

40, Preston on Stour, Warwickshire

Archaeological Evaluation



understanding heritage matters

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1368
November 2013



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: 40, Preston on Stour evaluation

Commissioned by: Matthew Green for Alscott Estate

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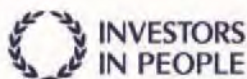
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Summary

The excavation of a single trial trench at 40, Preston on Stour, revealed no finds or features relating to the medieval settlement. Two postholes and a probable pit of late 19th-century or later date were found.

1 Introduction

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Stratford on Avon District Council for an extension to 40, Preston on Stour, Warwickshire. The site lies within the probable extent of the medieval settlement according to the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record. A condition of planning permission required the applicant to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work to be carried out prior to development works commencing.

1.2 A programme of fieldwork, consisting of the excavation of 10m of trial trench in accordance with a brief prepared by the County Planning Archaeologist on behalf of the Planning Authority (August 2013), was commissioned from Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire and carried out on the 5th November 2013. This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum.

2 Location

2.1 The site is located on the north side of Preston on Stour, in the parish of the same name (Fig 1). The superficial geology of the area is River Terrace Deposits (BGS 2013).

2.2 The site was previously garden and slopes down to the north and east.

3 Methodology

3.1 The evaluation consisted of a trial trench between 1.6 and 2m wide which was excavated using a JCB fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The trench was photographed, recorded and levelled to Ordnance Survey Datum (Figs 4-6).

3.2 The work undertaken also involved the examination of early map evidence as well as records of archaeological remains in the area and local historical journals and other publications. The results of this work are presented below.

4 Archaeological and Historical Background

4.1 The site lies within the likely extent of the medieval settlement of Preston on Stour (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record No. MWA 8960). Preston on Stour is not mentioned in the Domesday survey, but the deserted medieval settlement of *Arlescote* is mentioned (MWA 1348). The parish church of St Mary is mentioned in a document dating to 1272, but most of the present building, which is Grade I Listed, largely dates to the 14th and 15th centuries, with later remodelling (MWA 1406).

4.2 Alscot Park was a medieval deer park (MWA 1412). Other medieval features include a watermill (MWA 5070) and a watermill was still in existence here in the early 20th century. Alscot Park House incorporates part of a late medieval building to the rear. A 13th/14th-century pewter brooch has been found in Preston-on Stour (MWA 5856).

4.3 The Gables is a 16th-century, close-studded, timber-framed building in the village (MWA 7552). A large number of timber-framed buildings of 17th-century date also survive in the village. Alscot Park House is also a 17th-century building (MWA 7544), albeit remodelled in 1750-52 and extended in 1762-4, so that it appears to be largely mid-18th century in date. Other buildings, such as Atherstone Hill Farm (MWA 7554), date to the early 18th century.

4.4 In the mid-18th century medieval Alscot Park (MWA 8503) was enlarged and a number of garden features were erected, in keeping with the gardening fashions of the time. This included a Chinese garden temple (MWA 1594) and a mound, built for a tower or rotunda (MWA 1593). Another post-medieval park was associated with Atherstone Hill Farm (MWA 8703).

4.5 An undated, three-sided enclosure, visible as an earthwork, may be part of a farm complex (MWA 1595). This is situated to the north-west of the site.

4.6 Early maps show that the site was occupied by a larger dwelling than the present one (Ordnance Survey 1885, Fig 2). There were a series of small buildings along the rear property boundary which could have been animal housing. The Second Edition map shows that the larger dwelling was two adjoining cottages and that the garden was formally divided at this time (Ordnance Survey 1901-2, Fig 3). Demolition of the eastern cottage (or part of it) took place by 1968 (Ordnance Survey 1968).

Evaluation

5.1 The evaluation trench was 9.5m long and between 1.6 and 2m wide (Figs 4-6). Geological natural, reddish brown sand (3) was reached at a depth of between c0.3m and c0.7m below the current ground level.

5.2 Overlying the geological natural was up to 0.5m of dark greyish-brown sandy loam (2). Bottles were noted in this layer and a 'Nubian Boot polish' bottle circa 1890 was retained as it still had the applicator inside it (Fig 10).

5.3 Cutting layer 2 was an irregular shaped pit (8) which was partly revealed within the trench. It was 1.04m in length and up to 0.24m deep. The single light greyish-brown sandy loam fill (9) was dated by its contents to no earlier than the late 19th century (Fig 9). The irregular shape of the feature suggests it could have been a tree hole.

5.4 Also cutting layer 2 were two postholes. The first was circular in plan and had a U- shaped profile (4). The diameter was 0.3m and it was cut 0.17m into the natural (Fig 7). The greyish-brown sandy loam fill (5) contained two rusty nails (not retained). The second post hole was sub-circular, 0.38m x 0.24m, and had a V- shaped profile

(6). It was cut 0.14m into the natural (Fig 8). No finds were recorded in the greyish-brown sandy loam fill (7).

5.5 Topsoil was the most recent deposit found across the trench. A significant amount of root disturbance and brick fragments were noted in the very dark greyish brown sandy loam (1).

Conclusions

6.1 No archaeological finds or features relating to medieval activity in the area were encountered during the evaluation. The features and finds uncovered on site all appeared to be 19th century in date. The cottage that appears on the First Edition map was not apparent in the trench and therefore may have lain just to the east of it.

Acknowledgements

Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire would like to thank Matthew Green of the Alscott Estate for commissioning the work and the Planning Archaeologist for preparing the brief.

Bibliography

British Geological Survey Viewer <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/data/mapViewers/> accessed November 2013.

Ordnance Survey 1885 *First Edition 1:2500 map*, Warwickshire Sheet 50.2

Ordnance Survey 1901-2 *Second Edition 1:2500 map*, Warwickshire Sheet 50.2

Ordnance Survey 1968 *1:2500 map*, Warwickshire Sheet 50.2

Appendix

A List of Finds

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1	Very dark greyish brown sandy loam, occ. bricks	Topsoil
2	Dark greyish-brown sandy loam	Layer
3	Reddish-brown sand	Geological Natural
4	Circular cut	Post hole
5	Greyish-brown sandy loam	Fill of posthole
6	Sub-circular cut	Post hole
7	Greyish-brown sandy loam	Fill of posthole
8	Irregular shaped pit	Tree hole?
9	Light greyish-brown sandy loam	Fill of no 8

B List of Finds

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
2	Glass Bottle	1	1890s Nubian Boot Polish
9	Pottery	22	18 th -20 th century pottery; TGE, tin glazed earthenware PLW02, Pearlware MGW, Modern glazed ware CRW, Creamware
9	Flint	1	Burnt flint flake
9	Clay pipe	1	Bowl frag
9	Glass	1	19 th century wine glass foot

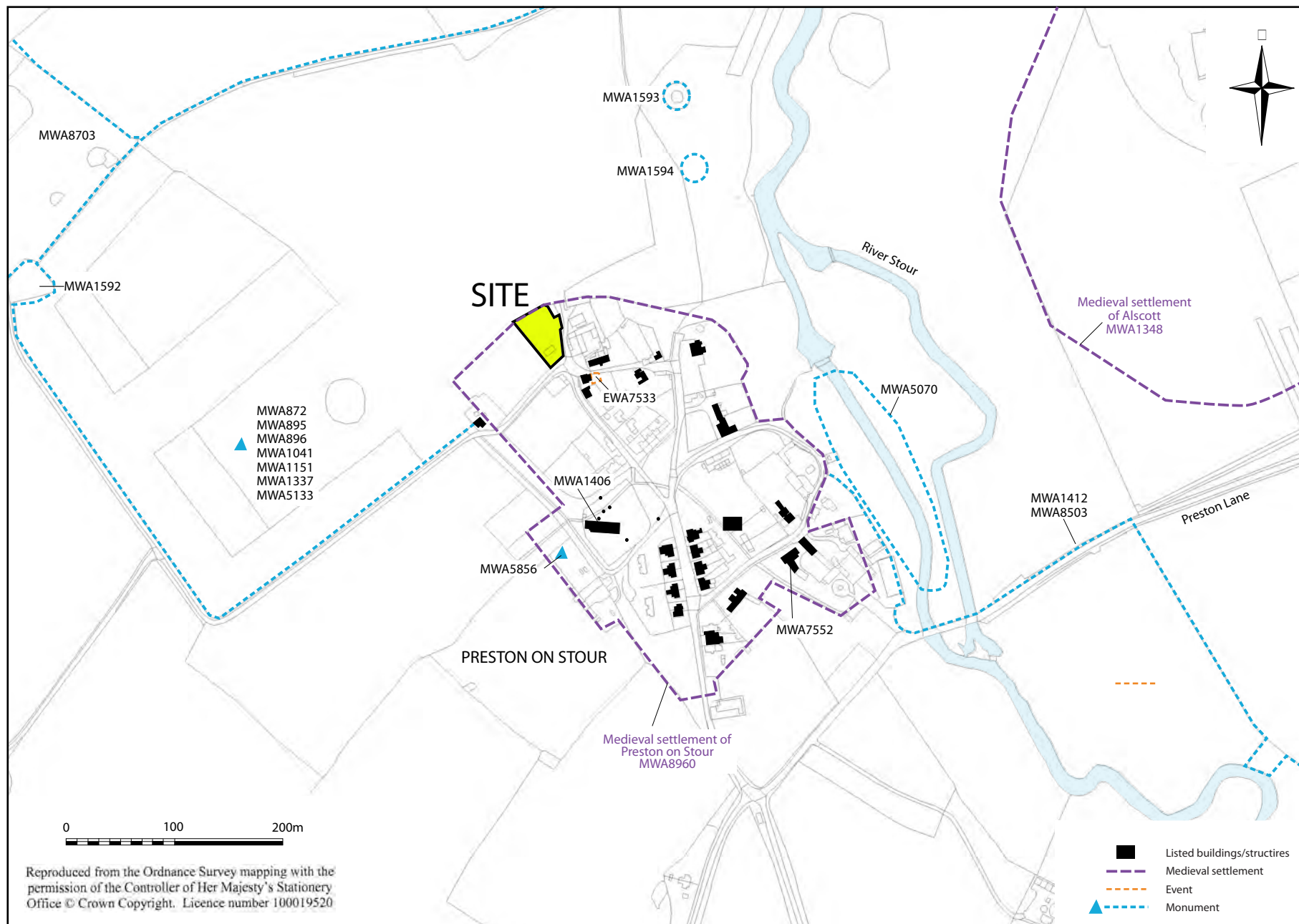


Fig 1: Site location

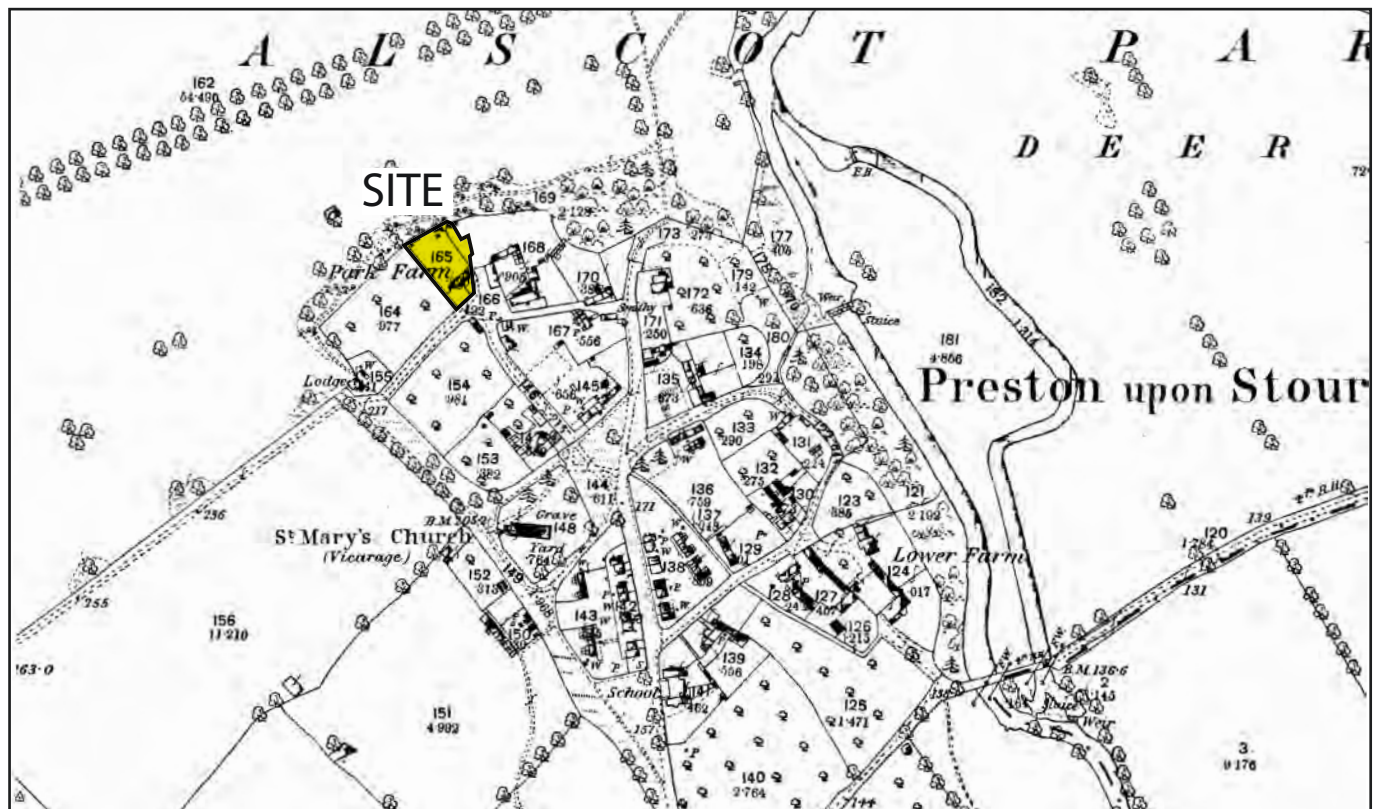


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1885



Fig 3: Detail from Second Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1901-1902



Fig 4: Trench location

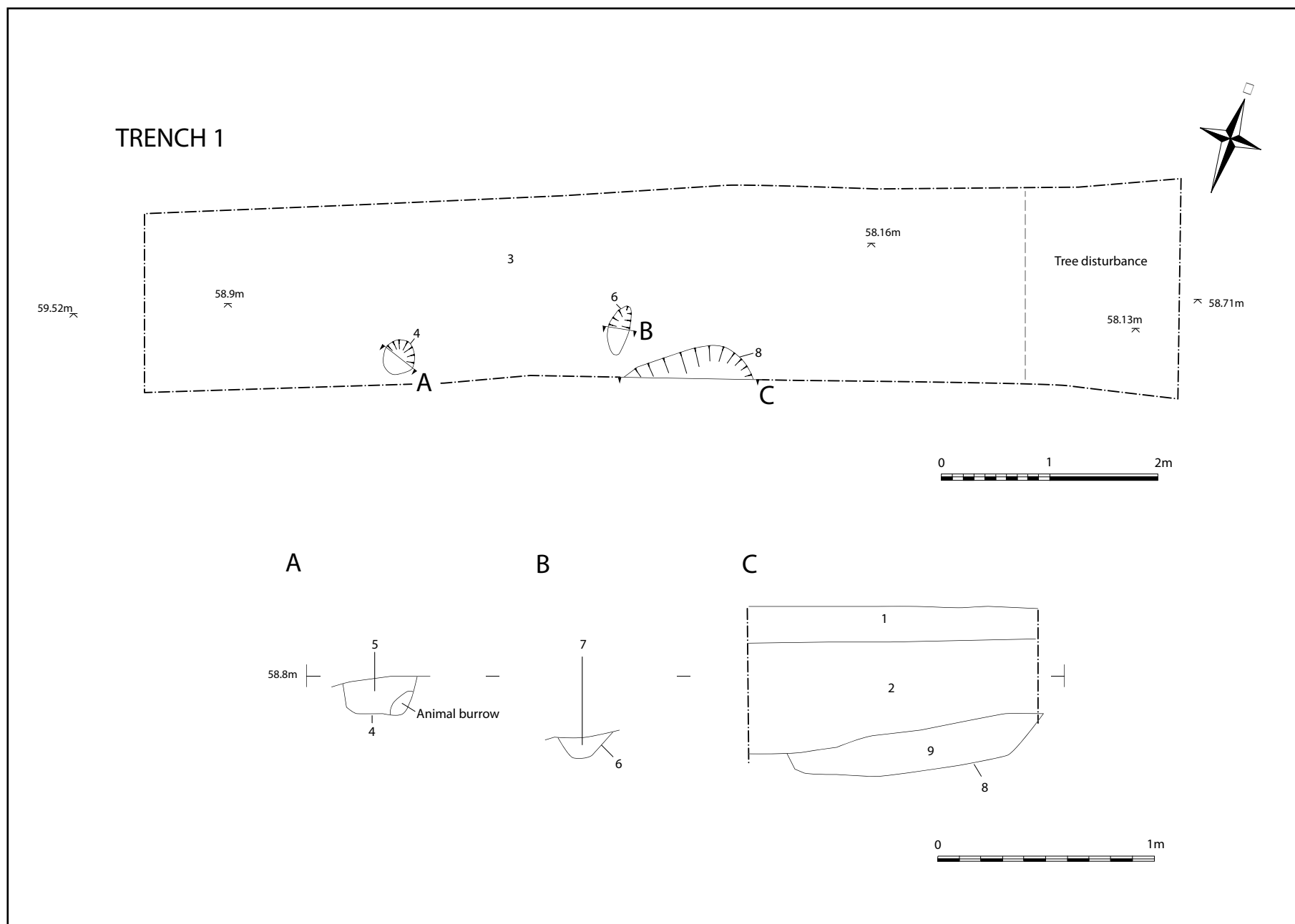


Fig 5: Trench plan and section



Fig 6: Trench, looking north-east



Fig 7: Posthole 4, looking south-west



Fig 8: Posthole 6, looking south



Fig 9: Pit/tree hole 8, looking south-east



Fig 10: Nubian Boot Polish Bottle