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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK IN 2004
AT FARNHAM QUARRY (RUNFOLD FARM),
nr. RUNFOLD, SURREY**



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(RUNFOLD FARM), nr. RUNFOLD, SURREY**

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Date	21 st June 2004
NGR	SU 8712 4849 (approximate centre)
Client	Hanson Aggregates Ltd



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1. Introduction

1.1 Between 2nd - 10th June 2004, staff of the Surrey County Archaeological Unit supervised the soil stripping of an area of ground measuring approximately 80m by 35m at Farnham Quarry (Runfold Farm), near Runfold, Surrey (figures 1 & 2). This work occurred as a result of a field evaluation carried out in 2003 (Robertson & Hayman, 2003) which indicated that further parts of the Late Iron Age or early Roman field system first discovered in 1998 (Marples 1998) would be revealed (figure 1), and was undertaken in advance of preparations for mineral extraction within this part of the quarry.

2. Stratigraphy and topography

2.1 The overburden removed consisted of between 0.20-0.35m of topsoil, below which lay the features of archaeological interest and the undisturbed 'natural' geology of orange-yellow sandy clay. The topsoil was shallowest at the southern end of the site, immediately beyond which a raised area of natural gravel was later seen to replace the orange-yellow clay, and deepest towards the west where a prominent topographical hollow was present; the investigation of several similar hollows during previous work within the permission has concluded that most, if not all, are of geological origin.

3. Results - see figures 2 & 3

3.1 The work led to the discovery of various ditches, two, or possibly three, of which most probably date to the Late Iron Age while the remainder are of relatively recent origin, and an amorphous feature which produced a large quantity of humanly struck flint.

Phase 1: Prehistoric

FEATURE 302

3.2 This large, irregularly shaped anomaly, found close to the southern limit of the site, was initially thought to be a possible water hole, though this was not found to be the case. Prior to excavation the feature appeared to contain various different fills, the central area being occupied by a grey silty clay soil (303) that produced thirty four pieces of struck and three burnt flints as surface finds, while layers of orange-grey clay (304) and mid to dark grey clay (305) were visible around the periphery. The feature was sampled by the excavation of a 1m wide trench through the central region of its long axis, and this showed 303 to be no more than 0.16m deep and to overlie either the natural geology or else a series of irregularly shaped hollows filled by layers 304 or 305. Two sherds of Iron Age pottery and an additional seventy nine struck flints and nineteen burnt flints were recovered from 303, but 304 and 305 were devoid of any finds and their 'sterile' appearance prompted the assumption that they probably did not result from human activity. Further work was restricted to the western half of the trench, and towards the western end of this the removal of 304 and 305 led to the discovery of two other layers which filled a deeper irregular hollow, 306, which was similar to 304, and 343, a black humic deposit with fragments of wood; 306 and 343 also produced no archaeological material.

Provisional inspection of the struck flints recovered from 303, most of which are 'waste' flakes though several utilized pieces are also present, suggests that they may be a mixed assemblage belonging to the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods.

3.3 As 343 was primarily of organic origin it was concluded that this anomaly was partially or wholly associated with the former site of at least one tree. Once this had died, decomposition resulted in subsidence and led to the formation of the irregular hollows in which layers 305, 304, and 303 subsequently formed. It is possible that this tree was killed by man as part of some ground clearance scheme for agricultural purposes, but the absence of artefacts from 304-6 and 343 provides no support for such a contention and the tree may well have perished naturally. The finds from 303 are interesting as they indicate presence of contemporary activity in the immediate vicinity - this information being of particular significance as far as the flintwork is concerned as no features of Neolithic or Bronze Age date were discovered during this excavation or during the earlier field evaluation. It is probably also significant that the two southernmost segments of ditch 307 also produced quite frequent pieces of struck flint, and that little was recovered from the other segments of this or from ditches 325 and 327 dug further to the north.

DITCH 307

3.4 This feature ran in a roughly north-south direction throughout the entire length of the site area, and was cut by the much later ditches 330, 331, 337, 338, and 339. It had previously been discovered during the Watching Brief of 1998, and was found again during the field evaluation in May 2003 when segment 100 was excavated, though it was not clear during this work that 100 was cut by ditch 339. The feature was initially sampled by the excavation of seven further segments, 308-10 and 312 varying in depth between 0.20-0.38m and all containing single fills of pale grey-brown clay soil, while 323-4 and 329 were between 0.46-0.58m deep and either contained a single fill (329), three layers (324), or seven layers or minor lenses of fill (323). The layering within 324, and the layering and variations in the basal profile of 323 suggested that the ditch had been recut at some point or was intercutting with another ditch (figure 3), and the shallow shelf recorded on the eastern side of 312 (figure 3) may be evidence of another phase of either this feature or the boundary - several ditches which were intercutting or ran roughly parallel to each other were found in 1998.

3.5 The majority of these segments produced either few, or no (324 and 329) finds, the material recovered from these consisting of occasional struck or burnt flints and one tiny, possible (but unidentifiable) fragment of prehistoric pottery, but 308 and 309 were exceptions as these produced twenty five and fourteen pieces of struck flint respectively and several pieces of burnt flint. The struck flint from 307 has been provisionally dated to the Neolithic and/ or Bronze Age (as 302), and the likely significance of increased quantities of this material at the southern end of the site has been mentioned above.

3.6 After the subsequent removal of topsoil from the area immediately to the south of the excavation area by contractors, the opportunity was taken to trace this ditch to its limit as a soil mark. The shallowing apparent within segment 308 was found to continue and the feature failed to leave any visible imprint in the surface of the natural beyond the southern end of the additional segment 340. At this point a raised area of natural gravel lay directly beneath 0.20m of topsoil, and it is possible that the presence of this material discouraged the digging of the ditch to a more substantial depth. There was no evidence to suggest that 340 was a definite terminal to the feature, but there was no opportunity to check for a continuation further to the south because of the scale of the earthmoving work in progress there; the feature was not seen in Trial Trenches 4 or 6 of the May 2003 evaluation. The 0-0.14m deep fill of 340 produced two struck flints, one of which was a scraper.

DITCH 325

3.7 This feature ran across the north-western corner of the excavation area and was sampled by the excavation of a single segment, 326, which was no more than 0.06m deep with a fill of grey-brown clay soil. No finds were recovered from 326, or from the surface of the unexcavated ditch fill, but the characteristics of this feature suggested that it was more likely to be broadly contemporary with 307 and 327 than to be of much later date. As a soil mark when first exposed it appeared that 325 may have cut 327, this impression being due to the presence of an area of iron-panning within its fill.

DITCH 327

3.8 Ditch 327 ran in an east-west direction across the northern part of the site area, at roughly 90° to ditch 307, and was sampled by the excavation of segments 328 and 335. 328 had a variable depth that reached up to 0.58m at the western end while the eastern end was no more than 0.26m deep. This discrepancy coincided with a distinct round-ended deepening which occurred midway across the segment, indicating that the feature must have terminated at this point at some stage during its history and had been recut at least once. Up to seven layers or minor lenses of fill were tentatively identified within the segment, these all being silty clays of slightly different colours, but it was unclear whether this terminal preceded or superseded the shallower ditch. It was also unclear whether layer 328G, at the western end (see figure 3), belonged to the shallower ditch or to a further phase of the boundary that predated the terminal; two burnt flints were recovered during the excavation of 328. Segment 335 contained a single fill of mid to dark grey-brown clay soil, was approximately 0.30m deep throughout, and was presumably a continuation of the shallower ditch; it produced three pieces of struck flint.

3.9 The presence of a large bank of soil which could not be removed at this time prevented the exposure of 327 to the east of segment 335, though it seems likely that the feature either joined, or terminated close to 307. A small box section cut into the northern edge of site may have discovered

the southern side of the feature (341), but the depth of the earth bank prevented any further investigation here. If this is correct, the projected course of the ditch suggests it is unlikely to have continued to the east of 307 as it heads towards an exposed area of natural clay.

Phase 2: Modern

DITCHES 313 - 319

3.10 These ditches skirted around the western side of the topographical hollow noted above and mostly appeared as a single area of dark grey-brown fill, though some separation was visible towards the south and other individual features were identified through the excavation of an investigation trench (segments 320-2, and 342). Surface finds (pottery, iron, glass) of late 19th and/ or 20th century origin were recovered from 319, and the dark, topsoil-like fill of this more distinct feature suggested that it was almost certainly the last of this sequence of features to infill. No finds were recovered from the other features, but there seemed little doubt that all represented earlier phases of the same boundary.

DITCHES 330, 311, AND 333

3.11 Ditch 330 ran in a roughly east-west direction across the site, and was joined by 311 from the south, and by 333 from the north. 330 and 311 were not sampled as their dark topsoil-like fills left no doubt that they had infilled fairly recently, and this assumption was confirmed by finds of pottery, brick, glass, and coal recovered from the machine exposed surface of 311. 333 contained a greyer coloured fill and was sampled by the excavation of one segment, 334, which was no more than 0.06m deep. 334 produced a tiny, undatable fragment of brick or tile, two pieces of coal, and a small split copper alloy cylinder bearing the legend 'best accommodation holder' imprinted in small upper case letters on its side. These features are most probably all of late 19th or 20th century origin.

DITCH 331

3.12 Ditch 331 was cut by the modern ditches 330, 333, and 339, and itself cut ditch 307. It was sampled at its eastern and western extremities by the excavation of segments 336 and 332, which contained fills of dark grey-brown-black (due to a high organic content) or grey-brown clay soil and were each around 0.30m deep. Neither segment produced no finds, but the appearance of their fills suggested that 331 was most probably of post medieval or modern origin.

DITCHES 337 - 339

3.13 Ditches 337/ 338 and 339 followed a roughly parallel course across the north-eastern corner of the site, the darker more topsoil-like fill of 338, which was readily comparable with that of 339, suggesting that it probably infilled after 337. None of these features were sampled, but finds of post medieval or later date were recovered from 338, and 20th century material (including building debris,

part of a ploughshare, and what looked like the foot stand from a bike were observed on the surface of 339).

4. Discussion

4.1 The excavation was extremely worthwhile as it enabled a considerable further stretch of a previously known north-south 'Celtic' field boundary to be traced (307), and led to the discovery of an east-west ditch that was almost certainly associated with this as a plot division (327), and a further ditch that seems likely to have been broadly contemporary with these features and may even have been a continuation of one of the shallower linear features found in 1998 (325). The size of 307 suggests that it was most probably a continuation of either ditch 106 or 107 from 1998, or it may have contained elements of both features if they were intercutting at this point. The finds recovered from 307, 325, and 327 are generally comparable with those recovered from parts of the field system in 1998, though a small number of Iron Age or Romano-British pottery sherds were recovered at that time, and the absence of greater amounts of contemporary material is presumably due to the distance from the associated settlement area which was located around 250m to the north-west. The discovery and recording of such field systems is vital to the full appreciation and understanding of the settlement which it served. The struck flints recovered primarily from the southern segments of 307 and from the nearby feature 302 were something of a bonus as they indicate that toolmaking was probably taking place in the immediate vicinity prior to the Iron Age.

4.2 The remaining features are, or most probably are of post medieval or more recent origin, and an examination of the Tithe Map of c1840 has shown that 313-9 and 337-9 follow the course of joining boundaries that are recorded on this.

References

Robertson, J & Hayman, GN, 2003 An Archaeological Evaluation of the Remainder of the Stage 2 Land at Farnham Quarry (Runfold Farm), Surrey, in May and September 2003 - *a client report prepared by SCAU*

Marples, NJ, 1998 An Archaeological Watching Brief at Runfold Farm, near Badshot Lea: Evidence for a 'Celtic' or Medieval Field System - *a client report prepared by SCAU*

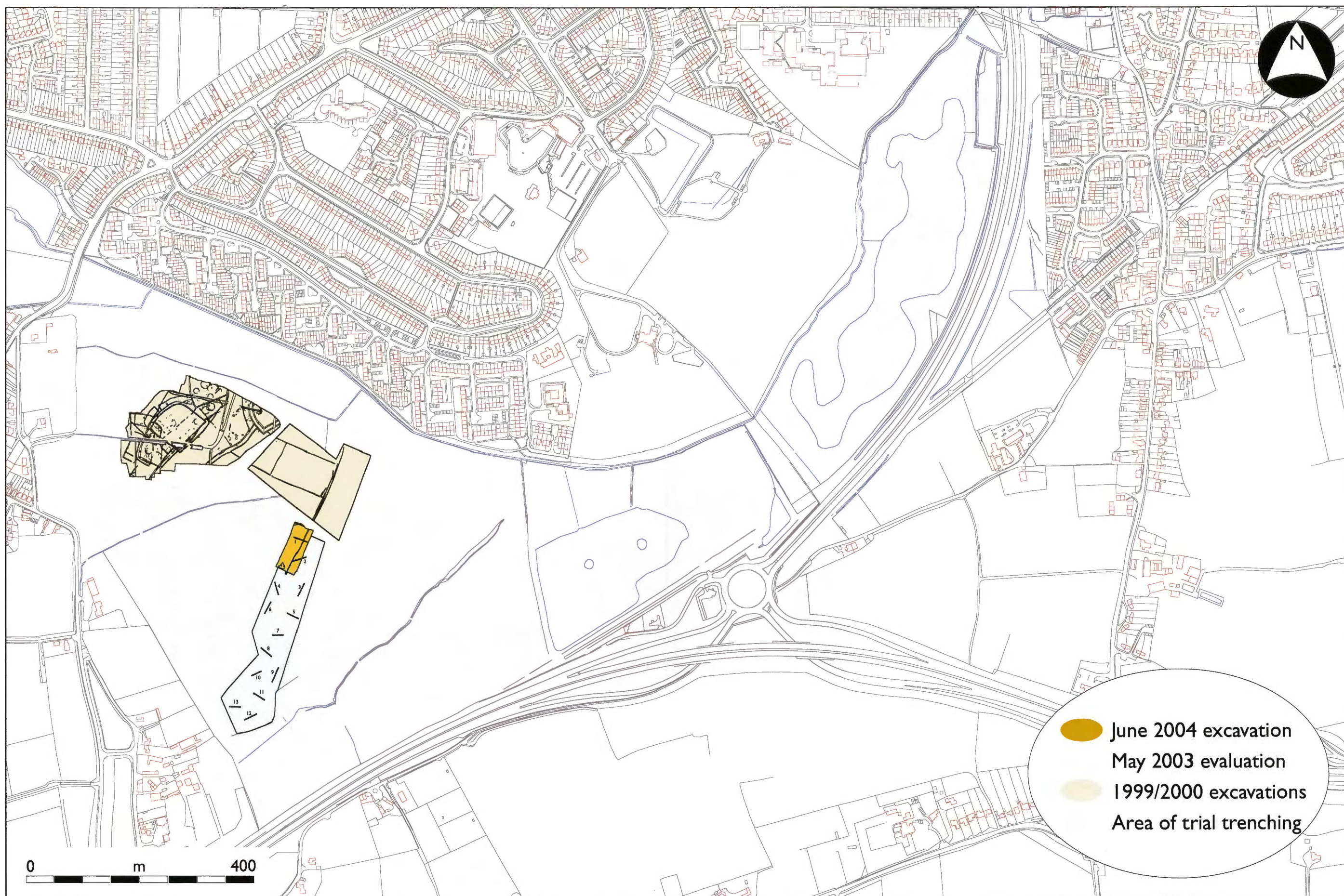


Figure 1 Farnham Quarry: location of 2004 work in relation to earlier archaeological work and features.

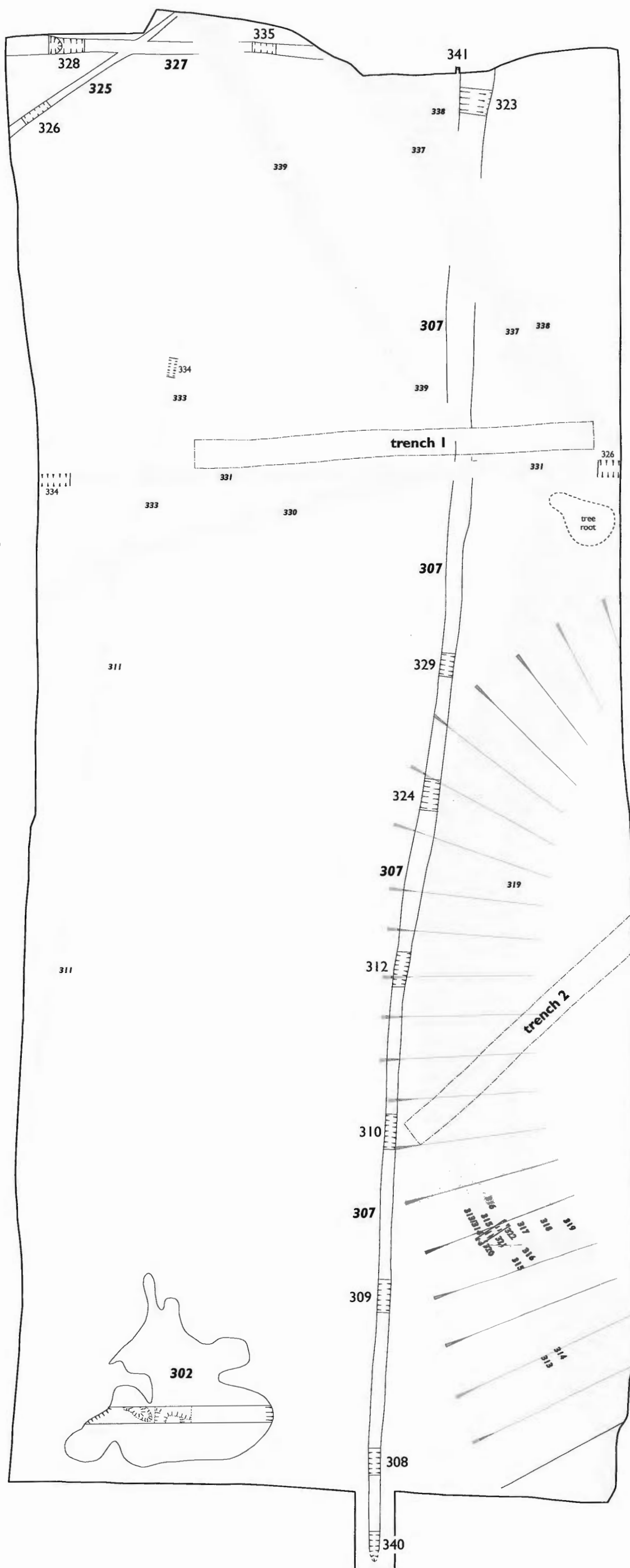
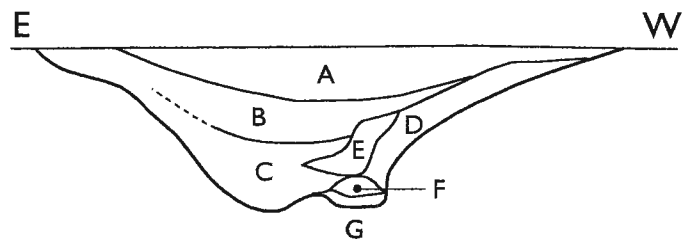
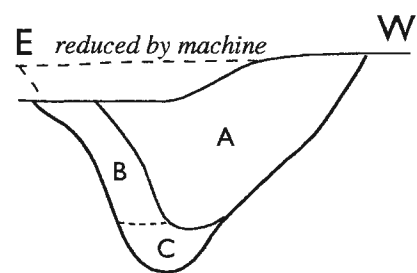


Figure 2 Farnham Quarry:
 plan of main features revealed
 by stripping in 2004.

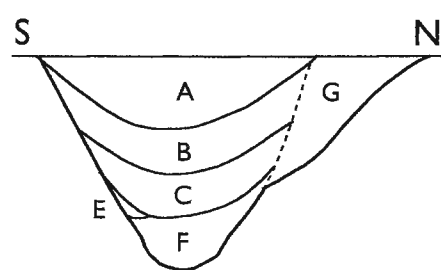
Segment 323, Ditch 307



Segment 324, Ditch 307



Segment 328, Ditch 327



Section through feature 302

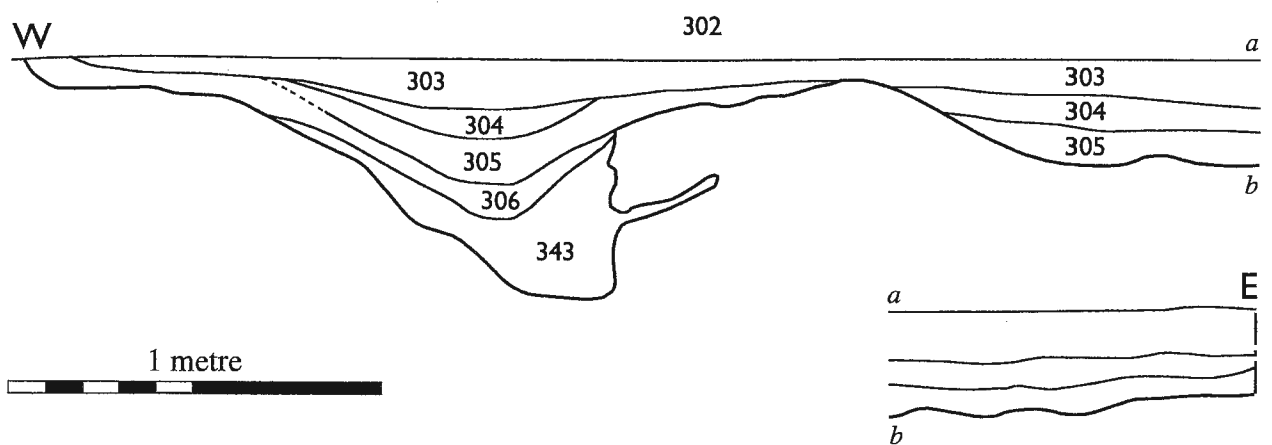


Figure 3 Farnham Quarry: section of features examined in 2004

