manor Farm, Guildford in 1999. Scale 1:1.

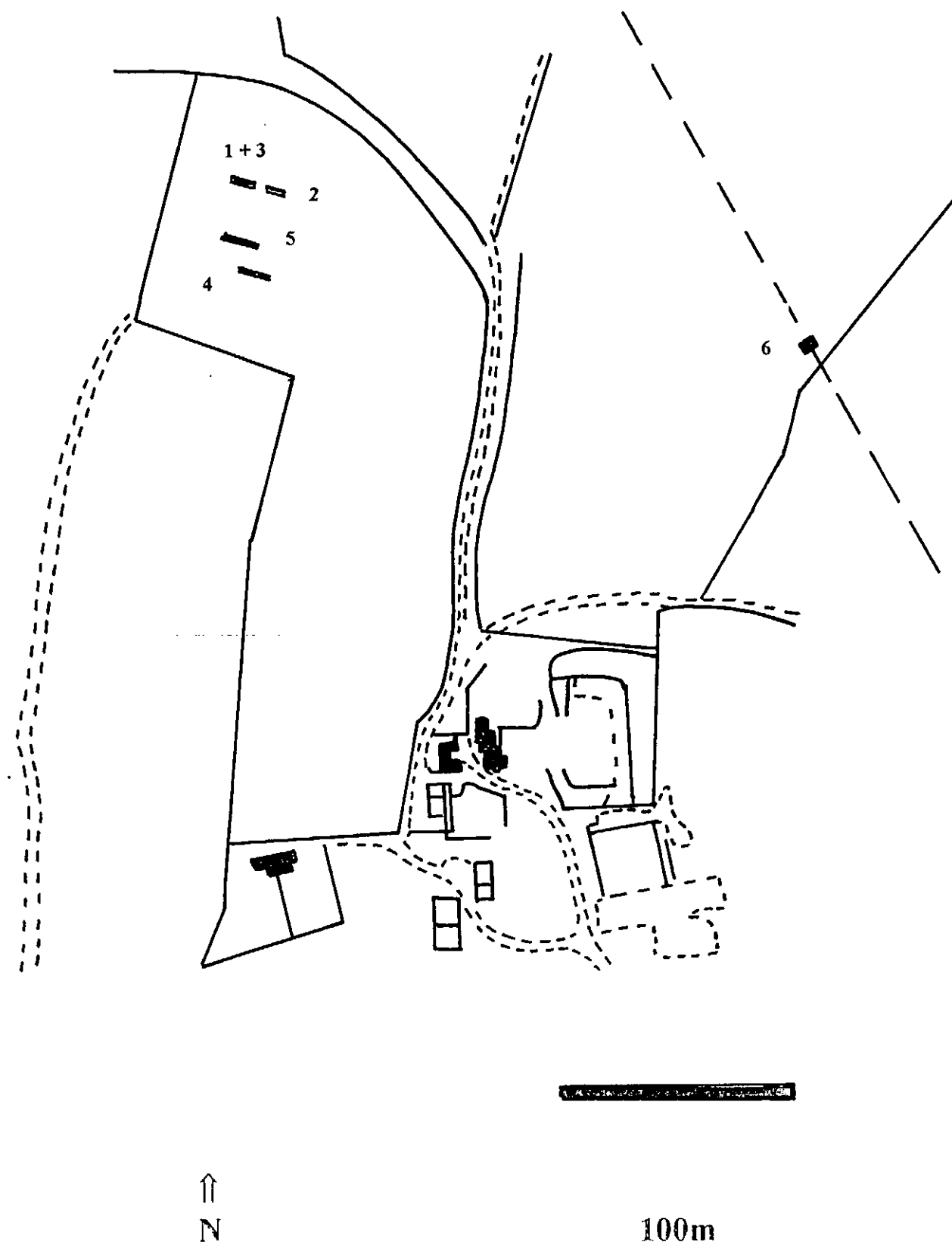


Figure 4. Position of all trenches excavated at Manor Farm, Guildford in 1998 and 1999.