SETTLEMENT WEST OF LATTON (SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT 899), LATTON, WILTSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

BY

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FOR

CWS PROPERTY GROUP

Cotswold Archaeological Trust

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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GLOSSARY

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.

BRONZE AGE
Chronological division of the prehistoric period which sees the introduction of copper and eventual widespread adoption of bronze weapons, implements, jewellery etc. In Britain it is dated between *c*2300 BC-700 BC.

CAT
Cotswold Archaeological Trust

CROPMARK
A trace of a buried feature revealed by differential growth of crops, best seen from the air.

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 invasion in AD 1066 to approximately AD 1500.

MONUMENT
The expression *monument* is statutorily defined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as follows:

(a) any building, structure, or work whether above or below the surface of the land, and

any cave or excavation; (b) any site comprising the remains of, any vehicle, vessel, aircraft or other movable structure or part thereof, which neither constitutes nor forms part of any work which is a monument within paragraph (a) above. The site of a monument includes not only the land in or on which it is situated, but also any land comprising or adjoining it which is essential for its support and preservation.

NATURAL
Defined in archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site, eg. Lower Lias clay, river terrace gravels etc.

NGR
National Grid Reference given from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

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

RIDGE AND FURROW
Remains of cultivation of medieval or later date forming a corrugated surface.

RING-DITCH
A ditch of circular or penannular plan, usually surviving as a cropmark and often representing the remains of ploughed barrows often of Bronze Age date.

ROMANO-BRITISH
The period from the Roman invasion of Britain of AD 43 to a date generally agreed to be AD 410, by which time there had been a fusion of indigenous late Iron Age traditions with Roman culture.

SAXON
Taken here as the period from the end of the Roman era c. AD410 to the Norman conquest in AD 1066.

SMR
Sites and Monument Register.

SUMMARY

In November 1996 Cotswold Archaeological Trust (CAT) was commissioned by D.K. Symes Associates, on behalf of Co-operative Wholesale Society, to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Latton, Wiltshire. The objective of the evaluation was to ascertain the extent of the nationally important remains within the area currently designated as a scheduled ancient monument in order to determine whether areas within the SAM could be developed for mineral extraction.

The evaluation indicates that the main focus of activity, excepting the multi-phased settlement complex itself, is concentrated within field 7666, between the current A419 (Ermin Street) and the newly constructed Latton bypass. Within this north-east corner of the scheduled area there is a discernable concentration of activity, with perhaps a continuity of occupation within the landscape from the Bronze Age onwards. The evaluation indicates that Romano-British domestic occupation does not extend eastwards beyond the area of settlement defined by aerial photographic evidence. The Romano-British activity identified within field 7666 is restricted to agricultural field enclosures and paddocks, and may therefore be interpreted as the peripheral elements of the main settlement complex. From a regional perspective, the evidence of Saxon activity on the First Terrace of the Upper Thames is significant.

To the south of the Latton bypass, within field 1100, the archaeological evidence appears much more restricted. Iron Age activity is attested by the dating of the subrectangular enclosure, and by the isolated posthole at the western boundary of the scheduled area. However, the majority of features, except the Romano-British organic deposits, are representative of medieval/post-medieval cultivation practises.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 In November 1996 Cotswold Archaeological Trust (CAT) was commissioned by D.K. Symes Associates, on behalf of Co-operative Wholesale Society, to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Latton, Wiltshire (Fig. 1).

1.1.2 The objective of the evaluation was to ascertain the extent of the nationally important remains within the area currently designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM), (County Monument No. 899, *Settlement West of Latton*) in order to determine whether areas within the SAM could be developed for mineral extraction. For this reason the evaluation was targetted away from the core of the cropmark complex, and sought to test areas which were seemingly blank.

1.1.3 Scheduled Monument Consent for the evaluation programme had previously been granted by the Department of National Heritage on August 20th 1993 (HSD 9/2/1756 Pt 4). A Section 42 licence to undertake a geophysical survey within the monument was granted in November 1996.

1.1.4 The work was undertaken in compliance with the 'Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation' issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA). A monitoring visit was made by Mr D. Coe of the Archaeological Service, Wiltshire County Council on 27th January 1997.

1.2 The Study Area

1.2.1 The study area lies south west of the village of Latton. The scheduled area is bound to the north-east by the A417 Swindon to Cirencester trunk road (*Ermin*

Street) and to the south by the Thames-Severn Canal. The remaining boundaries consist of pre-existing field boundaries.

1.2.2 The area evaluated comprises three fields (OS land parcels 1100, 5769 and 7666) which are now traversed by the construction of the Latton bypass. Fields 1100 and 7666 are under arable cultivation, currently oilseed rape. Field 5769 is under grass pasture.

1.2.3 The site lies on the First Terrace river gravels of the Upper Thames. Topographically the study area consists of generally flat ground.

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

1.3.1 The SAM was first identified from aerial photography where it was shown as a complex series of cropmarks, incorporating a possible late prehistoric/Romano-British settlement (Wilts SMR 315), and a circular feature, possibly a Bronze Age ring ditch (SMR 620). The cropmarks have subsequently been transcribed on a number of occasions, most recently by CAT as part of the initial assessment and evaluation of the Latton Bypass, and by the Royal Commission of Historic Monuments (England) (RCHME) at 1:10,000.

1.3.2 There have been a number of archaeological investigations within the scheduled area. In 1985 a watching brief undertaken by the Trust for Wessex Archaeology along the ESSO Midland Pipeline recorded finds of Saxon and medieval pottery within the limits of the SAM (Wiltshire SMR 400 and 453 respectively).

1.3.3 In 1988, Thamesdown Archaeological Unit undertook a limited survey, including fieldwalking, geophysical survey and evaluation trenching within the SAM when the route of the Latton bypass was under consideration. The

conclusions of the evaluation indicated the cropmark complex was, at least in part, Romano-British in date, with a concentration of occupation debris in the north-east quarter of the scheduled area (Digby 1988).

1.3.4 As a consequence of these findings, the preferred route of the bypass was moved further to the south-west to avoid the areas identified as being of greatest importance. This new route was evaluated by CAT in 1990/91.

1.3.5 Within the scheduled area the evaluation again comprised fieldwalking, geophysical survey and evaluation trenching. Iron Age and Romano-British pottery associated with quarry pits and probable field boundaries suggested an Iron Age origin for some of the elements of the cropmark complex. Romano-British pottery was found within a peaty, organic ?pond fill, into which a series of post-holes had been cut (Johnson 1991)

1.3.6 In 1996, an excavation and watching brief were undertaken within the SAM by Oxford Archaeological Unit in advance of the construction of the Latton bypass. To date the findings of these excavations remain unpublished.

1.4 Archaeological Specification and Methods

1.4.1 A specification for works prepared by CAT was approved as part of the granting of Scheduled Monument Consent. This defined a core area of cropmarks which would not be evaluated, the work concentrating on the remainder of the scheduled area.

1.4.2 The initial phase of the evaluation proposed a fieldwalking survey within OS land parcels 1100 and 7666, and the excavation of 6, 1m x 1m test-pits within pasture field 5769. Augering was also to be used to determine the extent of the organic peat deposit prior to evaluation trenching. The use of these techniques

ensures compatibility with the data collected during previous archaeological investigations within the general vicinity of the SAM (Barber 1993 & 1995).

1.4.3 A geophysical survey, using magnetometer and magnetic susceptibility was undertaken on a series of transects throughout the SAM. A full report on this survey by the Bartlett-Clark consultancy forms Appendix 6 of this report.

1.4.4 The third phase of the evaluation proposed the excavation of 22, 50m x 1.8m trenches. The evaluation trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machining was carried out under archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological deposits or the natural substrate, which ever was encountered first.

1.4.5 Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were sampled by hand in accordance with CAT *Field Recording Manual.*

1.4.6 All artefacts recovered were catalogued and analysed in accordance with CAT *Field Recording Manual.* Particular emphasis was given to potentially datable artefacts such as pottery. A full written, drawn and photographic record was kept during the programme of works.

1.4.7 The finds and site archive will, subject to agreement with the legal landowner, be deposited with Devizes Museum.

2. EVALUATION RESULTS

2.1 Fieldwalking

2.1.1 Since the granting of Scheduled Monument Consent in 1993, the crop regime within the SAM had changed from winter wheat to oilseed rape. The density of leaf cover prohibited the undertaking of the field walking survey. Written consent was given by English Heritage enabling the fieldwalking element to be dropped from the project specification.

2.2 Test-pits

2.2.1 In accordance with the project specification the test-pits were located on a 50m grid aligned relative to the National Grid. Due to changes along the western boundary of field 5769, a total of 9 test-pits, rather than the proposed 6, were hand excavated (Fig. 2). Test-pits 1 to 4, and 7 and 8 confirmed the presence of the organic deposit. Natural gravels were encountered within test-pits 5, 6 and 9 to the north of the field.

2.2.2 Descriptions of all deposits recorded within the test-pits are contained within Appendix 1.

2.3 Auger Survey

2.3.1 The auger survey was conducted utilising the same grid alignment employed for the test-pits. The survey was undertaken within fields 1100 and 7666 to the north of the Latton bypass. The survey identified the approximate extent of the organic peat and clays.

2.4 Geophysical Survey

2.4.1 The geophysical survey was undertaken within 6 transects (Fig. 2). The survey revealed a number of linear anomalies which can be related to former field boundaries shown on the 1805 Latton Enclosure Award, and associated cultivation patterns.

2.4.2 The survey also confirmed the presence of the ring ditch (SMR 620) within field 7666, to the north of the bypass. Previously there had been some debate about its existence, and it had been deleted from the most recent RCHME cropmark plot where it was presumably considered to be of geological rather than archaeological origin.

2.4.3 A full report on the geophysical survey is contained within Appendix 6.

2.5 Evaluation Trenching

2.5.1 A total of 23 rather than the proposed 22 evaluation trenches were excavated at the locations indicated on Fig. 2. The additional trench was excavated after consultation with Mr Duncan Coe, Wiltshire Archaeological Service.

2.5.2 The natural terrace gravels were revealed throughout the study area between 81m OD and 83m OD.

2.5.3 Descriptions of all features recorded within the evaluation trenches are contained within Appendix 2. A description of all significant features are presented chronologically within this section.

2.6 Prehistoric

Possible Enclosure or Field Boundary (Trench 12) (Fig. 2)

2.6.1 At the western limit of the Trench 12 a linear ditch [1201] was revealed. It measured 2.1m in width and was fully excavated to a depth of 0.75m. It contained a mid brown silty clay fill (1202) from which one sherd of prehistoric pottery and 2 flints were retrieved. It had been recut by ditch [1205].

2.6.2 Ditch [1205] measured 1.3m in width and was fully excavated to a depth of 0.6m. It contained a mid brown silty clay fill (1206) from which no artefactual material was retrieved.

Ring-Ditch (Trench 10) (Fig. 3)

2.6.3 Within Trench 10, ditches associated with the double ring ditch identified during the geophysical survey were revealed.

2.6.4 The outer ring ditch [1012] measured 1.3m in width and was fully excavated to a depth of 0.06m (Fig. 5). It contained an orange-brown silty clay fill (1013) from which no artefactual material was retrieved.

2.6.5 The inner ring ditch comprised an outer gulley [1001] and an inner ditch [1005] (Fig. 5). Gulley [1001] measured 0.4m in width and 0.08m in depth. It contained a mid orange-brown gravelly clay fill (1002) from which 1 fragment of burnt clay was retrieved. Ditch [1005] measured 1.8m in width and 0.17m in depth and contained mid orange-brown fill (1006) from which 1 sherd of ?prehistoric and 1 sherd of ?Roman pottery were retrieved.

2.6.6 The physical relationship between inner ring ditch [1005] and undated linear

ditch [1003] which seems to have bisected the ring remains unresolved.

2.7 Iron Age

Rectilinear Enclosure (Trench 7) (Fig. 2)

2.7.1 Ditch [701] was revealed 5m from the north-eastern extent of Trench 7 (Fig. 4, section 2). The ditch measured at least 1.8m in width and was fully excavated to a depth of 0.88m. It contained three distinct fills; primary fill (704), secondary fill (703), from which 5 sherds of Iron Age pottery were retrieved, and tertiary fill (702). The ditch had been recut by ditch [705].

2.7.2 Ditch [705] measured 0.9m in width and was fully excavated to a depth of 0.2m. It contained a silty clay fill (706) from which no artefactual material was retrieved.

2.7.3 Ditch [707] (Fig. 4, section 1) was revealed at the north-eastern limit of Trench 7. Due to the confines of the trench the full dimensions of the ditch were not revealed. The ditch measured at least 0.6m in width and was excavated to a depth of 0.4m. It contained two fills, primary fill (708) and secondary fill (709). No artefactual material was retrieved from the feature.

Other Iron Age Features (Trench 2)

2.7.1 A subcircular posthole [201] was revealed 4m from the western limit of the Trench 2. The posthole measured 0.4m in diameter and 0.13m in depth. It contained a mid brown silty clay fill (202) from which 2 sherds of ?Iron Age pottery were retrieved.

2.8 Romano-British

2.8.1 Romano-British features were encountered within Trenches 9, 11, 22 and 23 to the north and Trench 16 to the south of the newly constructed Latton bypass.

The Organic Deposit and Associated Features (Trenches 9,16,22,23) (Fig. 2 & 3)

2.8.2 Within Trench 9 (Fig. 3), semi-organic clays (902) were identified at the western limit of the trench. The deposit measured at least 10m in width and contained one sherd of Saxon/medieval pottery. The deposit was not excavated within this trench.

2.8.3 Ditch [903] was revealed 1.7m east of organic clays (902). The ditch measured 3.8m in width and aligned with a similar sized ditch, [2207] within Trench 22. It contained a mottled grey-brown clay fill (904) from which no artefactual material was retrieved.

2.8.4 Ditch [905] (Fig. 5) was orientated approximately east-west. It measured 1.3m in width and was fully excavated to a depth of 0.16m. It contained a gravelly clay fill (906) from which 1 sherd of Roman samian pottery was retrieved. The relationship of this ditch with [903] was not established.

2.8.5 Semi-organic clays (2211) were identified at the north-western limit of Trench 22. The deposit measured at least 11m in width. The deposit was not excavated within this trench, although 6 sherds of Roman pottery and 1 fragment of Roman tile were retrieved from the upper surface of the deposit.

2.8.6 Ditch [2207] (Fig. 6) was revealed 1.8m east of organic clays (2211) on the same alignment as ditch [903] previously revealed within Trench 9. Ditch [2207] had been recut twice by [2205] and [2210] respectively.

2.8.7 Primary ditch [2207] was orientated approximately north-south. It measured at least 1.8m in width and at least 0.4m in depth. It contained a grey gravelly clay fill (2209) from which 22 sherds of Roman pottery were retrieved.

2.8.8 Ditch [2205] was cut along the east edge of ditch [2207]. It measured at least 2.1m in width and 0.58m in depth. It contained an orange-brown gravelly clay fill (2206) from which no artefactual material was retrieved.

2.8.9 Ditch [2210] was cut along the western edge of ditch [2205]. It measured 2.5m in width and 0.32m in depth. It contained an orange-brown silty clay fill (2208) from which two sherds of Roman pottery were retrieved.

2.8.10 Semi-organic clays (2301) were revealed at the north-western limit of Trench 23, the extra trench dug to trace the continuation of ditch [903]/[2207].. The deposit measured at least 8m in width and was fully excavated to a depth of 0.28m. No artefactual material was retrieved from the deposit, and the continuation of the ditch was not found.

2.8.11 To the south of the bypass, dense organic clays and peats were revealed throughout Trench 16 to a depth of 0.35m. No artefactual material was retrieved from this deposit.

2.9 *Early Saxon*

Ditch or Pit (Trench 11) (Fig. 3)

2.9.1 Feature [1107] was revealed 25m from the northern limit of Trench 11. It measured 2.8m across and was fully excavated to a depth of 1.15m (Fig. 6). It contained four distinct fills. Primary fill (1106) consisted of a silty clay from

which one sherd of early Saxon pottery and one sherd of residual Roman ware were retrieved. Secondary fill (1105) consisted of gravelly clay from which one bodysherd of limestone tempered Saxon pottery was retrieved. Tertiary fill (704) consisted of a silty clay with lenses of ash and charcoal. Three sherds of organic tempered Saxon pottery, fragments of burnt clay/daub and a small assemblage of animal bones were retrieved. Fill (703) consisted of a clay silt.

2.10 Post-Medieval

Field Boundaries and Associated Cultivation (Fig. 2)

2.10.1 Evidence of medieval/post-medieval land boundaries and associated cultivation practices were revealed throughout the study area. In general, these features were broad, often over 3m in width, and shallow, usually less than 0.1m in depth. No artefactual material, except residual Roman and Saxon pottery, was retrieved from these field systems.

2.11 Undated

2.11.1 Undated features were revealed within seven trenches (4,6,11,12,17,18,21).

2.11.2 Ditch [401] was revealed 15m from the north-western extent of Trench 4. It measured 1.5m in width, 0.42m in depth and was orientated north-south. It contained a red-brown silty clay fill (402) from which no artefactual material was retrieved.

2.11.3 Ditch [601] was revealed 8m from the northern limit of Trench 6. It measured 1.2m in width, 0.37m in depth and was orientated approximately north-east to south-west. It contained a red-brown silty clay fill (602) from which no

artefactual material was retrieved.

2.11.4 Ditch [601] was cut by a subcircular pit/posthole which measured 0.9m in diameter and 0.26m in depth. It contained a red-brown silty clay fill (604) from which no artefactual material was retrieved.

2.11.5 Feature [1101] was revealed 4m from the northern limit of the trench. It was irregular in plan

2.11.6 Three subcircular postholes, [1207], [1210] and [1212], were revealed 5m from the western limit of Trench 12. The postholes measured 0.35m in diameter and were fully excavated to an average depth of 0.2m. No artefactual material was retrieved from any of the features.

2.11.7 Two undated ditches were revealed within Trench 17. Ditch [1701] was revealed 1m from the south-eastern extent of the trench. It measured 1.7m in width, 0.3m in depth and was orientated approximately north-south. It contained mid brown silty clay fill (1702), from which no artefactual material was retrieved.

2.11.8 Ditch [1703] was revealed 14m from the south-eastern limit of the trench. It measured 1.5m in width, 0.08m in depth and was orientated north-east to south-west. Fragments of animal bone were retrieved from silty clay fill (1704).

2.11.9 Ditch [1801] was revealed 7m from the northwestern extent of Trench 18. It measured 2.2m in width, 0.5m in depth and was orientated approximately north-south. It contained a uniform silty clay fill (1802) from which fragments of animal bone were retrieved.

2.11.10 Ditch [1810] was orientated approximately east-west. It measured 1.75m in width and 0.11m in depth. It contained an orange-brown gravelly fill (1811)

from which small fragments of coal/coke were retrieved.

2.11.11 Within Trench 21 ditch [2101] was revealed orientated north-east to south-west. It measured 1.1m in width and was fully excavated to a depth of 0.06m. No artefactual material was retrieved from silty clay fill (2102).

3. ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

3.1 Date and Interpretation of Archaeological Deposits

3.1.1 The archaeological deposits encountered during the evaluation are largely consistent with the features identified during the aerial photographic transcriptions and the geophysical survey. While the majority of features recorded are extant post-medieval field boundaries and ridge and furrow field systems, evidence suggests the study area was utilised from the Bronze Age through to the Saxon period.

Prehistoric

3.1.2 The accurate dating of double ring ditch [1006]/[1012] remains problematic due to the paucity of artefactual material retrieved. However, the typology of the double ring suggests a Bronze Age rather than a Saxon origin for the round barrow. A comparable, although smaller, double ringed round barrow has previously been identified at Siddington, 6.5km north west of the study area (Smith 1972). Such an interpretation would suggest the Romano-British pottery retrieved from ditch [1006] is intrusive and is likely to have derived from linear ditch [1003].

3.1.3 The excavated dimensions of the double ring ditch suggest the outer ring is 38m

in diameter, with the inner ring measuring 22m in diameter. The outer ring in particular has been severely truncated by ploughing and survives to a depth of less than 0.06m.

3.1.4 Ditch [1201] is provisionally dated as prehistoric by the decorated rim sherd and two flint flakes retrieved from fill (1202). Ditch [1201] and recut [1205] may be interpreted as boundary ditches delineating the small paddocks/enclosures highlighted during the geophysical survey.

Iron Age

3.1.5 Iron Age activity was revealed within two trenches, 2 and 7, both to the south of the current bypass construction.

3.1.6 Within Trench 2, Iron Age activity is restricted to a single posthole [201] at the western limit of the trench. Interpretation of such a feature is problematic due to its relative isolation within the evaluation trench. However, geophysical evidence within transect B does highlight a number of magnetic anomalies within the general vicinity of Trench 2, which may suggest some human activity within this area of the SAM.

3.1.7 Within Trench 7, ditches [701] and [705] may be interpreted as boundary ditches associated with the sub-rectangular enclosure identified during aerial photographic transcription. The orientation and spacing between the ditches is consistent with the RCHME aerial photographic plot. Furthermore, such an interpretation correlates closely with evidence from the 1991 fieldwalking and evaluation trenching (Johnson 1991) which suggested a probable Iron Age origin for the settlement.

3.1.8 Ditch [701] is therefore interpreted as the outer boundary ditch of the enclosure. Longevity of use of this boundary is suggested by the gradually silting of the

ditch, indicated by fills (702) to (704), and its subsequent recutting by ditch [705]. Ditch [707] is interpreted as the inner enclosure ditch.

Romano-British

3.1.9 Romano-British activity is restricted to the western limit of field 7666 and to pasture field 5769.

3.1.10. Within Trench 16, the organic peat deposits, previously revealed during the 1991 evaluation (Johnson 1991) and more recently during the archaeological excavations along the route of the Latton bypass (OAU unpublished), were again evident. Because of their previous sampling, no attempt to excavate the deposits was made during this further programme of evaluation. The broad conclusion is that the deposits represent an inlet from the nearby River Churn which silted and filled with organic material during the Romano-British period.

3.1.11 Within Trenches 9, 22 and 23, the semi-organic deposits highlighted during the initial phase of the evaluation, were again evident. Within these trenches the eastern limit of the deposit was revealed, and largely correlated with the findings of the stage 1 auger survey. Predominately, Romano-British pottery was retrieved from the surface of the deposit, although one sherd of ?Late Saxon/medieval pottery was also recovered.

3.1.12 Within Trenches 9 and 22, a broad ditch was noted approximately 2m east of the organic deposit. Ditch [903]/[2207] was Romano-British in date and had been recut at least twice. No evidence for the continuation of the ditch to the northern limit of the organic deposit was identified within Trench 23. This sequence of ditches may be interpreted as a boundary delineating Romano-British field systems associated with the nearby settlement, from the wetter area.

3.1.13 An east-west orientated curvi-linear ditch [905] was noted within Trench 9. No

physical relationship with ditch [903] could be established due to the confines of the trench. The ditch may be interpreted as a boundary ditch delineating Romano-British field systems. However, the feature does align with geophysical evidence for a post-medieval cultivation furrow, suggesting the sherd of Romano-British pottery may be residual.

3.1.14 Within Trench 18, ditch [1801], although containing no datable artefactual material, was sealed by the deep subsoil horizon at the field headland, and may therefore be potentially of Romano-British origin.

Early Saxon

3.1.15 One Saxon feature, [1107], was revealed during the evaluation. Interpretation of such a feature is problematic due to its relative isolation within the evaluation trench, although a large pit or possibly a ditch terminus are possibilities. The depth and steepness of the feature would argue against an interpretaion as a sunken-featured building.

3.1.16 The geophysical results indicate a small number of magnetic anomalies within the general vicinity of Trench 11, which may suggest a greater focus of Saxon activity within this north-east quarter of the SAM. Such an hypothesis is supported by the residual Saxon pottery retrieved from post-medieval field boundary [1109], and the possible Saxon pottery sherd recovered from the upper surface of semi-organic deposit (901). Furthermore Saxon pottery (SMR 453) had previously been recovered 150m south of feature [1107] during the 1985

ESSO pipeline watching brief (see 1.3.2). The identification of early Saxon activity at Latton is of note given its location on the First Terrace of the Upper Thames Valley. It has previously been suggested from evidence at Claydon Pike near Lechlade that there was a retreat from the previously drained land on the first gravel terrace in the late Roman period, the pagan Saxon cemeteries at

Fairford and Lechlade lying on the lighter soils of the Second Terrace (Hamerow 1992).

Post-medieval

3.1.17 Evidence of post-medieval field boundaries and cultivation practises were revealed throughout the scheduled area and correlate closely with cartographic evidence from the 1805 Latton Enclosure Award, and the geophysical evidence. These remains are considered to be of low archaeological importance.

3.2 Survival and Extent of Archaeological Deposits

3.2.1 The evaluation, combined with the previous work on the site, has succeded in characterising the archaeological resource within the SAM, and permits a three-fold zoning of the scheduled area.

(i) *Central Cropmark Area.*

3.2.2 Trench 7, combined with earlier work, indicates the cropmark complex to be reasonably well preserved. The cropmarks amply demonstrate the complex patterning of the settlement which is likely to be a result of protracted occupation from the late Iron Age into the Romano-British period.

(ii) *Field 7666; (between the current A419 and the newly constructed Latton bypass)*

3.2.3 Within this north-east corner of the scheduled area there is evidence of a Bronze Age ring-ditch and prehistoric enclosures. The evaluation indicates that Romano-British domestic occupation does not extend eastwards beyond the area

of settlement defined by aerial photographic evidence. The Romano-British activity identified within field 7666 is restricted to agricultural field enclosures and paddocks. The Saxon evidence, if it proves indicative of settlement, would be regionally significant.

(iii) Field 1100 (south of the Latton bypass)

3.2.4 Here, the archaeological evidence is much more restricted excepting the small part of the sub-rectangular Iron Age enclosure which lies to the south of the bypass corridor. Excepting this, a single Iron Age post hole was found in Trench 2 near the western boundary of the SAM, and the Romano-British organic deposit within Field 5769. Otherwise the other features are indicative of post-medieval cultivation.

3.2.5 The effects of modern ploughing in addition to the medieval/post-medieval ridge and furrow cultivation has truncated all archaeological deposits excepting features revealed within Trenches 9, 18, 22, and 23. Here a deep accumulation of subsoil (upto 0.6m in depth) at the headland of field 7666 has protected the archaeological resource. Elsewhere the level of truncation was largely consistent at depth of 0.35m below the existing ground surface.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The field work was carried out by Cliff Bateman, Laurie Coleman, Sue Diamond, Nick Turner and Franco Vartuca. The report was written by Cliff Bateman and the illustrations were drawn by Rick Morton.

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APPENDIX 1

Test-pit Descriptions

All test-pits were 1m square and were hand excavated to the top of the organic deposit or the natural gravels, whichever was encountered first. Depths of the organic deposit were measured by dutch auger. OD heights refer to the existing ground level at each test-pit.

Test-pit No.	NGR	Stratigraphy	OD Height
1	0860/9565	0.00-0.33m: grey-brown, silty clay topsoil 0.33-0.67m: organic deposit 0.67m +: natural gravels	81.93m
2	0860/9570	0.00-0.31m: grey-brown, silty clay topsoil 0.31-0.65m: organic deposit 0.65m +: natural gravels	82.04m
3	0860/9575	0.00-0.27m: grey-brown, silty clay topsoil 0.27-0.36m: orange-brown, silty clay subsoil 0.36-0.58m: organic deposit 0.58m +: natural gravels	82.27m
4	0860/9580	0.00-0.22m: grey-brown, silty clay topsoil 0.22-0.38m: organic deposit 0.38m +: natural gravels	82.22m
5	0860/9685	0.00-0.34m: grey-brown, silty clay topsoil 0.34-0.50m: orange-brown, silty clay subsoil 0.50m +: natural gravels	82.57m
6	0860/9590	0.00-0.28m: grey-brown, silty clay topsoil 0.28-0.39m: orange brown, silty clay subsoil 0.39-0.49m: dirty gravels 0.49m +: natural gravels	82.73m
7	0855/9570	0.00-0.31m: grey-brown, silty clay topsoil 0.31-0.73m: organic deposit 0.73m +: natural gravels	81.97m
8	0855/9575	0.00-0.32m: grey-brown, silty clay topsoil 0.32-0.61m: organic deposit 0.61m +: natural gravels	82.11m
9	0865/9590	0.00-0.28m: grey-brown, silty clay topsoil 0.28m +: natural gravels	82.48m

APPENDIX 2

Trench Descriptions

Note: Stratigraphic descriptions are given from the earliest to the latest deposits. Cut features are designated by square brackets thus; [000], all other deposits/layers are in round brackets; (000). Heights are based on the bench mark located on the Street Farm and on the canal bridge, Cerney Wick. The levels was taken to be 82.95m OD and 84.34m OD respectively.

Trench 1 NW-SE

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.32m below present ground level at 82.7m OD

Evidence of NE-SW orientated ridge and furrow and field boundary throughout the trench.

Trench 2 E-W

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.32m below present ground level at 82.93m OD

[201] Subcircular posthole: 0.4m in diameter and 0.13m in depth. Contains mid brown silty clay fill (202). Finds: ?Iron Age pottery

Evidence of NE-SW orientated ridge and furrow throughout the trench.

Trench 3 N-S

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.39m below present ground level at 82.72m OD

Evidence of NW-SE orientated ridge and furrow throughout the trench.

Trench 4 NW-SE

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.3m below present ground level at 82.53m OD

[402] Linear ditch: 1.5m in width and 0.42m in depth, orientated NE-SW. Contains red brown silty clay fill (401).

Evidence of NW-SE orientated ridge and furrow throughout the trench.

Trench 5 NE-SW

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.4m below present ground level at 82.25m OD

Evidence of NW-SE orientated ridge and furrow throughout the trench.

Trench 6 NE-SW

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.32m below present ground level at 82.61m OD

[601] Linear ditch: 1.2m in width and 0.37m in depth, orientated NE-SW. Contains red brown silty clay fill (602).

[603] Subcircular posthole/pit: 0.85m in diameter and 0.26m in depth. Contains red brown silty clay fill (604).

Evidence of NW-SE orientated ridge and furrow throughout the trench.

Trench 7 NE-SW

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.33m below present ground level at 82.79m OD

[701] Linear ditch: at least 1.8m in width and 0.88m in depth, orientated NW-SE. Contains primary fill (704), light grey gritty clay, secondary fill (703) an orange brown gravelly clay and tertiary fill (702) orange brown silty clay. Finds: Iron Age pottery and animal bone.

[705] Linear ditch: Recut within [701], 0.92m in width and 0.2m in depth. Contains orange brown silty clay fill (706).

[707] Linear ditch: at least 0.7m in width and 0.4 m in depth, orientated NW-SE. Contains primary fill (708), a mid brown gritty clay and secondary fill (709) an orange brown silty clay.

Evidence of NW-SE orientated ridge and furrow and field boundary.

Trench 8 NW-SE

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.39m below present ground level at 82.93m OD

Evidence of NW-SE orientated ridge and furrow.

Trench 9 E-W

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.46m below present ground level at 81.84m OD

(902) Semi organic clays: at least 10m in width Finds: 1 sherd of Saxon/medieval pottery.

[903] Linear ditch: not excavated within this trench, measured 3.8m in width. It contained a mottled grey-brown clay fill (904).

[905] Curvi-linear ditch: It measured 1.3m in width and 0.16m in depth, orientated approximately NW-SE. It contained a gravelly clay fill (906). Finds: 1 sherd of samian pottery

Trench 10 NW-SE

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.34m below present ground level at 82.13m OD

[1012] Outer ring ditch: It measured 1.3m in width and 0.06m in width. It contained an orange-brown silty clay fill (1013).

[1001] Gulley along inner ring ditch : It measured 0.4m in width and 0.08m in depth. It contained a mid orange-brown gravelly clay fill (1002). Finds: 1 fragment of burnt clay

[1005] Inner ring ditch: It measured 1.8m in width and 0.17m in depth. Contained mid orange-brown fill (1006). Finds: 1 sherd of ?prehistoric and 1 sherd of ?Roman pottery.

[1003] Linear ditch. .It measured 1m in width and 0.1m in depth. It contained red brown siltyclay fill (1004).

Evidence of NW-SE orientated ridge and furrow.

Trench 11 N-S

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.45m below present ground level at 82.39m OD

[1102] Irregular feature: It measured 4.5m in width and 0.50m in depth, orientated NW-SE. Contains red brown silty clay (1101). Finds: fragments of animal bone and x1 Fe nail.

[1107] Pit/ditch terminus: measured 2.8m in diameter and 1.15m in depth. Contains four fills, primary fill (1106), secondary fill (1105), tertiary fill (1104) and upper fill (1103). Finds: Saxon pottery, residual Roman pottery, fragments of burnt clay/daub, animal bones.

Evidence of NW-SE orientated ridge and furrow.

Trench 12 E-W

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.42m below present ground level at 83.14m OD

[1201] Linear ditch: It measured 2.1m in width and 0.75m in depth, orientated NE-SW. Contained a mid brown silty clay fill (1202). Finds: 1 sherd ?prehistoric pottery, x2 flint flakes.

[1203]Linear ditch: Recut within [1201], measured 1.3m in width and 0.6m in depth. Contained a mid brown silty clay fill (1206).

[1207] Posthole: 0.45m in diameter and 0.25m in depth. Contains red brown silty clay fill (1208).

[1209] Posthole: 0.3m in diameter and 0.2m in depth. Contains red brown silty clay fill (1210).

[1211] Posthole: 0.3m in diameter and 0.2m in depth. Contains red brown silty clay fill (1212).

Evidence of NW-SE orientated ridge and furrow.

Trench 13 NW-SE

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.37m below present ground level at 83.03m OD

Evidence of NW-SE and NE-SW orientated ridge and furrow.

Trench 14 NE-SW

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.32m below present ground level at 82.76m OD

Evidence of NE-SW orientated ridge and furrow throughout the trench

Trench 15 NW-SE

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.65m below present ground level at 82.92m OD

Evidence of NW-SE orientated ridge and furrow throughout the trench.

Trench 16 NE-SW

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.67m below present ground level at 80.99m OD

(1601) Dense organic deposit throughout trench.

Trench 17 NW-SE

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.44m below present ground level at 82.223m OD

[1701] Linear ditch: 1.5m in width and 0.3m in width, orientated NE-SW. Contains mid brown silty clay fill (1702).

[1703] Linear ditch: 1.5m in width and 0.08m in depth, orientated NE-SW. Contains mid brown silty clay fill (704). Finds: fragments of animal bone

Trench 18 NW-SE

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.43m below present ground level at 81.84m OD

[1801] Linear ditch: 2.2m in width and 0.5m in depth, orientated N-S. Contains red brown silty clay fill (1802). Finds: fragments of animal bone

[1803] Linear: 0.6m in width and 0.1m in depth, orientated N-S. Contains mid brown silty clay fill (1804)

Evidence of NW-SE orientated ridge and furrow

Trench 19 NE-SW

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.54m below present ground level at 82.46m OD

Evidence of NE-SW orientated ridge and furrow.

Trench 20 NW-SE

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.58m below present ground level at 82.4m OD

Evidence of NW-SE orientated ridge and furrow.

Trench 21 NW-SE

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.3m below present ground level at 82.15m OD

[2101] Linear ditch; 1.1m in width and 0.06m in width, orientated NE-SW. Contains mid orange brown silty clay fill (2102).

Trench 22 NW-SE

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.39m below present ground level at 81.8m OD

(2211) Semi organic clays: at least 10m in width. Finds: 1 sherd of Saxon/medieval pottery.

[2207] Linear ditch: It measured at least 1.8m in width and at least 0.4m in depth, orientated approximately north-south. It contained a grey gravelly clay fill (2209). Finds: 22 sherds of Roman pottery.

[2205] Linear ditch: Recut within [2207], at least 2.1m in width and 0.58m in depth. It contained orange-brown gravelly clay fill (2206).

[2210] Linear ditch: Recut within [2207] and [2205], 2.5m in width and 0.32m in depth. It contained an orange-brown silty clay fill (2208). Finds 2 sherds of Roman pottery were retrieved.

Trench 23 NW-SE

Natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.38m below present ground level at 81.82m OD

(2301) Semi organic clays: at least 8m in width.

APPENDIX 3

Pottery Assessment by Dr. J.R. Timby

The evaluation trenches yielded a small but interesting group of pottery of Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon date. Most of the sherds were in poor condition, either worn and abraded or discoloured. There were very few featured sherds present and with such a diverse chronological range there is some uncertainty about the date of some pieces. The suggested dating is in many cases based on the character of the fabric rather than any typological clues. In total 46 sherds of pottery were recovered, some very small, along with a few fragments of Roman tile.

The feature containing the Saxon sherds is of particular interest as it has an oolitic limestone tempered sherd in association with the more typical organic tempered sherds to be expected in the pagan Saxon period. Such sherds found in association are particularly rare and would otherwise be very difficult to date.

Catalogue

(202) 2=1 handmade bodysherd, limestone tempered. Date: ?Iron Age

(703) x5 handmade brown-orange oolitic limestone tempered ware. Dark grey core. Date: Probably Iron Age

(902) x1 bodysherd, sandy fabric. Date: uncertain ?Late Saxon/medieval

(906) x1 bodysherd samian. Date: Roman

(1006) x2 very abraded fragments; x1 coarse oolitic limestone tempered. Date: ?Prehistoric.
x1 fine black sandy fabric. Date: Roman

(1009) x1 bodysherd grey ware. Date: Roman

(1104) x3bodysherds organic tempered (? same vessel). Date: Saxon

(1105) x1 bodysherd, black ware with smoothed exterior. The fabric is well tempered with oolitic limestone gravel with some carbonaceous impressions, iron grains and quartz sand. Date: Saxon

(1106) x1 organic tempered body sherd. Date: early Saxon
x1 fine grey ware. Date: Roman

(1108) x1 crumb. Date: probably Saxon

(1202) x1 rim fine sandy ware, handmade, orange exterior, black core/interior. Decorated with fine slashing on the exterior rim edge. Date: uncertain, ?Prehistoric

(2207) x2 tile fragments, one a Minety fabric. Date: Roman
x1 fragment of fired clay
x1 rim of storage jar, Savernake ware, x1 rim of everted rim jar, x18 bodysherds from various sandy wares. Date: Roman

(2208) x1 ?Dorset black burnished ware, x1 grey sandy ware. Date: Roman

(2211) 3=1 sherd Savernake ware, x3 grey/oxidised sandy wares, x1 tile fragment. Date:Roman

APPENDIX 4

Summary of flint artefacts by Graeme Walker

(1202) x1 small secondary flake
x1 squat tertiary flake, used expediently as an awl/borer

Both pieces are struck from reasonable quality grey-brown flint. Surviving cortex suggests the flint is derived from a gravel source, probably locally. Both pieces are quite fresh suggesting primary deposition. Neither is diagnostic, probably Neolithic/Bronze Age.

APPENDIX 5

Finds Catalogue

(202) x2 ?Iron Age pottery

(702) x1 animal bone

(703) x5 Iron Age pottery

(704) x3 animal bone

(902) x1 ?Late Saxon/medieval pottery

(906) x1 Samian ware

(1002) x1 burnt clay/daub

(1006) x1 ?Prehistoric pottery
x1 ?Roman pottery

(1009) x1 Roman pottery

(1101) x53 animal bone
x1 Fe nail

(1104) x3 Saxon pottery
x57 fragments animal bone
x4 burnt clay/daub

(1105) x1 Saxon pottery
x26 animal bone

(1106) x1 Saxon pottery
x1 Roman pottery

(1108) x1 ?Saxon pottery

(1202) x1 ?Prehistoric pottery
x2 flint flakes

(1704) x7 animal bones

(2207) x21 Roman pottery
2 Roman tile fragment

(2208) x2 Roman pottery

(2211) x6 sherds Roman pottery
x1 Roman tile fragment

APPENDIX 6

Geophysical Report by A Bartlett

LATTON,
WILTSHIRE

Report on Archaeogeophysical Survey

1996

A.D.H. Bartlett

Surveyed by:

Bartlett-Clark Consultancy

Oxford Centre for Innovation
Mill Street, Oxford, OX2 0JX
(01865 200864)

for

The Cotswold Archaeological Trust
Headquarters Building, Unit 9
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Latton, Wiltshire

Report on Archaeogeophysical Survey, 1996

Introduction

The purpose of this survey was to test for evidence of archaeological features or remains in a series of trial transects arranged to provide a representative sample of two fields (1100 and 7666) located to either side of the new Latton bypass. The work was commissioned by the Cotswold Archaeological Trust, who are undertaking an archaeological evaluation of the fields.

The survey transects lie close to a scheduled cropmark site (SAM 899), which has produced findings of Romano-British and other periods in previous investigations. This site gave a very clear response to a magnetometer survey we carried out in 1988 on the line of an earlier proposed route for the bypass scheme. Subsequent surveys on the present line of the bypass, and in other fields nearby (in 1990 and 1993) were less productive, although archaeological findings were reported in each case. These results confirmed that soil conditions in this area, where there is a clay topsoil with high magnetic susceptibility, and gravel subsoil, are favourable for magnetometer surveying. Fieldwork for the present survey took place in November 1996.

Survey Procedure

Detailed magnetometer surveys, supplemented by topsoil magnetic susceptibility measurements, were carried out within each of the six 30m wide transects (A-F) located as shown on plans 1 and 2. There do not appear to be any clear cropmarks, or other previous evidence of archaeological findings from these transects, except for a ring ditch in field 7666.

The survey transects in field 1100 were located by reference to a baseline (indicated on plan 2) which was sighted from the corner of the hedge at the field entrance at a to the intersection of two ditches at b, a distance of 756m. Point b is clearly relocatable on the ground, but proved difficult to place on the map because the ditches and boundaries at the east end of the field have been rearranged. Measurements were taken to the southern (canal-side) ditch to confirm the position of the transects, but this boundary offers no clearly identifiable points from which the survey could be relocated. (The field is also cut off from buildings and boundaries to the north by the new road embankment,

currently under construction.) Additional measurements were therefore taken to the new roadside fence at the positions shown on plan 2, and could be used to confirm the location of the baseline on the ground if necessary. Measurements and offsets used to locate the transects in relation to the baseline are marked on plan 2. Field 7666 has clearly defined and unchanged boundaries to the north and east from which transects F and G were located at the positions shown without difficulty. Further details of the measurements needed to relocate the transects in both fields can be supplied on request.

The magnetometer results from the six transects are reproduced in pairs as graphical and half tone plots at 1:1000 scale on plans 3-8. (The plots as shown on these plans are correctly oriented, but the transects are not necessarily in their correct relative positions.) The graphical plots (plans 3-5) represent the initial readings after correction for irregularities in line spacing caused by variations in the instrument zero setting, and with slight linear smoothing. Additional 2-D low pass filtering has been applied to the half tone plots (plans 6-8) to reduce background noise levels and emphasise the broader features which may be archaeologically significant. A summary interpretation showing selected magnetic anomalies as detected by the survey has been added to the 1:2500 location plan (plan 1).

The magnetometer survey was supplemented by magnetic susceptibility readings taken from soil samples using a Bartington MS2 meter and MS2B sensor. Susceptibility measurements can provide a broad indication of areas in which burnt or decayed material associated with past human activities has become dispersed in the soil, and are of assistance in interpreting magnetometer results.

The samples were collected at 20m intervals, and are displayed in the form of shaded squares of density proportional to the susceptibility readings, as shown on plan 2. The sample positions were located in relation to a uniform site grid, and a sample collected from each 20m square which fell wholly or partly within a survey transect. The shading on plan 2 therefore extends in part beyond the magnetometer transects. (The sampling interval was intensified slightly from the 25m separation as specified to provide more detailed coverage).

Results: Field 1100

Transect A

This 100 x 30m block was perhaps the least productive of the six transects surveyed. Features visible on the plots (plans 3 and 6) include a number of pieces of iron (narrow spikes on graphical plot), and other minor disturbances at the north end of the strip near the field entrance. Magnetic susceptibility readings (plan 2) are relatively high, but this effect does not appear to be associated with any distinct magnetic anomalies except for some parallel linear markings which are intermittently visible, particularly on the half tone plot. (These linear markings are indicated by broken lines on the interpretation shown on plan 1.) Parallel patterns of this kind usually relate to ploughing, and may

represent traces of ridge and furrow cultivation, although field drains can occasionally create a similar effect.

Transect B

This transect again shows a parallel linear pattern likely to result from cultivation, although the lines lie at right angles to those seen in transect A. A number of other magnetic anomalies were also detected, and there appears to be a greater overall level of activity within the strip than in most of the other areas surveyed. Magnetic susceptibility values are also significantly higher here than elsewhere.

Some of the more distinct detected features include a possible ditch at c, which does not align with the cultivation pattern, and clusters of more localised anomalies which could represent silted pits of potential archaeological interest at d and e. Other small anomalies are scattered throughout the transect. Some of these could be man-made, although it is possible, given the high magnetic susceptibility values, that natural irregularities in the depth of the gravel subsoil could account for some of the magnetic disturbances. Trenching should indicate whether this is likely to be the case.

Transect C

The overall level of disturbance visible in the magnetometer plots is stronger at the northern end than in the remainder of this transect. There are some possible pits (f) at the north west corner, and there appears to be a continuation of the general level of activity as seen in transect B. Susceptibility values are also higher here than in the south of the transect.

The most clearly identifiable anomalies in the transect are again linear features which align with the regular pattern seen in transect B. The regular sequence of parallel anomalies appears to terminate on the east with a strong ditch-like anomaly g, which may represent a former field boundary.

Transect D

Much of the western half of this block is magnetically quiet, with only an isolated anomaly, which could represent a broad silted hollow, at h. There are no other associated features here to suggest any concentration of archaeological activity, and susceptibility values are relatively low. There are some very weak linear markings on a different alignment to those seen in blocks B and C.

There is greater activity towards the eastern end of the transect where susceptibility values increase, and there are clusters of anomalies which could be of archaeological

interest. These could represent small pits associated with settlement remains, or other past human activities. These features appear to be enclosed to the west by a ditch at j.

The strong anomaly marked on plan 1 by shading at k is difficult to categorise. It may represent a structure or deposit incorporating burnt clay, but is rather disordered and has a strong negative anomaly, which could mean it is a modern disturbance containing buried iron.

Results: Field 7666

Transect E

The northern part of this transect is relatively quiet, both in the magnetometer plots and in the susceptibility values, although there are linear anomalies likely to represent former field boundaries or ditches. The cropmark ring ditch was detected a little to the north of the expected position at the intersection of transects E and F. There are other anomalies nearby which could indicate pits, and a possible ditch, m, appears to intersect the ring ditch. Susceptibility values are higher at the southern end of this transect than elsewhere in transects E and F.

Transect F

The plots from this transect are shown alongside rather than superimposed on those of transect E because the findings differ slightly according to the orientation of the traverses. The cropmark indicates a possible second outer ring ditch, and this appears to have been detected in part in transect F, although it is much less clear than the inner ring.

There is a broad anomaly at n, which may be similar to that seen in isolation at h in transect D. There is a system of clearly detected linear anomalies p at the eastern end of the transect. These are likely to represent ditches forming a pattern of rectilinear enclosures, although they do not appear to be closely associated with other archaeological features, and susceptibility values at this end of the strip are low. The strong anomalies marked by shading on plan 1 at the east end of the strip appear to be modern. The anomaly labelled q stands in a patch of long grass and appears to be the base of a former electricity pole, and anomaly r lies at the corner where the survey approaches most closely to an adjoining oil pipeline.

Conclusions

This survey has, as in previous investigations nearby, produced a clear response to a variety of subsurface features. Some of the widely distributed parallel linear anomalies

detected by the survey may represent only relatively insubstantial disturbances caused by past cultivation, but other features which appear likely to be of archaeological interest have also been detected.

Clusters of magnetic anomalies of a kind which could relate to past settlement activity were seen in transect B and at the eastern end of transect D. The presence of a ring ditch was confirmed in transects E and F, together with other potential features nearby.

Linear features probably representing former field boundaries were seen in transects C and E.

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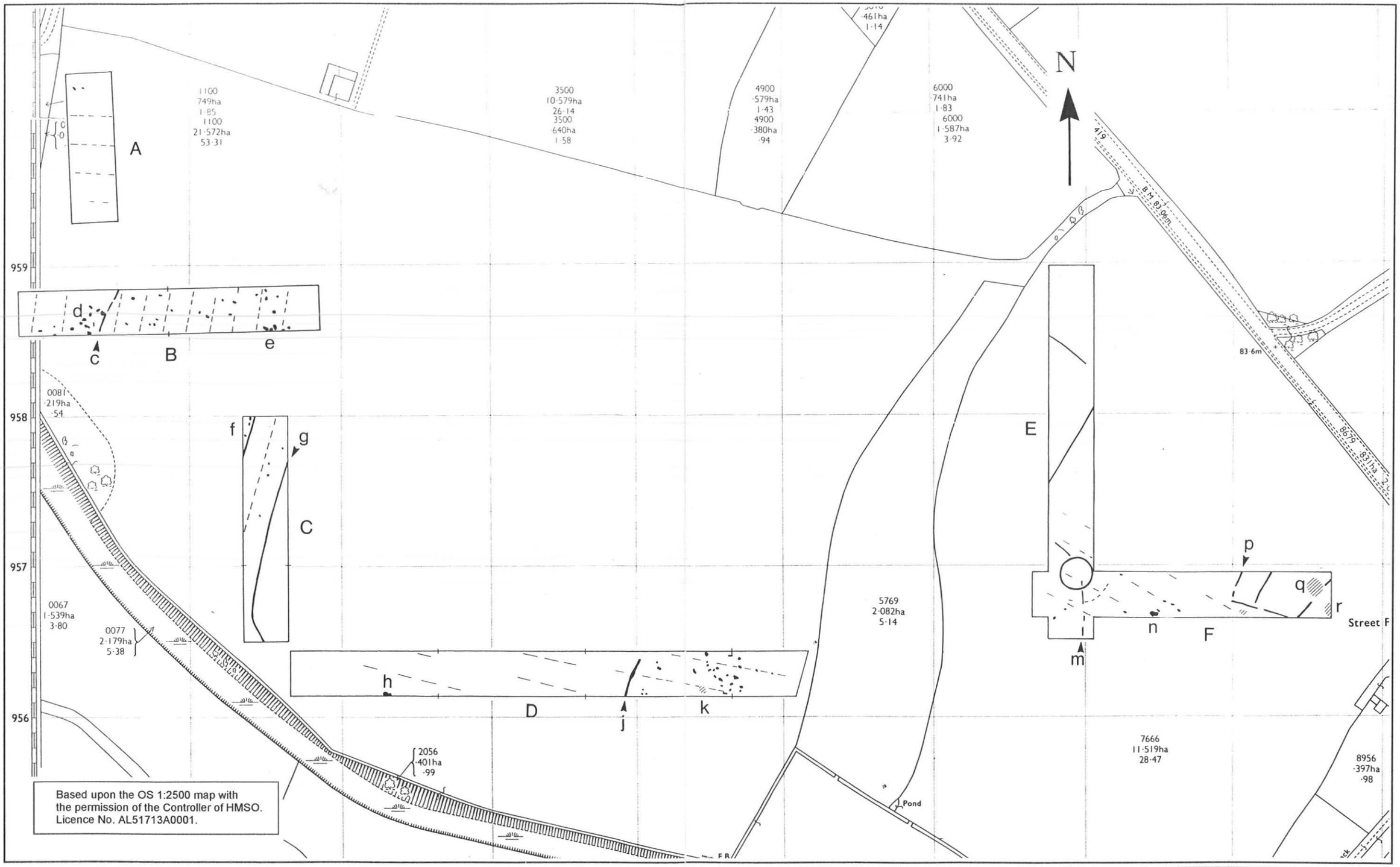
B.Y. Turton MA and P. Heykoop BA assisted with this project.



Magnetometer survey:

magnetic anomalies (archaeological ?)

area of magnetic activity (non-archaeological / ferrous ?)

linear cultivation pattern

Latton, Wiltshire: Geophysical Survey 1996
Location of Magnetometer Survey Transects A - F
(with interpretation)

Scale 1:2500

Plan No. 1

Surveyed by:
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for:
Cotswold Archaeological Trust
Unit 9
Kemble Business Park
Cirencester GL7 6BQ

All measurements in metres

Latton, Wiltshire: Geophysical Survey 1996
Location of Survey Transects
(with magnetic susceptibility readings)

Surveyed by:
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for:
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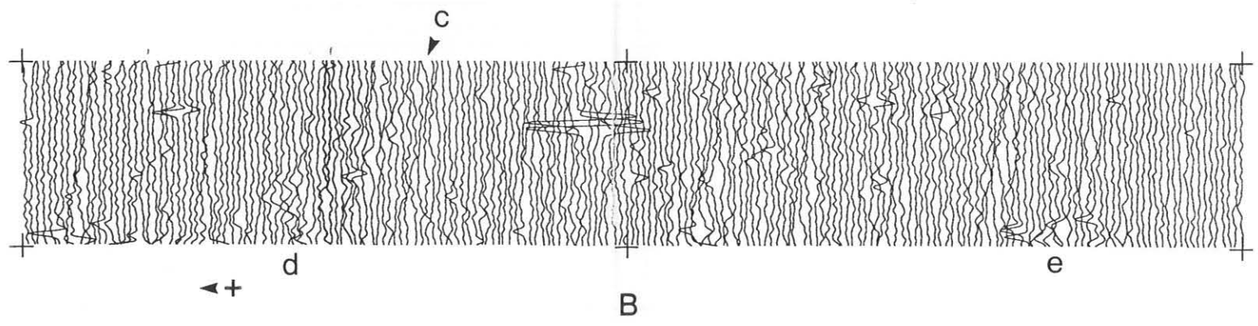
Kemble Business Park
Cirencester GL7 6BQ

Scale 1:2500

Plan No. 2

N



For interpretation of survey see plan 1

Latton, Wiltshire: Geophysical Survey 1996
Magnetometer Survey Transects A - B

Scale 1:1000

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Mill Street
Oxford OX2 0JX 01865 200864

for:
Cotswold Archaeological Trust
Unit 9
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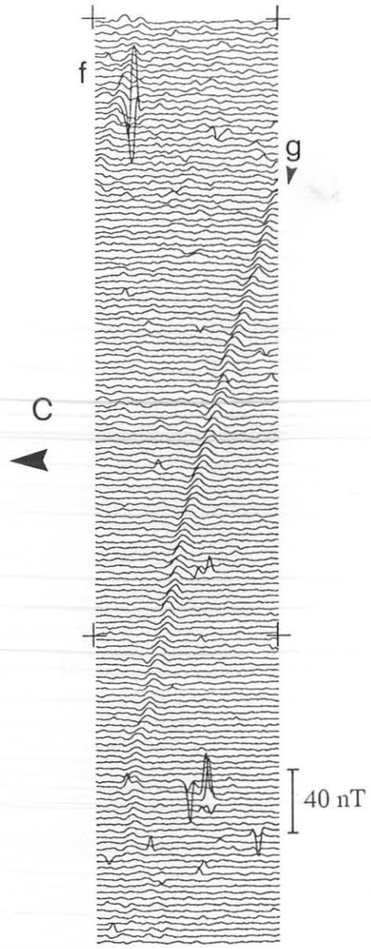
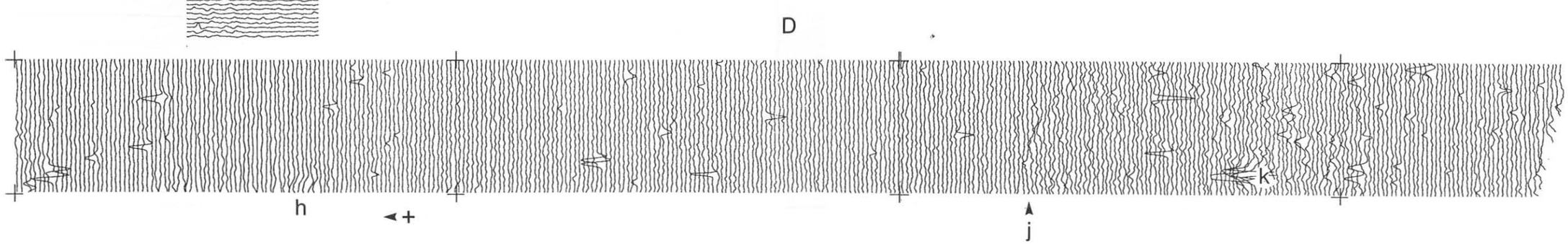
Plan No. 3





For interpretation of survey see plan 1

Latton, Wiltshire: Geophysical Survey 1996
Magnetometer Survey Transects C - D

Scale 1:1000

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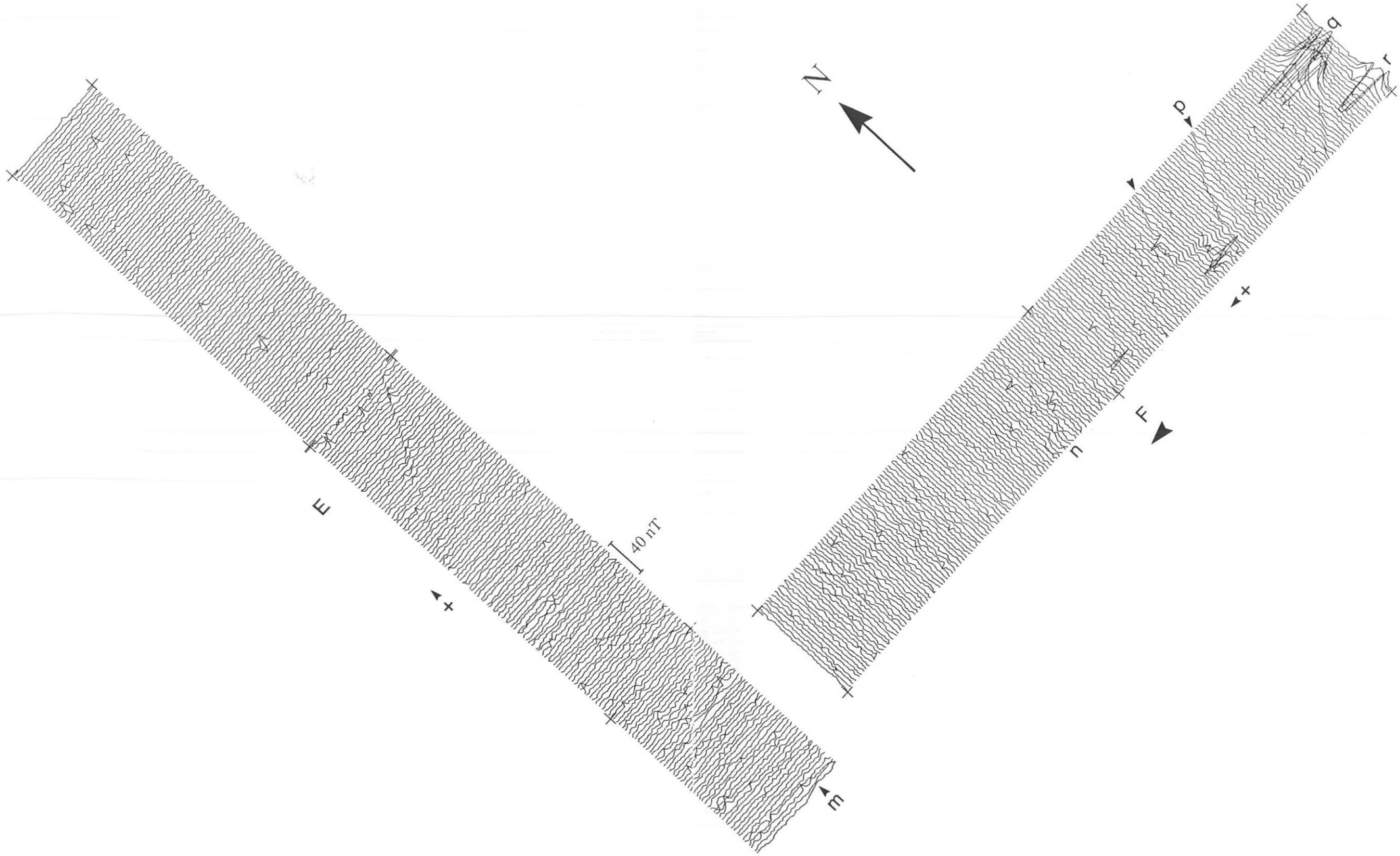
Plan No. 4



For interpretation of survey see plan 1

Latton, Wiltshire: Geophysical Survey 1996
Magnetometer Survey Transects E - F

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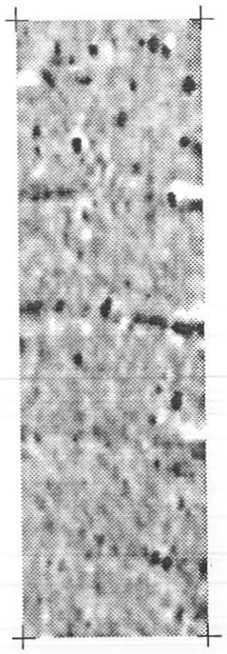

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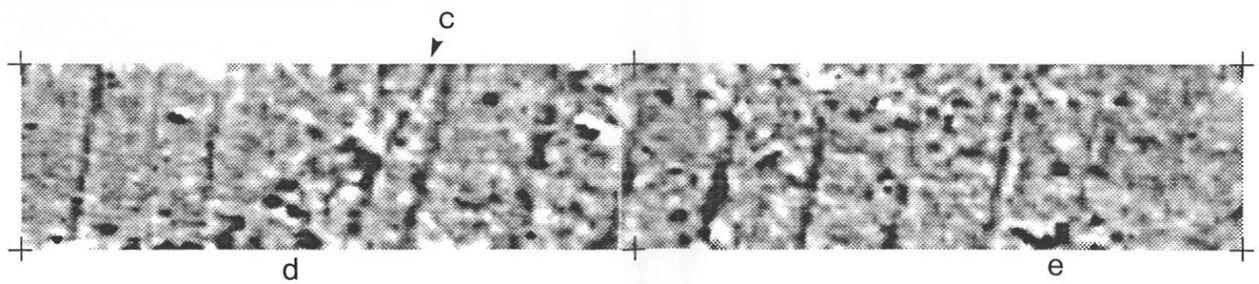

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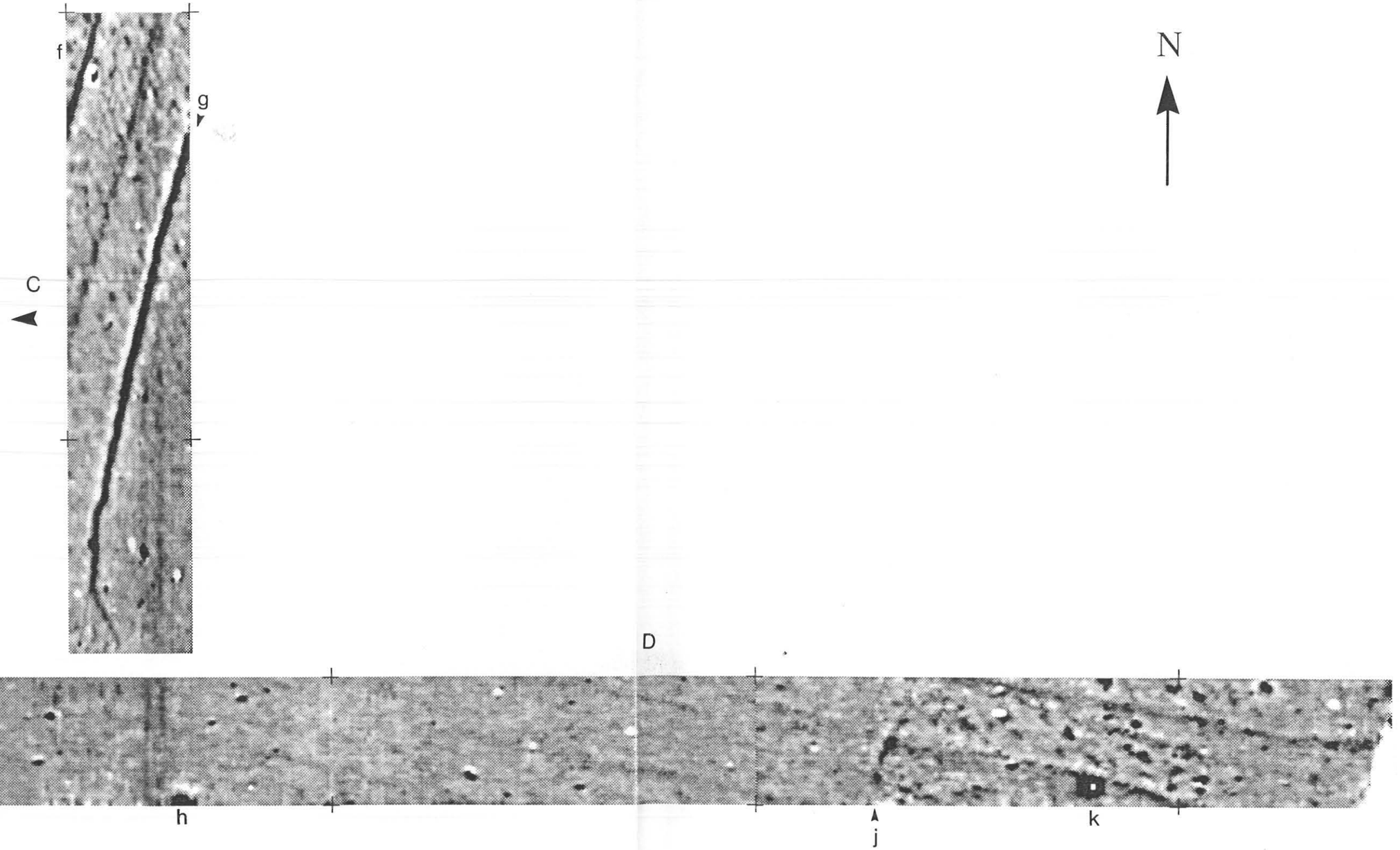

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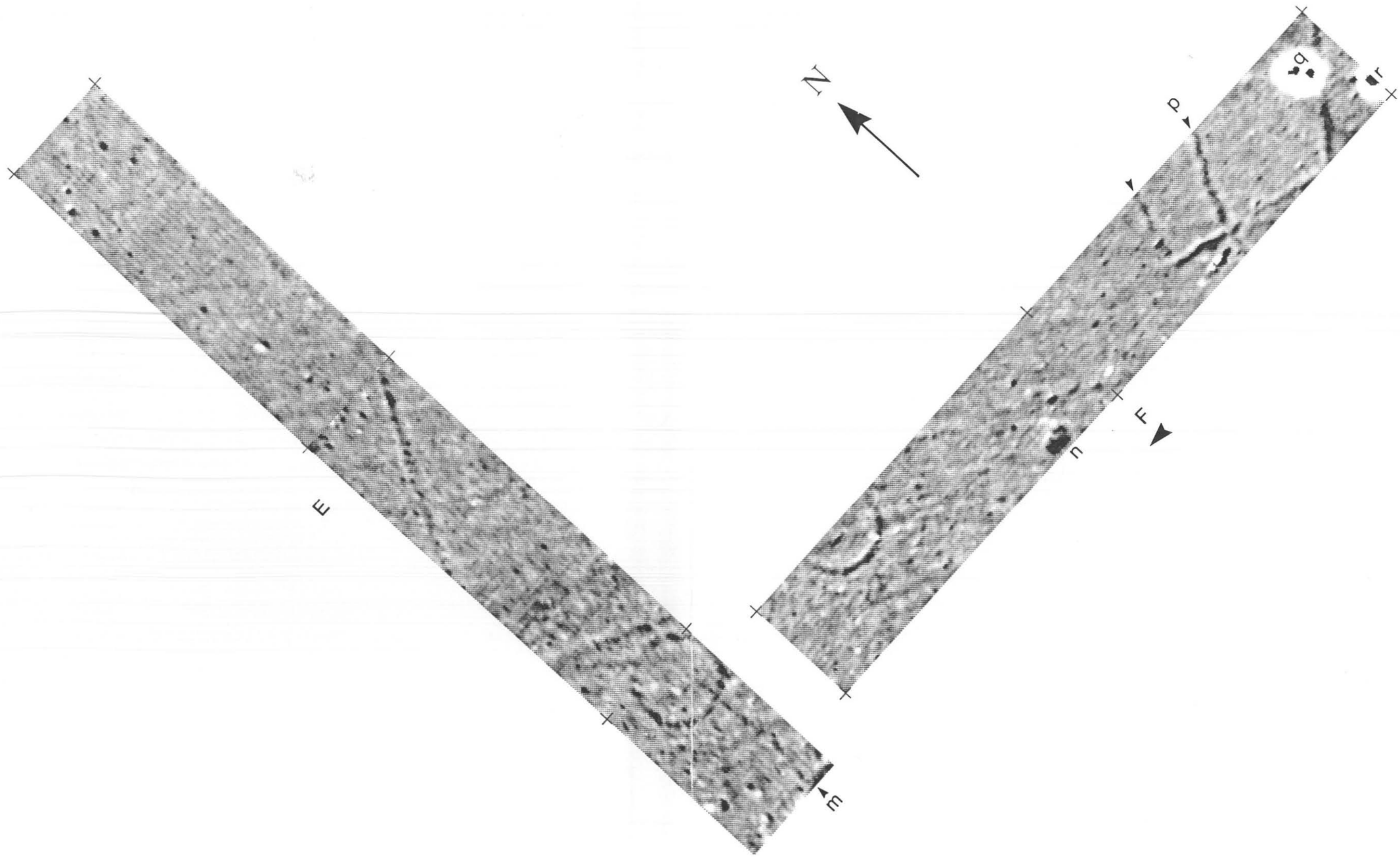

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Latton, Wiltshire: Geophysical Survey 1996
Magnetometer Survey Transects E - F

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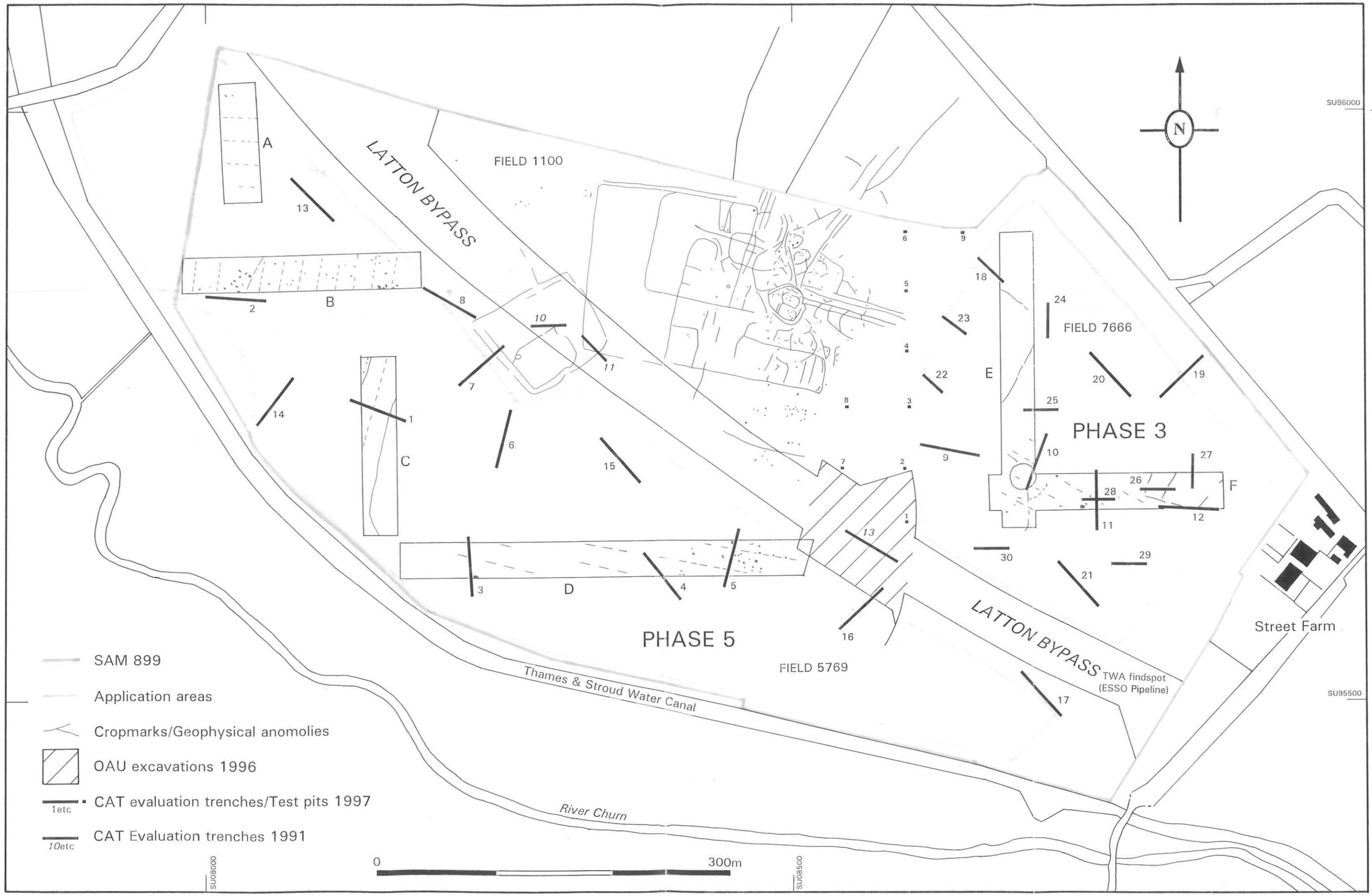


Fig. 2 Application area and recorded archaeology

98947

PROPOSED QUARRY EXTENSION AT LATTON, WILTSHIRE

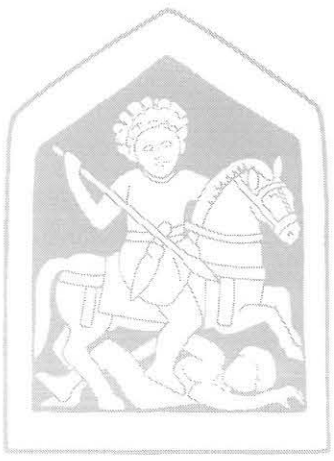
CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

BY

RICHARD MORTON

FOR

CWS PROPERTY GROUP



Cotswold Archaeological Trust

PROPOSED QUARRY EXTENSION AT LATTON, WILTSHIRE

CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

C.A.T JOB: 616
C.A.T REPORT: 98947

NOVEMBER 1998

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This report presents an assessment of the effects of the proposed extension to mineral extraction sites near Latton, Wiltshire upon the cultural heritage. It refers to a body of previous work undertaken in 1997 within the application area, and a number of phases of work undertaken between 1988 and 1996 in connection with the new Latton bypass.

The application area lies within an area currently defined as Scheduled Ancient Monument 899, *Settlement West of Latton.* The site was scheduled on the basis of a complex of cropmarks indicative of late prehistoric/Romano-British settlement, mainly concentrated in the area currently north of the Latton bypass. A number of further features were identified beyond this major concentration, including a ring-ditch towards the east of the Scheduled area and several linear boundaries. The limits of the scheduled area were defined by existing (post-medieval/modern) land boundaries.

This report attempts to more closely define the nature and extent of the features within this multi-phased site on the basis of the comprehensive and wide ranging archaeological investigations carried out over the last ten years.

The application area is treated as two Phases to complement the approach of the planning application; Phase 3 and Phase 5. Further phases to the north-west of the application area have already been granted planning permission for mineral extraction.

Both Phase 3 and Phase 5 contain evidence of a silted-up stream channel, which appears to have begun silting at around 1000BC. The fill of the channel contains an organic peat deposit which has been demonstrated to have some potential for environmental remains.

Phase 3 contains a probable Bronze Age ring-ditch, and enclosure/paddock boundaries dating to the same period. Evidence for Romano-British field boundaries has also

been found, but no occupational remains. A horse burial may tentatively be dated to the Iron Age. Two discreet Early Saxon features have also been discovered, which may suggest that there is potential for the existence of settlement remains within this Phase.

Phase 5 lies adjacent to a well-preserved Iron Age enclosure, but no features of this date date are present within the application area itself, apart from a single posthole to the west of the field. The major feature of this Phase is a system of post-medieval field boundaries.

The archaeological remains within Phase 5 are assessed as being of low archaeological importance, and a programme for mitigating the effects of gravel extraction in this phase is contained in Appendix 1. Within Phase 3 the remains are considered to be of regional importance, although this may be enhanced by their association with the nationally important cropmark complex. Further discussions are required to agree the possible limits of extraction in this part of the scheduled area, and an appropriate mitigation strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In October 1998 Cotswold Archaeological Trust (CAT) was commissioned by Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS) to provide a desk-based cultural heritage assessment of land at Latton, Wiltshire. This work forms the cultural heritage component of an environmental statement prepared by CWS/Cotswold Aggregate Ltd in support of an application for planning permission for mineral extraction at the site.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to identify and describe the extent and character of the known cultural heritage resource within the area of proposed extraction. The report contains an analysis of the preservation and importance of the archaeological remains, and an assessment of the impact of the proposed works. Proposals for mitigating the effect of the development upon the resource are also presented.

2. STUDY AREA

2.1 The application area considered in this assessment, which is presently part of an agricultural unit on the Down Ampney Estate, covers 26.49ha (centred on NGR SU 95700 08400) (Fig. 1) to the south-west of the village of Latton. The former A419 (Swindon to Cirencester) forms the north-eastern boundary of the area and the former Thames and Stroud Water Canal forms the southern and south-western boundary. It is divided by the Latton bypass into two discreet parcels. Consistent with the CWS planning application (drawing No. 485/PL3), these will henceforth be referred to as Phase 3 (north-east of the bypass), and Phase 5 (south-west of the bypass) (Fig. 2).

2.2 Phase 3 comprises a single field (7.46ha; Field No. 7666), bordered to the south-west by the Latton bypass and to the north-east by the former A419.

The eastern boundary is formed by the line of the ESSO pipeline, and that to the west by an existing field boundary. The field is currently under arable cultivation, and consists of generally flat ground at an average height of 82m AOD.

2.3 Phase 5 comprises one large field and one smaller field to the east (total 19.03ha; Field No.'s 1100 and 5769 respectively). The area is bordered to the north-east by the Latton bypass, and to the south and west by the line of the previous Thames and Stroud Water Canal. A short boundary to the east is again formed by the line of the ESSO pipeline. Field No. 1100 is currently under arable cultivation, and Field No. 5769 pasture. Both fields consist of relatively flat ground, at a height of around 82m AOD.

2.4 The application area lies on the First Terrace river gravels of the Upper Thames (Geological Survey of England & Wales 1976).

2.5 The application area (apart from a small portion to the north-west) lies within the currently designated boundaries of Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) Wiltshire County Monument No. 899, *Settlement West of Latton* (Fig. 2).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 The study was conducted in accordance with the '*Standard and Guidance for Desk-Based Assessments*' issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists in 1994, and follows the format specified in Appendix 10 of the *Good Practice Guide* for the preparation of environmental statements issued by the Department of the Environment (DoE 1995).

3.2 The assessment involved consultation of readily available historical and archaeological information from documentary and cartographic sources.

Most relevant to this study was the information resulting from previous archaeological investigations within the area of SAM 899.

3.3 The SAM was first identified from aerial photography where it was shown as a complex series of cropmarks, incorporating a possible late prehistoric/Romano-British settlement (Wilts SMR 315), and a circular feature, possibly a Bronze Age ring ditch (SMR 620). The cropmarks have subsequently been transcribed on a number of occasions, most recently by CAT as part of the initial assessment and evaluation of the Latton bypass, and by the Royal Commission of Historic Monuments (England) (RCHME) at 1:10,000.

3.4 In 1985 a watching brief undertaken by the Trust for Wessex Archaeology (TWA) along the ESSO Midland Pipeline recorded finds of Saxon and medieval pottery within the limits of the SAM (Wiltshire SMR 400 and 453 respectively).

3.5 The proposal of the Latton bypass in the late 1980s initiated a series of archaeological investigations along its corridor, including the portion dividing the application area. In 1988, Thamesdown Archaeological Unit (TAU) undertook a limited survey, including fieldwalking, geophysical survey and evaluation trenching within the SAM. The evaluation indicated that the cropmark complex was, at least in part, Romano-British in date, and the preferred route of the bypass was consequently shifted to the south-west to avoid the areas identified as being of greatest importance.

3.6 The new preferred bypass route was evaluated by CAT in 1990/1991. Within the scheduled area the evaluation again comprised fieldwalking, geophysical survey and evaluation trenching. New data suggested an Iron Age origin for some of the elements of the cropmark complex, as well as evidence of palaeo-environmental deposits (Johnson 1990, 1991).

3.7 In 1996 an excavation and watching brief were undertaken within the SAM by Oxford Archaeological Unit in advance of the construction of the Latton bypass, centred upon the palaeo-environmental deposits, which comprised peaty organic clays, identified in 1991. To date these results remain unpublished.

3.8 In 1992/1993 several sites (Phases 1, 2 and 4) adjoining the application area were the subject of an archaeological assessment and evaluation in connection with a planning application for mineral extraction (Howlett 1992; Barber 1993, 1995). A programme of fieldwalking, evaluation trenching and geophysical and topographical surveys was carried out, and evidence of prehistoric, Roman and medieval activity was identified (lithic and ceramic).

3.9 Planning permission was subsequently granted for mineral extraction in Phases 1, 2 and 4 with a condition for archaeological recording. This was to be undertaken in accordance with a brief prepared by Wessex Archaeology. In 1996/7 Cotswold Archaeological Trust was commissioned to carry out a geophysical survey and two phases of archaeological evaluation within the present application area, in order to ascertain the extent of the nationally important remains within the area currently designated as SAM 899. The results of these evaluations are of primary importance to this assessment of the application area.

4. BASELINE SURVEY

4.1 The Palaeo-Environment

4.1.1 The 1991 CAT evaluation on the proposed route of the Latton bypass first produced evidence of palaeo-environmental remains within the immediate vicinity of the application area. Trench 13 was located immediately between Phases 3 and 5 (Fig. 2), and revealed a dark brown humified amorphous peat

(the lower 0.05m of which consisted of a brown organic silt) overlying clay subsoil deposits. This was proved to be at least 0.49m in thickness and at least 51.5m in length (maximum 81.43m AOD, minimum 80.70m AOD). The deposit contained a quantity of well-preserved plant remains, although pollen preservation was poor (Straker 1991). A line of equally spaced postholes was cut into the deposit, which appeared from ceramic evidence to be related to a Roman or later structure (Johnson 1991).

4.1.2 Subsequent excavation by the Oxford Archaeological Unit in 1996, prior to the construction of the bypass, more closely defined this deposit as the fill of a shallow Pleistocene palaeochannel (a former channel of a small subsidiary stream of the River Churn), cutting the gravel terrace (OAU 1998). The channel was probably dry over most of the Holocene, and a subsequent rise in the water table resulted in very humic soil and the formation of organic sediments in tree-throw holes (*ibid*). Eventually, perhaps during the 1st millenium BC, alluvial clay began to fill the palaeochannel.

4.1.3 The 1997 CAT evaluation of the application area (in support of the present planning application) further defined the nature and extent of the peat deposit beyond the Latton bypass corridor. Trench 16 (Fig. 2) revealed the continuation of the palaeochannel south of the bypass and through Field No. 5769 (Phase 5), with a width of at least 10m. No features were associated with the peat horizon in this trench. Further organic deposits were revealed within Trenches 9, 22 and 23 in Phase 3, although these horizons displayed a lower organic consistency than those to the south. The horizon was also revealed in Test Pits 1 to 4, and 7 and 8. It is probable that these deposits represent the continuation of the same channel in a northerly direction to the west of Phase 3, but the lower organic content may represent a different phase of silting. Within these trenches the eastern limit of the channel was revealed.

4.1.4 It is probable that the organic fill of the channel had reached some depth by the Romano-British period, as it is cut in its upper levels by features of this

date. It is probable that the palaeochannel continues north through Phase 3 and further south through Phase 5.

4.2 Archaeology

4.2.1 General

4.2.1.1 As discussed above (Section 3), the principal sources for the archaeology of the application area are the various phases of evaluation work undertaken in connection with the current planning application and the new Latton bypass. Much of this work is not yet incorporated into the Wiltshire County Council SMR register, but where a number is available this has been incorporated within the text; other sources are listed in the bibliography.

4.2.2 Bronze Age

4.2.2.1 The major evidence of Bronze Age activity within the application area is the double ring-ditch (barrow) in Phase 3. This monument was first identified from aerial photographs, and confirmed by the geophysical survey preceding the two phases of CAT evaluation in 1997 (Fig. 2). It was subsequently sampled in the first evaluation phase (Bateman 1997a). The excavated dimensions of the ring-ditch suggest that the outer ring is 38m in diameter, with the inner ring measuring 22m in diameter. The outer ring in particular has been severely truncated by ploughing and survives to a depth of less than 0.06m. The accurate dating of the monument remains problematic due to the paucity of artefactual material retrieved. The typology of the double ring, however, suggests a Bronze Age rather than Saxon origin. A smaller but comparable double ringed round barrow has previously been identified at Siddington, 6.5km north-west of the application area (Smith 1972).

4.2.2.2 Further evidence of activity during this period in Phase 3 was retrieved during the two CAT evaluations in 1997 (Bateman 1997a,b). The earlier geophysical survey had highlighted a series of small paddocks/enclosures approximately

100m east of the ring-ditch, and these were targeted by the evaluation trenches to retrieve any datable evidence. In the first phase of evaluation one of the ditches within this series (Trench 12) yielded a decorated rim sherd and two flint flakes, diagnostic of the Neolithic/Bronze Age. In the second evaluation phase this ditch was found to extend to the north-west into Trench 26. A further flint flake was retrieved from a ditch in Trench 27. These ditches were interpreted as boundary ditches delineating the small series of paddocks/enclosures that had been highlighted by the geophysical survey. The full extent of the system is unproven, but a ditch in Trench 29 further to the south was found on the same alignment and may suggest the enclosures extend at least that far.

4.2.2.3 No further features datable to the Bronze Age or earlier were identified during the 1997 CAT evaluations of the application area. No features datable to this period were identified within Phase 5.

4.2.2.4 The 1990 CAT fieldwalking survey along the Latton bypass corridor identified a small assemblage of prehistoric material within the area of SAM 899. This assemblage included both pottery and worked and unworked flint. In general, the artefact distribution was found to be fairly evenly spread across the scheduled area, with no obvious concentrations. Most pertinently, no real concentrations were found immediately south of Phase 3 and the series of enclosures described above.

4.2.2.5 Within the immediate environs of the application area four further prehistoric ring-ditches are listed on Wiltshire County Council SMR, forming part of a wider distribution throughout this part of Wiltshire/Gloucestershire (Howlett 1992). Two of these were sampled by CAT in 1991 (Johnson 1991), including Wilts SMR 621 immediately north of Phase 5, which yielded a flint scraper of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date. Fieldwalking in 1993 to the north of the SAM (Barber 1993; Field No.s 2540, 3500) produced a small assemblage of worked and unworked flint of a probable Late Neolithic/Early

Bronze Age date, but of insufficient quantity to suggest occupation. The tool types present suggest less intensive activity on site such as the processing of raw materials.

4.2.3 Iron Age

4.2.3.1 The only evidence of Iron Age activity within Phase 5 came from Trench 2 of the 1997 evaluation (Fig. 2), which displayed a single posthole at its western limit. The isolation of this feature makes interpretation difficult, although anomalies within Transect B of the geophysical survey may suggest some human activity within that area of the SAM.

4.2.3.2 Within Phase 3, features of unresolved date, but potentially Iron Age, were revealed during the second phase of the 1997 evaluation (Trench 25). Two ditches were interpreted as contemporary and of Iron Age or Romano-British date, and may have formed the south-east corner of an enclosure/paddock. These ditches were both cut by a further feature which contained a horse burial, although it is unclear whether the feature represents a grave solely cut for this purpose or a ditch terminus. The deposition of animal carcasses, particularly those of horses, dogs and ravens, within ditch termini and pits became widespread in central southern Britain during the early Iron Age (Cunliffe 1995), although such practises are attested from the Bronze Age through to the Romano-British period. Unfortunately, this burial could not be tied to any dateable material but it is likely that it should be assigned to this period rather than being considered as a casual post-medieval inhumation.

4.2.3.3 The major evidence of Iron Age activity immediately adjacent to the application area is represented by a sub-rectangular enclosure, which lies under the route of the Latton bypass and immediately to the north-east of Phase 5 (Fig. 2). The enclosure was first identified during aerial photographic transcription by the RCHM(E), and the double boundary ditches were sampled by Trench 7 of the 1997 CAT evaluation (Fig. 2).

4.2.3.4 Longevity of the outer enclosure ditch was suggested by its gradual silting, which yielded five sherds of Iron Age pottery (Bateman 1997a). This ditch was subsequently recut.

4.2.3.5 These results correlate closely with evidence from the 1991 fieldwalking and evaluation trenching (Johnson 1991). Two trenches were targeted on the enclosure in this project (Fig. 2) in the area of the Latton bypass route. Trench 11 revealed a large enclosure ditch containing a number of fills, and appears to represent a continuation of the outer enclosure ditch, although no datable material was recovered. A further ditch of particular note was also identified in this trench, possibly representing a roundhouse gully within the enclosure. Trench 10 was located within the centre of the enclosure, but due to flooding a precise record of the features revealed was not achieved. One major ditch feature was found, but the absence of sizeable quantities of domestic refuse within the fills suggests that the main focus of occupation lies beyond this trench. Other shallow features were recorded, but their full profile and function could not be recorded (Johnson 1991).

4.2.4 Romano-British

4.2.4.1 The 1997 CAT evaluation within the application area was partly designed to test the extent of the major cropmark complex. Two trenches revealed evidence of Romano-British features in Phase 3, Trenches 9 and 22. Within these two trenches a broad ditch was noted approximately 2m east of the organic deposit. The ditch was revealed to be Romano-British in date, and had been recut at least twice. No evidence for the continuation of the ditch to the north was identified within Trench 23. The ditch was interpreted as a boundary delimiting Romano-British field systems associated with the nearby settlement complex, from the wetter area. An east-west orientated curvi-linear ditch, containing a sherd of Romano-British pottery, was noted within Trench 9 which may be part of the same system. However, the fact that it

aligns with geophysical evidence for a post-medieval cultivation furrow suggests rather that the pottery sherd may be residual. It is possible that ditches in the second phase evaluation Trench 25 represent part of such a field system, although if the interpretation of the later horse burial cutting the ditch as an Iron Age feature is correct, this would necessarily be negated. A further ditch in Trench 18 to the north of Phase 3 was also of potential Romano-British origin.

4.2.4.2 No finds or features dateable to the Romano-British period have been identified within Phase 5.

4.2.4.3 The major concentration of cropmark features within SAM 899 lie to the north of the Latton bypass corridor and beyond the application area (west of Phase 3 and north of Phase 5). This complex contains cropmarks indicative of a Roman period farmstead, and has received its scheduled protection on that basis. It comprises a main outer enclosure ditch containing a further series of enclosures and features. The main enclosure ditch, as currently plotted from aerial photographs, impinges upon the Iron Age enclosure discussed above (Section 4.2.3). In 1988 Thamesdown Archaeological Unit undertook a limited survey of this complex when the initial route of the Latton bypass was under consideration (north of the final route). This included fieldwalking, geophysical survey and evaluation trenches. The conclusions of the evaluation confirmed that the site was, at least in part, Romano-British in date, with a concentration of occupation debris in the north of Field No. 1100 (Digby 1988).

4.2.4.4 As a consequence of these results the preferred route of the bypass was moved to its current location south of the main cropmark complex, which was evaluated by CAT in 1990/1991. A further fieldwalking programme on this new route found a general scatter of Romano-British pottery, with six sherds found to the west of the creamery and three pieces to the west of Westfield Farm. A surprisingly small number of finds was retrieved from the area

around the main cropmark complex. Only four sherds, three from the edge of the main ditched enclosure evaluated by TAU in 1988 and one from the apparent area of pitting to the south (Fig. 2), were recovered. These results confirmed those of the TAU survey which showed a strong fall-off in scatter density away from the main cropmark complex. CAT 1991 evaluation Trench 11 was located to sample the outer enclosure of the complex, as well as the Iron Age sub-rectangular enclosure. Although the presence of the latter was confirmed the main enclosure ditch was not located. The reason for this is unclear, but is presumably due to a lateral displacement of the aerial photograph readings. This may suggest that the outer enclosure ditch is actually slightly further north than currently plotted, a possibility which would be strengthened by the low concentration of occupation material recovered from the fieldwalking phase.

4.2.4.5 Within the wider environs of the application area, the major features dating to the Romano-British period are the Roman road (Ermin Street), which bounds Phase 3 to the north, and a cropmark settlement site immediately east of Latton village (SAM 900). A small number of pottery sherds were recovered from the 1993 CAT fieldwalking programme in Phases 1, 2 and 4 north-west of the application area, but no strong concentrations (Barber 1993). Evidence of Roman gravel quarrying along the line of Ermin Street was also found (*ibid*).

4.2.5 Early Saxon

4.2.5.1 Evidence for Saxon occupation within the application area was first suggested in 1985 when a watching brief by the Trust for Wessex Archaeology along the ESSO Midland Pipeline recorded finds of Saxon pottery (Wilts SMR 453; Fig. 2).

4.2.5.2 Two features provisionally dating to the Early Saxon period were identified in the 1997 CAT evaluations within Phase 3. A sub-circular feature was

identified in Trenches 28 and 11, which also displayed various subrectangular recuts, the fills of which yielded a number of sherds of Saxon pottery. Interpretation of the feature is problematic as there area no obvious typological comparisons. Outwardly the feature neither resembles a well/water hole or a sunken-featured building.

4.2.5.3 The geophysical results prior to the 1997 evaluations indicated a small number of magnetic anomalies within the general vicinity of Trench 11, which may suggest a greater focus of Saxon activity within this north-east corner of the SAM. Such an hypothesis may be supported by the residual Saxon pottery retrieved from post-medieval field boundary in Trench 11, and a possible Saxon pottery sherd recovered from the upper surface of the organic deposit in Trench 9.

4.2.5.4 There is no evidence of Saxon occupation from within Phase 5 or the immediate environs of the application area. No Saxon material was identified within the SAM during the Latton bypass evaluation, or in the fields to the north during the 1993 CAT fieldwalking programme.

4.2.6 Medieval and Post-Medieval

4.2.6.1 The Enclosure Award of c.1805 includes references to sheep pasture in Latton and Down Ampney parishes, and it is probable that the land within the application area was subject to both pasture and arable farming throughout the medieval period and into the post-medieval period (Section 4.4). The focus of medieval Latton would appear to have lain, as it does now, north-east of Ermin Street.

4.2.6.2 Although one sherd of Late Saxon/medieval pottery was found during the 1997 CAT evaluation, no features specifically dateable to the medieval period were identified within the application area.

4.2.6.3 The evaluation did reveal evidence of post-medieval field boundaries and cultivation practises throughout the application area, which correlate closely with the same evidence from the earlier geophysical survey. These boundaries tie closely to the cartographic evidence from the 1805 Latton Enclosure Award. The public footpath forming the northern boundary of the SAM and the northern tip of Phase 3 is shown as a trackway on the 1805 Enclosure Award and probably dates to at least the eighteenth century. The Thames and Stroud Water Canal, forming the southern limit of the application area, is of nineteenth-century date.

4.2.6.4 Very little artefactual evidence from the medieval period has been recovered from the vicinity of the application area. The CAT 1990 programme of fieldwalking retrieved only four sherds of medieval pottery from the walked corridor between Phases 3 and 5. A few sherds were also found during the TWA watching brief of the ESSO Midland Pipeline in 1985. No features dateable to this period were revealed during the 1991 CAT evaluation phase.

4.3 Historic Buildings

4.3.1 No Listed Buildings exist within the application area, nor does any part of it fall within a designated Conservation Area. Street Farm, to the east of Phase 3, had been established by at least the mid-nineteenth century but is not shown on a map by Andrews and Dury of 1783. Two buildings are marked on this map beside the former trackway into Cerney Wick (now a public footpath and the northern boundary of the SAM), but these lie beyond the application area.

4.4 Historic Landscape

4.4.1 The basic settlement pattern of this area of Wiltshire/Gloucestershire is nucleated villages, such as Latton and Down Ampney, with individual large farmsteads spaced between. The foundation of this pattern, the sites of the

villages, was almost certainly laid down in the Anglo-Saxon period (Howlett 1992). By the medieval period isolated farmsteads away from the village centres began to be established when, for various reasons, areas in the open fields were enclosed and farmed separately. This process was accelerated during the period of Parliamentary Enclosure.

4.4.2 The Enclosure award of c1805 for Latton refers to sheep pasture within the parish, but it is also probable that there has been a variety of landuse within the application area, fluctuating between crops and grass over time. The post-medieval field boundaries identified in the geophysical survey and evaluation trenching in 1997 correlate closely with the pattern illustrated on the award. This essentially comprises the sub-division of the present large open fields into smaller, fairly evenly spaced, units. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries these boundaries gradually disappeared into the present landscape. Historic maps including the Enclosure Award are reproduced in the 1990 CAT assessment of the Latton bypass route (Johnson 1990).

4.5 Sites of Historic Events or with Historic Association

4.5.1 No sites of historic events or with historic associations lie within the application area.

5. ANALYSIS

5.1 Archaeological Survival

5.1.1 The baseline survey has demonstrated that the application area has been relatively undisturbed by modern development. The major recent development has been the adjacent Latton bypass, but this has not affected the archaeological record of either Phases 3 or 5 which it divides. The construction of the Thames and Stroud Water Canal in the nineteenth century has likewise had no effect upon the archaeological record within the

application area. Both Phases have been subject to agriculture and plough-depth disturbance since at least the post-medieval period.

5.1.2 The comprehensive coverage of the application area by aerial photography, geophysical survey and evaluation trenching has revealed a fairly widespread survival of negative features within certain areas of the application area. Generally, these are concentrated in Phase 3 and to the north-east of Phase 5.

5.1.3 The sampling of many of these features by hand excavation has, however, revealed variable stages of archaeological survival. A primary example of poor survival is the Bronze Age ring-ditch in Phase 3, the outer ring of which survived to a depth of only 0.06m and the inner ditch to 0.17m (Bateman 1997a).

5.1.4 It is apparent that the levels of archaeology have been greatly truncated through ploughing, and especially modern deep-ploughing methods. This truncation level is at a depth of around 0.35m below the ground surface over most of the application area. This is an ongoing process under the current agricultural regime. Some more deeply-cut features have necessarily survived to a greater depth (such as the Early Saxon feature in Phase 3) but the majority of the application area would appear to have been subject to the same level of plough-erosion. The exception to this pattern is a deep accumulation of subsoil (up to 0.6m in depth) at the headland of Field No. 7666 (Phase 3), which has protected the archaeological resource thereabouts.

5.1.5 The condition of many of the finds, especially bone, from the 1997 evaluations has confirmed the acidic nature of the Upper Thames gravels. This acidic depositional context will have had a further detrimental effect upon artefactual remains, especially organic or organic-based artefacts. Most of the pottery assemblage from the evaluations was described as 'in poor condition, either worn and abraded or discoloured' (Timby 1997).

5.1.6 The organic fills of the palaeochannel crossing the application area have survived across the site and were sampled in 1991. The deposits were found to be of generally poor preservation due to either high biological activity or the seasonally fluctuating water table (Straker 1991). Palaeoenvironmental samples from archaeological features have likewise proved poor in quality (eg. Johnson 1991; Bateman 1997a,b).

5.2 Archaeological Potential

5.2.1 *Phase 3 (North of the Latton Bypass)*

5.2.1.1 Within this Phase there is evidence of a Bronze Age ring-ditch and prehistoric enclosures. There is a high potential for the continuation of the enclosure ditches at least to the north of the current location. The full extent of the ring-ditch has been revealed by geophysical survey.

5.2.1.2 Evaluation has also indicated that Romano-British domestic occupation does not extend eastwards beyond the area of settlement defined by aerial photography. Romano-British activity within the field is rather restricted to agricultural field enclosures/paddocks, although there is a high potential that these continue eastwards across Phase 3.

5.2.1.3 Two probable Early Saxon features have been identified within this area. No direct evidence of settlement has been recovered but the range of finds (including unabraded pottery, butchered bone and ?daub) suggests that this is likely to be present in the vicinity.

5.2.2 *Phase 5 (South of the Latton Bypass)*

5.2.2.1 There is a low potential in this area for isolated prehistoric/Romano-British features, as suggested by the single Iron Age post-hole in 1997 evaluation Trench 2. Comprehensive archaeological evaluation of Phase 5 has revealed

that the main feature of this area is a system of post-medieval field boundaries, largely recorded on historical plans, and the palaeochannel.

5.3 Assessment of Importance

5.3.1 With the exception of a small area at the north-west end of the site, all of Phases 3 and 5 fall within the bounds of SAM 899. The scheduled ancient monument designation indicates that at the time of scheduling the monument was considered to be of national importance. The purpose of the 1997 evaluation programme was to ascertain whether nationally important archaeological remains lay within the whole area currently designated as a SAM, or whether there were significant areas of no, or less important, archaeology.

5.3.2 It was accepted from the outset that the main cropmark complex was manifestly of national importance and hence worthy of its scheduled status. More doubt was attached to the areas contained within the current application area. The importance of the archaeology within each of the two areas will be assessed in turn.

5.3.3 *Phase 5*

5.3.3.1 Evaluation has revealed only slight archaeological remains within this area, and it is considered that there is low potential for the discovery of further currently unrecorded remains. There are no discernible monuments within this Phase and consequently its archaeological importance must be assessed as *low*.

5.3.3.2 At a meeting with Ms Amanda Chadburn of English Heritage on 25th February 1997 Ms Chadburn indicated that she considered the archaeological remains within Phase 5 were not of national importance, and that their removal could be regarded as acceptable loss if a satisfactory mitigation strategy was implemented (see Appendix 1).

5.3.4 *Phase 3*

5.3.4.1 Within this area evaluation has revealed a Bronze Age ring-ditch; prehistoric enclosures; Romano-British fieldsystems; and currently uncharacterised evidence of Early Anglo-Saxon activity. The Secretary of State for Environment has listed a series of non-statutory criteria for determining monument importance. As currently documented there is probably only sufficient evidence to characterise the ring-ditch as a monument.

5.3.4.2 On a more general level the remains within Phase 3 can be considered to be typical of those found on the gravel terraces of the Upper Thames Valley. Prehistoric ring-ditches and multi-period fieldsystems are well known in this part of Wiltshire and Gloucestershire (see, for instance, Leech 1977). The Early Anglo-Saxon activity, although currently uncharacterised, is potentially of significance given its location on the First Terrace of the Upper Thames Valley. It has been suggested (Hammerow 1992) that there was a retreat from the previously drained land on the first gravel terrace in the late Roman period, the pagan Saxon cemeteries at Fairford and Lechlade lying on the lighter soils of the Second Terrace.

5.3.4.3 By virtue of the relative abundance of similar remains to those found within Phase 3, and considering their heavily truncated state, it would be reasonable to consider them as being of Regional Importance. It must be noted, however, that this importance may be enhanced by their association with the nationally important cropmark complex. This Group Value takes two forms: firstly the association of the Romano-British fieldsystem with a seemingly contemporary settlement, and secondly the chronological association of monuments and features of different periods (Bronze Age ring-ditch; Iron Age and Romano-British settlement and fieldsystem; uncharacterised Early Anglo-Saxon activity).

5.3.4.4 Further discussions are required with English Heritage to agree the possible limits of extraction in this part of the SAM, and an appropriate mitigation strategy.

6. PREDICTION OF IMPACT

6.1 Current Situation and Ongoing Process

6.1.1 Apart from Field No. 5769 (which is under pasture) the application area is currently under arable cultivation. This regime involves regular ploughing as an ongoing process. The process has to date had a demonstrably detrimental effect upon the archaeological resource, truncating the archaeological horizon. A number of features, such as the ring-ditch, survive only ephemerally and are likely to be consistently eroded in the future under the current regime.

6.2 Constructional Effects

6.2.1 The proposed mineral extraction within the application area will remove all archaeological deposits.

6.3 Operational Effects

6.3.1 After the initial mineral extraction there will be no further operational effects upon the archaeology of the application area.

7. MITIGATION STRATEGY

7.1 A two-fold mitigation strategy is proposed. A brief has been prepared (CAT 1997) for Phase 5 of the application area, recommending an archaeological watching brief to be incorporated within the scope of extraction works planned at the site. Appendix 1 of this report should be consulted for this document. A mitigation strategy has yet to be developed with regard to Phase 3.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cotswold Archaeological Trust would like to thank Mr Mark Chappell of CWS Property Group for his assistance with this project. Thanks are also due to Colin Yelland of Bardon Aggregates and Roy Canham of WCC. Much of the report was based upon the results of the 1997 CAT evaluation carried out by Cliff Bateman, and the 1990/1991 assessment and evaluation carried out by Casper Johnson.

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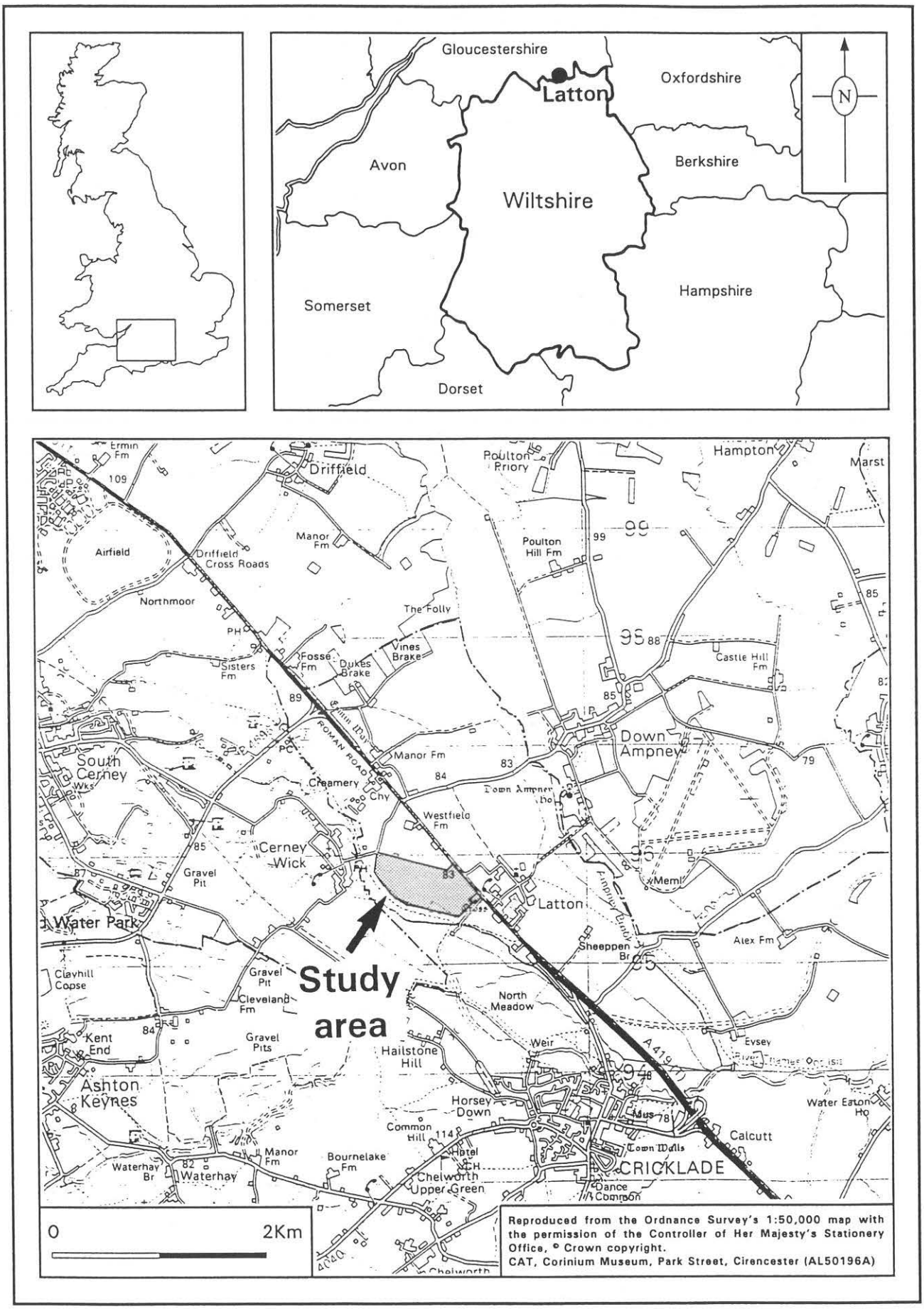

Fig. 1 Location plan

APPENDIX 1

SCHEDULED MONUMENT WILTS. 899
SETTLEMENT WEST OF LATTON

BRIEF FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

MAY 1997

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1. Introduction

1.1 This document presents a brief for an archaeological watching brief in the southern part of the scheduled ancient monument (SAM) Wilts. 899: *settlement west of Latton*. It has been designed to accompany applications for scheduled monument consent and planning permission to extract gravel from that part of the scheduled monument area shown on the enclosed plan.

1.2 This brief has been guided in its composition by the '*Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*' issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

2. Background

2.1 In January 1997 an archaeological evaluation was conducted within the bounds of SAM 899 by Cotswold Archaeological Trust (Bateman 1997). The evaluation was conducted in accordance with a specification which was granted scheduled monument consent on August 20th 1993 (ref: HSD 9/2/1756 Pt 4). Subsequently a second phase of evaluation was undertaken in the north-west corner of the SAM (and outside the area with which the current applications are concerned). The purpose of the evaluation was to ascertain whether nationally important archaeological remains lay within the whole area currently designated as a SAM, or whether there were significant areas of no or less important archaeology.

2.2 Trenches 1-17 were excavated within that part of the SAM which lies to the south of the recently constructed A419 Latton bypass. The evaluation confirmed the existence of an Iron Age enclosure ditch in the position expected from aerial photographs, but otherwise only a single Iron Age post hole and some undated features were found in this area.

2.3 Following the completion of the evaluation a meeting was held with Ms Amanda Chadburn of English Heritage on 25th February 1997. At that meeting Ms Chadburn indicated that she would be minded to recommend to the Secretary of State that the area shown on the enclosed plan should be granted permission for mineral extraction, subject to the implementation of a satisfactory mitigation strategy.

2.4 The purpose of this brief is to provide an acceptable mitigation strategy to enable mineral extraction. In general terms it seeks to provide a comparable strategy to that being implemented on the adjacent extraction sites (Wessex Archaeology 1996)

3. Objectives

3.1 The objective of the watching brief is to observe any operations on site that may disturb or destroy archaeological deposits, and to record the presence/ absence, nature, extent, and date of any buried archaeological remains within the study area.

4. Field Methodology

4.1 Topsoil stripping will be conducted at all times under archaeological supervision. The archaeologist will guide the excavator driver to remove the appropriate depth of soil to allow

archaeological features to be exposed if they are present. The evaluation suggests that this level lies at the interface of the natural gravel and overlying topsoil.

4.2 Topsoil stripping should be undertaken with a 360^0 tracked excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. Bulldozers must not be used to strip fresh areas although they may move displaced soil. Plant must not be allowed to track over the exposed natural or subsoil features until they have been informed that those areas are archaeologically sterile by the archaeological supervisor. It is accepted that designated haulage routes may need to be instigated, and these should be located in consultation with the archaeologist and in areas which are either blank or have already been examined.

4.3 During the strip the archaeologist (s) will record and sample excavate features where it is unclear whether the features have an archaeological or geological origin; where deterioration would occur if the features were not examined immediately, and where only a low-medium density of features have been exposed.

4.4 If discrete areas of archaeological features are exposed during the watching brief which appear to be potentially significant, or particularly fragile, the area will be fenced off. Notification will then be made to English Heritage, Wiltshire County Council and the client so that an agreed programme of further investigation and recording can take place. If necessary such works may require a separate project specification by the archaeological contractor.

4.5 If archaeological deposits are encountered they must be recorded to professional standards. Examination of features will concentrate on recovering the plan and structural sequence. Some degree of sampling will be instigated, although a priority will be placed on obtaining details of the principal structural periods including the earliest. All discrete features (post holes, pits) will be sampled by hand excavation (average sample unlikely to exceed **50%**) unless their common/repetitious nature suggests they are unlikely to yield significant new information. All linear features (ditches) will as a minimum be hand sectioned (average sample unlikely to exceed **10% sample by length**). Bulk horizontal deposits will as a minimum be **10% by area** hand excavated, after which a decision may be taken (in conjunction with English Heritage and the County Archaeological Officer) to remove the remainder with machinery. The evaluation suggests that such deposits are unlikely to be present in this case. Priority will be attached to features which yield sealed assemblages which can be related to the structural sequence.

4.6 Each context will recorded on a pro-forma context sheet by verbal and measured description. Principal deposits will be recorded by drawn plans and sections (normally at a scale of 1:20). Photographs (black and white; colour slide) will be taken at regular intervals as the works progress.

4.7 All artefacts will be recovered and retained for processing and analysis. All finds and samples will be bagged separately with unique numbers related to the context record.

4.8 Due care will be taken to identify deposits which may have environmental potential. Bulk samples of up to 30 litres will be collected on site for subsequent flotation for carbonized remains and molluscs.

4.9 The Client and The Coroner will be notified in the event that human remains are recovered. These will be excavated and lifted only under a Home Officer Licence.

5. Post Fieldwork Assessment of Results

5.1 Following completion of the fieldwork an ordered, indexed, and internally consistent site archive will be compiled in accordance with the specification contained in *The Management of Archaeological Projects 2nd ed* (English Heritage 1991). Following completion of the archive an assessment will be made of the importance of the discoveries, and a programme of research and analysis commensurate with their importance devised. This will itemise the sequence of tasks to be performed; their duration, and the critical project path. The research objectives of the project will be revised and updated as appropriate. The programme of analysis will lead to the publication of a report on the works in an appropriate journal.

5.2 The final report should include a description of the methodology used; plans and sections at appropriate scales showing the location of the features; a quantification of the features, classes and numbers of artefacts located and their interpretation; a discussion of any significant finds recovered; and a description and interpretation of the deposits identified. The archaeological evidence from the site will also be set in its broader landscape setting. The methodology will be reconsidered to give a confidence rating to the results.

5.3 A non-technical report summarising the main findings of the excavation will be submitted to the client upon completion of fieldwork, and a summary report will be submitted for publication in an appropriate journal (most probably *Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine*) within one years of the completion of the fieldwork

5.4 Subject to agreement with the legal landowner the contractor will make arrangements with Devizes Museum for the deposition of the site archive and artefact collection. Conservation should be undertaken for any items requiring this treatment.

6. Health and Safety

6.1 All work is to be carried out in accordance with the latest Health and Safety legislation and good practice.

7. Monitoring

7.1 The contractor will liaise with English Heritage and the County Archaeological Officer during the course of the project so that there is an opportunity to monitor and inspect the progress of works. A minimum of notice of four weeks will be given to both these parties of the date when fieldwork will commence.

8. Archaeological Contractor

8.1 The archaeological contractor should use this brief as the basis to prepare a full method statement/project design for submission to, and approval by, English Heritage and the County Archaeological Service prior to the commencement of work.

8.2 The contractor should use suitably experienced personnel who will comply with the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

Reference

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Cotswold Archaeological Trust
19/05/97

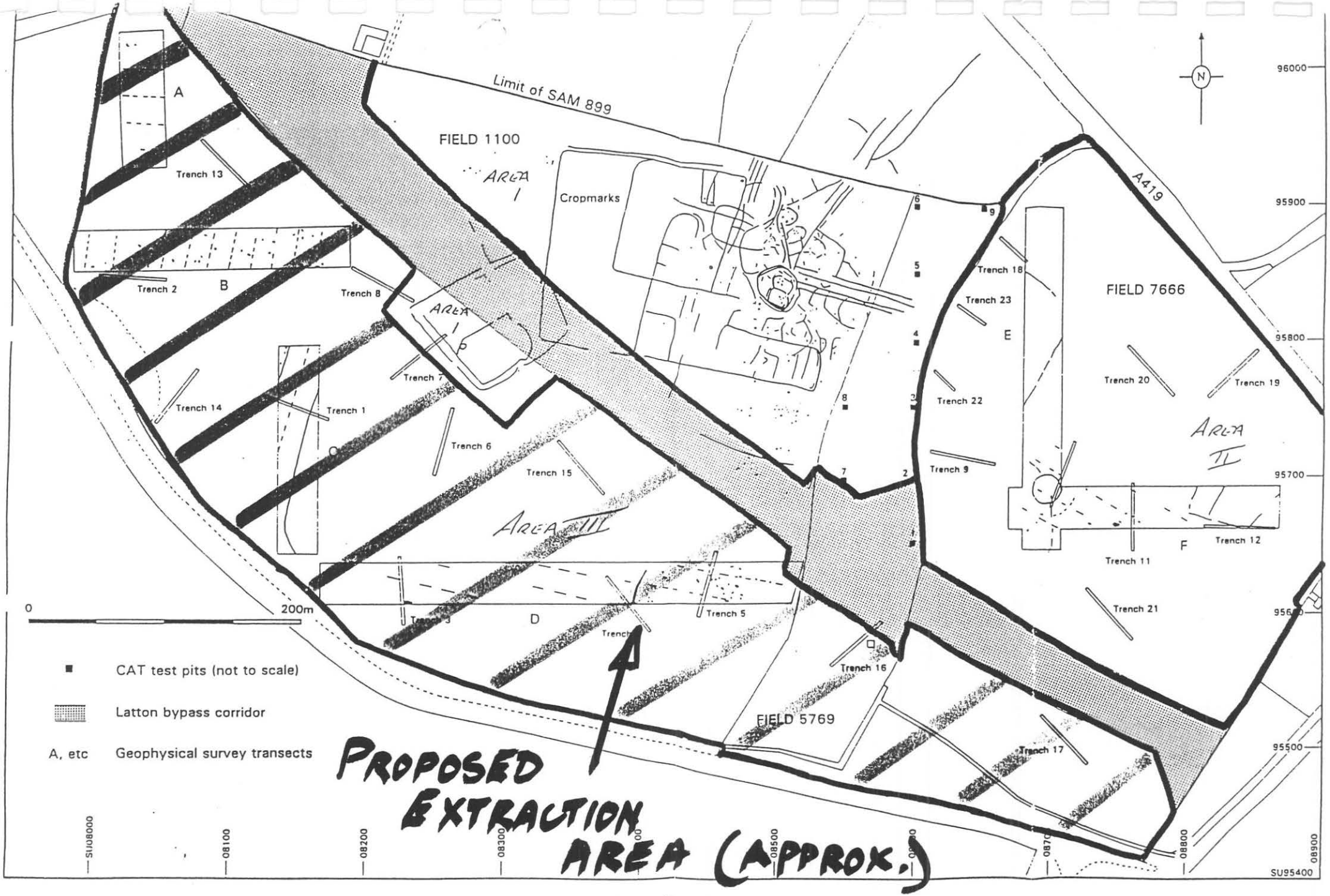

Fig. 2 Location of trenches