global environmental solutions

Pebsham Landfill Site, East Sussex
Stockpile and Northern Quadrant
Archaeological Excavation 2010

Archaeological Archive Report

SLR Ref : 405.00034.00444

July 2014

Rev 2

CONTENTS

TABLES

FIGURES

DRAWINGS

APPENDICES

Status of report: Final

Author	Tim Malim BA, FSA, MIfA
Date	25th October 2013
Review (external)	Casper Johnson (ESCC)
Date	10th April 2014
Revisions	Marcus Headifen: consistency, cross-referencing, addition of Site Plan by grid square (Appendix G), correction of unclear text
Date	4th July 2014

The SLR staff involved in the implementation of this project were:

Tim Malim BA, FSA, MIfA	Technical Director	Stratigraphic Analysis Archive Report
Damian Hind BA, MA, MIFA	Associate	Post-Excavation Assessment
Andy Towle BA, MA, PhD	Associate	Project Management of Field Work
George Nash BA, Mphil, Dphil	Associate	Lithics analysis
Caroline Malim BA, MPhil,	Senior Illustrator	Report Drawings
Ben Blakeman BSc, MSc	GIS Consultant	Site plans and survey editing
Thomas Wellicome BSc, MA	Senior Archaeologist	Processing and matrix production
Marcus Headifen BA	Archaeologist	Internal review and revisions

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Acknowledgements

SLR is grateful for the assistance of Ian Tridgell and Jeff Rhodes (Biffa Waste Services) and Casper Johnson and Greg Shuter (East Sussex County Council) during the course of the works.

The investigation was designed and directed by Andy Towle (SLR). Fieldwork was undertaken by Gerry Martin Associates. The site work was supervised by Gerry Martin and Kate Griffiths. They were assisted by Z. Cameron, G. Crawford, M. Headifen, R. Martin, Z. McBride, K. Mees, G. Morley, A. Thompson, T. Wellicome and R. Woolley. Post-excavation assessment and analysis was undertaken by Luke Barber (ceramics), Dawn Mooney and Louise Rayner (Archaeology South East) charcoal samples,

1.0 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

An archaeological strip, map and record exercise was carried out over the period May to September 2010 on ground north of the Pebsham Landfill site (NGR TQ 770 096) which had been permitted as a soil storage area. This document forms the stratigraphic narrative and archive report for the site.

A large number of archaeological features were discovered during the topsoil strip which necessitated rapid excavation and recording. Although activity was found over most of the site, clusters of activity were most evident in the southwestern quadrant of the site, in the south-east on a ridge that sloped down to east and south, and on the northern edge of the area investigated.

Four main periods of archaeological activity were present: Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age/Romano-British, and early medieval (Saxo-Norman). The main character of the archaeology consisted of Iron Age pyro-technical activity, land division, and structural components including two possible round-houses, several possible rectangular buildings, and a possible corn-dryer. The Saxo-Norman period was significant for the quantity of ceramic material recovered from a hearth. A large number of soil samples were collected for palaeoenvironmental and industrial process analysis, but unfortunately the majority of these were discarded by the organization to whom the samples had been sent.

Features included linear gullies and ditches, with fire pits and some post holes being noted. Few of these features intercut, making the possibility of identifying clear stratigraphic relationships difficult from the excavation record alone. In addition, there was a substantial amount of colluvium covering lower levels of the site, suggesting the area had been subject to erosion during periods of cultivation. This had resulted in a high level of damage to archaeological deposits, as well as masking features buried beneath the colluvium.

Evidence for hearths was relatively abundant, and charcoal within these features provided an accurate date for individual features, which demonstrated that the majority of features were attributable to the Iron Age. The C14 dates spanned a range from the 2nd century BC to 1st century AD, and their accuracy was verified by use of two samples from each deposit. Charcoal was identified as coming from Alder, Oak and Maple.

Artefacts recovered included flint, pottery and a polished stone axe. Several contexts suggest that flint working had occurred on site, and the fact that the site lies adjacent to Combe Haven is probably no coincidence, as this location would have been a valuable hunting area in the past. The pottery was predominantly Iron Age and Saxo-Norman in date, with occasional Bronze Age sherds. One sherd of Medieval and no later pottery was recovered, although a small collection of post-medieval artefacts was found by metal-detecting.

2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 Site location and description

The site was formed from a piece of land approximately resembling a parallelogram. The southern side measured 250m and the western margin 238m. The northern and eastern edges narrowed to approximately 161m and 138m respectively. The overall area was approximately 4 hectares.

The general topography comprises a steep gradient from south to north producing a southern ridge that rises towards the west.

Figure 1 Site Location (site outlined in red) (after SLR 2008)

The site is located in agricultural land between Bexhill to the west and St Leonards / Hastings to the east in East Sussex. The site is within the administrative area of Rother District Council (with East Sussex County Council as the waste planning authority), and is located 1.2 km north of the coast. The site is situated north-west of the pre-existing Pebsham landfill, north of the A259 between Hastings and Bexhill (Figures 1 and 2). The total application area was 4.54 hectares. The land is located on a steep slope which drains to the north where low-lying land adjacent to the water course 'Combe Haven' is an area designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and noted for its wetland and reed-bed habitats (SLR 2008: 5). The site is located above the valley floor.

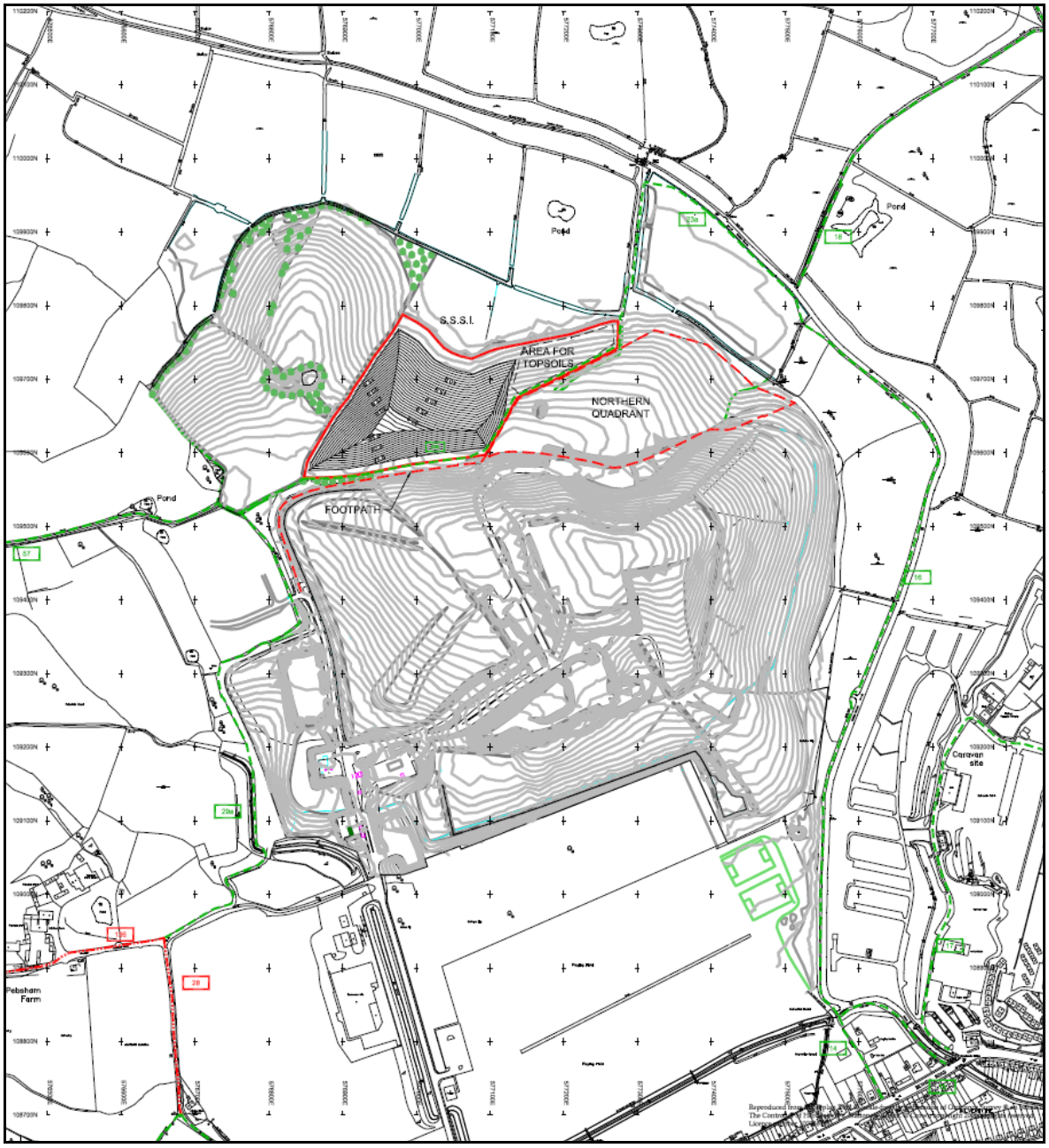
The previous land use of the application site was as pasture for the grazing of stock.

The site is located over the Hastings Beds, consisting of Ashdown Sands overlain by Wadhurst Clays. The drift geology at the site consists of alluvial deposits of estuarine silts and clays, freshwater flood-loams, peat-beds and woodland and marsh soils. These combined superficial deposits have been noted to be up to 20m deep within the vicinity of the site (SLR 2008: 7). Within the stockpile area, the deposits close to the surface consist of interbedded clay with elements of colluvium being noted on the lower slopes.

2.2 Planning

In response to a planning condition relating to the creation of a topsoil storage area, a programme of archaeological works was carried out at Pebsham Landfill Site (NGR TQ 770 096) during 2010 (Figure 2). The project involved a suite of investigations in advance of creation of this area, although it primarily involved a metal detector survey and an archaeological strip, map and record exercise, which led to the full excavation of a large number of landscape and other features found within the site. The site code used was PEB10.

Figure 2: Detail of Site, showing stock pile area and Northern Quadrant (after SLR 2008)



The Client secured planning permission to use the site for stockpiling of top soil and sub-soil associated with permitted activities within the existing Pebsham Landfill site (SLR 2008) (Planning Reference RR/543/CM). The application received permission, but a condition was placed on the work (Number 14), in relation to the potential unknown archaeological remains at the site:

> *"14. No development shall take place within the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, including a timetable for the investigation, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Transport and Environment. The works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details. A written record of any archaeological works undertaken shall be submitted to the Director of Transport and Environment.*
>
> *Reason: The development may disturb items of archaeological interest which should be investigated and recorded, in accordance with Policy WLP35 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Waste Local Plan 2006."*

The placing of an archaeological condition on the proposed development was also consistent with Planning Policy Statement 5 (2010) and to preceding guidance (PPG16).

Following discussions over the practicality of a phased archaeological programme, SLR proposed a scheme in which the Client's preparatory topsoil strip of the stockpile area was undertaken under archaeological supervision, after a preliminary metal detector survey. Any archaeological remains exposed during the stripping would be recorded and sampled. This type of investigation was referred to as a "strip, map and sample" exercise. It negated the requirement for a drawn-out programme of archaeological works in circumstances where the scheme had little room for re-design to preserve remains in situ; where there were few known archaeological remains within the development area, and where there was a commitment on the part of the Client to adequately record any remains encountered during the groundworks.

This document describes the outline findings of an archaeological "strip, map and sample" during the topsoil strip of the stockpile area.

2.3 Archaeological background

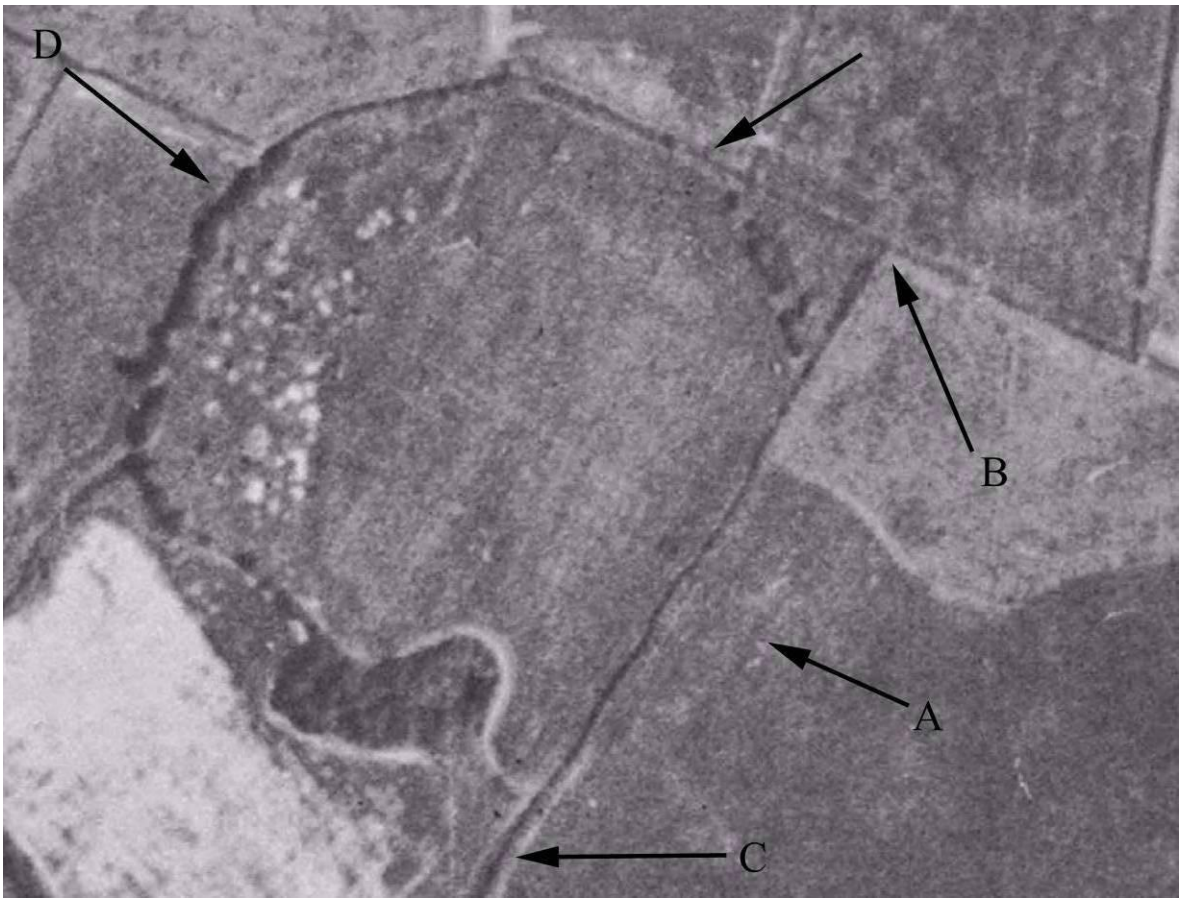
As part of the preliminary research for the site, an archaeological desk based assessment (DBA) was undertaken (SLR 2008). In addition, comments from the East Sussex County Archaeologist on recent fieldwork in the area not previously available were incorporated into the DBA.

The DBA showed that no HER entries were located within the site. An aerial photograph dating to 1947 (Figure 3), showed possible activity in the form of a cropmark located on the western fringes of the site, but otherwise there was no suggestion of known archaeological remains existing within the site boundary. Whilst it was far from clear, it was considered that the cropmark may have represented a univallate Iron Age hillfort (C. Johnson, pers. comm.).

Further archaeological potential for the site was considered possible, due to its location adjacent to Combe Haven (300m north) and previously unpublished work that showed the valley floor to have potential for the presence of archaeological remains from the Prehistoric and Roman periods. In addition, there was a suggestion that the road running immediately south of the site may have been of Roman origin, on the basis of its straight alignment and

its appearance on all historic mapping (Casper Johnson pers. comm. to Andy Towle 08.04.09). No indication of the potential for remains from later periods was known before the fieldwork, and the site was considered to have been used for agricultural purposes since Post-Medieval times.

Figure 3: 1947 Aerial phtograph showing circular cropmark (D) beyond western limit of site. A is where the line of it passes through the site, B is the northern limit of the site, C the western boundary of the site.



3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 General

The specific aims of investigating and recording archaeological remains on site were delivered by means of a strip, map and sample exercise, the main elements of which included:

- Undertaking a metal detector survey to recover metal artefacts close to the surface prior to the site strip
- Supervising the stripping of the topsoil from the development area
- Recording and sample excavating all archaeological remains exposed
- Analysing and reporting on the results of the fieldwork
- Depositing the archive of records and any artefacts recovered with a suitable local repository

The work was undertaken with reference to the Standards and Guidance of the Institute for Archaeologists and East Sussex's *Standards* document (ESCC 2008).

3.2 Metal Detector Survey

Prior to the topsoil strip a metal detector survey was undertaken by a group of experienced local detectorists, arranged through the East Sussex metal detectorists' liaison group. The location of all significant archaeological finds was recorded using GPS in order to identify any concentrations which may indicate the location of buried archaeological features. The metal detecting survey was undertaken in accordance with the draft metal detecting survey standards prepared by East Sussex County and under the supervision of an SLR archaeologist.

The metal detecting survey was to be repeated after completion of the topsoil strip, however, it was deemed unnecessary since the follow-on archaeological excavation was imposed instead.

3.3 Topsoil Stripping

All machining was carried out under the strict control of the SLR archaeology team to ensure correct depths of excavation was maintained and the site stripped in as methodical manner as possible to allow accurate and complete recording of any archaeological features exposed.

The work was executed using large tracked excavators equipped with a toothless "ditching" bucket. Spoil was removed to the storage area (north-east corner of the site) using 20-30 ton ADTs where final stockpiling was carried out by bulldozer.

This was in accordance with the agreed terms as specified in the original application, with a tracking and possible damage to unrecorded archaeology minimised through constant supervision and adherence to the methods outlined in the WSI.

A 2m wide buffer of undisturbed ground was left around the perimeter of the site to eliminate the possibility of direct runoff or other inadvertent transference of suspended material off-site

in the event of heavy rain. A low bank of excavated topsoil was also be set atop the northern (downslope) perimeter to further ensure against the possibility of direct runoff from the site. This was a temporary measure in addition to the agreed longer term bunding arrangements which were designed for the storage area after construction.

The archaeological remains that were encountered during the topsoil strip were fully exposed, and segregated from the rest of the site using temporary fencing (road irons and bunting) to avoid accidental damage from plant traffic. The remains were then investigated and recorded by a member of the SLR archaeology team. Areas were formally signed off following a weekly site visit from the County Archaeologist.

The topsoil stripping was organised such that it could continue away from the identified archaeological remains, to maintain progress and minimise disruption to the construction timetable. Additional archaeological staff were required when extensive remains were exposed which could not readily be investigated and recorded by a single individual.

The remains exposed during the work required a rapid expansion of the field team from a single monitoring archaeologist to a team of 12 site staff. This was undertaken in consultation with Biffa and the County Archaeologist, in order to ensure that the preparation of the site proceeded as rapidly as possible for the Client, whilst archaeological remains were rapidly investigated. The presence, extent and significance of the remains present was entirely unexpected, and could not have been predicted on the basis of the information available prior to the groundworks. The pressures of time and scale of remains represented a challenge to the archaeological team, and methodological shortcomings were exposed.

3.4 Sondages

Four machine-excavated sondages (or test pits) were excavated to test for the presence of archaeologically significant deposits within colluvial deposits at the site. These test pits were used to inform the recording strategy undertaken during the topsoil strip. They were excavated using a machine equipped with a toothless “ditching” bucket. The sections were recorded and deposits of interest inspected for artefact recovery. The location of the sondages are indicated Drawing 1. Since they were not (with the exception of sondage A) designed to locate any known features, specific placing was not an issue. The sondages were accurately surveyed in following excavation by GPS.

Sondage A was located to intercept the curvilinear feature close to the western limit of the site, to establish whether or not it was of archaeological interest prior to the topsoil strip.

For reasons of both Health and Safety and efficiency, trenching was carried out using a minimum of two staff. The sondage trenching was carried out as the first stage of the topsoil strip. All machining was carried out under archaeological direction.

3.5 Fieldwork Recording

All cut features were planned and sectioned, with palaeoenvironmental samples taken from those deposits considered of potential. The sample size was determined in discussion with palaeoenvironmental specialists from Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT) and the County Archaeologist.

Archaeological deposits were recorded using a pro-forma recording system, and fully cross-referenced.

The photographic record comprised high-resolution digital images with a supporting index.

The drawn record comprised plans of the site at a suitable scale, 1:20 for features, and sections at scale 1:10. Feature locations and outlines were also recorded using engineering surveyors supplied by the Client and also SLR Consulting to produce overviews of progress.

Artefacts/ecofacts were collected and recorded stratigraphically. All artefacts were labelled, packed and stored in appropriate materials and conditions to ensure that no deterioration occurs. All artefact/ecofact processing/storage were carried out in accordance with UKIC (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation) guidelines and will accord with relevant Institute of Field Archaeologists Guidelines on Finds Work.

Figure 4: Views of site work in progress

a) Looking north; b) looking west; c) looking south showing colluvium; d) looking south

e) recording colluvium; f) Bronze Age ditch [497] looking south; g) natural gully [345] beneath colluvium

4.0 CHARACTER AND DISTRIBUTION OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND COLLUVIUM

4.1 Quantification of archaeology and natural deposits

Shortly after commencement of topsoil stripping, it became evident that the site contained extensive, significant archaeological remains, manifested as residual artefacts present in topsoil and colluvial deposits, as well as cut features observable beneath the topsoil and masked in part by colluvial deposits.

This arrangement of the archaeological remains represented a logistical challenge during the topsoil and subsoil stripping of the site, since archaeological features would be exposed at different levels within a variable and localised sequence of colluvial deposits. This meant that the machine-stripping of the site in preparation for the Client's use required repeated careful stripping to expose the archaeology present within the colluvial deposits.

The excavation recorded 586 contexts interpreted as archaeological deposits, consisting of 231 cut features, 355 fills and other deposits. In addition a further 25 features were recorded during the course of the investigation which have been identified as natural phenomenon (such as animal burrows).

A number of tree throws were noted during the excavation. These have not been discounted from the body of data, as they may represent possible boundary alignments, however, they are not included within the narrative unless their location is clearly related to possible ditches or other boundary features.

4.2 Organisation of the study area

For ease of organisation in the post-excavation stage, the site was subdivided into a grid of 23 boxes, of 38m by 25m – this accorded to an area which fitted onto an A3 sheet at 1:100. Whilst it is understood that this was an arbitrary method, it allowed a general descriptive narrative of spatially-associated features. The numbering system ran A-H (south-north), and 1-6 (west-east). Boxes where archaeological features were recorded were A1, B1-B6, C1, C3-C6, D5-D7, E2-E5, F3-F6, G4 and H4 (see Drawing 1 and Appendix G for detail of each grid square).

4.3 Characterization of archaeology on site

The following descriptions include explanation of the topographical location and character of the archaeological remains within different parts of the site, as well as initial interpretation. Following stratigraphic analysis as part of the post-excavation process a fuller description of all features and deposits has been compiled and structured as a phased chronological site development narrative which is presented in the next chapter.

4.3.1 Areas A1-C1

Description

This area comprised three grid squares - A1, B1 and C1; located in the south-west corner of the site. A large number of linear features were recorded within this area of the site. These were orientated roughly north-south or north-east – south-west, (downslope). This area was the location of the cropmark noted on aerial photography, though no evidence of this feature was found. Several possible postholes were found, although these did not cohere into any structures.

Linear features

Ditch [21] ran north-south and appeared on the same alignment to ditch [17], which had a rounded terminal, located 5m north-east. Ditch [21] was relatively poorly defined. It was accompanied by an adjacent shallower cut [22], filled by mid-brown developing into yellow-brown silty clay (29), which may have represented a re-cut of the original feature. No finds were recovered from these features.

Five metres to the north, an east-west aligned ditch [10] was recorded. It was aligned with cut [27]. Analysis of pottery from ditch [10] suggests a Late Iron Age date.

Approximately 30m north-east an east-west aligned linear cut [32] was recorded. This had a clearly defined, rounded base, though it petered out towards the east, possibly as a result of truncation through ploughing. No finds were recovered.

A linear, north-south aligned slot [55] was located on the crest of the highest point of the ridge. The feature was filled by compacted yellow grey clay (57) overlain by mottled greyish orange clay (56).

Pits and other ovoid features

Cutting into fill (14), from ditch [10], was a small sub-circular feature [6], filled by dark grey silt and clay (7) containing burnt material, interpreted as a fire pit.

Cutting the natural clay was an undated circular post-hole [34], filled by light brown sandy clay (39), that was cut by pointed stake-hole [37] (unseen in plan) filled by grey-brown silt (38) and capped by light brown, possibly burnt, silty clay (33).

Pit [23] contained evidence of AD10th-11th century date. It was located near to pit [71] and slot [55], neither of which contained datable material.

Rectangular pit [23] contained a fill of orange clay (26) at its base that was overlain by scorched bluish grey silty clay (25). This fill contained 3 sherds of Saxo-Norman pottery of C10th- C11th date, which was overlain by mid brown grey silty clay (40) that butted three upright stones (41). This may suggest stone packing or a small cist. Fill (40) was covered by a layer of charcoal and pottery fragments within grey silty clay (43), beneath two Ironstone rocks (44). This was covered by scorched, mottled mid brown-grey sandy silty clay (24). A relict soil comprising highly-mixed mid brown silty clay (5) sealed feature [23] and also sealed fills (8), (9), (11), (14), (18) and (30).

Discussion

The earliest features appeared to be a series of narrow ditches that cohere into a pattern interpreted as field boundaries or beam trenches, depending on size. This was provisionally interpreted on the basis of their form as being Iron Age in date. They were aligned across the slope and may suggest possible boundary features. While not having any finds associated with them, they were sampled for organic deposits, though this material was later discarded by SWAT.

Pits [23] and [71] appeared to be Saxo-Norman in date. The pits appear to be of three distinct types in this area: tree throws, fire pits and post holes. Several contained charcoal remains, though as mentioned above these samples were discarded by SWAT before they could be processed.

Several of the shallow, wide, oval pits can be interpreted as tree throws, given that they appear to be backfilled with silts suggestive of natural processes.

4.3.2 Areas B2-C3

Area B2-C3 comprised of boxes B2, B3, B4 and C3. These areas were located in the central southern part of the site and contained linear and sub-circular features.

Linear features and their fills: (81),(82),(83),(84),(85)-[86]; (91),(92),(93),(94)-(95)-[96]; (101)-[102]; (114)-[115]; (120)-[121]; (122)-[123]; (124),(138)-[125]; (136)-[140]; (143)-[146]; (147)-[149]; (158)-[159].

Sub-circular features and their fills: [80]-(116,117); [87]-(88); [104]-(103); [119]-(118); [150]-(151).

Pits

None of the pits recorded in the areas noted in this section ([80], [119], [150], [87]) can be related to each other. Of these features, only [87] was suitable for dating, as it the fill (88) contained charcoal, though the sample collected from this fill was later discarded, while [150] contained 3 flints from fill (151), one of which was interpreted as Mesolithic or Neolithic (SF 161).

Linear features

Based on the stratigraphic relationships and layout, the earliest activity in this part of the site was an east-west aligned linear cut approximately 36 metres in length. This was recorded as a discontinuous series of cuts ([96], [125] and [159]); the principal element being [96]. No finds were recovered from this group.

Cut [96] was partially truncated by an east-west aligned cut [86] that was located just to the south. Further west, cut [86] was recorded as an east-west aligned cut [140].

To the north-east of cuts [86] and [96] was a roughly north-south aligned ditch [115]. This feature appeared to form a corner with cuts [86] and [96], the corner being marked by an sub-ovoid pit [104] filled by mid greyish yellow sandy silt (103), which was cut by a short north-south aligned linear cut [102] filled by light greyish yellow silty clay (101).

Interpretation

The features identified in this area suggest the intermittent remains of ditches set at right angles which may stratigraphically suggest two phases within those set on an east-west axis.

The alignment of the east-west aligned ditches [96], [86], and north-south aligned ditch 115 suggest the remains of field boundaries, possibly with cuts [104] and [102] marking the corner point. However, the lack of cultural artefacts or stratigraphic analysis makes it difficult to know if they are contemporary, although this appears to be likely.

4.3.3 Areas B4-C4

Most features in this area were generally poorly defined and in some doubt as to their cultural authenticity, on account of their acutely shallow depth; however, the fills to [157] and [266] had sufficient charcoal for radiocarbon dating and suggest they are of anthropogenic origin. Fill (291), from pit [266] contained 18 sherds of Late Iron Age pottery.

Linear features and their fills: (105)-[106]; (357)-[358]; [361]-(362). The two cuts ([106] and [358]) were extremely shallow, and produced no artefacts from their fills.

Sub-circular features and their fills: (105),(106),(107)-[108]; (156)-[157]; [266]-(267),(268); (291),(292)-[293]; (335)-[336]; [339]-(340); (355)-[356]; (422)-[423].

4.3.4 Areas B5-C6

The area comprised grid squares B5, B6, C5 and C6 and consisted of an area that was located on the eastern crest of the ridge that rose towards the west, overlooking Combe Haven. Activity primarily appeared to be located to the south of a linear feature [133]/[500], within areas C5 and C6. The features recorded were a mixture of linear and non-linear features, which were interspersed and intercutting.

This was clearly a focus of activity within the site, and the direct evidence suggests some form of food processing was being undertaken.

The following fills contained datable evidence:

- (433): Mesolithic flint (fill of ditch/ channel [434])
- (435): Mesolithic flint (fill of tree bole [436]
- (282): Neolithic flint (fill of gully [283]
- (449): 2 Bronze Age pot sherds (fill of pit [250])
- (208): possible Early Bronze Age sherd (fill of pit [209])

Three very shallow, narrow gullies ran on a northeast-southwest alignment approximately 18 metres in length. These features comprised of the following: [394], [396], [398]. A similar, linear east-west aligned cut [391] was also recorded. They contained no dating evidence.

A linear east-west aligned cut [434] contained a Mesolithic flint (SF 201) within fill (433). A number of features clustered around this apparent alignment perhaps indicating contemporary use e.g. pits or other shallow depressions, which could represent the remains of trees or a level of activity which has been otherwise truncated elsewhere on the site. These features comprised of the following: [319], [321], [342], [392], [417], [419], [420], [425], [487].

A north-south aligned curvilinear feature [198] was cut by a sub-circular plan, north-south aligned cut [196], which was cut by a lozenge-shaped cut [194]. No datable finds were associated with these contexts.

Pits [319], [321], [342], [417], [419], [420] and [425] were located in close proximity to a series of gullies ([394], [396] and [398]). Their position and relationship with the gullies might suggest that trees were planted in conjunction with a boundary, however without clear stratigraphic relationships or contemporary dating, such interpretation is speculative at best.

Approximately ten metres east of this group was a short linear stretch of ditch [283] bearing the same alignment. Its fill (282) contained a Neolithic flint, suggesting that the segmented ditches that share the same alignment and lay to the west may be contemporary. A short section of isolated ditch [166] was also thought likely to be contemporary.

Appearing to replace the possible earlier boundary of [394]/ [396]/ [398] were a series of segmented ditch features that appeared overall to form a right-angle measuring approximately 15 metres aligned north-south and 27 metres in length veering westwards, and have been provisionally interpreted as part of land boundaries.

The north-south aligned portion comprised the following linear cuts: [243], [286], [454] (cut by [450], fill of which (449) contained early Bronze Age pottery), and [460]. This was separated from a parallel group to the east by 1.5-2m which comprised the following features: [247], [548]. The east-west aligned limb on the northern side comprised the following features: [465], [273], [271], [245].

Although Bronze Age pottery was recovered from pit [450], there was an absence of flint artefacts and other cultural material. The 1.50-3.00m gap between the two sets of parallel ditch segments may indicate a path or a hedgerow.

Approximately 39 metres east of the corner of the field system was a north-south aligned segmented ditch [186]/ [207]/ [209]. This was cut by a north-south aligned cut [191].

A possible stake hole [221] was associated with fill (206) (lying within [207]). A single early Bronze Age pot sherd was recovered from fill (208), which also lay within ditch [207].

Three small features were also noted around ditch [186/207/209]: linear cut [211]; oval plan cut [213]; circular plan post-hole [215].

<u>Fire-pits, pits and possible corn drier</u>

A group of undated fire-pits and pits was discovered:

- [157]-(156); [160]-(161),(165); [173]-(172); [177]-(176); [205]-(204); [217]-(216); [226]-(222),(223),(224),(225]; [228]-(227); [231]-(230); [236]-(237); [250]-(251),(252); [270]-(269); [277]-(278),(279); [294]-(295),(296),(297); [334]-(332)(333); [338]-(337); [351]-(349),(350); [444]-(445); [462]-(461); [477]-(478).

Further pits were noted in this area

- [219]-(218); [502]-(557); [503]-(599); [507]-(612).

A T-shaped cut [160] possibly served as a corn drier. Spread (164) may represent the raked-out ashes from corn drier [160] despite being cut by this feature.

Pits [157], [173], [177], [226], [231], [236], [250], [277], [294], [351] and [477] were located without a discernible pattern and could represent either hearths or fire-pits. This is clearly a focus of activity within the site, and the direct evidence suggests some form of food processing was being undertaken. If hearths and pits appear interspersed, it may suggest organised activities, and thus a possible settlement, although no structural remains were observed.

Pits [205], [217], [219], [228], [270], [334], [338], [444], [462], [502], [503] and [507] appeared to be similarly haphazardly arranged. These features were undated and possessed no diagnostic material within them. Cut [219] may have been a post-hole.

Three pits were cut by later features – none contained dating evidence:

- Cut [303] was cut by ditch [290];
- Curvilinear cut [505] was cut by [596];
- Pit [554] was cut by [552].

Possible Structures

A possible group of partial ring ditches was observed. The sequence included the following features:

A curvilinear feature with a rounded northern terminal [301] was in turn cut by a lozenge-shaped feature [288]. This feature was cut by crescent shaped pit [290], which extended northwards. Respecting this group and to the east was a curvilinear slot [257] filled by a series of deposits (280) and (253)-(256). Of these, (254) and (256) contained charcoal. A stake hole was noted [259] in association with these contexts.

A remnant series of structures may have been identified by a series of arcing slots [288], [290] and [301] that may have formed the south-eastern part of a large circular structure. Unfortunately, later truncation appears to have removed the remaining ground plan, limiting the potential for accurate interpretation. However, an outer ring may have been formed from slot [257], perhaps in association with post-hole [263], completing a terminal end.

Just west of a series of arcing slots ([288], [290] and [301]) were a further series of poorly defined slots and several other possibly structural features: [324], [304], [458], [441] and [443] (the latter two are both circular plan cuts).

Curvilinear slots [299], [304] and [324] may be the remains of heavily truncated ring ditches, although their definition was poor. A slot or gully [458] appeared to maintain the alignment northwards whilst two adjacent stake-holes [441] and [443] could represent further related structural elements.

Field boundaries

Two possible field boundaries were present in the form of two linear ditches. The largest element [500] measured 32m in length and was aligned east-west forming the northern limit.

Ditch [500] was formed from linear cuts [552], [559], [567] and [596] probably continuing westwards as cut [133] although the ditch forked into two parallel limbs; the additional being numbered [135] which turned slightly northwards.

Although a gap of 18m separated ditch [500] from a ditch [64]/[89], the general alignment suggested that [64]/[89] may have been a truncated continuation of [500]. Ditch [64/89] was aligned northwest-southeast and measured over 22m in length before disappearing beyond the limits of excavation.

Ditches [500] and [64]/ [89] formed a substantial landscape boundary around the crest of the ridge. There did not appear to be any subdivisions that would suggest it formed part of a rectilinear field system.

A rectilinear field system was outlined by the ditch configuration [62]/ [155]/ [112] whose axes were northeast-southwest and were divided by a partition ditch [53]/ [153] possibly represent land divisions suggestive of a field system. Pits [110] and [127] may be related to this activity.

Approximately 7.50m south of the earlier eastern end of ditch [500], between cut sections [567] and [595] was a north-south aligned ditch [51] measuring 32m in length which formed a right-angle with ditch [500]. Ditch [51] also cut a short northwest-southeast gully [166]. Ditch [51] appears to post-date [500] and its orientation was counter to it. A sub-circular plan pit [52], located nearby, contained three pieces of 9th-11th century pottery from fill (68).

4.3.5 Areas C6-D6

The area north of ditch [500] produced a number of features that were investigated, but it is highly probable that these deposits were not archaeological, as no cultural artefacts were recovered and no discernible configuration could be applied to their spatial disposition.

Contexts (534), (535) and (561) were issued to denote the interface between natural geology (5)0 and spreads of silt, representing colluvial deposition. They are not considered to be of archaeological note except in terms of formation processes.

A series of “pits” were investigated, however they appeared to be the result of bioturbation or geomorphological processes, rather than anthropogenic activity. These were: [510], [512], [514], [515], [518], [519] and [529].

Cuts [511], [522], [530], [531], [542], [544], [545], [549] were series of short linear features probably all represented natural gullies and runnels.

Cuts [516], [517], [569], [565], [591], [616] appeared to be scattered features with no discernible pattern which may represent post-holes. No datable evidence was recovered.

Unseen in plan was a V-shaped linear cut [563] that cut colluvium spread (562). This feature may represent a land drain or plough mark.

4.3.6 Areas D5-F6

Area D5-F6 comprised of grid squares, D5, E4, E5, F5 and F6. The main character in this area included the boundary created by gully [480] and ditch [489]/[496]/[497] and a series of pits just to the east of this division. This area appeared to be subject to soil movement/ colluvial processes.

Linear features

Approximately 40m east of gully [480] was a north–south aligned linear cut [345]. This feature continued southwards rising onto a ridge where definition was lost, although its fill probably continued in the form of a linear north-south aligned spread of maroon silty clay (187) that constituted a colluvial horizon. Flints recovered from layer (187) date from the Mesolithic period but are probably residual. It is considered that this was a natural feature.

Cutting the natural (50) was an undefined plan cut [483], seen within a sondage and from which a polished Neolithic hand axe (SF 186) was recovered (481). Pit [483] was truncated by gully [480]. The hand-axe was found in a good state of preservation.

The definition for ditch [480] was poor but it appeared to utilise a natural hollow (471) to the south and continued northwards for 62m where definition once more diminished probably truncated by later formation processes. It appeared to be filled by various deposits (584), (580), (578), (579).

Cuts [489], [496] and [497] appeared to form a truncated north-south aligned linear ditch that was at least 30m in length overall. It appeared to be deliberate land division. Ditch [489]/ [496]/ [497] appeared to cut gully [480], although the relationship between these two features was poorly defined and there exists a possibility that they were both contemporary.

Hollow [471] was adapted to form gully [480]. This may have been a cultural act but could be naturally occurring through land slip or erosion associated with poor land management resulting in the accumulation of probable colluvium (577-580) and (584-586)) towards the north.

Fire Pits

Pits [473], [498], [527], [546], [547] and [589] represent a concentration of fire-pits. They were relatively shallow with, in most cases, scorched bases. As with the group of fire-pits to the north-west (Area H4) the lack of related features, or finds such as animal bone, pottery or other industrial material is currently problematic to establishing a date or function.

Lynchet/ Terrace

A bench or terrace [310] appears to have been cut midway into the side of the north facing slope leading up to the ridge. Overlying this terrace was a thin layer of dark grey charcoal-rich silt (311), which was in turn overlain by differing layers of colluvium (312), (313), (314) and (353). This probably

represents the creation of a lynchet but may also have served as a track leading to the summit of the ridge.

4.3.7 Areas E3-H4

Area E3-H4 comprised of grid squares E3, E4, F3, F4, G4 and H4 and lay to the west of gully [480].

No pottery or flint was recovered from this area from within secure contexts except spread (374). Unstratified flint artefacts were encountered but these were largely non-diagnostic and undatable. Ten “fire pits”, ten probable pits and two post-holes were recorded.

A square spread of light brown and yellow grey clay silt (374) was recorded, which contained a concentration of flint debitage (eleven flints identified). This surface may represent a floor surface or flint working station, associated with hunting on the river plain nearby.

A sub-rectangular pit [366] appears to be a fire pit in which a single sherd of Late Bronze Age pottery was recovered, albeit abraded. Further fire pits or spreads of charcoal were recorded: [58], [61], [401], [405], [408], [410], [411].

A sub-circular pit [402], which contained hard, scorched pink clay (79), was cut by a sub-circular stake-hole [59] which was outlined by scorched pink clay (78). This surface was filled by sterile, light grey silty clay (77), which was overlain by a band of dark grey charcoal (76) beneath light yellow grey clay (74). Between cut [402] and sealed by fill (76) was orange fired clay (75). This may represent deliberate lining of a fire pit, for possible industrial processing.

All these features were shallow with, in most cases, scorched bases indicative of multiple use. With the exception of charcoal, no artefacts were recovered.

The following pits were recorded: {178], [381], [393], [404], [409], [429], [432], [438], [446], [447], [448].

Cut [381] appears to be a storage pit, the sides of which may have collapsed.

Pits [393] and [404] appeared to be rubbish pits whilst pit [409] had been damaged by intrusive activity, but could belong to the group of charcoal rich fire pits.

Pits [429], [432], [438], [446], [447] and [448] contained no dating evidence, but formed a discrete group flanking boundary [489]/ [496]/ [497]. The generally irregular layout and shallow depth of these features and the recovery of one flint artefact from fill (439) may suggest these features are Prehistoric in date.

Pit [178] remained undated and isolated from the other pits and features.

Two post holes were noted: [180] and [178]. They do not appear to be associated with other contexts.

4.4 General observations

4.4.1 Topography

The topography of the site appears to have been an important factor in the activity recorded. The site is based about a ridgeline and on the north facing aspect. This overlooks Combe Haven, which is a low lying alluvial meadow that is a remnant of a more extensive marshland prior to having drainage ditches constructed throughout the area. This extends to the north and west of the application site, and the water channel flows southwards towards a gap near Bulverhythe and into the sea.

The sloping nature of a large portion the site does not readily lend itself to domestic habitation, although some indication for this is suggested by the remains on site as well as pyrotechnical activity which was a significant component of the evidence. The archaeological evidence of boundary features suggests the ground was also used as a series of small fields. The topography may also have been utilised to assist drainage of the heavy clay soils by using ditches and gullies to remove standing water or reduce the water table.

The sloping nature appears also to have increased the erosion of the open ground within the site, which has contributed to the formation of terracing and colluvial layers in the lower portions of the site.

Contrary to the findings of Oxford Archaeology's 2007 report which suggested the focus of activity was along the edge of Combe Haven, most of the evidence uncovered in 2010 appears to show the preferred location was along the "ridge" which runs east-west towards the southern end of the site. This focus of activity, adjacent to a long-established, modern right of way, may have ancient origins. The lower lying areas adjacent to Combe Haven may well have been uninhabitable and marshy at times, and it is likely that this would have led to a lack of sustained activity in this northern area of the site. It may also have proved a resource for anyone utilising the area, as it would have been a favourable location for wildfowling and fishing, as well as a source of raw materials, such as reed.

4.4.2 Site formation processes

A number of the linear features appear to have been either naturally occurring gullies which have been recut, or may be the result of naturally meandering runoff. Analysis of these features with those considered to be of anthropogenic origin may show whether natural features were exploited to assist the creation of land divisions. Likewise, many of the larger, more irregular shallow pits are thought to represent the presence of trees within the site. It is possible that trees may have been selectively felled or managed to create the fields or provide "joins" in between ditches, so as to minimise work on the part of those farming the site.

Recent ploughing processes appear to have little affected the archaeological record, with few plough scars recorded ([45]-[49] and [60]). However, there does appear to have been substantial truncation occurring, given that many of the linear features are intermittent in nature. This may suggest that the initial interpretation of some of the smaller, straighter gullies may need to be reconsidered. The presence of terrace [310], a possible lynchet, further suggests prolonged cultivation and natural erosion processes having been active within the site, possibly explaining the colluvial nature of many of the deposits.

The provenance of many of the finds recovered from the linear features (flint and pottery) is in some doubt, given that runoff and soil creep is a strong possibility on the site, and the deposition within the fills of these linear features may represent secondary deposition. Dating the linear features using these finds alone may result in inaccuracies due to the

potentially residual nature of the finds, however those finds that can be reasonably assumed not to be secondary in nature may also be possible to relate to particular agricultural regimes.

4.4.3 Preservation of finds

Bone is noticeably absent from the finds assemblage: this may be due to a lack of bone being processed on the site, possibly indicating a lack of occupation, or equally it could represent preservation conditions were not suitable for bone or other organics. Other organic matter, such as cereal husks, has been found within the pits, and has been noted in the paleoenvironmental report. Whilst this could support an assumption that animal products were not being processed on the site, the lithics evidence may suggest otherwise.

It is noticeable that no glass or slag was identified on the site. Rather than this being due to the lack of raw materials in the surrounding area being available for processing, it may suggest that possibly the fire pits identified were not for used for industrial processes, due to the links between Combe Haven and the sources of iron from the High Weald. Only one fire pit exhibited the possibility of large scale processes being undertaken [160].

There appears to have been little waterlogging on the site: given that it lies on the side of a ridgeline, this may not be an overly surprising conclusion. No peat samples were recovered: hence recovery of pollen from the bulk samples would not be possible even prior to the environmental samples being discarded by Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company. Even so, this would have potentially limited the opportunity to accurately reconstruct the likely conditions on the site in antiquity through paleoenvironmental analysis.

4.4.4 Problems with dating and phasing

Given the widespread distribution of many of the features, there was relatively little in the way of intercutting features to create a strong stratigraphic sequence to form a relative dating tool. This problem was further exacerbated by a lack of diagnostic pottery capable of providing secure dates for the features in question.

Few contexts provided definitive dating evidence, with a significant proportion of those features containing sherds that appeared to have been substantially abraded; inferring possible pre-deposition weathering and therefore residuality. Five deposits have produced valuable radiocarbon dates that show a broad level of consistency for a period of activity during the later Iron Age.

4.4.5 Pottery

From a total of 164 pottery sherds, 145 were recovered from secure contexts – though the sherds came from only 15 contexts, indicating a lack of dating from the majority of the features recorded. See Appendix A for the full report.

Most periods appear to be represented from the Early Bronze age through to about AD 1000, although specifically Roman ceramic is rare within the assemblage.

Late Iron Age and Romano-British wares accounted for a total of 30 sherds, which may suggest a greater level of activity on the site, although this only equates to 5 secure contexts, with unstratified finds accounting for 6 of the total number of sherds from this period.

Only 8 sherds of Roman-British pottery were recovered and none these were from a “secure” context, being either unstratified or from topsoil.

The vast majority of pottery sherds (116) were of Saxo-Norman date (mid-C10th-11th): these were recovered from only 5 fills, with one context accounting for the majority of the sherds. A further two contexts provided pottery of Anglo-Saxon date (C9th-11th). Context 70 contained pottery from both periods. Context 24 contained 61 pieces of Saxo-Norman pottery, of two distinct types, 58 sherds being of one type.

One piece of medieval pottery was recovered from the ploughsoil – this was the latest sherd recovered. Due to its location in ploughsoil it was considered to be residual and therefore cannot be associated with any meaningful activity.

The pottery report states that whilst the overall level of pottery found was small, the dates are of interest since there is a noticeable lack of Early Bronze Age, Late Saxon and Saxo-Norman assemblages from Bexhill: this assemblage therefore helps to "fill a hole "in the narrative of the area, although the data is limited in scope.

4.4.6 Lithics

The site yielded a large assemblage of flint of varying quality – from rough cherty opaque material through to translucent flint (Appendix B full report) The majority of the material recovered derives from sub-surface contexts and the dating spread is between the Mesolithic (probably Late Mesolithic) through to the Bronze Age; some of it may be of a residual nature.

The material is unusually diverse, spanning at least three prehistoric periods, partially represented by diagnostic tools of high quality, in particular two Mesolithic cores (e.g. SFNo. 190), Neolithic cores (e.g. SFNos. 67, 78, 80, 222), Neolithic polished flint axes (e.g. SFNos. 60 and 186) and a number of blades and points (some retouched) that span both periods. Although no diagnostic lithics clearly derive from the Bronze Age, it is probable that a number of lithics classified prehistoric and comprising débitage and worked material may date from this period.

It is clear from the dispersal of material within such a confined space that the site was important, albeit periodically for at least 5000 years. It is probable that further lithic scatters/spreads extend beyond the current boundary of the site.

4.4.7 Metal-detecting

The site produced relatively little in the way of finds from the ploughsoil, however the background "noise" produced by the ubiquitous foil fragments hampered the survey and led to many false readings.

The finds distribution suggested a concentration of activity towards the south of the site, towards the higher ground. However the finds recovered suggest that there was limited activity on the site, with those items recovered indicating casual loss of a variety of items (Appendix C). The two coins suggest little about use of the site, and cannot be meaningfully compared, given that they are separated by several hundred years.

The metal detector survey did not suggest the presence of underlying significant archaeological remains at the site.

4.4.8 Charcoal and C14 dating

Preservation of large pieces of charcoal, individually collected and bagged, was generally fair to poor. Most of the remains exhibited some degree of sediment infiltration, resulting from fluctuations in groundwater level, and many fragments were soft and/or friable.

However, taxonomic identifications were still possible in most cases. The anatomical structure of the charcoal fragments identified from Pebsham was consistent with the following taxa:

Aceraceae: *Acer campestre*, field maple

Betulaceae: *Alnus* sp., alder

Fagaceae: *Fagus sylvatica*, beech; *Quercus* sp., oak

Rosaceae: Maloideae subfamily, including genera such as *Crataegus* sp. (hawthorn), *Malus* sp. (apple), *Pyrus* sp. (pear) and *Sorbus* sp. (rowan, whitebeam) which are indistinguishable from one another on the basis of microscopic anatomy alone.

The samples selected for dating represented those with the best potential for achieving accurate dates, and to establish an even distribution of dated contexts across the site (Appendix D).

4.4.9 Paleoenvironmental Samples

Seven samples were studied as a subset of the 72 bulk samples taken from the site, in order to ascertain the potential information held within the assemblage, and the viability for further meaningful research. See Appendix E for the assessment report.

Charred wood predominated in the analysed samples with seeds and grains recovered from only 2 of the 7 samples. These two samples provided very little of these types of remains.

The flot analysis also recovered magnetised material from one context (225), although this appeared not to have the crescent shape typical of the processing of ironwork. Burnt flint was also recovered.

The paleoenvironmental report recommended the analysis of possible hammerscale to determine the possibility that industrial processes were occurring on the site.

Unfortunately the remaining 65 samples, including many from features that contained charcoal suitable for radiocarbon dating, were all discarded by Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT) due to a delay in reaching agreement for post-excavation analysis and associated budgets. The potential for evidence regarding the type of industrial activities associated with the many hearth or fire-pits, as well as environmental data connected with other types of feature, was therefore lost.

5.0 SITE NARRATIVE

5.1 Introduction and structure of report

The post-excavation stratigraphic analysis has followed methods originally devised for the Department of Urban Archaeology, Museum of London, which structures the data hierarchically so that each archaeological context (cut, fill, layer) is assigned to a sub-group, which in turn are used to form groups, from which interior and exterior activity areas and related structures can be identified. Although there were relatively few stratigraphic relationships on which to build a complex matrix, it has been possible to adapt this method of analysis for Pebsham, so that spatial relationships and similarity in design have provided the reasons for group selection as construction and use episodes, and sub-groups tend to reflect disuse phases and infill deposits (see Appendix F for contexts organized by Phase, Group and Sub-Group and Appendix G for detailed plans of each Grid Square).

Building on the basic stratigraphic analysis, it has been possible to phase the site by comparison of feature types and their spatial distribution (see Drawing 2), as well as stratigraphic sequence and dating evidence. Incorporation of results from artefactual analysis and scientific dating, plus a consideration of potential residuality issues, have enabled a chronological development for the site to be established (see Drawing 3).

The overall site matrix is presented in Drawing 4, and this shows that the majority of features can be assigned to the Iron Age. It also demonstrates the scarcity of complex stratigraphic relationships, and within the site narrative only two further specific matrices have been included to assist with understanding the analysis.

The site narrative has been structured by Phase sections, and within these higher level divisions, each Group has then been presented as a sub-section, with a short descriptive title and identification of what area of the site it originates from (see Drawing 5). Within the Groups, each sub-group lists the cut number and dimensions, and then cut and fill numbers with detailed descriptions, cuts marked by the traditional square brackets and fills by parenthesis. Interpretation of each group is presented as a discussion text at the end of the group description.

The site narrative is followed by an overall interpretation of the chronological development, presenting a summary of the results of the investigation. Specialist analyses are included as appendices.

5.2 Period 1 Geological activity

This phase comprises the natural underlying geological formation and naturally occurring processes that might have been contemporary with some of the human activity on site.

Phase 1 Natural processes

Phase 1.1 geological formation of subsoil

(50) yellow-brown Jurassic clay, with lenses of grey clay and iron-pan

Phase 1.2 fluvio-glacial modifications to subsoil

(73), (327), (328), (343), (344), (407), (469), (470), (471), (472), (486), (487), (513), (602)

5.3 Period 2 Mesolithic and Neolithic activity

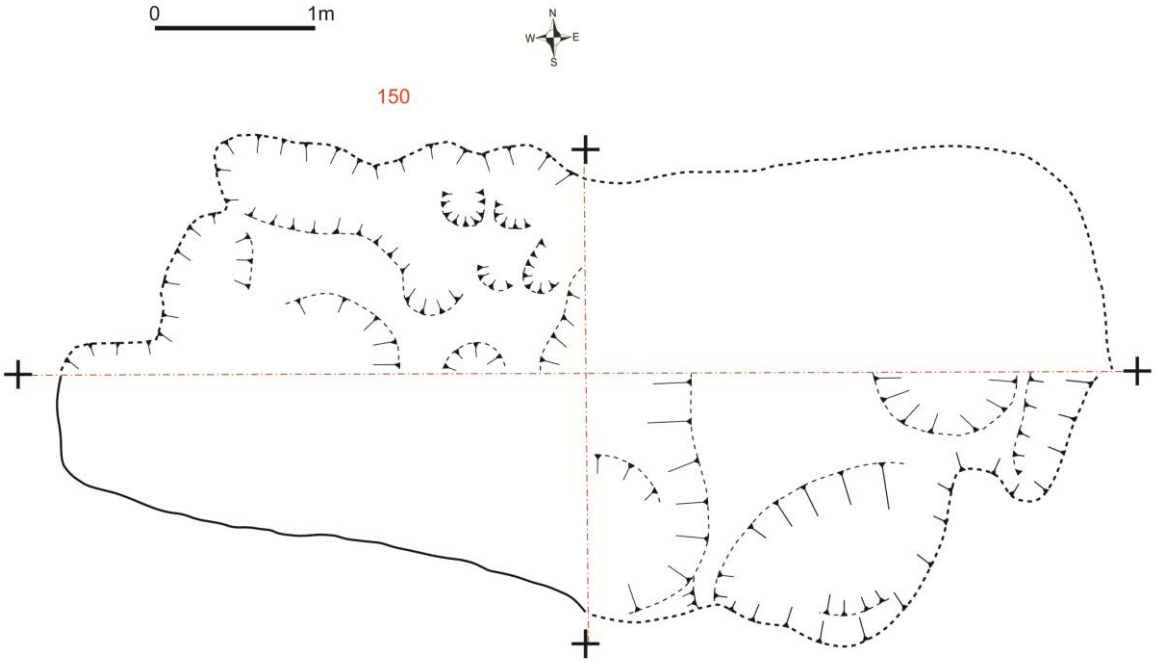
Phase 2.1 worked flint

An assemblage of 259 pieces of lithic material was collected during the excavation. Predominantly this consisted of worked flint and chert tools and debitage from topsoil recovery, most of which has been located two-dimensionally. A small number of these artefacts were found in the fills of cut features, and the majority of these were probably residual.

Some of the artefacts can be assigned to the Mesolithic or Neolithic period, but the majority (221 pieces) are described merely as prehistoric. Blades, cores and points were the most noteworthy finds from the datable artefacts, including five cores and two axe fragments, which demonstrate a presence in the landscape during this early period. In addition there are some cut features and a possible buried land surface that have been assigned to the Neolithic period (phase 2.2).

Phase 2.2 possible human cut features

Cut [150]: (Area C3) irregular oval-shaped quarry-pit; 6.51m W-E, 3.11m N-S, variable depth 0.02 - 0.28m



Fill (151): mid-dark brown sandy loam; charcoal flecks

Artefacts: SF161, SF162, SF163

SF161 Neolithic/Mesolithic hammer stone

This feature was unlike any others on site and contained Neolithic worked lithics with no later artefacts. It was an irregular shape, oval at the surface of the natural, but with variable depths created by at least seven deeper cut parts to the feature, deepest in central southern part of feature. A single fill comprised a sandy loam containing worked flint debris and charcoal flecks.

Cut [483]: (Area F5) natural gully running south-west – north-east, 1.15m wide, 0.6m deep

Fills (481), (482): soft grey clay-silt mottled orange

Artefact: SF186

Neolithic, Polished Stone Axe, reworked

This gully has been interpreted during fieldwork as a natural feature filled with water-lain silts. An alternative interpretation is that this represents a continuation of an Early Bronze Age ditch (see below Group 3.2).

Layer (374): (Area H4) firm, light brown/grey clay-silt, rectangular-shaped spread, 3.2m W-E, 1.5m N-S, depth 0.09m

Artefacts: Neolithic? 11 worked flint flakes, scraper and core fragments, SF213, SF216-225

Possible associations: pits [406], [411]

This horizon was interpreted on site as a Neolithic occupation layer, and possible flint-knapping activity.

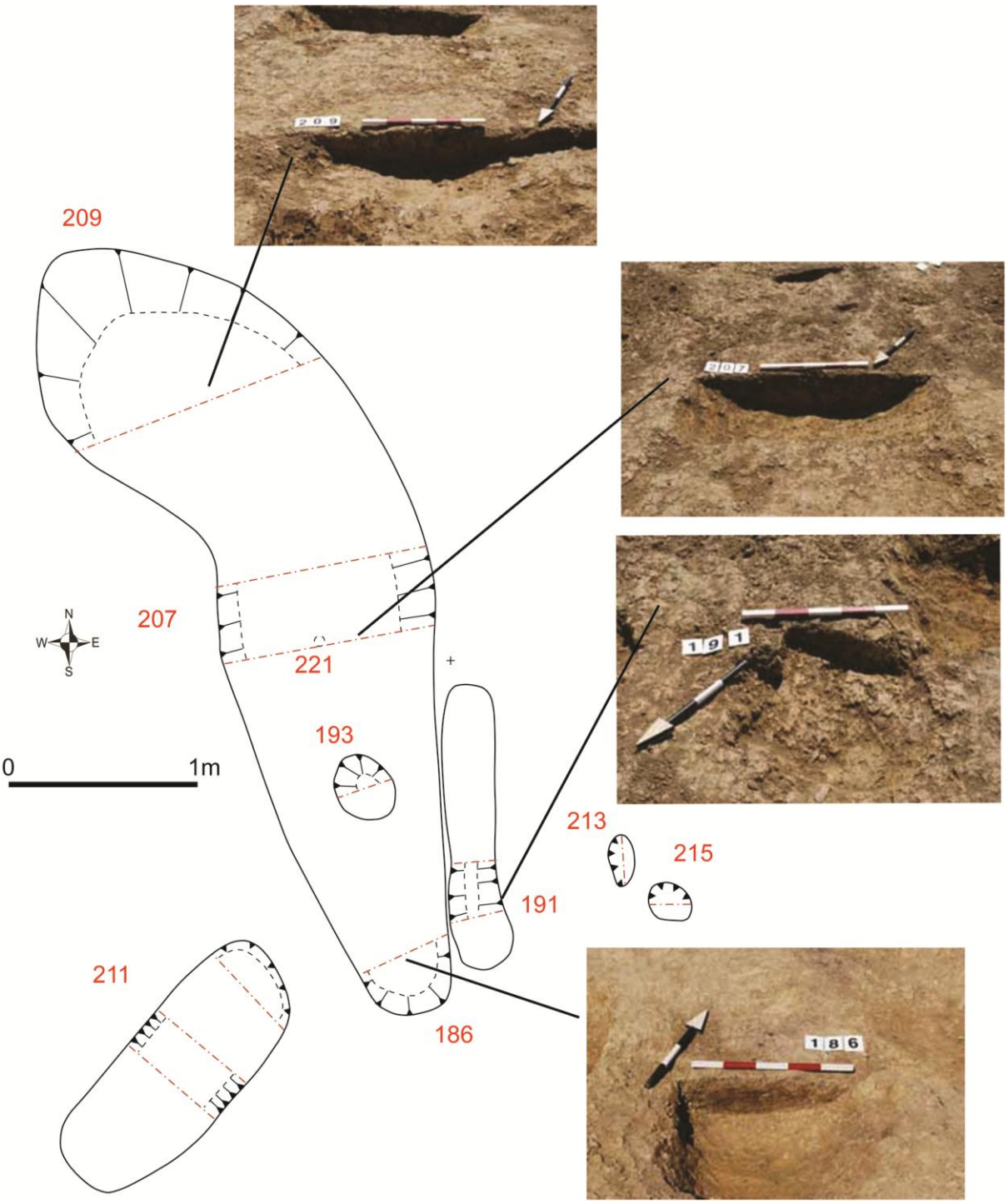
5.4 Period 3 Bronze Age activity

Phase 3.1 EBA

Group 3.1 Quarry pit complex

Sub-group 3.1.1 Pit(s) with EBA ceramic material

Cut [186]/[207]/[209]: (Area C6) oval-shaped quarry pits, 4.5m NW-SE, 0.55m SW-NE, depth 0.17-0.2m



Fills (185), (206), (208): mid-brown clay; small inclusions of carbonized wood

Artefacts: Early Bronze Age pottery fragment in 208, northern end of feature (2000 – 1300BC)

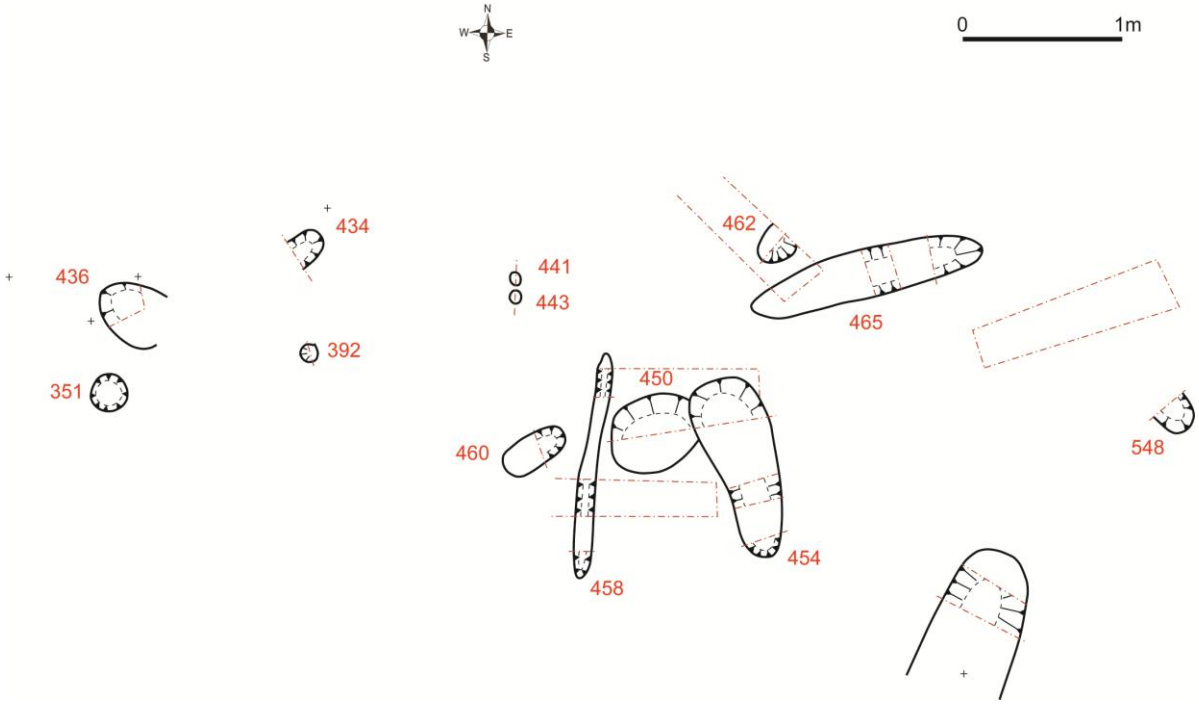
Cut [191]: gully, 3m N-S, 0.4m E-W, 0.05m depth; shallow linear depression parallel to linear pit [186]

Sub-group 3.1.2 deposit of burnt material

Cut [186]; fill (184): (Area C6) mid-brown clay; large inclusions of carbonized wood

This deposit is the top fill in southern part of quarry-pit complex (186).

Cut [191]; fill (190): pale brown clay carbon-rich, 3000mm x 400mm, 50mm depth; frequent charcoal and burnt clay



Section [454], [450], [458] looking south

Sub-group 3.1.3 pit

Cut [450]: (Area C5) pit, 1.5m x 1.32, depth 0.22m

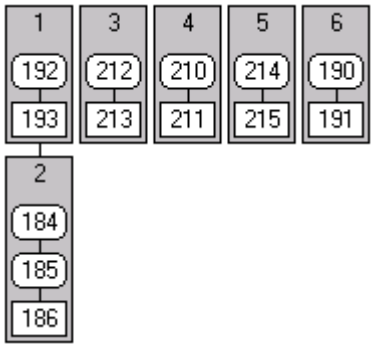
Fill (449): grey-brown clay-silt; charcoal flecks

Artefacts: 3 sherds Early Bronze Age pottery

Discussion and interpretation Group 3.1

The excavation record is unclear as to whether pit complex [186]/[207]/[209] is a single event, or several activities that join together. The cut appears continuous and the fill material is the same, so the interpretation given is that of a quarry-pit complex. The single pot sherd is abraded, but in the absence of later dating material within the fills, the pit complex has tentatively been assigned to a date contemporary with the pottery.

The deposit (184) represents a final episode of infilling for the quarry-pit complex [186]. The burnt material indicates proximity to domestic or industrial activity areas.



An isolated pit, [450] is located amidst a concentration of later activity. There is a possibility that the EBA pottery is residual, but the fact that the pottery has survived is rare on this site, and therefore suggests the fill of the pit is contemporary with the pottery.

Group 3.2 Ditch in northern part of excavation area

Sub-group 3.2.1 construction and use of NE-SW oriented ditch

Cut [483]/[489]/[496]/[497]: total length c.36.00m, width c.0.70m – 1.50m, V-shaped linear

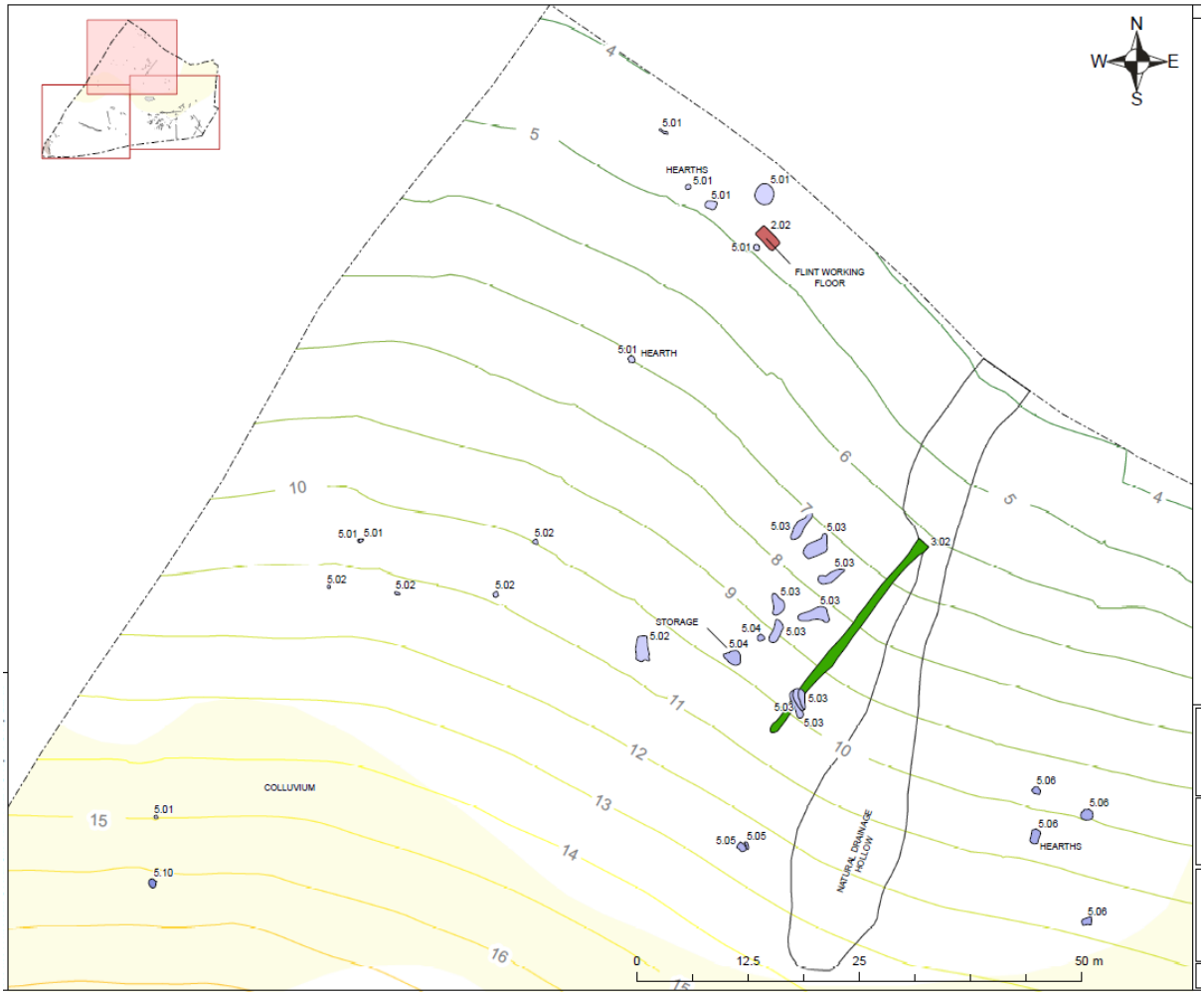
[480] and [483] (see detail) looking north

Cut [483]: (Area F5) >1.5m width, depth 0.6m, sloping sides flattish base, minimal investigation (southern end and lowest part of ditch)

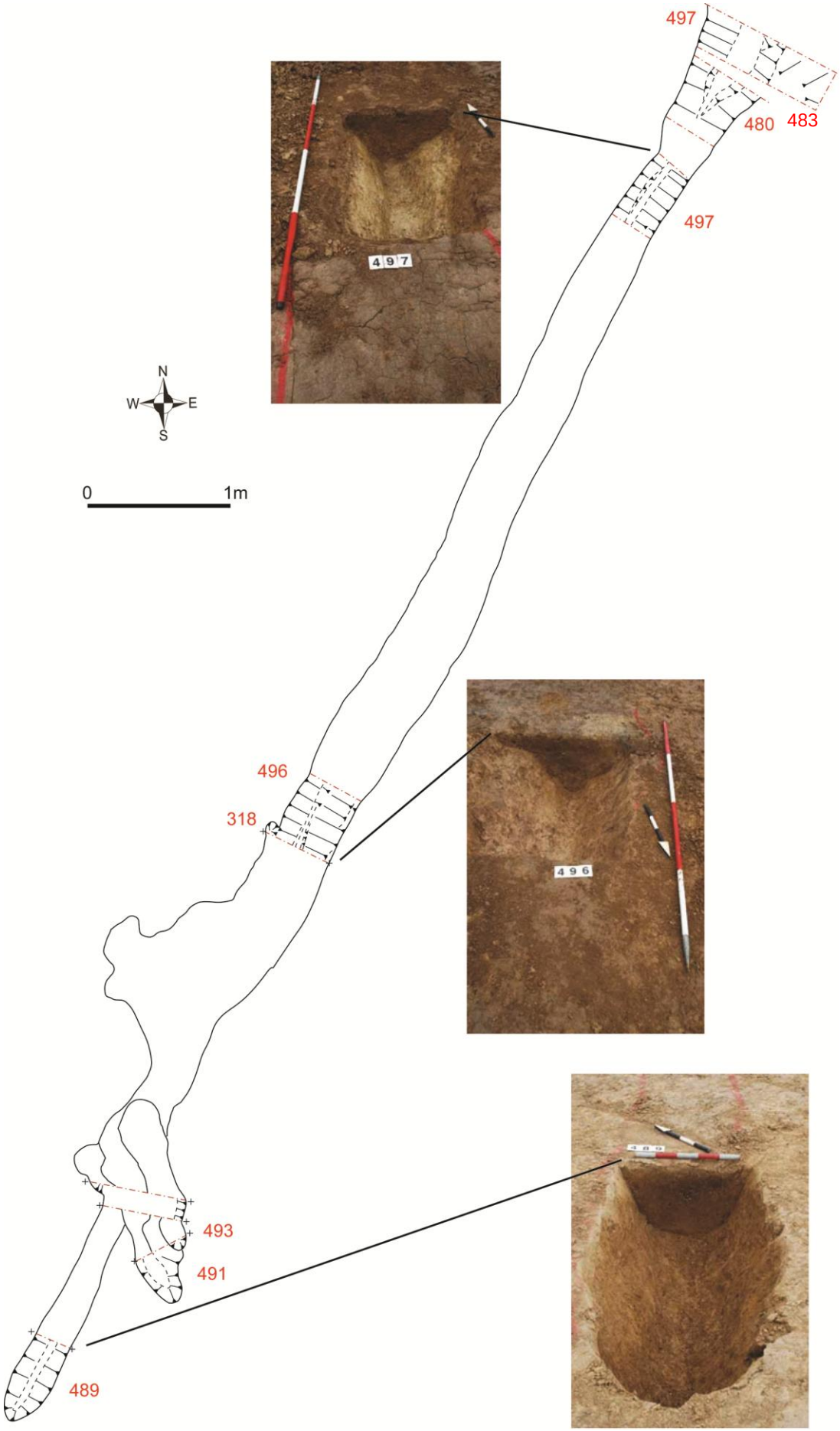
Cut [489]: (Area E4) 0.62m width, depth 0.28 – 0.41m (N-S), recorded length 4.3m, sloping sides to rounded base (northern end and highest part of ditch)

Cut [496]: (Area E4) 0.8m width, depth 0.49m, recorded length 8.2m, sloping sides at top, steep nearer base (northern central section of ditch)

Cut [497]: (Area F5) <0.95m width, depth 0.51m, recorded length 14.4m, sloping sides at top, then steep to narrow flat base 0.1 – 0.2m wide (southern central section of ditch)



Plan of northern part of site with features numbered by Group


497
480
483
497
N
W
E
S
0
1m
496
318
493
491
489

Sub-group 3.2.2 fill episodes of NE-SW oriented ditch

Cut [483]; primary fill (482): yellow-grey clay silt, 820mm width, 270mm depth; occasional charcoal flecks

Cut [483]; secondary fill (481): grey clay silt, 960mm width, 250mm depth; occasional charcoal flecks; artefactual evidence: Early Bronze Age flint butt-end axe (SF186) re-use of a Neolithic polished flint axe

Cut [489]; fill (490): orange brown sandy silt, 620mm width, 280 – 410mm depth (N-S); no inclusions

Cut [496]; primary fill (316): yellow grey silty clay, 800mm width, 180mm depth; no inclusions, secondary fill (315): yellow brown silty clay, 800mm width, 320mm depth; occasional fragments of sandy stone

Cut [497]; primary fill (571), (575), (582), (585): pale grey silty clay, (710): 1900mm width, 120 – 330mm depth

Cut [497]; secondary fill (573), (577), (581), (584): compact brown silty clay, (540): 2370mm width, (180): 410mm depth; grit and charcoal inclusions

Discussion and interpretation Group 3.2

Group 3.2 consists of a single linear feature running downhill from southwest to northeast, interpreted as the base of a ditch. The fill sequence suggests gradual accumulation of water-lain silts and clays, with a single artefact of Early Bronze Age fabrication found within the fills.

The ditch is obscured at the northern end by colluvial deposition, silts from a probable natural hollow or drainage gully [480]. The ditch is cut by later features at its southern end, linear pit [491] and associated recuts.

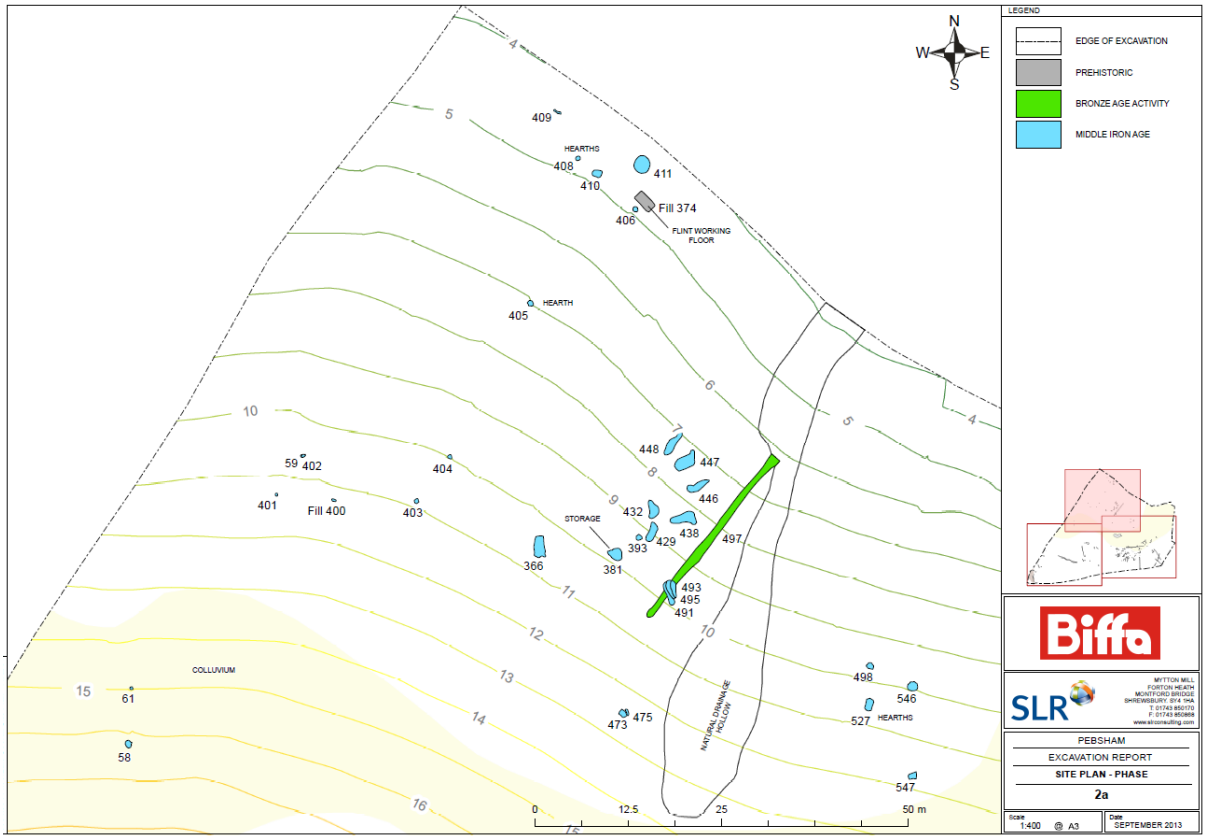
Phase 3.2 LBA

This phase is represented by residual pot-sherds found in Iron Age pit [366], filled by (365), and one unstratified sherd.

5.5 Period 4 Iron Age and Romano-British activity

Phase 4 Early Iron Age

There is no evidence for the Early Iron Age, but it is probable that the site would have continued in agricultural use which has left no physical trace in the material evidence.



Plan of northern part of site by phase and cut number

Phase 5 Middle Iron Age

Group 5.1 Pits with evidence of burning in northern-most part of the site

Sub-group 5.1.1 occupation evidence, construction and use of pits in northern-most part of the site (E3, F3, G4, H4)

Layer (58): (Area E3) shallow scoop burnt natural with grey-black clay silt above, 1.00m E-W, 0.90m N-S, 0.09m depth

Cut [61]: (Area E3) sub-circular pit, 1.00m E-W, 0.80m N-S, 0.12m depth; clay natural burnt red on northern side

Cut [59]: (Area F3) stakehole on W edge of Pit 402, 0.13 x 0.11m, 0.1m depth, filled by (78): burnt pink clay

Layer (374): (Area H4) rectangular zone of light brown clay silt, 3.2m E-W, 1.5m N-S, depth 0.09m; worked flint debitage and tools (SF213, SF216-225)

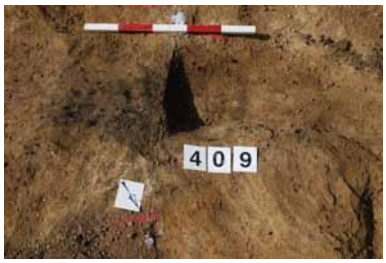
Cut [402]: (Area F3) sub-circular pit, diameter 0.45m, depth 0.07m, clay natural burnt red (W & S sides), primary “fill” (79): hard burnt pink clay 440mm diameter, 100mm depth

Cut [405]: (Area G4) circular pit, diameter 0.64m, depth 0.16m; clay natural burnt red

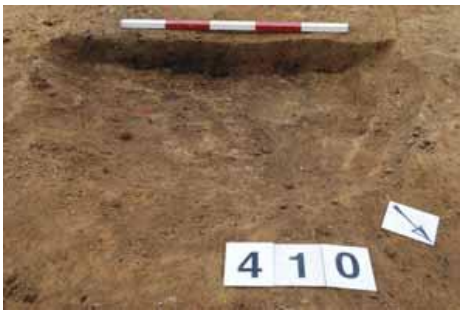
Cut [406]: (Area H4) circular pit, diameter 0.75m, depth 0.13m; clay natural burnt red

Cut [408]: (Area H4) circular pit, diameter 0.64m, depth 0.11m; clay natural burnt red

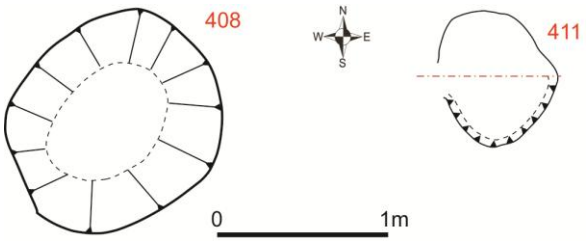
Cut [409]: (Area H4) sub-oval pit, 0.56m E-W, 0.26m N-S, depth 0.12m; cut damaged on west side by animal or plough activity



Cut [410]: (Area H4) rectangular pit, 1.1m N-S, 0.75m W-E, depth 0.8m; clay natural burnt red; possible two phases as step to west side co-incident with fill (377)



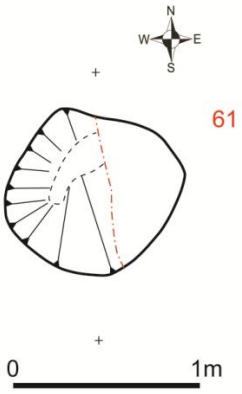
Cut [411]: (Area H4) circular pit diameter 0.8m, depth 0.09m; clay natural burnt red



Sub-group 5.1.2 primary use of pits in northern-most part of the site (E3, F3, G4, H4)

Layer [58]: charcoal rich clay silt 1000 x 900mm, 90mm depth

Cut [61]: single fill (109): pink, red and black silt clay; 1000 x 800mm, 120mm depth; frequent charcoal inclusions and some burnt flint



Cut [402]; primary fill (76): vertical band of charcoal against side of pit, 70mm wide, 70mm depth

Cut [59]; primary fill (77): light grey silty clay, 90mm diameter, 120mm depth; charcoal flecks

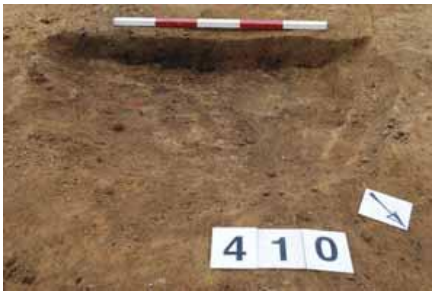
Cut [405]; primary fill (414): compact deposit of charcoal and burnt wood (grain visible, oak); 640mm diameter, 140mm depth; C14 date 196 - 41 or 197 – 46 cal BC

Cut [406]; primary fill (372): charcoal-rich burnt clay; frequent charcoal and burnt clay fragments; 480mm diameter, 50mm depth

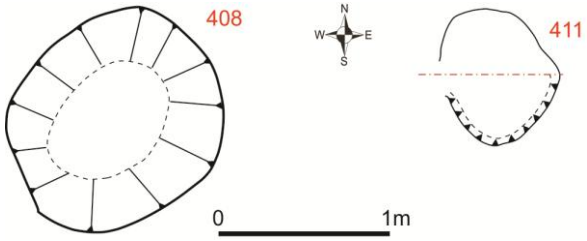
Cut [408]; single fill (375): charcoal-rich silty clay; frequent charcoal inclusions (mostly oak with two alder fragments; 700mm diameter, 100mm depth; C14 date 111 – 58 or 165 – 24 cal BC

Cut [409]; single fill (378): yellow-brown silty clay; frequent large fragments of charcoal; 560 x 260mm, 120mm depth

Cut [410]; primary fill (376): pale grey silty clay; frequent burnt clay and carbonised wood inclusions (oak); 300mm diameter, 300mm depth



Cut [411]; primary fill (380): very dark brown silty clay; frequent charcoal fragments (mostly oak with one beech fragment), 800mm diameter, 70mm depth



Sub-group 5.1.3 final episode of in-fill of pits in northern-most part of the site (F3, G4, H4)

Cut [402]; fill (75): burnt clay backfill within 76, 200mm x 20mm, 50mm depth; fill (74) yellow-grey clay 250mm diameter, 50mm depth; charcoal flecks

Cut [405]; secondary fill (413): grey-brown clay silt; frequent charcoal fragments; 640mm diameter, 50mm depth

Cut [406]; secondary fill (371): brown clay silt; occasional charcoal flecks; 650mm diameter, 80mm depth

Cut [410]; secondary fill (377): grey-brown silty clay; occasional carbonised wood fragments and burnt flint; 750mm diameter, 500mm depth

Cut [411]; secondary fill (379): firm brown silty clay; frequent charcoal flecks; 800mm diameter, 40mm depth

Discussion and interpretation Group 5.1

Flint working evidenced by tools and debitage suggests a knapping floor (374). The rectangular shape of this deposit could indicate the interior floor area of a structure.

This group consists of eight pits, a shallow scoop and one stake-hole (adjacent to pit 402) which all display evidence for having been exposed to heat, and with primary fills comprising carbonized wood or charcoal-rich deposits, as well as burnt clay. Secondary fills are predominantly mineral-based, although containing sufficient charcoal to suggest that the in-fill episode was not widely separated from the use of the pits, and that some remnant debris from burning within them became included within a back-fill, perhaps deliberate capping event.

Although no artefactual evidence was recovered from these deposits, radio-carbon determination of charcoal from two of the pits produced broadly consistent dates within the 2nd century BC – mid 1st century BC.

The majority of pits cluster at the northern end of the excavation area, with outliers isolated from each other c.15m, c.40m and c.70m to the south-west of the main group.

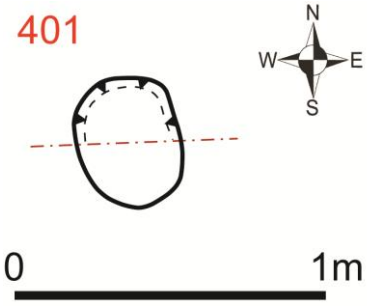
Group 5.2 Pits without evidence of burning in northern-most part of the site (F3, F4, G4, H4)

Sub-group 5.2.1 construction and use of pits

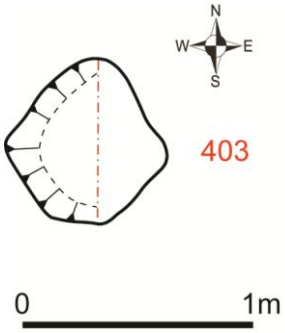
Cut [366]: (Area F4) rectangular pit, 1.8m W-E, 0.75m N-S, depth 0.25m

Cut [400]: (Area F3) elongated pit, 0.60m E-W, 0.35m N-S, depth 0.03m

Cut [401]: (Area F3) circular pit, 0.29m diameter, depth 0.20m



Cut [403]: (Area F4) sub-circular pit, 0.67m W-E, 0.55m N-S, depth 0.31m



Cut [404]: (Area F4) circular pit, 0.55m diameter, depth 0.14m

Sub-group 5.2.2 primary use of pits

Cut [366]; primary fill (370): yellow-grey clay 750mm width, 500mm depth (side collapse); (365): dark grey/black carbon-rich silty clay, 750mm width, 100mm depth; inclusions: seed, grain, charred wood flecks, 1 x LBA pot sherd (abraded)

Cut [400]; single fill (400): light-brown silt clay with frequent fragments of charcoal

Cut [401]; single fill (412): brown-grey silty clay with spread of carbonized wood

Cut [403]; primary fill (364): light grey clay silt, 700mm diameter, 70mm depth; charcoal flecks

Cut [404]; single fill (367): brown clay silt, 550mm diameter, 140mm depth; frequent charcoal fragments and flecks

Sub-group 5.2.3 final episode of infill for pits

Cut [366]; fill (369): yellow-grey clay 350mm diameter, 100mm depth; no inclusions (side collapse); fill (368): grey-brown silty clay, 1800mm x 750mm, 80mm depth

Cut [403]; fill (363): yellow-grey clay silt, 440mm diameter, 240mm depth; frequent charcoal

Discussion and interpretation Group 5.2

Several pits which display no evidence for heat, although containing residues from burning within their primary fills, and capped by silty clay. Three are small circular pits, which could be large post-holes, a fourth appears to have been designed in a rectangular form, for unknown purpose, and one appears as a shallow scoop. Its proximity and shape is similar to a group of linear pits to the east (Group 5.3) but its infill history appears markedly different from them.

Group 5.3 Linear pits without evidence of burning in north-eastern-most part of the site (F4, F5)

A group of pits of elongated form which occupy a zone 25m N-S and 9m E-W, and appear to contain similar infill histories.

Sub-group 5.3.1 construction and use of pits

Cut 429: (Area F4) ovoid pit, 2.6m N-S, 1.12m W-E, depth 0.30m, steep-sided, flat base

Cut [432]: (Area F4) irregular linear pit(s), 2.44m N-S, 1.2m W-E, depth 0.26m, sloping sides, flattish base. (N.B: [432] might comprise two intercutting pits, a N pit and a S pit)

Cut [438]: (Area F5) irregular linear pit(s), 3.2m W-E, 1.25m N-S, depth 0.14m, sloping sides, flat base (N.B: [438] might comprise two intercutting pits, west terminal additional to W-E linear main part)

Cut [446]: (Area F5) irregular linear pit(s), 3.24m NE-SW, 0.84m NW-SE, depth 0.23m, sloping sides, flat base (N.B: [446] might comprise a main linear with a small pit to NE corner)

Cut [447]? (Area F5) irregular linear pit(s), 3.42m NE-SW, 1.5m NW-SE, depth 0.23m, steep sides, flat base (N.B: might comprise a main linear with additional pit to south)

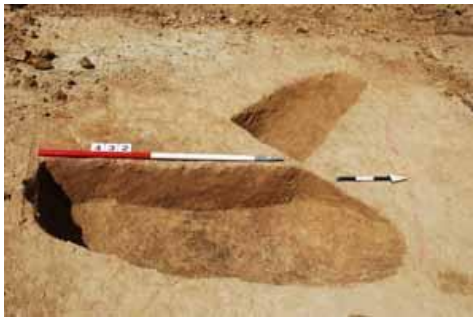
Cut [448]: (Area F5) sub-rectangular pit, 2.80m N-S, 0.95m W-E, depth 0.30m, sloping sides, flat base (N.B: narrow extension to S possible flue or drain)

Cut [491]: (Area E5) linear pit, 3.3m N-S, 1.00m E-W, depth 0.22m, sloping side, flattish base (N.B: cuts earlier ditch [489]; later recut episodes [492] and [493])

Sub-group 5.3.2 backfill of linear pits

Cut [429]; single fill (430): red-brown clay silt, 2600mm x 1120mm, 300mm depth

Cut [432]; single fill (439): red-brown clay silt, 1540mm x 1250mm, 280mm depth; inclusions worked flint SF184 at base, forced into side of pit, and small lump of clay



Cut [438]; single fill (437): red-brown silty clay, 3200mm x 1250mm, 140mm depth; yellow clay inclusions

Cut [446]; single fill (466): light brown clay silt, 3240mm x 840mm, 230mm depth; firmer clay towards base

Cut [447]; single fill (467): brown clay silt, 3420mm x 1500mm, 230mm depth; re-deposited clay towards base of fill

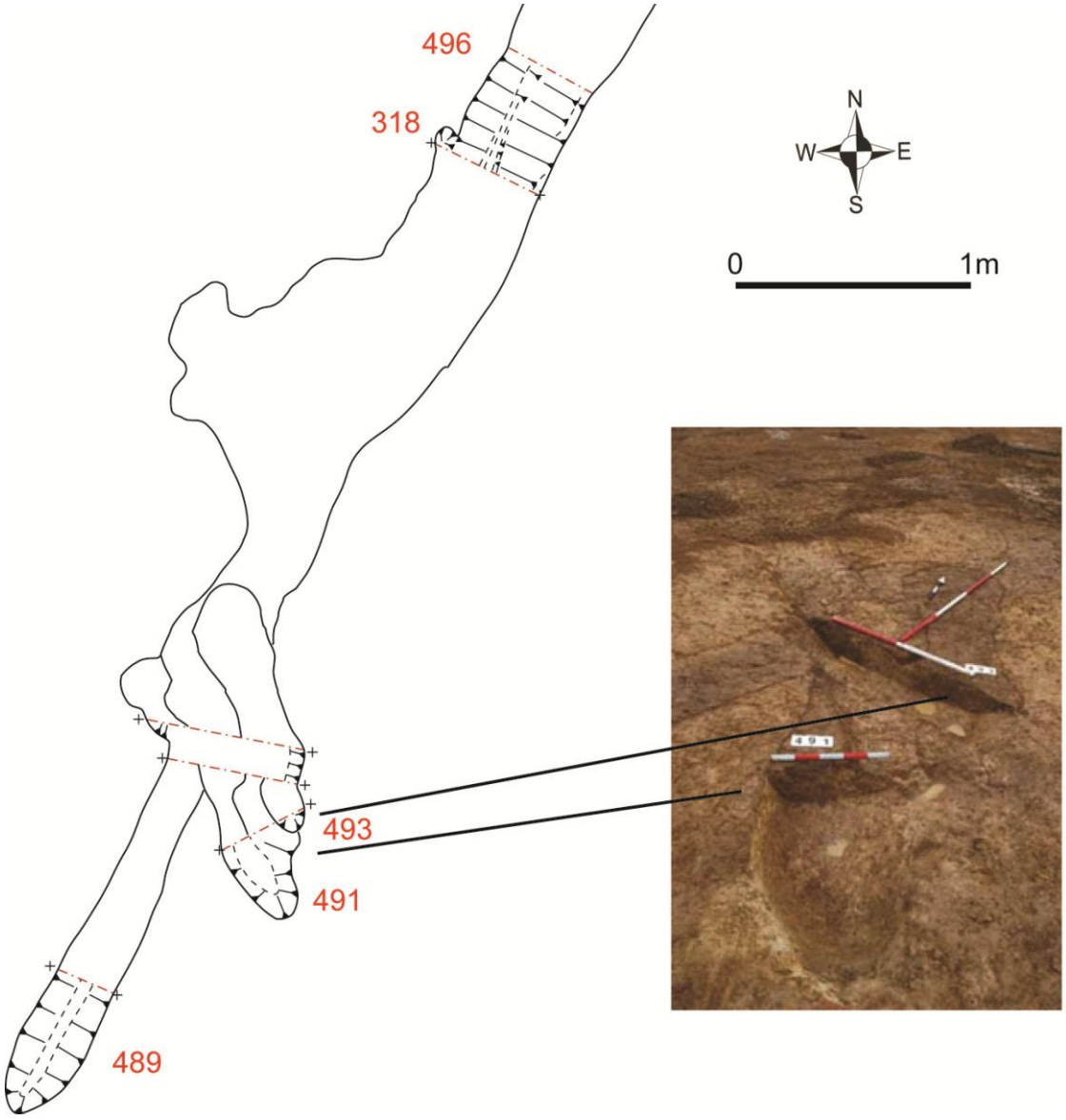
Cut [448]; single fill (468): orange-brown clay sand, 2800mm x 950mm, 300mm depth; occasional charcoal flecks and hard pan

Cut [491]; primary fill (492): grey-brown sandy silt, W side of pit; secondary fill (495): orange silt sand, 2900mm x 650mm, 180mm depth

Sub-group 5.3.3 recut of linear pit [491]

Cut [493] lies north-east of [491], and cuts fill (495); 2.7m N-S, 0.63m W-E, depth 0.2m

Single fill (494): dark grey-brown sandy silt, 2700mm x 770mm, 200mm depth

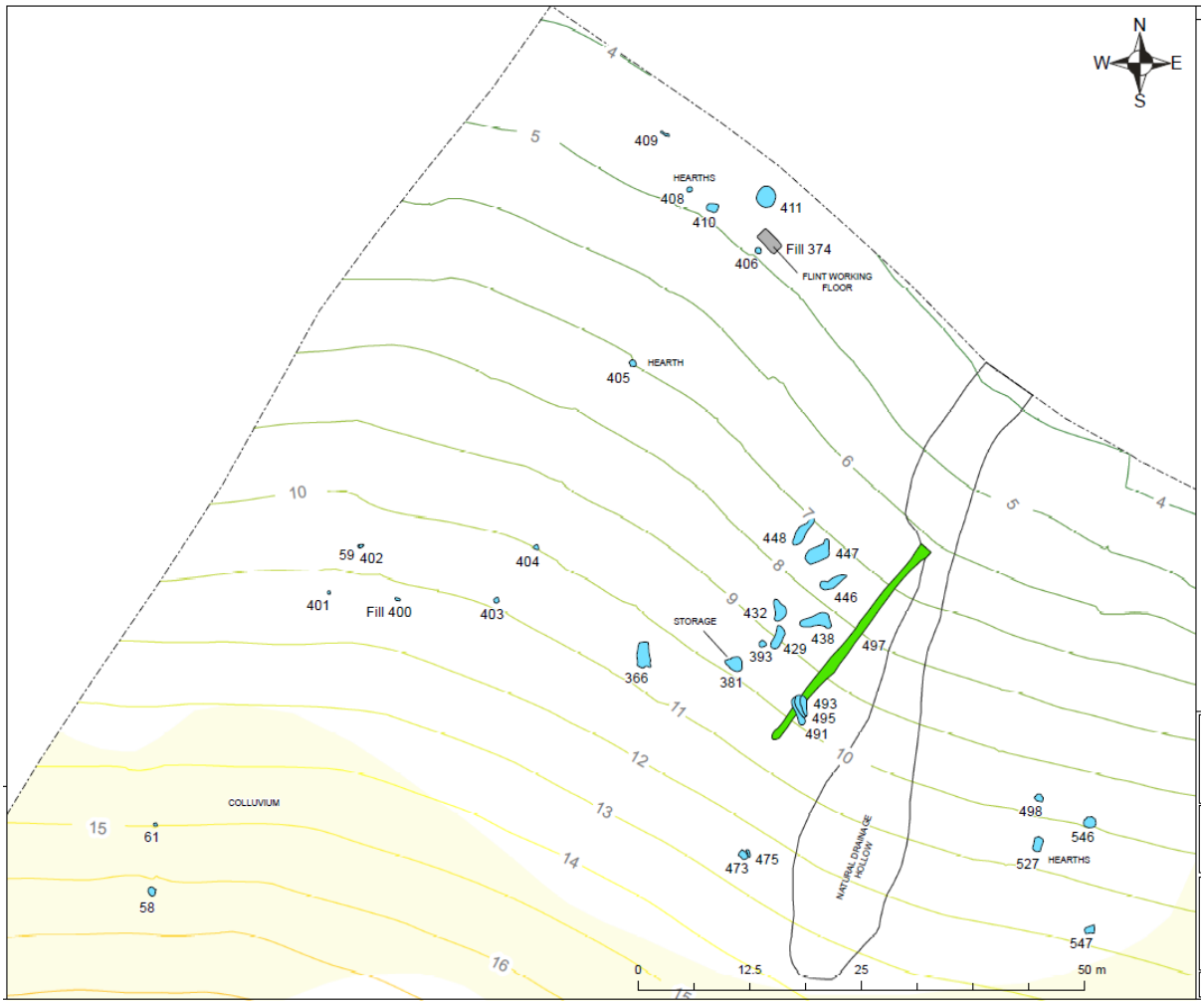

496
318
N
W
E
S
0
1m
493
491
489

Discussion and interpretation Group 5.3

These pits have been cut as irregular linear features, probably as part of their original design although possibly this shape could have derived from amalgamation of two or more events. They are inconsistent in form, often displaying projections or bulbous terminals at one end. No particular alignment has been followed, but their flue-like shape and clustering is suggestive of some industrial activity. The absence of evidence for burning (heat on the natural clay or large quantities of charcoal) is significant (especially in comparison to Group 5.1). All have very similar infill deposits, and the likelihood of them representing a single contemporary activity, on the north-facing dipslope of the site, is high.

Pit [432] has a residual re-touched flint which is not attributable to any particular period. Pit [491] is the only feature which provides some stratigraphic information for this group. It cuts a ditch assigned to the Bronze Age, and is recut by [493], presumably the latest linear pit in the sequence. A number of fills are recorded as containing clay inclusions, fragments or redeposited clay at the base of the pit, and this evidence could possibly indicate remnants of a clay superstructure or lining that were pushed in with a deliberate backfill event.

Without further evidence it is difficult to interpret these pits, but the balance of probability would seem to favour some kind of water-based processing activity.



Plan of northern part of site by phase and cut number (detail)

Group 5.4 Circular pits without evidence of burning in north-eastern-most part of the site (F4, F5)

Sub-group 5.4.1 construction and use of pits

Cut [381]: (Area F4) sub-circular pit, 1.54m diameter, depth 1.10m, vertical-sided, stepped to deeper central section and flat base

Cut [393]: (Area F4) circular pit 0.61m diameter, depth 0.21m, vertical-sided, flat base

Sub-group 5.4.2 backfill of circular pit [381]

Primary fill (387): yellow-grey clay, 570mm width, 180mm depth; horizontal surface

Secondary fill (386): light yellow clay, 950mm width, 210mm depth; horizontal surface

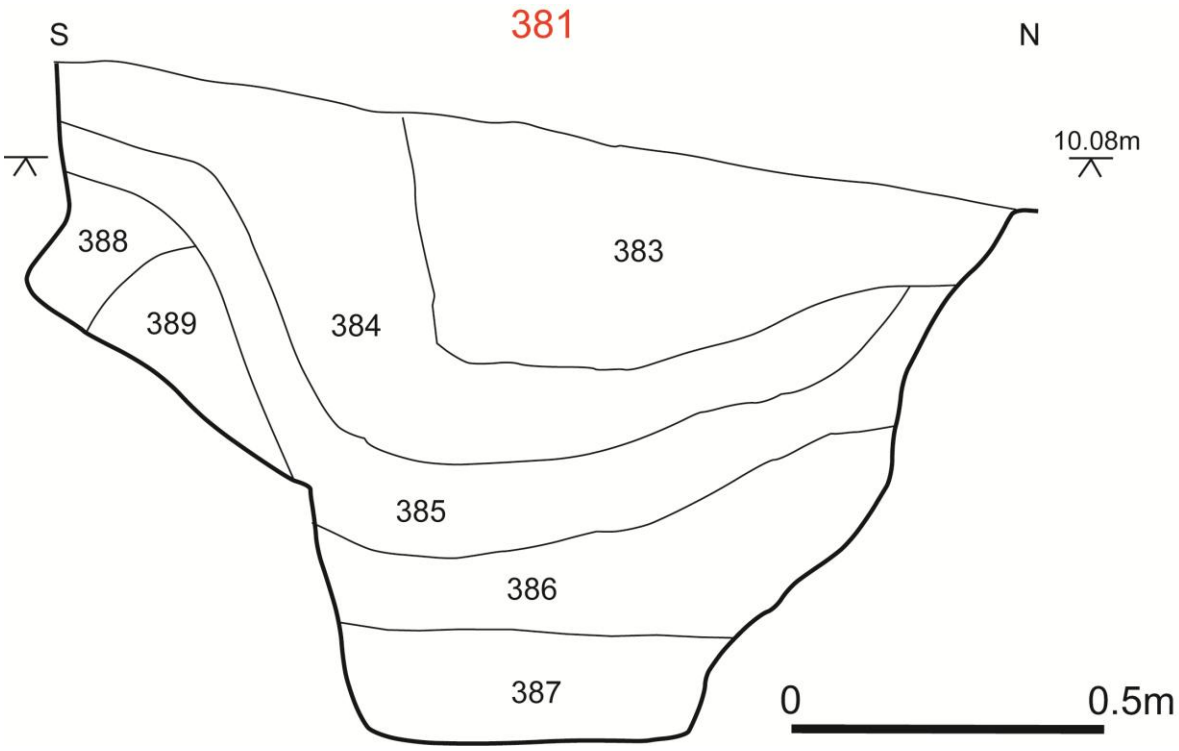
South side disturbance (388) and (389): grey-brown clay silt with lump of yellow clay sealed by tertiary fill

tertiary fill (385): brown clay silt, 1400mm width, 160mm depth; slopes from S and N sides down into pit

final infill (383) and (384): red/orange-brown clay silt; 1900mm x 1600mm, 500mm depth; clay fragments within fill

Sub-group 5.4.3 backfill of circular pit [393]

Cut [393]; single fill (428): brown silty clay, 610mm diameter, 210mm depth; occasional fragments of charcoal in centre of deposit



Discussion and interpretation Group 5.4

Although spatially related to the linear pits discussed in Group 5.3, the form and infill histories of the circular pits in Group 5.4 are distinct. Pit {381] is large and deep, splayed at the top and with two initial infill episodes which are level and do not suggest tipping. The third infill episode (385) displays tip lines from both south and north, and seals possible evidence for a collapse to the southern edge of the pit. The final episode of infill is similar in description to the backfill events for Group 5.3. An interpretation of this feature as a storage pit would be consistent with many examples of similar features found on Iron Age settlements.

Pit [393] is a small pit, and possibly the fragments of charcoal in the centre of the backfill point to an interpretation of this pit as a post-hole.

Group 5.5 circular pit with gully in central northern part of the site (E4)

Sub-group 5.5.1 construction and use of pit

Cut [473]: sub-circular pit 0.98m diameter, depth 0.29m; sloping sides to concave base

Fill (474): charcoal-rich deposit in grey-brown silty sand, 980mm diameter, 290mm depth

Cut [475]: gully cutting east side of pit [473] and fill (474), 0.9m N-S, 0.3m W-E, depth 0.25m; V-shaped profile

Fill (476): grey-brown sandy silt with concentrations of charcoal 900mm x 300mm, depth 250mm

Discussion and interpretation Group 5.5

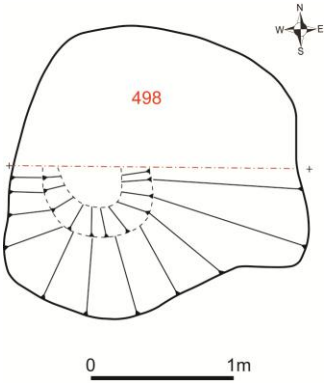
The gully to the east of the pit has charcoal concentrations that suggest it was a gully for stakes, perhaps supporting a hurdle windbreak for the pit. The pit is also filled with a charcoal-rich deposit and the interpretation for this feature is that it was used as a hearth.

Group 5.6 Pits with evidence of burning in eastern-most part of the site (E5)

A focus of three pits plus a single outlier, which contain evidence for in-situ burning.

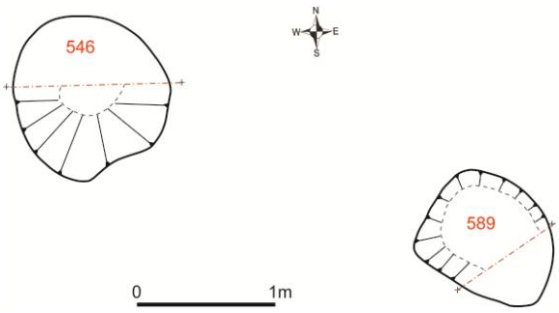
Sub-group 5.6.1 construction and use of pits

Cut [498]: circular pit 0.90m diameter, 0.34m depth; steeply sloping sides, narrow base

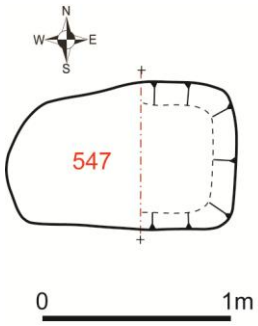


Cut [527]: rectangular pit 1.72m NE-SW, 0.84m NW-SE, 0.32m depth; vertical-sided, flat base; clay natural burnt red on sides and base

Cut [546]: sub-circular pit 1.15m diameter, 0.20m depth; sloping sides, flat base



Cut [547]: oval pit 1.25m W-E, 0.74m N-S, 0.07m depth; shallow sloped-sides, flat base; clay natural burnt red at base



Sub-group 5.6.2 backfilled debris from use of pits

Cut [498]; single fill (499): charcoal-rich grey-brown silty clay, 900mm diameter, depth 340mm; frequent charcoal fragments and some stone inclusions

Cut [527]; primary fill (526): charcoal-rich grey-brown silty clay, 1720mm x 840mm, depth 90mm; abundant oak charcoal (60% of fill) C14 date 210 – 53 or 211 – 86 cal BC; secondary fill (525): yellow-brown clay silt, 1720mm x 840mm, depth 110mm; frequent charcoal and some burnt clay fragments; tertiary fill (524): grey-brown clayey silt, 1720mm x 840mm, depth 120mm; some charcoal and a fire-cracked flint

Cut [546]; single fill (566): orange brown silty clay, 1150mm diameter, depth 200mm; frequent charcoal inclusions

Cut [547]; primary fill (551): lens of charcoal and in-situ burnt clay capped beneath yellow-brown silty clay, 1250mm x 740mm, depth 70mm; frequent charcoal flecks

Discussion and interpretation Group 5.6

A cluster of three pits close together and one pit 10m to the south of them, all with similar characteristics of exposure to heat and charcoal-rich backfill deposits. They are not consistent in form, including one large rectangular, one oval and two of more circular design. Interpretation of these features is that they form part of some pyro-technical activity, but without industrial residues further interpretation based on their morphology alone is not possible.

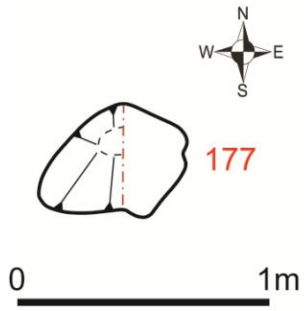
Although no artefactual evidence was recovered from these deposits, radio-carbon determination of charcoal from one of the pits produced dates within the 2nd century BC – mid 1st century BC.

Group 5.7 Pits and post-holes of possible structural origin in eastern-most part of the site (C6)

Sub-group 5.7.1 construction and use of pits and post-holes

Cut [173]: oval pit, 1.06m NW-SE, 0.80m NE-SW, 0.12m depth; sloping sides, concave base; natural clay burnt red at base

Cut [177]: hollow, 0.50m by 0.43m, 0.05m depth; base of post-hole?

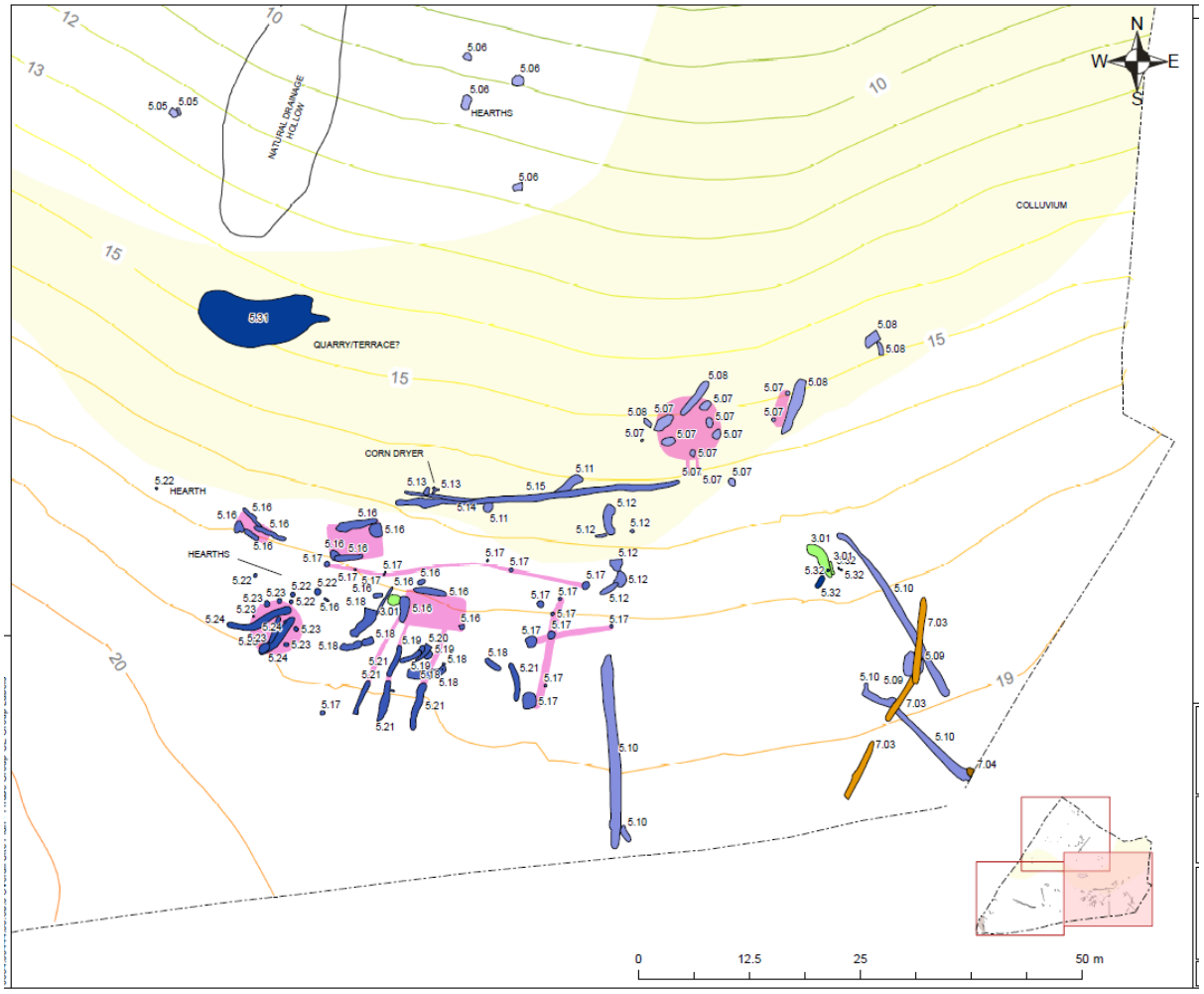


Cut [510]: irregular pit 1.00m diameter, 0.22m depth; sloping sides to undulating base

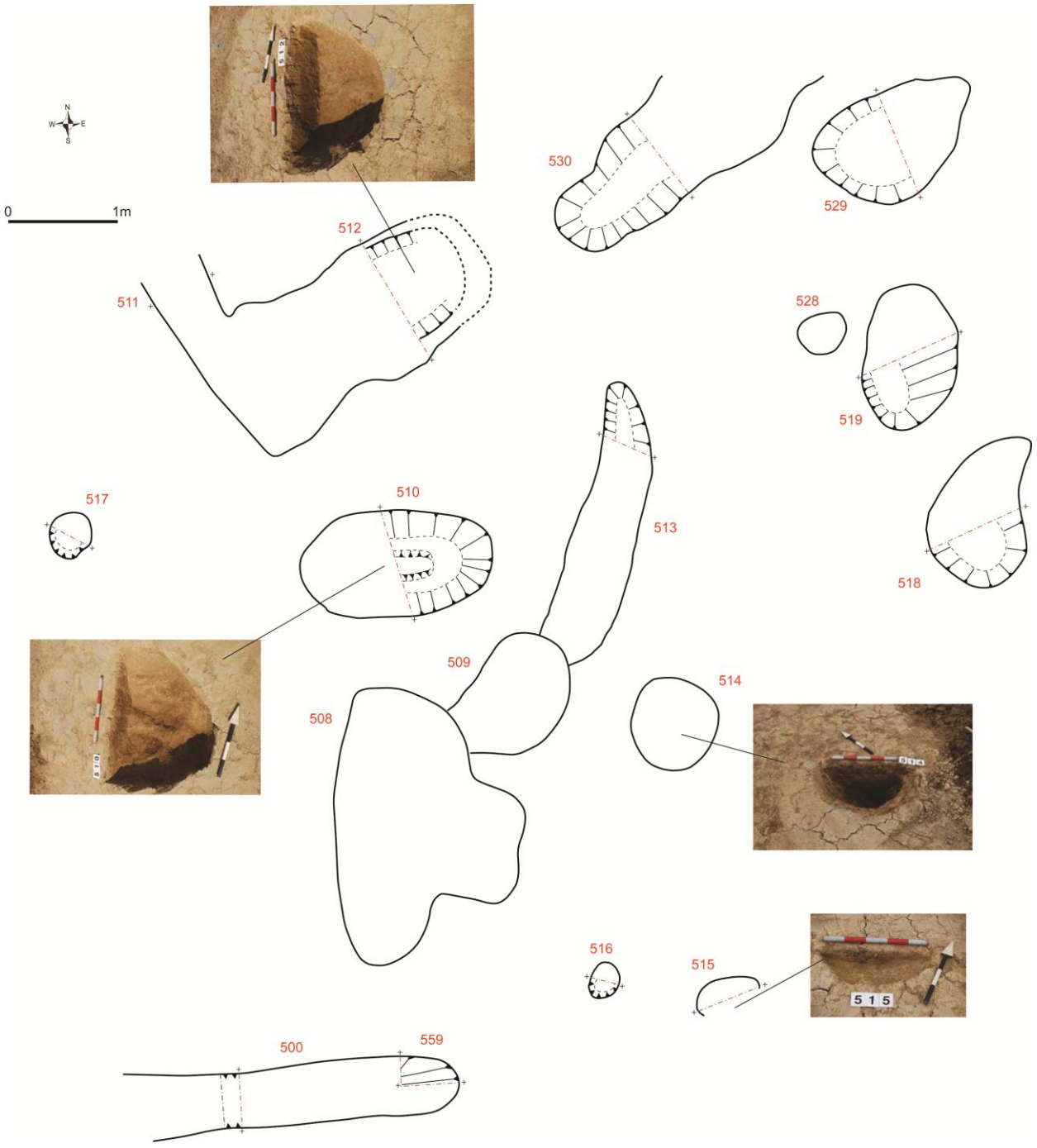
Cut [512]: sub-rectangular pit 2.5m W-E, 0.90m N-S, 0.27m depth; steeply sloping sides, flat base

Cut [514]: oval pit 0.88 x 0.64m, 0.41m depth; steeply sloping sides, concave base

Cut [515]: post-hole 0.4m diameter, 0.1m dept



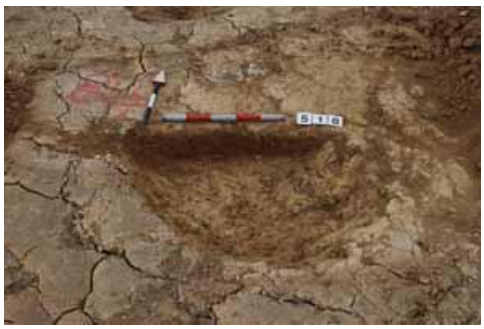
Plan of south-eastern part of site showing features numbered by Groups


0
1m
512
511
530
529
528
519
517
510
513
518
509
508
514
516
515
500
559

Cut [516]: post-hole 0.34m diameter, 0.07m depth

Cut [517]: post-hole 0.4m diameter, 0.14m depth

Cut [518]: oval pit 1.20m N-S, 0.8m W-E, 0.13m dept

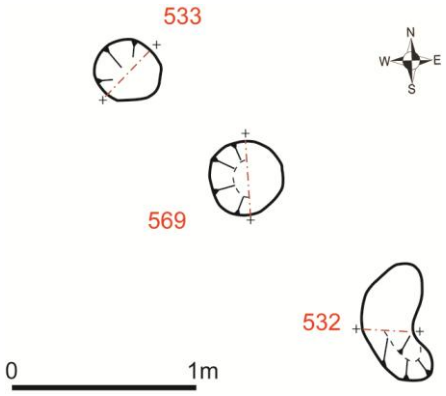


Cut [519]: oval pit 1.28m N-S, 0.72m W-E, 0.13m depth

Cut [529]: oval pit 1.26m W-E, 0.89m N-S, 0.08m depth

Cut [534]: post-hole 0.43m diameter, 0.11m depth

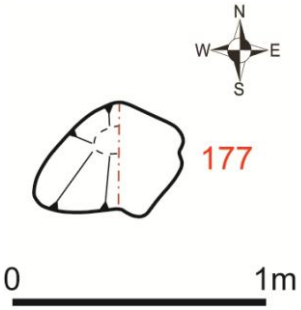
Cut [569]: post-hole 0.45m diameter, 0.17m depth



Sub-group 5.7.2 backfill of pits and post-holes

Cut [173]; single fill (172): dark brown clay silt with charcoal lens, 1060mm x 800mm, 120mm depth; lens of carbonized material in middle of deposit, sloping down to NW

Cut [177]; single fill (176): brown clay, 500mm x 430mm, 50mm depth; inclusions abundant carbonized wood and burnt clay fragments



Cut [510] fill (595) grey-brown clay, 1540mm diameter, depth 220mm; infrequent charcoal flecks and stone inclusions

Cut [512] fill (613) grey-brown clay silt, 2500mm x 900mm, depth 270mm; occasional charcoal and stone inclusions

Cut [514]; primary fill (605): yellow-brown silty clay, width 440mm, depth 150mm; secondary fill (604): light yellow clay silt, width 510mm, depth 120mm; tertiary fill (603): brown silty clay, 880mm x 640mm, depth 80mm; occasional charcoal flecks

Cut [515]; fill (593): orange-brown clay, 400mm diameter, depth 100mm

Cut [516]; fill (558): orange-brown clay, 340mm diameter, depth 70mm

Cut [517]; fill (594): grey-brown clay, 400mm diameter, depth 140mm

Cut [518]; fill (607): yellow-brown silty clay, 1200mm x 800mm, depth 130mm; some charcoal flecks

Cut [519]; fill (606): dark grey-brown clay silt, 1280mm x 720mm, depth 150mm; some charcoal flecks

Cut [529]; fill (608): grey-brown clay silt, 1260mm x 890mm, depth 80mm; some charcoal fleck

Cut [534]; fill (614): grey-brown clay silt, 430mm diameter, depth 110mm; charcoal inclusions

Cut [569]; fill (570): yellow-brown clay silt, 450mm diameter, depth 170mm; occasional charcoal flecks

Discussion and interpretation Group 5.7

The larger pits ([510], [512], [514], [518], [519], and [529]) are interpreted as post-pits for a structure of at least 6m diameter internally, but probably larger than this defined by a partial series of outer post-holes ([515], [516], and [517]) which could imply a building approximately 12m in diameter. The depth of these pits and post-holes, however, are so shallow as to suggest severe erosion has occurred, or that an alternative interpretation is required. Some of these features are described as being sealed beneath a band of colluvium (187) which may indicate widespread displacement and truncation of original surfaces, perhaps as a result of ploughing, and this would account for the shallow nature of the surviving features.

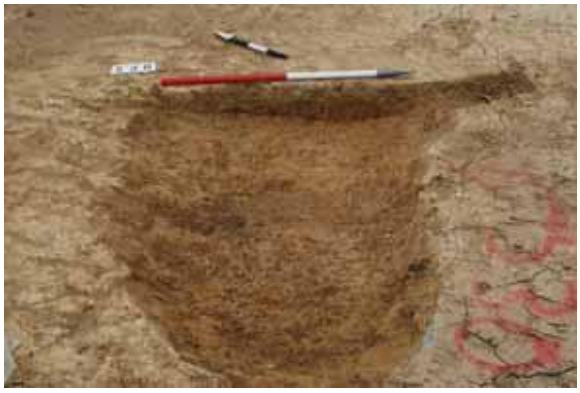
Post-holes [534] and [569] are located 6 – 8m east of the main group, and are more likely to be remnants from a fence line, perhaps running parallel to a N-S aligned ditch (531).

Group 5.8 ditches in eastern-most part of site (C6)

Sub-group 5.8.1 construction and use of ditches

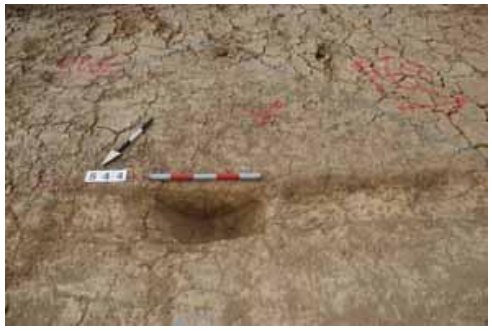
Cut [511]: short ditch 2m NW-SE, 0.77m NE-SW, 0.29m depth; steeply sloped sides, flat base

Cut [530]: ditch 5m NE-SW, 1.05m NW-SE, 0.16m depth; shallow slope to flat base



Cut [531]: ditch 8.15m NE-SW, 0.86m NW-SE, 0.21m depth; sloping sides to concave base

Cut [544]: ditch >1.5m N-S, 0.84m E-W, 0.24m depth; sloping sides to concave base



Cut [545]: gully >2.6m NE-SW, 0.49m NW-SE, 0.09m depth; U-shaped profile

Sub-group 5.8.2 backfill of ditches

Cut [511]; fill (601): yellow-brown silty clay, 800mm x 770mm, depth 290mm; occasional charcoal flecks

Cut [530]; fill (609): grey-brown clay silt, 5000mm x 1050mm, depth 160mm

Cut [531]; fill (610): orange-brown clay silt, 8150mm x 860mm, depth 210mm

Cut [544]; fill (574): orange-brown sandy clay, 1500mm x 810mm, depth 210mm

Cut [545]; fill (576): orange sandy clay, 2600mm x 490mm, depth 90mm

Discussion and interpretation Group 5.8

A group of ditches located within a 30m wide west – east zone at the eastern end of the site, which possibly form a co-axial system, although no intercutting, and obscured beneath colluvial deposits (187) and (650). Ditches [511] and [530] are located at the western edge of this zone, and are probably associated with the pit and post-hole structure described in Group 5.7. The other ditches were only revealed in a narrow band of excavated colluvium.

Group 5.9 pits in south-eastern-most part of site (B6)

Sub-group 5.9.1 construction and use of pit

Cut [110]: oval pit 2.3m NE-SW, 0.8m NW-SE, 0.39m depth; steep sided, uneven base

Primary fill (130): yellow grey clay, 1850mm x 600mm, depth 220mm; charcoal flecks

Sub-group 5.9.2 backfill of pit

Cut [110]; secondary fill (111): yellow grey clay, 2300 x 800mm, depth 200mm; occasional charcoal flecks

Sub-group 5.9.3 recut and use of pit

Cut [127]: recut on southern edge of pit [110], 0.72m SW-NE, 0.19m depth; steep sided, concave base cut into fill (111)

Sub-group 5.9.4 backfill of pit

primary fill (129): yellow grey clay, 630mm, depth 110mm

secondary fill (128): yellow grey clay 550mm, depth 80mm

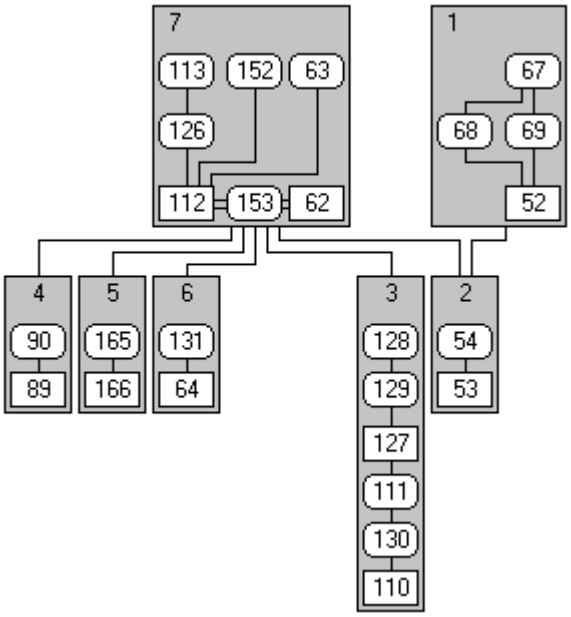
Discussion and interpretation Group 5.9

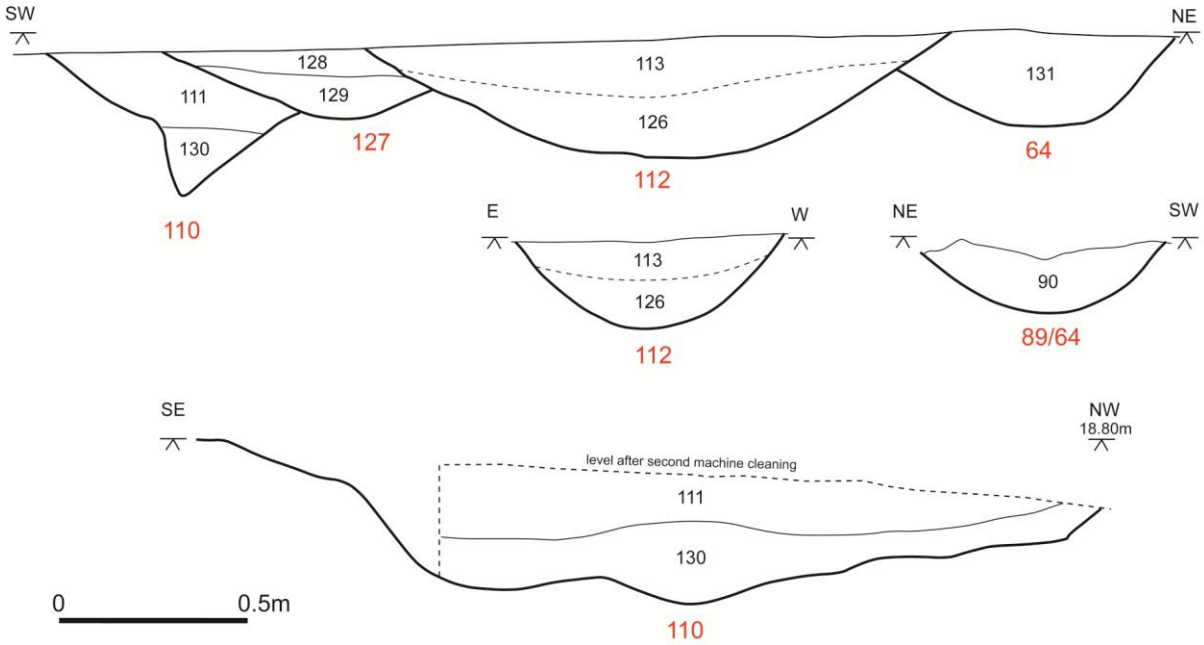
Two phases of pit use are indicated by the archaeological evidence. Although there is no waste product beyond some charcoal flecking to provide an interpretation of their function, there was sufficient duration between the two construction events for two phases of backfill to accumulate. The fact that two very similar deposits were visible as distinct layers, with the primary fill occupying the deepest part of the pit, could suggest a stage of use after primary infill, and prior to secondary infill, but there is no evidence to support this hypothesis. The original pit was designed as an oval rather than circular or with a flue, but the recut was not

sufficiently defined (survived) to confirm its design. Re-use of the same location suggests that whatever function the pit was used for, had been successful and warranted a second use.

The infill of the re-cut pit also had two visible horizons, demonstrating similarity in process to the earlier pit. Following disuse Pit [127] was cut by Ditch [112], providing further stratigraphic control for the pits. Ditch [112] also cuts Ditch [64] in which Late Iron Age sherds were found, and therefore the pits and Ditch [64] could have been contemporary.

Over time these pits therefore came to be located within the corner between Ditches [64] and [112], which suggests the original pits were a focus around which the ditches were positioned.




SW
NE
128
113
131
111
129
126
130
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64
112
110
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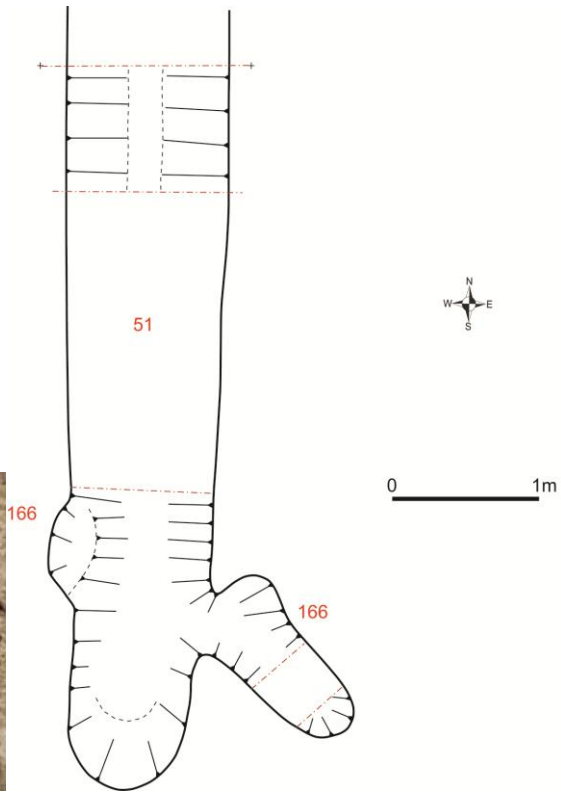
W
NE
SW
113
90
126
89/64
112
SE
NW
18.80m
level after second machine cleaning
111
130
0
0.5m
110

Group 5.10 ditches aligned NW-SE in south-eastern-most part of site (B5, B6)

Sub-group 5.10.1 construction and use of gully aligned NW-SE

Cut [166]: gully 2.4m NW-SE, 0.6m NE-SW, 0.12m depth; curved base

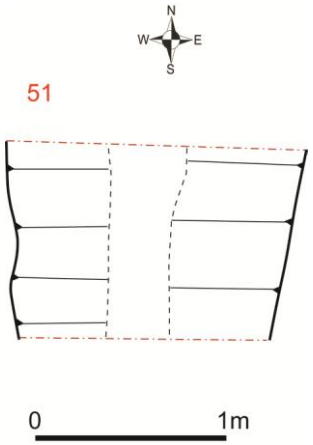


Sub-group 5.10.2 backfill of gully aligned NW-SE

Cut [166]; single fill (167): brown sandy clay, 2400mm x 600mm, depth 120mm; flint flake (SF165) found in backfill; cut by Ditch [51]

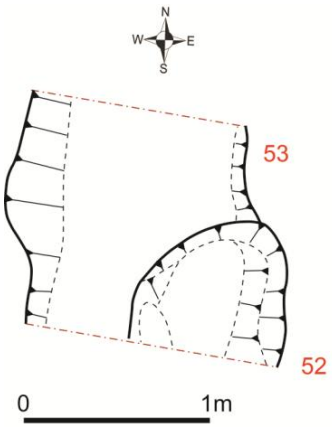
Sub-group 5.10.3 construction and use of ditches aligned NW-SE

Cut [51]: ditch, 27m NW-SE, 1.7m SW-NE, 0.28m depth; U shaped (cuts linear pit [166])



Cut [64]=[89]: ditch approximately 22m length, 0.65 - 0.70m width, 0.10 - 0.21m depth; gradual slope down to concave base

Cut [53]: ditch >16m length, 1.2m wide, 0.13m depth; vertical sides, flat base

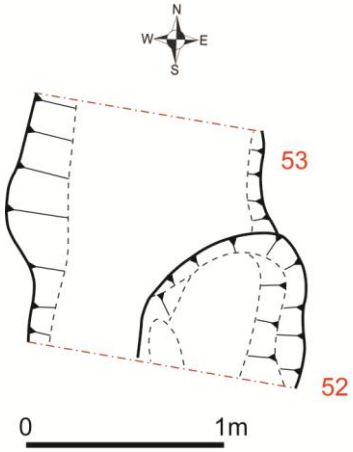


Sub-group 5.10.4 backfill of ditches aligned NW-SE

Cut [51]; single fill (70): red-brown silt clay; 27000 x 1700mm, 260mm depth

Cut [64]=[89]; fills (66), (90), (131): yellow-brown silty clay, 22000mm x 650 – 700mm, depth 150 – 260mm; possibly secondary fill (65): grey-brown silty clay 18500mm x 700mm, depth 180mm; abraded Late Iron Age pottery in fill (131)

Cut [53]; single fill (54): brown clay silt, 16000 x 1200mm, depth 130mm



Discussion and interpretation Group 5.10

Two ditches running in broadly similar directions but with a gradual convergence in alignment towards the south-east. Southern terminal to Ditch [64] is well defined, northern terminal unresolved but could have been formed by [188], which was investigated as a pit but then interpreted on site as of probable natural origin. Ditch [53] was recorded in two sections, separated by a NE-SW aligned ditch cutting through it (Ditch [153]/[112]) which also cut Ditch [64]. The northern terminal was apparent, but the southern end of the ditch extended beyond the south-eastern edge of excavation.

A third ditch c.25m to the west is on a similar orientation but appears unrelated to any other features (but see Group 5.12 below). It is possible that this ditch (51) is a recut for an earlier gully (166) which was found at its southern end. It would seem likely that this ditch (in one or more phases), and the two ditches further east, formed part of a field system with ditched and fenced boundaries, and a possible funnel-shaped droveway for [53] and [64].

The infill deposit for all three ditches and gully probably derives from natural accumulation of water and wind-borne sediments.

Group 5.11 pits cut by E-W ditch in southern part of site (C5)

Sub-group 5.11.1 construction and use of pits

Cut [505]: linear pit, 1.8m NE-SW, 0.80m NW-SE, 0.16m depth; shallow scoop

Cut [554]: oval pit, >0.60m E-W, 0.56m N-S, 0.24m depth; gently sloping sides, flat base

Sub-group 5.11.2 backfill of pits

Cut [505]; single fill (598): yellow brown clay silt; 1800mm x 800mm, depth 160mm

Cut [554]; single fill (555): grey clay silt; 600mm x 560mm, depth 240mm

Discussion and interpretation Group 5.11

Two dissimilar pits, function unknown, but both cut by same E-W Ditch.

Group 5.12 structural pits and post-hole south of E-W ditch in southern part of site (C5, C6)

Sub-group 5.12.1 construction and use of pit and possible post-hole

Cut [503]: oval pit 2.8m N-S, 1.25m E-W, 0.31m depth; gently sloping sides, flat base

Cut [502]: post-hole 0.40m diameter, 0.07m depth; sloping sides, concave base

Cut [507]: gully, 1.30m E-W, 0.31m N-S, 0.14m depth;

Cut [198]: curvilinear ditch, >1.34m N-S, 1.2m E-W, 0.14m depth; shallow, gentle slope to base

Sub-group 5.12.2 backfill of pit and possible post-hole

Cut [503]; single fill (599): firm yellow brown clay silt, 2800mm x 1250mm, depth 310mm

Cut [502]; single fill (557): firm orange brown clay 400mm diameter, depth 70mm

Cut [507]; single fill (612): firm grey-brown clay silt, 1300mm x 310mm, 140mm depth

Cut [198]; single fill (199): compact brown sandy clay, >1340mm x 1200mm, 140mm depth

Sub-group 5.12.3 construction and backfill of pit

Cut [196]: oval pit, 1.5m N-S, 1.3m E-W, 0.10m depth; gently sloping, cuts fill (199) and pit [198]

Cut [196]; single fill (197): compact brown sandy-clay, 1500mm x 1300mm, 100mm depth; inclusions charcoal flecks

Sub-group 5.12.4 construction and backfill of pit

Cut [194]: linear pit, 2.10m NE-SW, 0.54m NW-SE, 0.25m depth; steep sided, flat base; cuts fill (197) and pit [196]

Cut [194]; single fill (195): compact dark brown sandy clay, 2100mm x 540mm, 250mm depth

Discussion and interpretation Group 5.12

An isolated pit and post-hole located 1m and 4m south of the E-W Ditch [596], post-hole lies 3m south-east of pit. There is no evidence to suggest what function the pit fulfilled, and the

post-hole interpretation is weakened by the fact that the surviving feature is very shallow, so could only have formed the base for a post.

A series of other gullies or linear pits could also relate to these features, and together they follow a general N-S alignment also witnessed further south by Ditch [51] (Group 10). Although no coherent plan is apparent, these features could represent the surviving elements of a building foundation.

It is possible these features relate to Group 5.11 (4m to the north-west) but do not have the stratigraphic evidence to be included within this group. Alternatively they could form outliers to the structural evidence 8m to the north-east, Group 5.7.

Group 5.13 possible corn dryer (C5)

Sub-group 5.13.1 construction and use of possible corn dryer

Cut [160]: T-shaped feature 0.64m N-S, 0.20m W-E, 0.08m depth; vertical sided, flat based

primary fill (161): tightly compacted red clay with charcoal inclusions, fired clay lining, thickest in southern part of flue 640mm x 200mm, thickness 80mm

Layer (164): circular deposit of compact brown sandy clay silt c.550mm diameter, depth 50mm

Cut [162]: irregular pit 1.10m E-W, 1.05m N-S, 0.20m depth; heavily disturbed by animal activity

Sub-group 5.13.2 collapse/backfill deposit

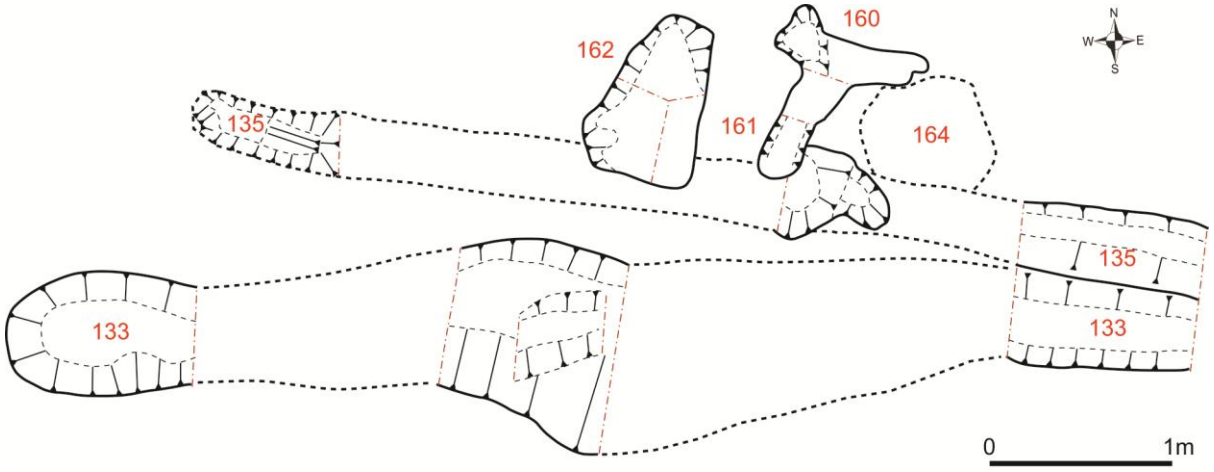
Cut [160]; secondary fill (165): light brown sandy clay silt and pinkish-orange fired clay 640mm x 200mm, depth 30mm

Cut [162]; single fill (163): compact brown sandy clay, 1100mm x 1050mm, depth 200mm; occasional fired clay inclusions and charcoal

Discussion and interpretation Group 5.13

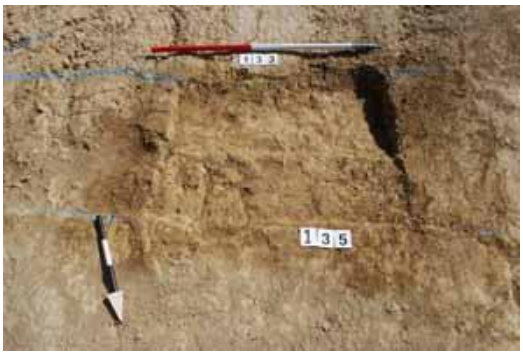
This small T-shaped feature consists of a single N-S gully with an arm off to each side of its northern terminal. It is largely filled with fired clay which is interpreted as the lining for an oven. This lining was thickest to the south and appeared to have been subject to higher temperature than in the north. To either side related features were found, which had been heavily disturbed. The pit to the west and the circular deposit to the east could have been used for storage of material used in the firing of the oven.

Disuse is represented by the secondary fill (165) which probably includes parts of the broken superstructure, and is interpreted as deliberate infill and levelling over, similar to the fill within Pit [162]. These features were both cut on their southern side by construction of Gully [135].



Group 5.14 gully aligned W-E in southern part of site (C5)

Cut [135]: gully >6.5m W-E, 0.30m N-S, 0.05m depth



Fill (134): compact brown sandy clay silt with frequent charcoal and ironstone inclusions

Discussion and interpretation Group 5.14

A shallow gully, function unknown. Stratigraphically later than the corn dryer on its northern side, but stratigraphically earlier than Ditch [133] to the south. Possibly a marking out feature for Ditch [133], which was later realigned slightly further south to ensure a straight line with its eastern terminal.

Group 5.15 ditch aligned W-E in southern part of site (C5, C6)

Sub-group 5.15.1 construction and use of ditch aligned W-E

Cut [133]/[500]/[552]/[559]/[567]/[596]: ditch, total length 32m, 0.54 – 1.06m width, 0.18 – 0.30m depth; U-shaped ditch

Sub-group 5.15.2 backfill of ditch aligned W-E

Fill (132)/(553)/(560)/(568)/(597): yellow brown clay silt, width 540 - 1060mm, depth 180 - 300mm; occasional charcoal flecks

Discussion and interpretation Group 5.15

Major boundary ditch with well-defined terminals at each end oriented E-W across site. This ditch cuts two pits ([505], [554]) and, at its western end, one short length of ditch [135]. The eastern end terminates at the southern extent of a group of pits interpreted as a possible structure (Group 5.7). The western end terminates north of a zone with short linear pits and post-holes. Along the length of the ditch a number of other features are visible, mostly on the northern side, including a possible corn dryer.

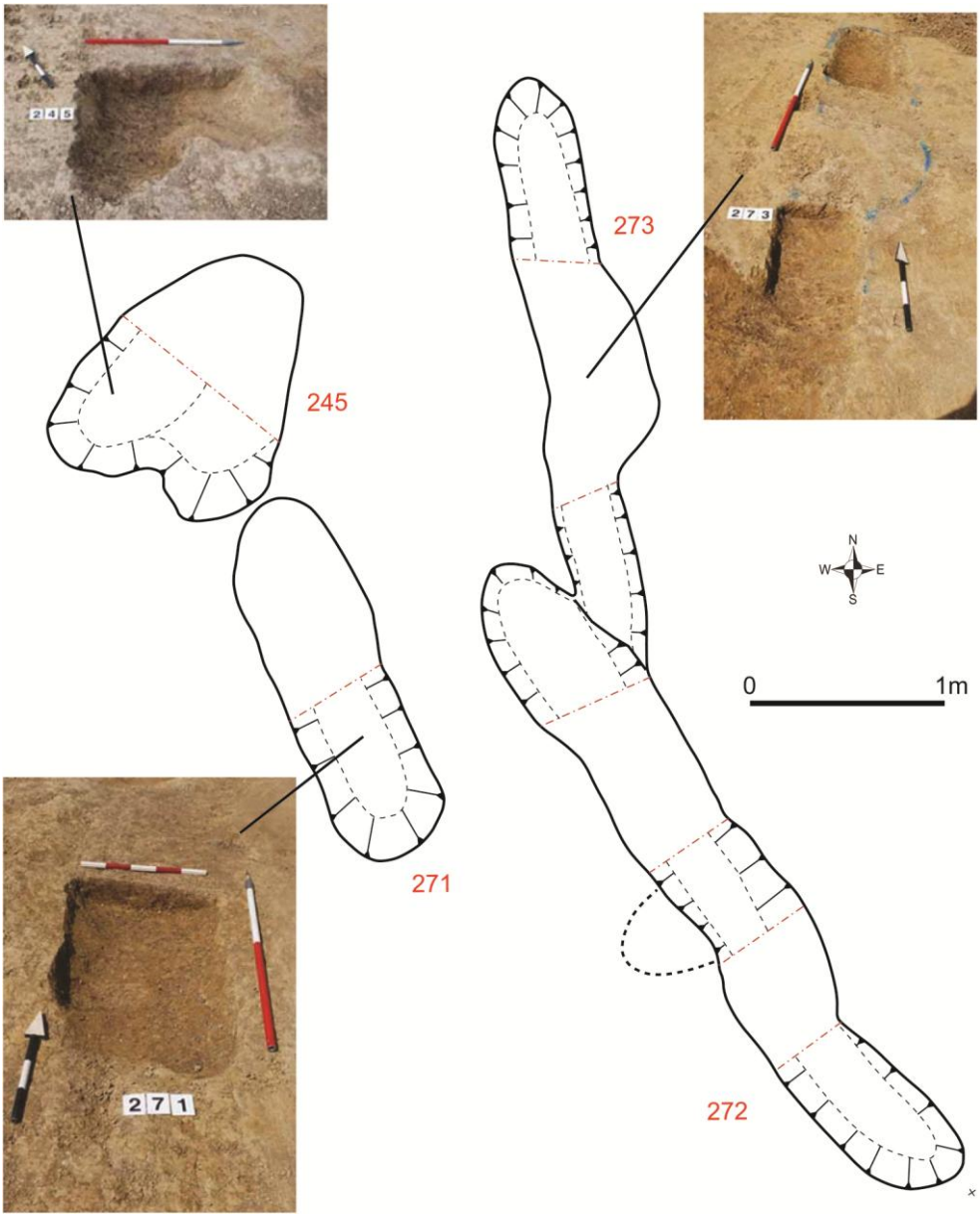
Group 5.16 linear pits and related post-holes in central southern part of site (B5, C5)

Sub-group 5.16.1 construction and use of linear pit and post-hole features

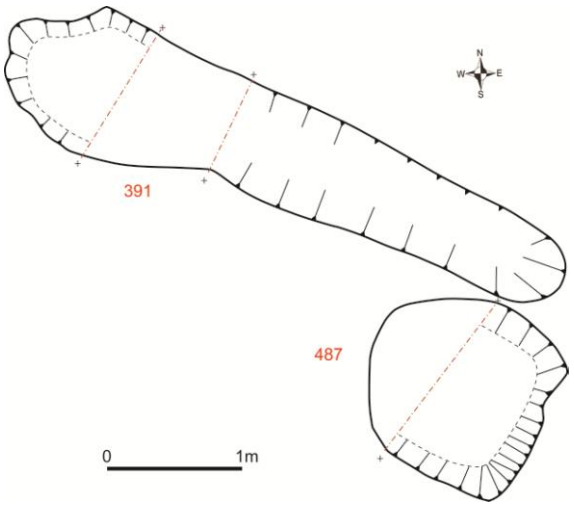
Cut [245]: post-pit, 1.5m N-S, 0.82m E-W, 0.23m depth; steep sided, concave base

Cut [271]: linear pit, 1.95m NW-SE, 0.52m NE-SW, 0.13m depth; gently sloping sides, flat base

Cut [273]: linear pit, 3.1m NW-SE, 0.51m NE-SW, 0.17m depth; slight step NW end, gently sloping SE end, concave base

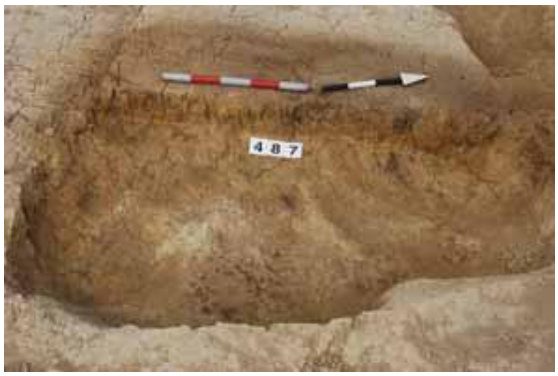


Cut [391]: linear pit, 4.5m E-W, 1.10m N-S, 0.22m depth; steep sided, concave base



Cut [420]: linear pit, 2.08m E-W, 0.7m N-S, 0.21m depth; steep sided, flat base

Cut [487]: post-pit, 1.40m diameter, 0.20m depth; steep sided, flat base



Cut [434]: linear pit, 3.3m E-W, 0.45m N-S, 0.16m depth; steep sided, flat base

Cut [436]: post-pit, 1.00m diameter, >0.16m depth; steep sided, flat base

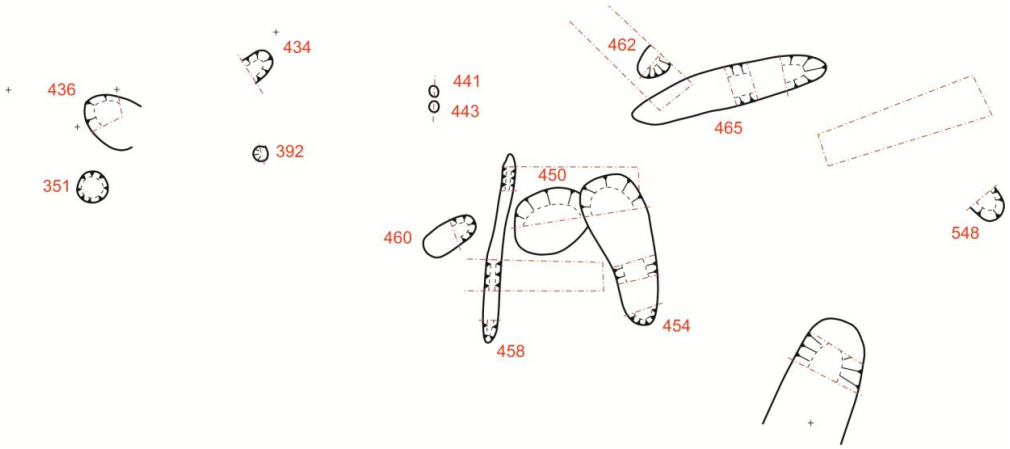
Cut [458]: linear pit, 3.6m N-S, 0.35m E-W, 0.18m depth; gently sloping sides, concave base

Cut [460]: oval pit, 1.1m SW-NE, 0.5m NW-SE, 0.13m depth; vertical sided, flat base

Cut [454]: linear pit, 3.05m N-S, 1.30m E-W, 0.3m depth; steep sided, concave base

Cut [450]: oval pit, 1.5m E-W, 1.32m N-S, 0.22m depth; gently sloping sides, flat base

Cut [465]: linear pit, 3.8m E-W, 0.63m N-S, 0.1m depth; gently sloping sides, concave base



Cut [462]: post-hole, 0.43m diameter, 0.12m depth

Cut [548]: linear pit, 1.54m N-S, 0.64m E-W, 0.15m depth; steep sided, flat base

Sub-group 5.16.2 backfill of linear pit and post-hole features

Cut [245]; single fill (244): dark-brown clay silt, 1500 x 820mm, 230mm depth; no inclusion

Cut [271]; single fill (276): brown silt clay, 1950 x 520mm, 130mm depth; inclusions fragments of brown “organic” material (possibly manganese)

Cut [273]; single fill (274): firm yellow-brown silt clay, 3100 x 510mm, 170mm depth; inclusions fragments of brown concretion (possibly manganese); cut by linear Pit 272

Cut [391]; single fill (390): green-grey clay silt, 4500mm x 1100mm, depth 220mm; stone inclusions

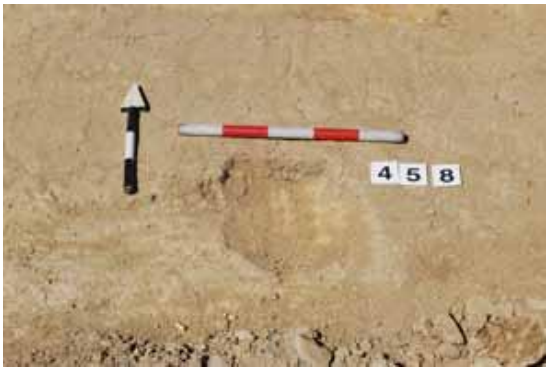
Cut [420]; single fill (382): yellow brown clay silt, 2080mm x 700mm, depth 210mm

Cut [487]; single fill (486): grey brown clay silt, diameter 1140mm, depth 200mm; stone inclusions

Cut [434]; single fill (433): firm brown silt clay, 3300mm x 450mm, depth 160mm; Mesolithic bi-facial tool SF201

Cut [436]; single fill (435): firm brown silt clay, diameter 1000mm, depth 90mm; stone inclusions

Cut [458]; single fill (455): yellow brown clay silt, 500mm x 230mm, depth 80mm



Cut [460]; single fill (459): firm grey brown clay silt, 1100mm x 470mm, depth 130mm

Cut [454]; single fill (451): yellow brown clay silt, 1650mm x 1060mm, depth 300mm; occasional charcoal flecks

Cut [450]; single fill (449): grey brown clay silt 1500mm x 1320mm, depth 220mm; occasional charcoal flecks, EBA pot shred, worked flint

Cut [465]; single fill (464): grey brown clay silt, 1400mm x 670mm, depth 100mm

Cut [462]; single fill (461): firm yellow brown clay silt, diameter 430mm, depth 120mm

Cut [548]; single fill (619): brown grey silty clay, 1540mm x 640mm, depth 150mm

Sub-group 5.16.3 construction and use of linear pit

Cut [272]: linear pit, 3.9m NW-SE, 0.54m NE-SW, 0.18m depth; steep sided, concave base; cuts Pit (273) and fill (274)

Sub-group 5.16.4 backfill of linear pit

Cut [272]; single fill (275): firm pale-brown clay silt, 3900 x 540mm, 180mm depth; inclusions occasional charcoal flecks, fragments of brown concretion (possibly manganese)

Discussion and interpretation Group 5.16

These features have been grouped together because they resemble one another in consisting of long pits with an associated post-pit or post-hole external to one terminal (with exception of intercutting Pits [272] and [273]). The linear pits are often not uniform in width, becoming bulbous at one end. Although dimensions vary, their general appearance and their location grouped together within a single zone, suggests that all these features shared a common function.

Tentative interpretation is that these are structural remains, forming small rectangular buildings. Alternatively they could represent other structures relating to farm activities, such as drying racks or stock pens.

Group 5.17 isolated pits and post-holes in central southern part of site (B5, C5)

Sub-group 5.17.1 construction and use of pit and post-hole features northern sector (C5)

Cut [351]: circular pit, 0.6m diameter, 0.22m depth; vertical sided, flat base with post-hole; primary fill (350): carbonized wood 500mm diameter, 120mm depth; C14 date 204 – 48 and 195 – 40 cal BC

Cut [392]: oval post-pit, 0.35m E-W, 0.23m N-S, 0.15m depth; steep sided, flat base

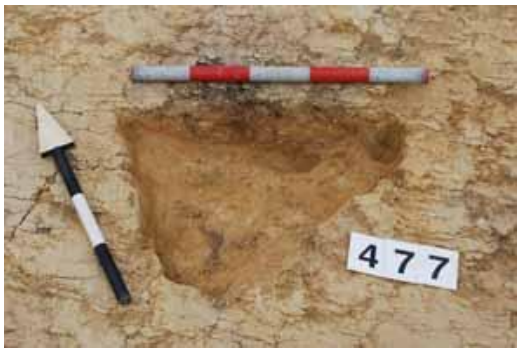
Cut [441]: post-hole, 0.22m diameter, 0.16m depth; steep sided

Cut [443]: post-hole, 0.25m diameter, 0.1m depth; steep sided

Cut [444]: circular post-pit, 0.33m diameter, 0.09m depth; steep sided

Cut [462]: circular post-pit, 0.43m diameter, 0.12m depth; sloping sides, concave base

Cut [477]: circular post-pit, 0.60m diameter, 0.14m depth; steep sided



Cut [484]: ditch, >1m E-W, 0.95m N-S, 0.38m depth; U-shaped, found from partial excavation through colluvium

Sub-group 5.17.2 disuse of pit and post-hole features northern sector

Cut [351]; secondary fill (349): grey brown silt clay; 600mm diameter, 100mm depth; inclusions frequent carbonized wood fragments

Cut [392]; single fill (427): orange brown silt clay; 350mm diameter, 150mm depth

Cut [441]; single fill (440): firm yellow brown clay silt, 220mm diameter, 160mm depth

Cut [443]; single fill (442): firm yellow brown clay silt; 250mm diameter, 100mm depth

Cut [444]; single fill (445): grey brown silt clay; 330mm diameter, 90mm depth

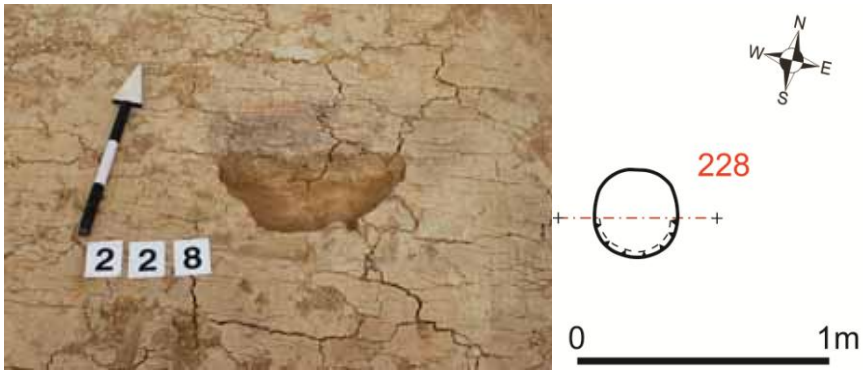
Cut [462]; single fill (461): firm yellow brown clay silt; 430mm diameter, 120mm depth

Cut [477]; single fill (478): firm orange brown silt clay; 600mm diameter, 140mm depth; inclusions moderately frequent charcoal fragments

Cut [484]; single fill (485): grey-brown clay silt, >1000mm x 950mm, 320mm depth; occasional charcoal flecks

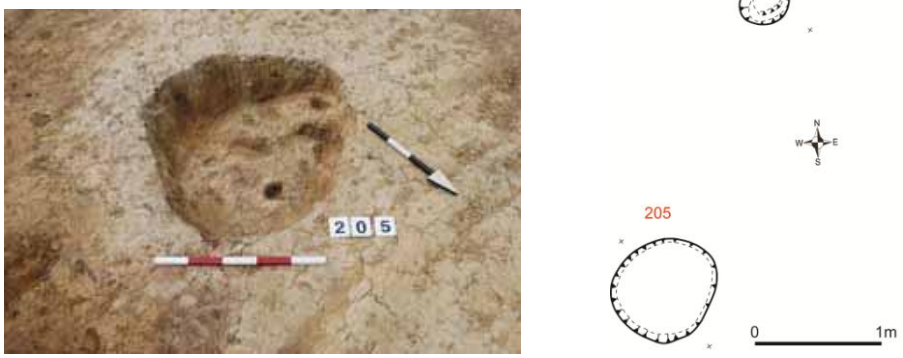
Sub-group 5.17.3 construction and use of pit and post-hole features south-eastern sector (B5, C5, C6)

Cut [228]: circular post-hole, 0.37m diameter, 0.11m depth; vertical sided, flat base



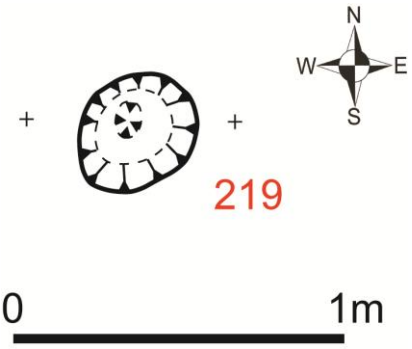
Cut [231]: oval pit, 0.93m E-W, 0.84m N-S, 0.13m depth; steep sided, flat base; clay natural burnt red on sides of pit

Cut [205]: oval pit, 0.85m N-S, 0.75m E-W, 0.22m depth; vertical sided, flat base

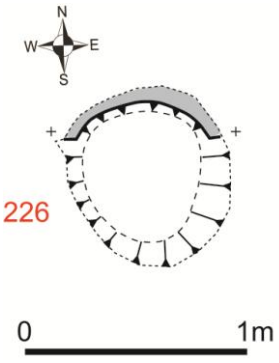


Cut [217] circular post-hole, 0.35m diameter, 0.18m depth; steep sided, concave base

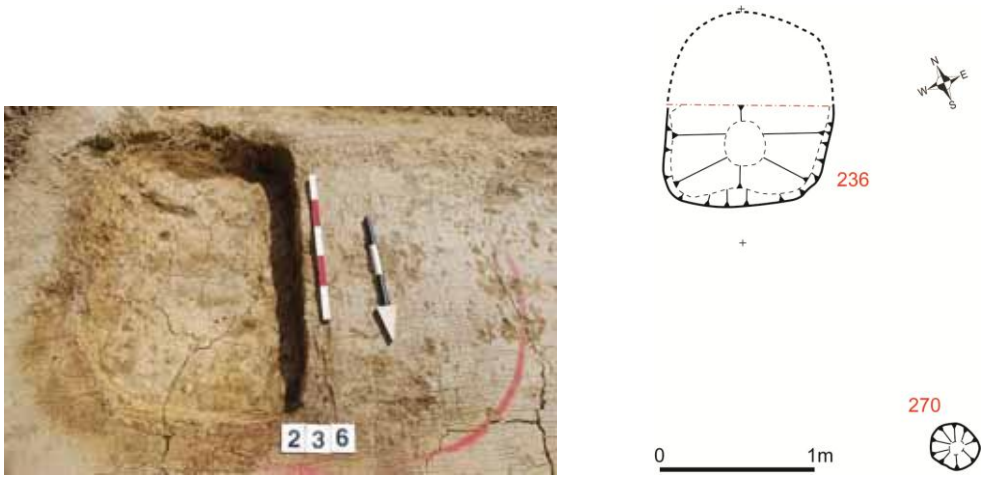
Cut [219]: circular post-hole, 0.4m diameter, 0.15m depth; steep sided, concave base



Cut [226]: sub-circular pit, 0.85m, 0.62m, 0.24m depth; U-shaped; orange-pink burnt natural clay at base (229); primary burning event carbonized wood 850mm x 390mm, 60mm depth; primary clay capping event (224): brown clay, 850mm x 390mm, 30mm depth; occasional carbonized wood and burnt clay fragments; secondary burning event (223): carbonized wood 850mm x 620mm, 40mm depth



Cut [236]: sub-circular pit, 1.25m E-W, 1.0m N-S, 0.17m depth; gently sloping, flat base; natural clay at base burnt red



Cut [270]: circular post-hole, 0.3m diameter, 0.11m depth; steep sided, flat base

Cut [334]: sub-circular pit, 1.35m diameter, 0.42m depth; steep sided, concave base

Sub-group 5.17.3 disuse of pit and post-hole features south-eastern sector

Cut [228]; single fill (227): grey-brown silt, 370mm diameter, 110mm depth; inclusions frequent charcoal flecks and burnt clay fragments

Cut [231]; single fill (230): firm red-brown clay silt, 930mm x 840mm, 130mm depth; inclusions frequent charcoal

Cut [205]; single fill (204): firm grey-brown silt, 850mm x 750mm, 220mm depth; manganese staining

Cut [217]; single fill (216): form red-brown silt, 350mm diameter, 180mm depth

Cut [219]; single fill (218): light brown silt, 400mm diameter, 150mm depth

Cut [226]; final fill (222): brown clay, 850mm x 620mm, 180mm depth; frequent small fragments of charcoal and burnt clay

Cut [236]; single fill (237): brown silt clay, 1250 x 1000mm, 170mm depth; frequent charcoal inclusions and burnt clay fragments

Cut [270]; single fill (269): grey-brown silt, 300mm diameter, 110mm depth; small stones

Cut [334]; primary fill (333): yellow-grey clay silt, 850m diameter, 120mm depth

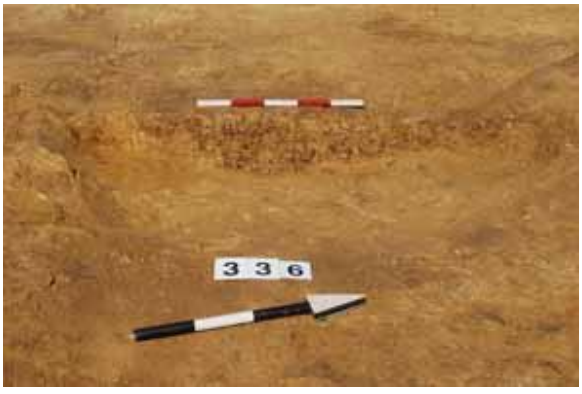
Cut [334]; secondary fill (332): grey-brown clay silt, 1350mm diameter, 290mm depth; occasional charcoal flecks, manganese flecks

Sub-group 5.17.5 construction and use of pit in south-western sector (B5)

Cut [336]: sub-circular pit, 1.5m N-S, 1.3m E-W, 0.15m depth; gently sloping sides

Sub-group 5.17.6 disuse of pit in south-western sector

Cut [336]; single fill (335): grey silt clay, 1500mm x 1300mm, 150mm depth; manganese staining



Discussion and interpretation Group 5.17

An E-W aligned linear group of isolated post-pits or smaller post-holes (5.17.1) within a zone of linear pit and post-hole features. They extend for a length of 22m. Part of a linear feature (484) was observed running parallel to the north, but the extent of this ditch is unknown due to colluvium obscuring it.

A deposit of burnt wood within one pit could lead to an interpretation as a hearth, but there is no record of heat-affected natural subsoil. Apart from this single occurrence of a primary fill, the remaining infill deposits appear very similar, and could be derived from natural accumulation, or deliberate backfill as packing around posts. The lack of erosion visible to the cut sides and bases suggest the latter. A final episode of colluvial deposition sealed these features.

The interpretation given to these post-holes (5.17.1) is that they represent a fence line separating a northern zone of activity from a southern one. Radiocarbon determination from carbonized wood in one of the pits provided a date within the 2nd – 1st centuries BC.

Further burnt posts or fills with charcoal in them are found in a collection of pits and post-holes extending for 16m to the south of the eastern end of this postulated fence line (5.17.1). These pits and post-holes (5.17.3) form a reasonably regular distribution that could be interpreted as another fence line which might have joined with the first at the NE corner, thereby forming two sides of a possible enclosure. A line drawn approximately through these pits and postholes show some that lie slightly to the east, and some to the west, which might indicate replacement posts and therefore more than one phase of activity.

Pit [226] contained definite evidence for use as a hearth, however, with a reuse phase after deliberate backfill. This feature therefore probably had a different function from the others in this sub-group, although a second pit with evidence of burning ([236]) lies at the southern end of the general alignment and would seem to be definitely part of the fence line. It mirrors the burnt post at the western end of 5.17.1, and it therefore also possible that pit [226] formed an integral part of the fence in spite of the two phases of burning. Alternatively it represents a pyro-technical activity against the boundary represented by the fence line. Pit [231] forms the north-eastern extent of this line of pits/post-holes and also shows evidence of in situ burning. Colluvium sealed some of these features.

A single small pit was also recorded SW of the others, which possibly was not originally isolated, as east of this the excavation area was obscured by spoil storage. It is just possible that this represents the start of an E-W fence line that would have met with the SE end of the N-S fence.

The general interpretation is that these pits and post-holes were used for fences, possibly forming an enclosure.

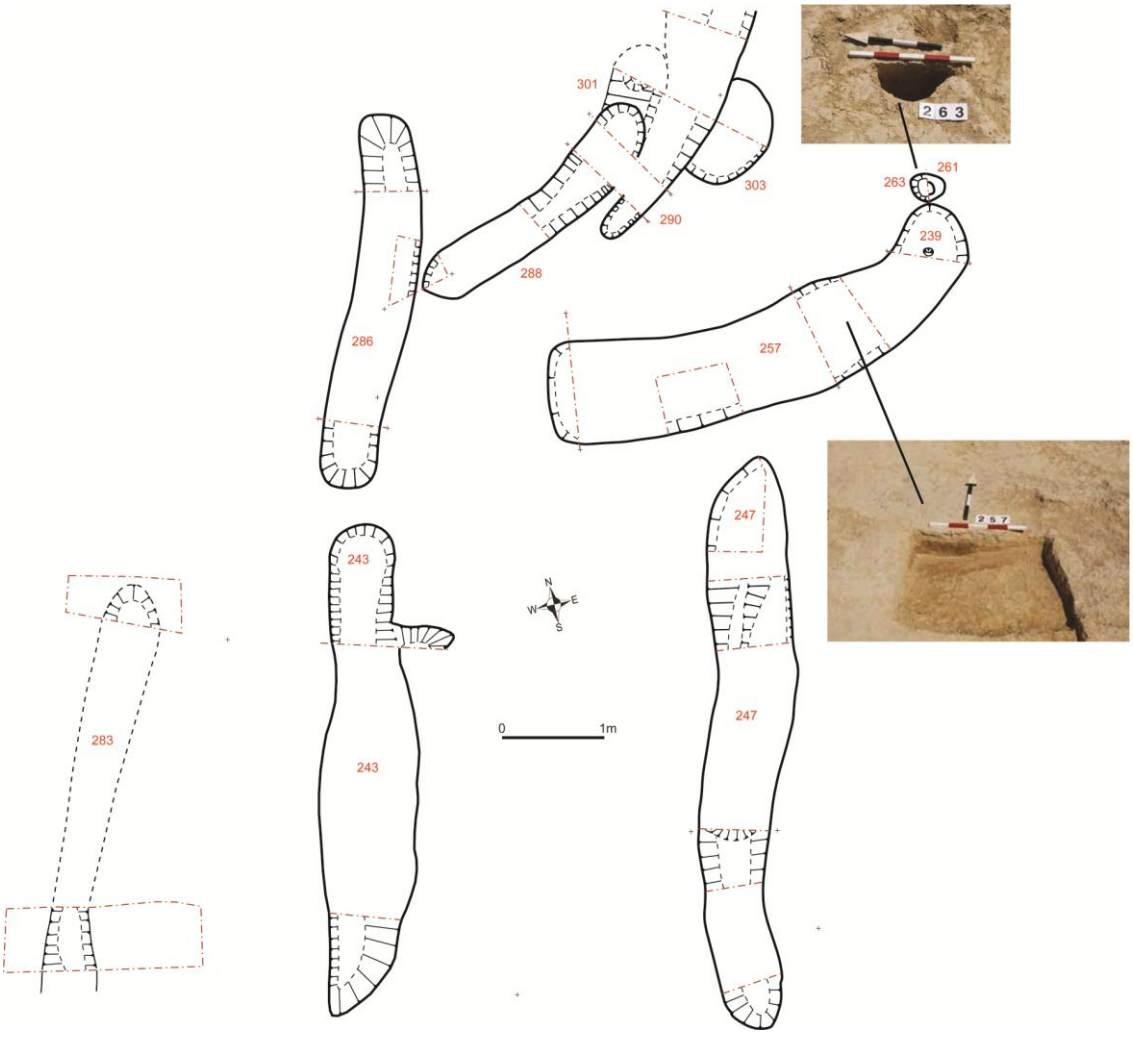
Group 5.18 curvilinear pits and related post-holes in central southern part of site (B5, C5)

Sub-group 5.18.1 construction and use of curvilinear pits and post-hole features

Cut [257]: linear pit, 4.9m curving E-W, 1.1m N-S, 0.21m depth; sloping sides, concave base; wider at western end.

Cut [259]: stake-hole cut into eastern terminal of pit 257, 0.13m diameter, 0.06m depth

Cut [263]: post-hole external eastern end pit 257, c.0.40m diameter, 0.24m depth



Cut [304]: linear pit, >4.1m E-W, 1.1m N-S, 0.1m depth; flat base, curves NE at eastern end (feature continued under spoil heap to east)

Cut [324]: oval pit, 1.4m E-W, 0.73m N-S, 0.11m depth; steep sided, flat base

Cut [338]: linear pit, 2.1m NW-SE, 0.6m NE-SW, 0.18m depth; sloping sides, concave base

Sub-group 5.18.2 backfill of linear pits and post-hole features

Cut [257]; primary fill (253), (255), (280): yellow grey clay silt 4900mm x 1100mm, depth 50mm; occasional - frequent charcoal flecks

Cut [257]; secondary fill (254), (256): charcoal-rich grey clay silt 2400mm x 650mm, depth 80mm

Cut [259]; single fill (258): grey clay silt; diameter 130mm, depth 60mm

Cut [263]; post-pipe [261]; filled by (260): grey clay silt; diameter 150mm, depth 210mm; frequent charcoal flecks; within post packing (262) yellow grey clay silt, 450mm x 390mm, depth 240m

Cut [304]; single fill (305): soft yellow-brown silt clay, 4100 x 1100mm, 100mm depth; occasional stones

Cut [324]; single fill (323): firm yellow-brown silt clay, 1400 x 730mm, 110mm depth; manganese staining, occasional small angular stones and charcoal flecks; cut by Pit 299

Cut [338]; single fill (337): grey-brown clay silt, 2100 x 600mm, 180mm depth; charcoal flecks

Sub-group 5.18.3 addition of linear pit

Cut [299]: linear pit, 2.65m slight curve SW-NE, 0.5 – 0.85m N-S, 0.17 – 0.2m depth; steep sided, concave base which becomes V-shaped at W end (cuts W end of Pit [324])

Sub-group 5.18.4 backfill of linear pit

Cut [299]; primary fill (331): firm yellow-brown silt clay, 2300 x 400mm, 40mm depth; not evident NE end; inclusions occasional charcoal flecks, small angular stones, manganese staining

Cut [299]; secondary fill (298): firm brown clay silt, 2650 x 850mm, 130mm depth; inclusions occasional charcoal flecks, small angular stones, manganese staining

Discussion and interpretation Group 5.18

Five linear pits broadly oriented E-W across distance of c.17m, some with slight curvature with terminals to north. A stake-hole was located within the eastern terminal of [257], and an external post-hole adjacent to this. Deliberate design but function undetermined. Pit [324] was cut, perhaps as a deliberate extension, by Pit [299], and the appearance of these pits and Pit [304] strongly suggest a method of segmented construction. Pit 304 might contain the base of a post-hole at its western end but it is too shallow to confirm.

Primary fill of Pit [257] appears to be natural weathering infill, with a secondary charcoal-rich deposit deliberately infilling the pit, whereas the two fills within Pit [299] both appear to have been natural accumulation, also evident in Pit [304]. Colluvium sealed these features.

Interpretation uncertain as there is little from the form, distribution or associated infill of these features to help determine their function.

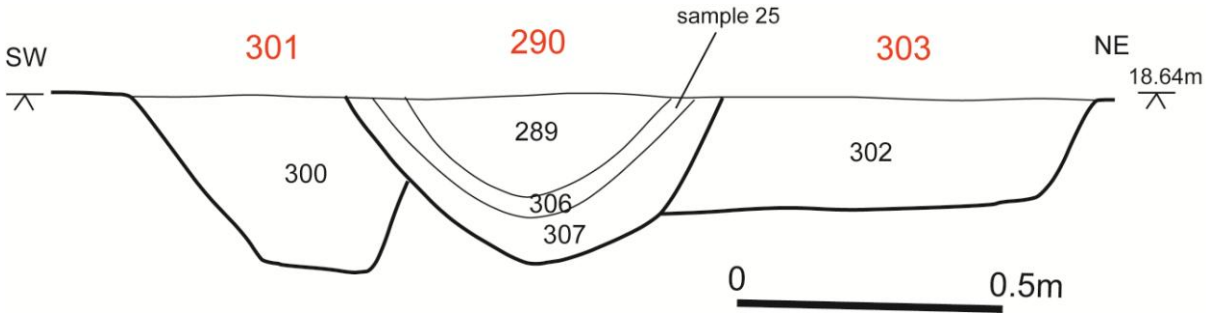
Group 5.19 curvilinear pit and related post-holes in central southern part of site (B5)

Sub-group 5.19.1 construction and use of curvilinear pit and post-hole feature

Cut [288]: linear pit, 2.8m curving NE-SW, 0.6m E-W, 0.55m depth; steep sides, irregular base

Cut [301]: post-hole external northern end pit 288, c.0.50m diameter, 0.35m depth

Cut [303]: post-hole external eastern end pit 288, c.1m diameter, 0.25m depth

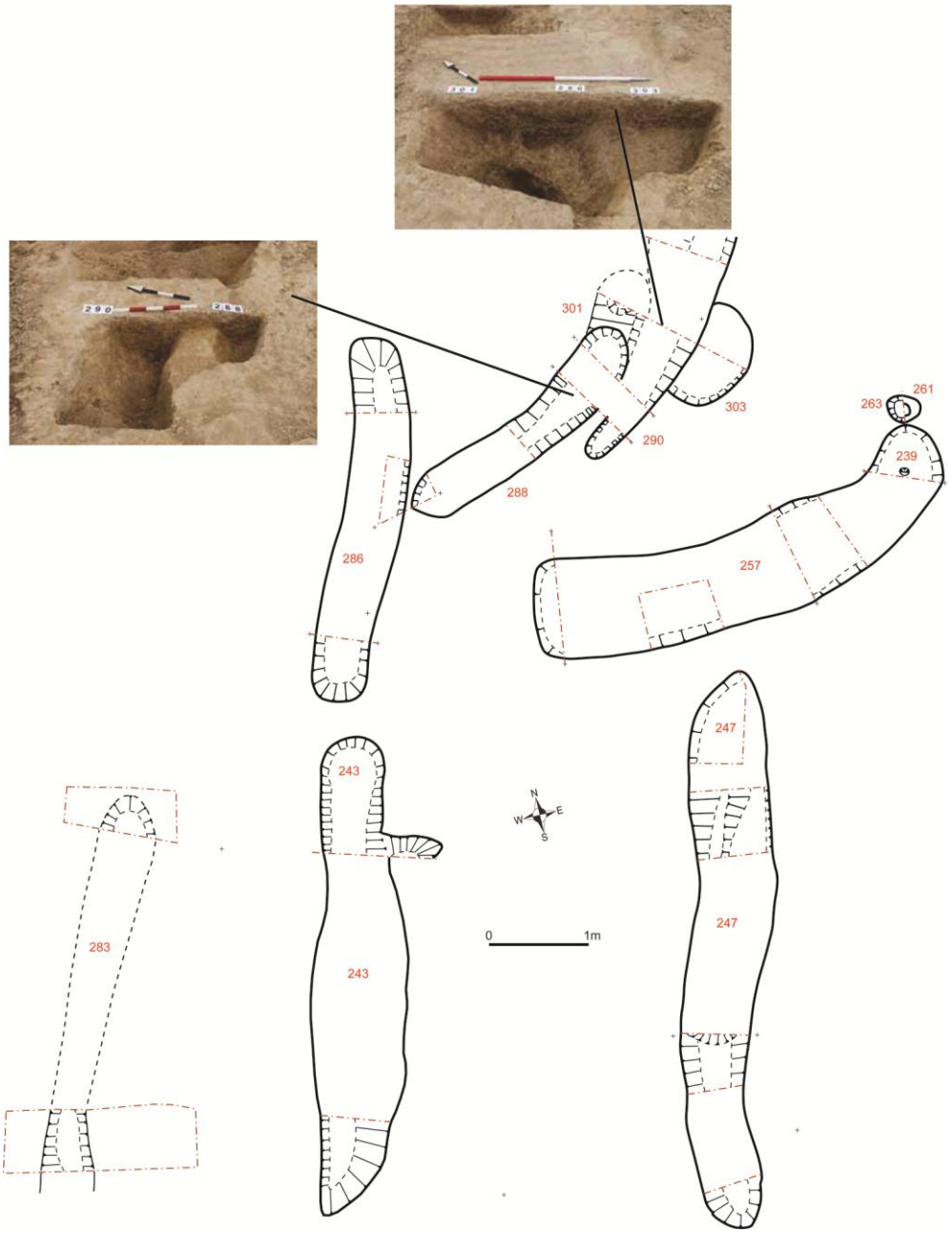


Sub-group 5.19.2 backfill of linear pit and post-hole features

Cut [288]; single fill (287): grey brown silt clay 2800mm x 600mm, depth 55mm

Cut [301]; single fill (300): grey brown silty clay; diameter 500mm, depth 350mm

Cut [303]; single fill (302): grey brown silty clay; diameter 1000mm, depth 250mm



Discussion and interpretation Group 5.19

A curving linear pit oriented NE-SW. A post-hole was located on the northern end, which may have been a continuation and thus would have formed the northern terminal. A second post-hole was located to the east of the northern end. Function undetermined.

A single fill appears to be consistent in description for all three features, suggesting contemporaneity, with no inclusions or artefacts to assist with functional interpretation. This infill event is interpreted as disuse, and a probable deliberate backfill prior to a replacement linear pit ([290]: see group below).

Group 5.20 curvilinear pit in central southern part of site (B5)

Sub-group 5.20.1 construction and use of curvilinear pit

Cut [290]: linear pit, 3m curving NE-SW, 0.7m E-W, 0.40m depth; U-shaped cut

Sub-group 5.20.2 backfill of curvilinear pit

Cut [290]; primary fill (307): grey silt clay 2000mm x 700mm, depth 200mm

Cut [290]; secondary fills (309) and (308): grey silt clay uncertain extent; depth 100-250mm

Sub-group 5.20.3 deliberate backfill of curvilinear pit

Cut [290]; tertiary fill (306): carbon-rich grey brown silt clay 2000mm x 700mm, depth 100mm;

Cut [290]; final fill (289): grey brown silt clay; 3000 x 500mm, depth 210

Discussion and interpretation Group 5.20

A curving linear pit oriented NE-SW replacing earlier feature [288] of similar type. No post-holes were found associated with this phase of use. Function undetermined.

Several fills are recorded, the primary episodes of infill appearing similar in description to the backfill of the earlier linear pit, but a deliberate backfill episode is also apparent, which contains large amounts of carbon. A final fill sealed this carbon-rich deposit, which could be attributed to abandonment and natural accumulation. There are not any artefacts or other inclusions to help interpret the function of the feature, and a sample taken for carbon analysis was discarded by SWAT.

Group 5.21 parallel ditches in central southern part of site (B5)

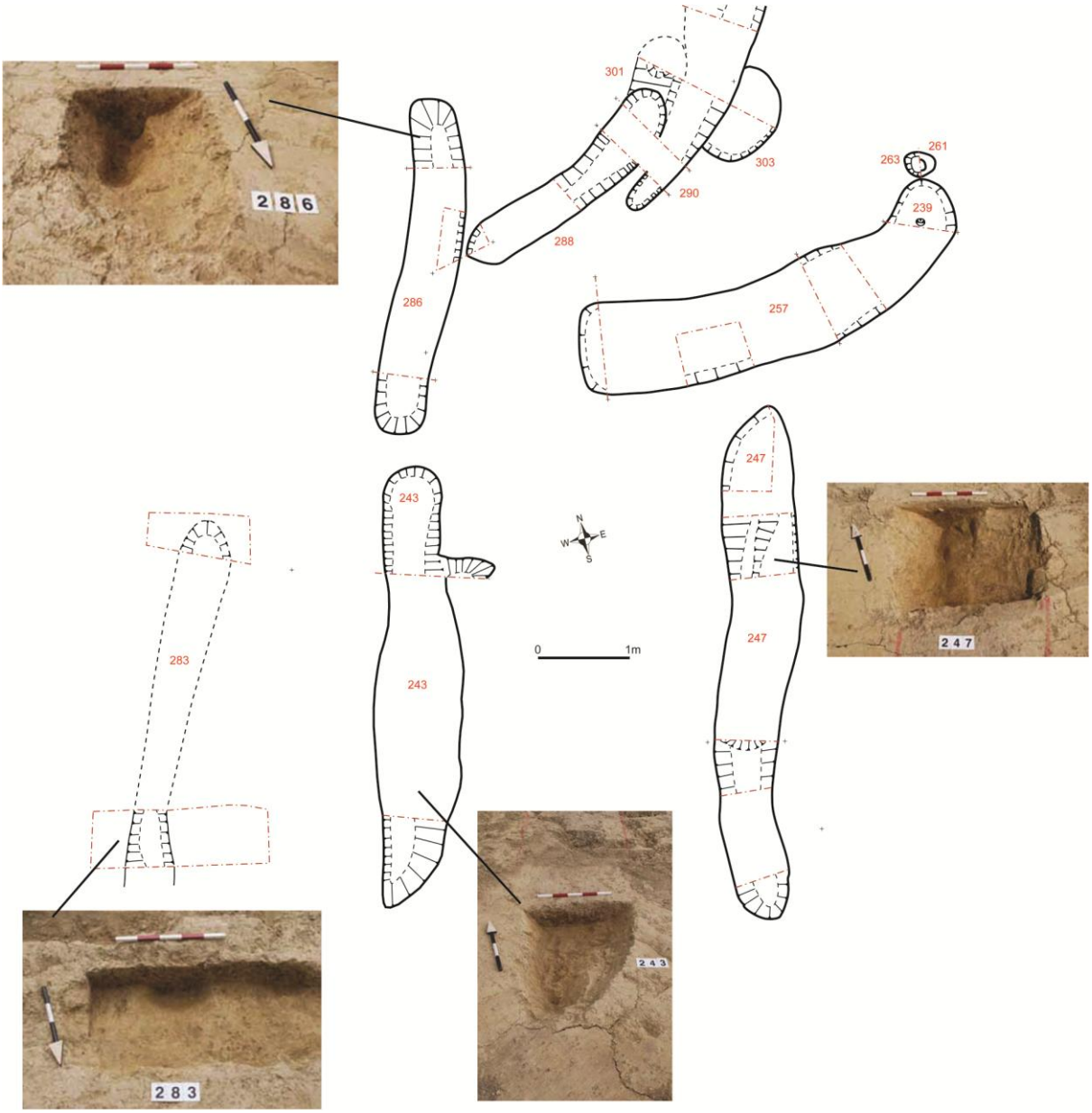
Sub-group 5.21.1 construction and use of ditches

Cut [243]: ditch, 4.6m NE-SW, 0.8m E-W, 0.46m depth; steep sided, flat base

Cut [247]: ditch, 4.7m NE-SW, 0.7m E-W, 0.3m depth; V- and U-shaped; post-holes in base

Cut [283]: ditch, 3.8m NE-SW, 0.55m E-W, 0.26m depth; steep sided, flat base

Cut [286]: ditch, 3.6m NE-SW, 0.55m E-W, 0.26m depth; steep sided, flat base



Cut [348]: ditch, 4.4m N-S, 0.58-0.7m E-W, 0.27m depth; steep sided, flat base

Sub-group 5.21.2 backfill of ditches

Cut [243]; primary fill (242): firm orange silt clay; 1000 x 420mm, depth 130mm; secondary fill (241): firm orange-brown clay silt; 1000 x 800mm, depth 330mm; inclusions small stones and charcoal flecks

Cut [247]; single fill (246), also recorded as (264) and (265): brown-grey silt clay; 4700 x 700mm, depth 300mm; inclusions small stones and manganese staining along central linear zone

Cut [283]; single fill (282): grey brown silt clay; 3800 x 550mm, depth 260mm; manganese staining and worked flint flake (Neolithic? SF172)

Cut [286]; primary fill (285): yellow-brown silt clay; 3500 x 400mm, depth 80 – 120mm; inclusions small stones and manganese staining; secondary fill (284): light brown silt; 3600 x 550mm, depth 100 – 150mm; inclusions small stones, charcoal flecks, manganese staining

Cut [348]; single fill (347), also recorded as (359) and (360): yellow-grey clay silt, 4400mm x 700mm, 270mm depth; occasional charcoal flecks and manganese

Discussion and interpretation Group 5.21

A group of parallel ditches aligned NE-SW with similar infill histories. Two of these ditches are separated by a 0.4m gap between the northern terminal of one and the southern terminal of the other, oriented as a continuation to each other. Two ditches lie parallel of this segmented section at approximately 3 – 4m distance on each side, and an outlier [348] 10m to the east. This latter has a slight curvature with terminals oriented towards NW and SW. All ditches have been carefully cut and have retained steep sides and flat bases, suggesting lack of erosion, and therefore rapid backfill. In the base of one ditch the field record notes the presence of post-holes.

The fill episodes are very similar and all contained a silt clay with manganese staining. The segmented ditch sections included a secondary fill episode with charcoal flecks. The manganese staining occurred along the central zone of the fills, and in association with post-holes found in the base of one ditch; the interpretation is that these ditches were constructed as fence-lines. A final episode of colluvial deposition (187) sealed these features.

Interpretation is that these features were designed as palisade slots.

Group 5.22 Pits with evidence of burning in central southern part of the site (C4, C5)

Sub-group 5.22.1 construction and use of pits

Cut [157]: circular pit, 0.52m diameter, 0.09m depth; flat base, burnt natural clay

Cut [250]: circular pit, 0.45m diameter, 0.11m depth; pit lining (252): clay natural burnt orange, 450mm diameter, 10mm thick

Cut [266]: circular pit, 0.40m diameter, 0.05m depth; shallow bowl-shaped; pit lining (268): clay natural burnt orange-red, 400mm diameter, <30mm thick

Cut [277]: sub-circular pit, 0.90m N-S, 0.70m E-W, 0.15m depth; steep sided, flat base; pit lining (279): natural silt clay burnt orange-red, 900 x 700mm, 25mm thick

Cut [294]: sub-circular pit, 0.65m N-S, 0.57m E-W, 0.16m depth; steep sided, uneven base; pit lining (297): clay natural burnt orange-red, 500 x 470mm, 10mm thick; carbonized wood deposit (295) above burnt clay base, 500 x 470mm, 70mm depth

Sub-group 5.22.2 backfill of pits

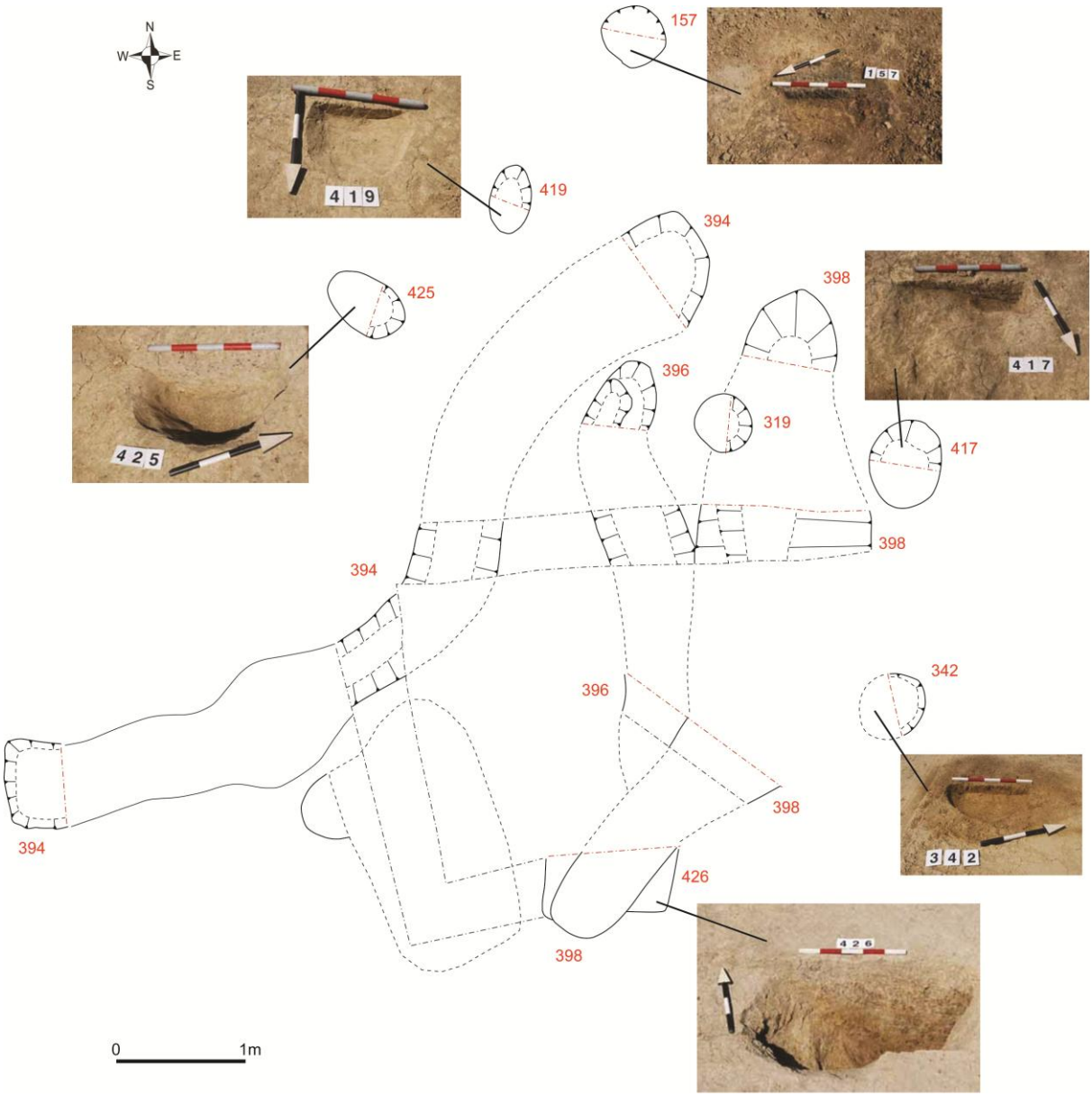
Cut [157]; single fill (156) black silt clay, 520mm diameter, 90mm depth; 75% charcoal

Cut [250]; fill (251): brown silt clay; 400 x 300mm, 110mm depth; inclusions - concentration of carbonized material in basal 60mm

Cut [266]; fill (267): black carbonized plant material with pieces of fired clay, 360mm diameter, <50mm depth

Cut [277]; fill (278): brown silt clay; 900 x 700mm, 125mm depth; inclusions - large concentration carbonized material in basal 50mm

Cut [294]; final fill (296): brown silt clay; 500 x 470mm, 120mm depth; inclusions - degraded pieces of sandstone and ironstone



Discussion and interpretation group 5.22

This group consists of five pits which all display evidence for having been exposed to heat, and with fills comprising carbonized wood or charcoal-rich deposits. Secondary fills are predominantly mineral-based, although containing sufficient charcoal to suggest that the in-

fill episode was not widely separated from the use of the pits, and that some remnant debris from burning within them became included within a back-fill, perhaps deliberate capping event.

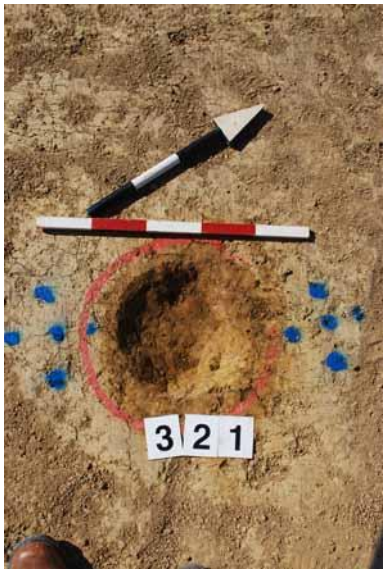
Although no artefactual evidence was recovered from these deposits, radio-carbon determination of charcoal from pit [351], located 3m to the north-east, produced two dates within the 2nd century BC – mid 1st century BC.

Four of the pits cluster in the central southern end of the excavation area, in a zone adjacent to a possible round-house structure to the south-west, and to groups of linear pits and post-pits to the north-east. An outlier [266] lies c.14m to the north-west of the main group.

The pits are interpreted as hearths, although probably not for domestic purposes as they do not lie within discernible structures. Samples discarded by SWAT.

Group 5.23 structural pits and gully in central southern part of site (B4, B5)

Cut [321] pit, 0.22m diameter, 0.08m depth; gently sloping sides, concave base



Cut [342]: pit, 0.51m diameter, 0.07m depth; gently sloping sides, flat base

Cut [396]: curvilinear gully, 3.5m N-S, 0.80m E-W, 0.16m depth; sloping sides, flat base

Cut [417]: ovoid pit 0.70m N-S, 0.56m E-W, 0.12m depth; gently sloping sides, irregular base

Cut [419]: ovoid pit 0.52m N-S, 0.36m E-W, 0.06m depth; sloping sides, flat base

Cut [425]: ovoid pit 0.75m E-W, 0.56m N-S, 0.22m depth; sloping sides, U-shaped base

Cut [426]: square pit, rounded corners, 1.0m E-W, 1.0m N-S, 0.65m depth; vertical sided, U-shaped base

Sub-group 5.23.2 backfill of pits

Cut [321]; single fill (322): brown silty clay, 220mm diameter, 8mm depth

Cut [342]; single fill (341): firm yellow brown clay silt; 510mm diameter, 70mm depth; inclusions occasional small pebbles, manganese staining

Cut [396]; single fill (395): yellow brown silt clay; 3500 x 800mm, 160mm depth

Cut [417]; single fill (416): yellow grey silt clay; 700 x 560mm, 120mm depth

Cut [419]; single fill (418): yellow grey silt clay; 520 x 360mm, 60mm depth; manganese mottling

Cut [425]; single fill (424): yellow grey silt clay; 750 x 560mm, 220mm depth; manganese mottling

Cut [426]; single fill (399): grey brown silt clay; 1000 x 1000mm, 650mm depth; manganese flecks

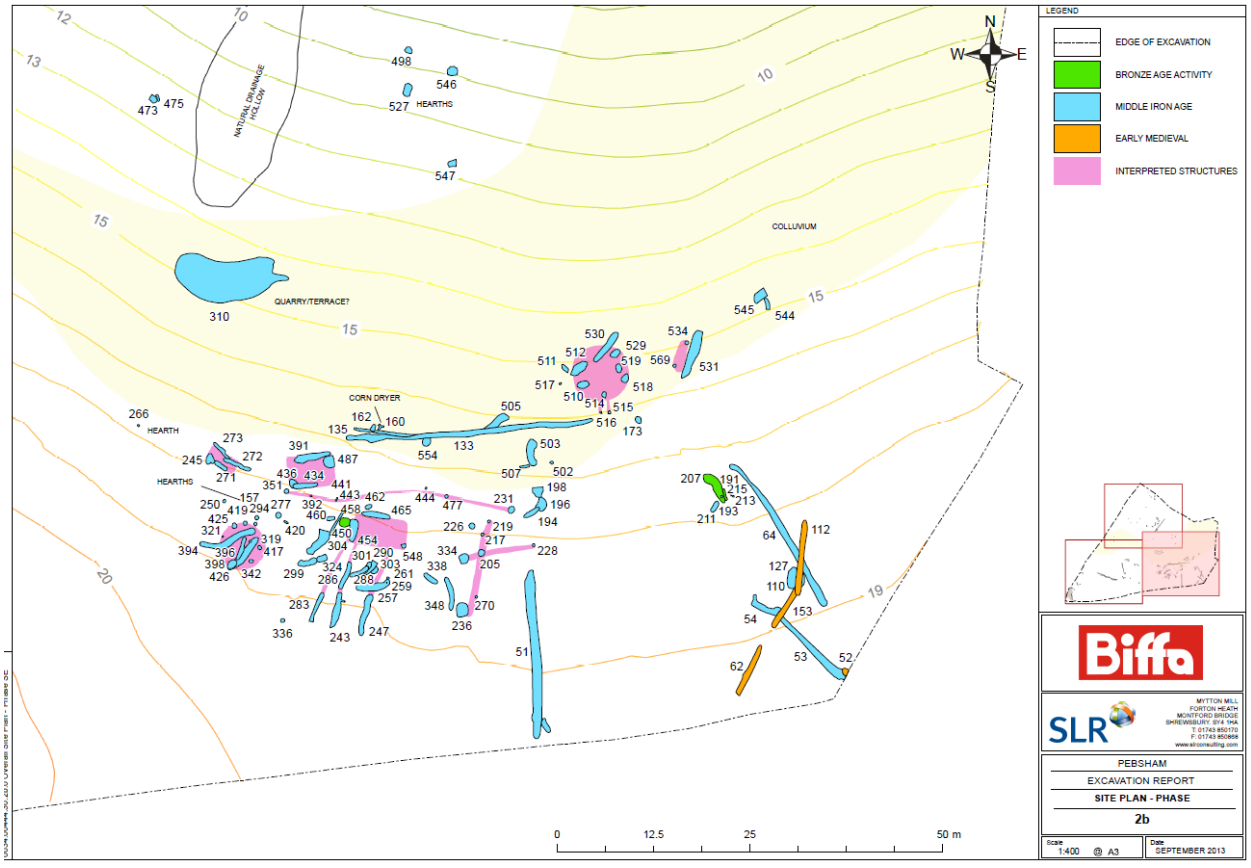
Discussion and interpretation Group 5.23

A group of six postholes which almost form a circle approximately 5m in diameter. This could represent a post-built round-house structure. A gully extends between the south-western corner post-hole and the northern most post-hole, possibly dividing the structure in two. An outlying post-hole c.2m to the north could be associated and is therefore included within this group.

The fills of the features are all of similar description and probably reflect backfill around posts or a wattle wall for the gully, rather than gradual infill following disuse. It is possible that a later linear feature (gully [394]) could have removed a post-hole on the western side that would otherwise have completed the circuit for the structure.

The interpretation given for this group is that of a small post-built round-house.

Plan of south-eastern part of site by phase and cut number

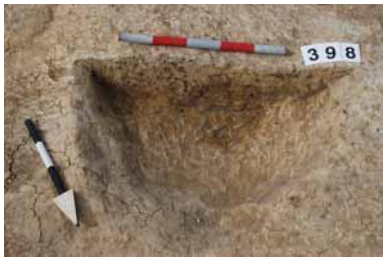


Group 5.24 short gullies in central southern part of site, cutting previous structure (B4, B5)

Sub-group 5.24.1 construction and use of ditches

Cut [394]: curvilinear gully, 7.05m SW-NE, 0.60m width, 0.20m depth; U-shaped

Cut [398]: gully 4.30m SW-NE, 1.20m width, 0.30m depth; U-shaped



Sub-group 5.24.2 backfill of ditches

Cut [394]; single fill (415): yellow brown silt clay; 7050 x 600mm, 200mm depth; manganese flecking

Cut [398]; single fill (397): yellow grey silt clay; 4300 x 1200mm, 300mm depth; manganese flecking

Sub-group 5.23.3 post-pit cutting gully 398

Cut [319]: sub-circular pit, 0.47m diameter, 0.17m depth; steep sided, flat based

Cut [319]; single fill (320): loosely compacted brown grey silt clay;

Discussion and Interpretation Group 5.24

Two gullies and a post were constructed within a possible round house. Gully 398 extends from the southern-most post-hole of the roundhouse (pit [426], cutting and replacing it) to the projected wall of the structure north of pit [419], effectively delimiting the southern third of the roundhouse. A post-hole (pit [319]) is located cut into the north-western edge of the gully, which is interpreted as a related event to the gully.

Gully 394 is located 1 – 2m north of gully [398], and its eastern terminal is also against the projected wall of the roundhouse. It could have been designed to delimit the northern third of this structure, but extends beyond the western projection of the roundhouse, curving in a more westerly direction. Limited investigation of this feature during fieldwork could mask its real character, possibly comprising separate segments or features: a western segment oriented E-W and an eastern segment oriented SW-NE, or possibly post-holes at the junction between these two alignments, or at its western terminal. If the latter was included then the roundhouse could have extended to approximately 8m in diameter.

The interpretation given for this group is modifications to an existing roundhouse structure, to delimit space internally, and to separate access externally into discrete zones within the structure.

Group 5.25 Pit and recut in central southern part of excavation area, (B4)

Sub-group 5.25.1 construction and backfill of pit

Cut [108]: oval pit, 1m N-S, 0.6m E-W, 0.06m depth; sloping sided, flat base

Fill [107]: compact brown-orange silt clay; 1000 x 600mm, 60mm depth

Sub-group 5.25.2 recut of pit

Cut [106]: linear pit, 1.94m N-S, 0.64m E-W, 0.08m depth; sloping sided, flat base

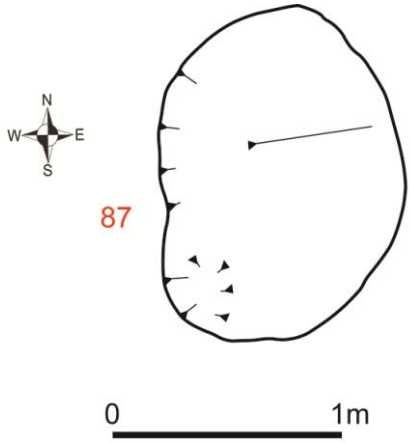
Fill [105]: compact grey-brown silt clay; 1940 x 640mm, 80mm depth; Mesolithic flint core (SF 190)

Discussion and interpretation group 5.25

An isolated pit that was backfilled and modified through reuse. The original oval pit 108 was cut on its western side by a larger pit, [106], which was oriented N-S. Function, date, and relationship to other features uncertain.

Group 5.26 Isolated pit with evidence of burning in central southern part of the site (B3)

Cut [87]: circular pit, 0.70m diameter, 0.12m depth; clay lining (97): 700mm diameter, 70mm depth



Fill (88): loose charcoal-rich deposit 700mm diameter, 50mm depth; inclusions - large charcoal pieces up to 3cm, and worked flint flake

Interpretation group 5.26

Hearth containing in-situ evidence of burning. Sample discarded by SWAT.

Group 5.27 Pit and recut in central southern part of excavation area, (B3)

Sub-group 5.27.1 construction and backfill of pit

Cut [104]: oval pit, 2.54m E-W, 1.2m N-S, 0.19m depth; sloping sided, concave base

Fill (103): yellow-grey sandy silt; 2540 x 1200mm, 190mm depth; inclusions – iron pan fragments, manganese, two worked flint flakes

Sub-group 5.27.2 recut of pit

Cut [102]: linear pit, 4.12m NW-SE, 0.60m NE-SW, 0.90m depth; sloping sided, flat base

Fill (101): yellow-grey silt clay; 4120 x 600mm, 900mm depth; inclusions – small stones

Discussion and interpretation group 5.27

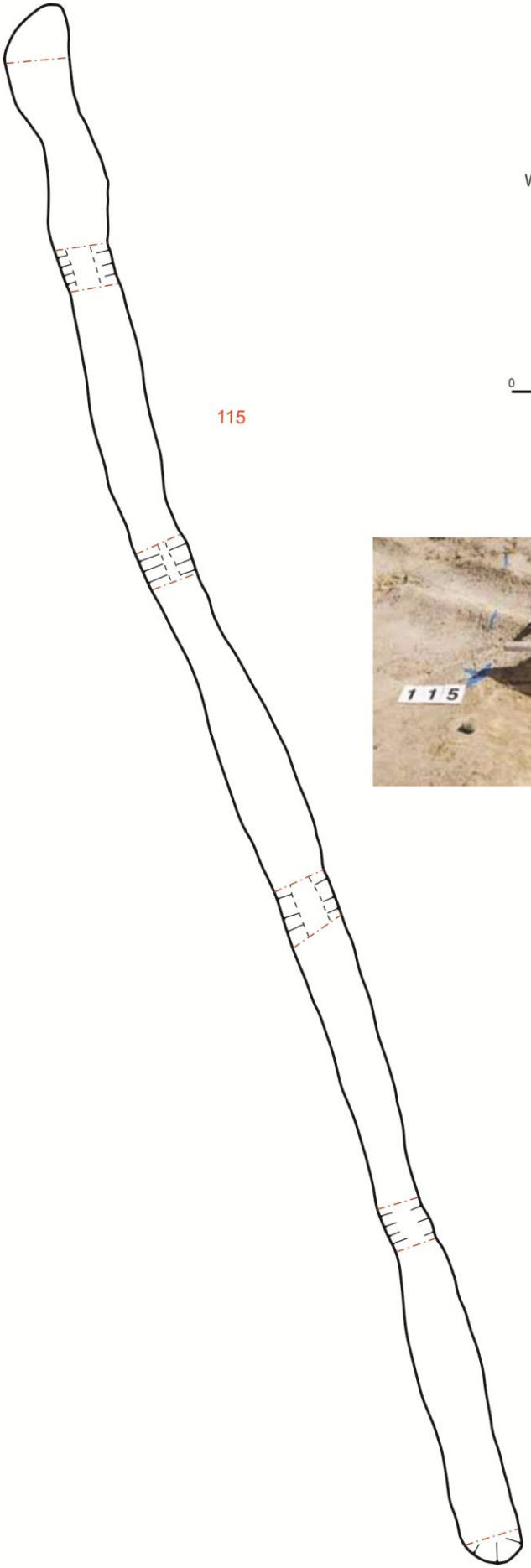
An isolated pit that was backfilled and modified through reuse. The original oval pit 104 was cut on its western side by a larger pit, [102], which was oriented N-S. Function and date uncertain, but proximity of these features to a NW-SE ditch [115] located 3m to the north-east, and to E-W ditches ([86] and [96]), located 11m to the west, suggests that its function was related to these landscape demarcation features.

Group 5.28 Ditch aligned NW-SE and large pit in central southern area of excavation, (B3, C3)

Sub-group 5.28.1 construction of ditch and pit

Cut [115]: ditch, 17.4m NW-SE, 0.8m width, 0.18m depth; sloping sided, flat - concave base

Cut [80]: circular pit, 1.75m diameter, 0.85m depth; vertical/bell shaped, flat base

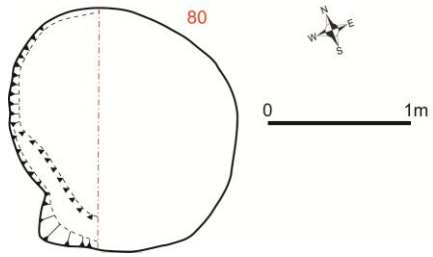

N
W
E
S
0
1m
115


115

Sub-group 5.28.2 backfill of ditch and pit

Cut [115]: single fill (114): compact orange clay sand; 17400 x 800mm, 180mm depth

Cut [80]; fill (117): basal deposit, yellow-brown silt clay; 1600 diameter, 250mm depth; fill (116): brown silt clay; 1750mm diameter, 300mm depth



Discussion and interpretation group 5.28

The large pit is located 0.5m north of the northern end of ditch [115]. The ditch's alignment is directly towards this pit, and it is concluded that the two features must be contemporary and associated with one another. The pit shape and dimensions would be consistent with a storage function, although its location at the end of a linear feature could argue for a more prominent role, perhaps as the pit for a very large marker post. The diameter of the pit, however, would suggest it is far too wide and too shallow for such a function. The ditch is shallow but relatively wide, and is one of the most extensive features on site.

The fills of the pit do not show evidence for tipping or slumping of the sides, and both are similar in description, which could suggest they derive from a single infill episode. This was probably a deliberate act, as although natural accumulation is also possible, there is a lack of evidence to show different lenses of material which might be expected from seasonal intensities of infill and stabilization horizons. The fill of the ditch appears to have had a greater sand content than most recorded deposits infilling features on site, and could reflect deliberate replacement of material excavated to make the ditch, shortly after its construction.

The interpretation is that the ditch was cut for creation of a boundary, a fence-line or more probably a hedge, and that it was backfilled around the foundations of this obstacle. The pit is interpreted as a storage feature, presumably for grain.

Group 5.29 Ditches aligned NW-SE in central western area of excavation, (B2, B3)

Sub-group 5.29.1 construction of ditches

Cut [86]/[140]/[146]/[159]: curvilinear ditch, oriented NW-SE, 30m, 1m width, 0.15-0.30m depth; almost vertical sided, flat base; possibly a segmented, discontinuous linear, which would explain the various arcs this sinuous feature forms

Cut [96]/[149]: curvilinear ditch oriented NW-SE, 22m (37m including uninvestigated possible extension at western end), 0.4 – 0.55m width, 0.05 – 0.30m depth; runs parallel and to north of Cut 86, discontinuous, possibly constructed in segments

Sub-group 5.29.2 backfill of ditches

Cut [86]; fills (81),(82), (83), (84), (85), (158): red-brown silt clay

Cut [96]; fills (91), (92), (93), (94), (95), (139), (143): red-brown silt clay

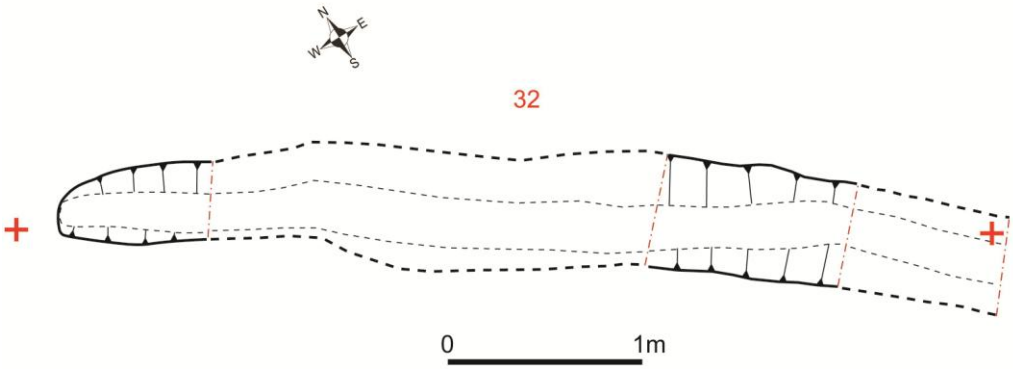
Discussion and interpretation group 5.29

These ditches were investigated by a series of slots, and the records have become confused because of the uncertainty as to whether the features are discontinuous and therefore should have separate context numbers assigned. Nonetheless, the overall impression is of two parallel ditches, with [96] being slightly earlier and smaller than [86] which cuts it on the southern side. The ditches form a major linear element within the site, and form part of a pattern of intermittent landscape division.

The interpretation for these curvilinear ditches is that they were designed for a fence or hedge.

Group 5.30 Ditch aligned E-W in western area of excavation, (B1)

Cut [32]: ditch, >4.90m E-W, 0.54m N-S, 0.24m depth; U-shaped and extends west beyond edge of excavation are



Cut [32]; fill (31): grey silt sand 4900 x 540mm, 240mm depth; inclusions – manganese fragments

Discussion and interpretation group 5.30

The ditch forms part of a pattern of intermittent landscape division within the site.

The interpretation for this ditch is that it formed a fence or hedge.

Group 5.31 Drainage features and terracing in northern part of excavation area (D5, E5, F5)

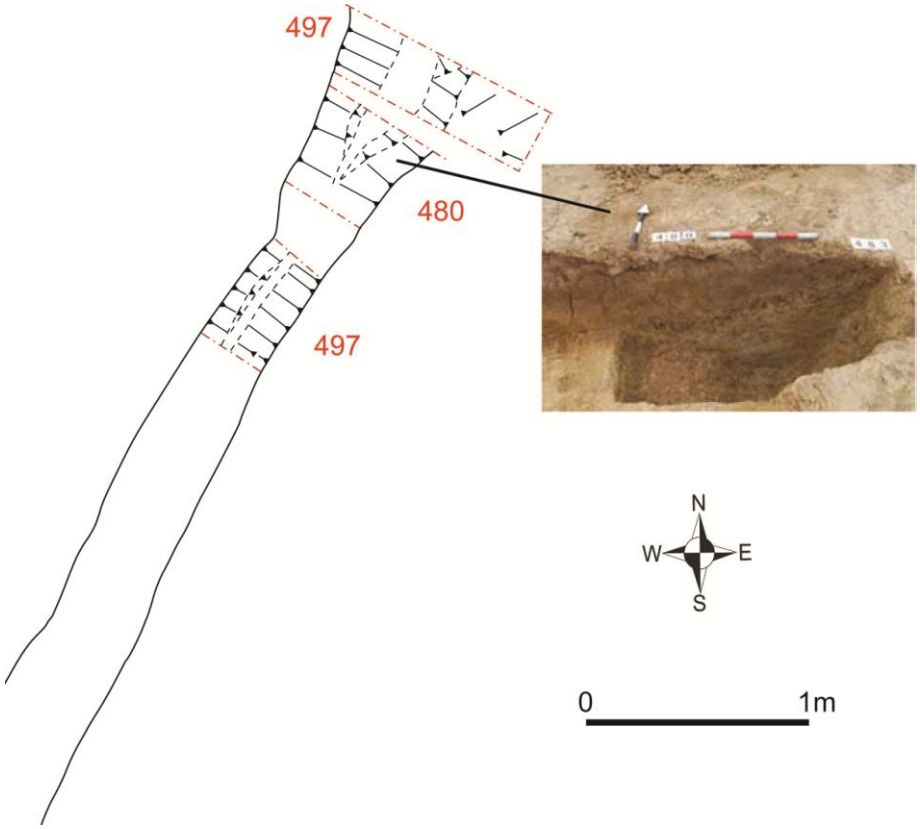
Sub-group 5.31.1 construction of terracing and gullies

Cut [310]: oval-shaped terracing or quarry, 13.7m NE-SW, 5m NW-SE, 0.5m depth; step-shaped, steep sided, flat base

Cut [469]: gully, c.35m NE-SW, 6.65m NW-SE, 0.47m depth; gently sloping sides, concave base

Cut [471]: gully, c.35m NE-SW, 3.3m NW-SE, 0.4m depth; shallow U-shaped profile

Cut [480]: gully, >50m NE-SW, 3m NW-SE, 0.55m depth; gently sloping sides, concave base



Sub-group 5.31.2 backfill of terracing and gullies

Cut [310]; primary fill (311): carbonized deposit, 1100mm NW-SE, thickness 30mm; at base of step within southern part of hollow

Cut [310]; secondary fills (312), (313), (314): brown silt clays becoming more silty and grey in colour with successive layers; thickness of layers 90mm, 180mm, 300mm; occasional charcoal flecks

Cut [310]; tertiary fill (353): grey clay silt; possible “B” horizon

Cut [469]; single fill (470): orange-brown sandy silt

Cut [471]; single fill (472): orange-brown sandy silt; frequent hard-pan and manganese flecks

Cut [480]; primary fill (488): orange-brown silt clay

Cut [480]; secondary fill (479): grey-brown clay silt; occasional charcoal flecks, burnt clay, abraded pottery, flint flake (SF 185).

Discussion and interpretation group 5.31

The relationship between these features lies in their proximity, alignment and topographic location. A large cut was hollowed into the hillside to level an area as a terrace platform, or possibly for rock or mineral extraction. A single slot was excavated across this feature which revealed a sequence of deposits infilling what was effectively a giant step carved into the hillside. Carbonized remains formed the primary infill, perhaps suggesting broad contemporaneity with some of the surrounding Middle Iron Age hearths and pit fills (Groups 5.5 and 5.6). A succession of silt layers covered this, each of which extended further northwards the later in the sequence it formed. The sequence was sealed by colluvium or a horizon that represents a period of stabilisation.

Northwards from terracing/platform [310], a natural undulation within the hillside slopes downwards to the north. Three gullies follow this alignment which could derive from natural drainage, or alternatively these may have been formed by human activity in relation to the terrace/platform, either as drainage features or as hollowed tracks which became filled by natural accumulation of sediment over time. The area was sealed beneath colluvium.

Interpretation: creation of a deliberate level platform terraced into the hillside, with tracks upslope from the north connecting the platform with the river valley below.

Group 5.32 pits and postholes in south-eastern part of site

Sub-group 5.32.1 pit, post and stake holes clustering around large pit (Group 3.1)

Cut [193]: post-hole, c.0.40m diameter, 0.06m depth; concave base only surviving

Cut [211]: linear pit, 1.90m NE-SW, 0.95m NW-SE, 0.09m depth; steep sided, concave base divided into two parts

Cut [213]: oval post-hole, 0.30m N-S, 0.20m E-W, 0.06m depth; concave

Cut [215]: post-hole, 0.35m diameter, 0.14m depth; steep sided, U-shaped base

Cut [221]: stake-hole, 0.04m diameter, 0.15m depth; sloping to east

Sub-group 5.32.2 backfill of post-hole features around large pit (Group 3.1)

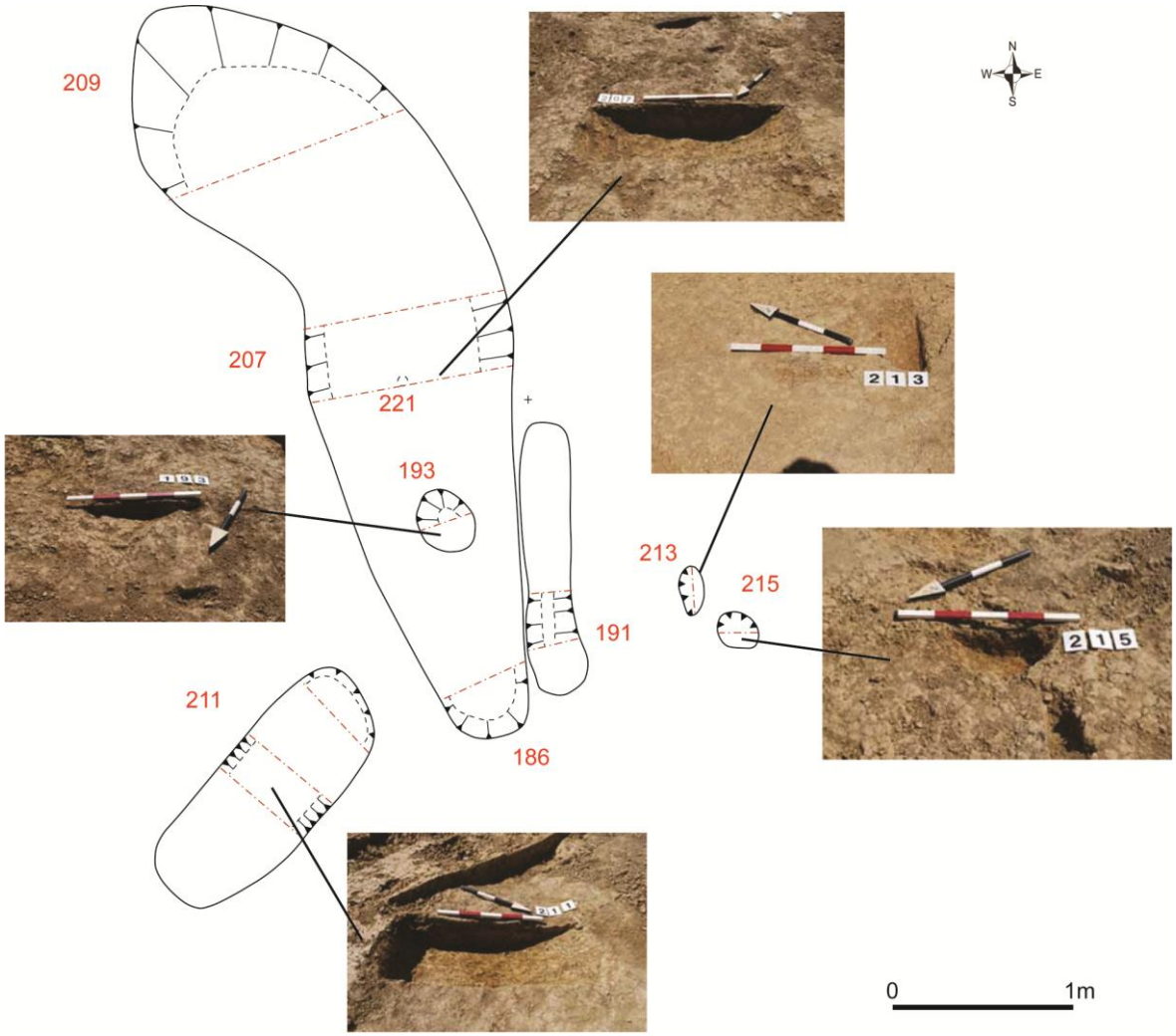
Cut [193]; single fill (192): mottled brown clay c.400mm diameter, 60mm depth; inclusion abundant carbonized wood and burnt clay fragments

Cut [211]; single fill (210): mottled brown clay, 1900mm x 950mm, 90mm depth

Cut [213]; single fill (212): brown clay, 300 x 200mm, 60mm depth; occasional fragments carbonized wood

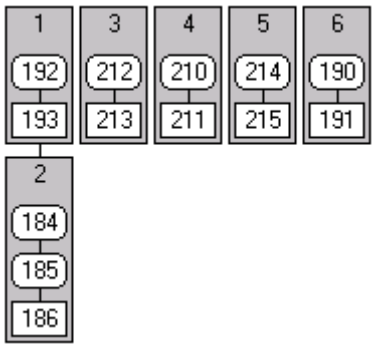
Cut [215]; single fill (214): yellow-brown clay, 350mm diameter, 140mm depth; occasional charcoal

Cut [221]; single fill (220): dark grey clay, 40mm diameter, 150mm depth; occasional charcoal



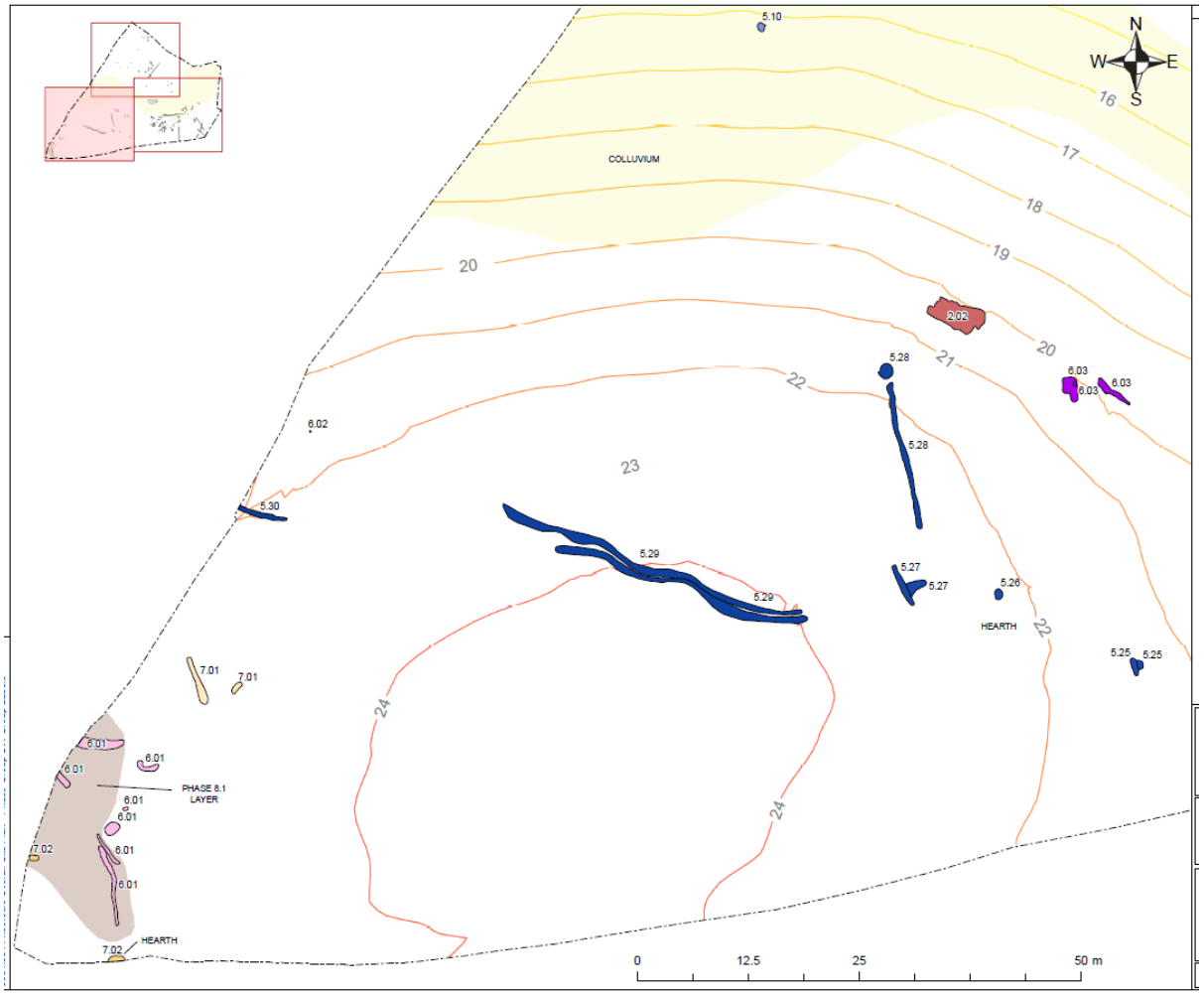
Discussion and interpretation group 5.32

This group comprises the bases of structural features, posts and stakes clustered around and within the backfill of a large pit that has been assigned (tentatively) to the EBA (Group 3.1). It is possible that the large pit is broadly contemporary with the later activity represented by Group 5.32, and the EBA pot sherd found within the backfill episode was residual. Nonetheless, at least one feature in Group 5.32 post-dates the disuse of the large pit, and therefore this group of structural features is assumed to be unrelated to the large pit, and of a much later period.



5.6 Phase 6 Late Iron Age and Romano-British

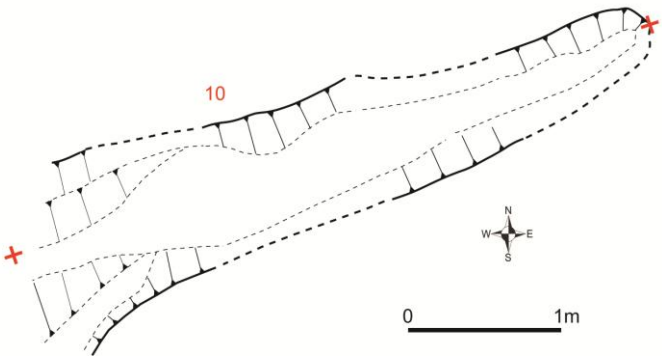
Group 6.1 ditches and pits in western part of excavation area (A1)



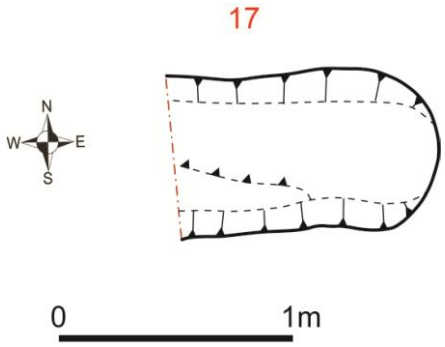
Plan of western part of site with features numbered by Group

Sub-group 6.1.1 construction of ditches and pits

Cut [10]: ditch, >4.30m E-W, 0.92m N-S, 0.54m depth; steep sided, flat base; western end extends beyond edge of excavation

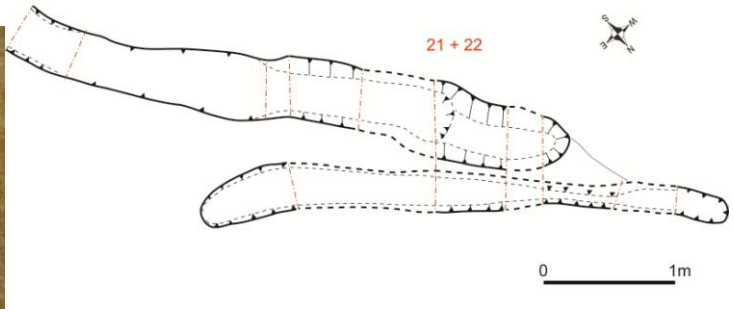


Cut [17]: ditch >1.25m NW-SE, 0.65m NE-SW, 0.35m depth; vertical sided, flat base; western end extends beyond edge of excavation

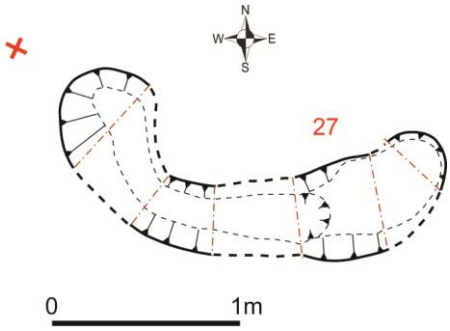


Cut [21]: ditch 9.5m N-S, 0.48m E-W, 0.5m depth; U-shaped, but variable depth

Cut [22]: gully 4m NW-SE, 0.3m E-W, 0.2m depth; steep sided, flat base

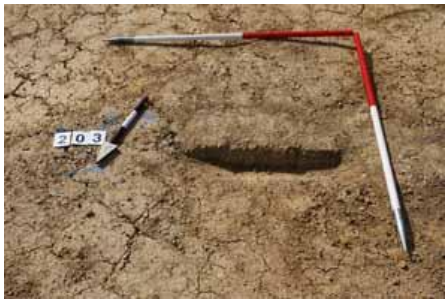


Cut [27]: banana-shaped pit, 2.00m E-W, 0.52m N-S, 0.26m depth; vertical sided, concave base



Cut [201]: elongated pit, 1.4m NE-SW, 1.05m NW-SE, 0.10m depth; steep sided, uneven base

Cut [203]: sub-rectangular pit, 0.58m NE-SW, 0.40m NW-SE, 0.08m depth; sloping sides, concave base



Sub-group 6.1.2 backfill of ditches and pits

Cut [10]; primary fill (12)/(15)/(16): brown clay; filling channel 0.18 - 0.35m wide, 0.12m depth

Cut [10]; secondary fill (8)/(9)/(11)/(13): brown silt clay, 400 – 550m width, 70 - 240mm depth; charcoal from 8 radiocarbon dated 118 – 247cal AD and 2 – 137 cal AD

Cut [10]; tertiary fill (14): brown silt clay, 1150 x 1100mm, 240mm depth; final fill of ditch containing eight slightly abraded Late Iron Age pot sherds

Cut [17]; slump deposit (20): yellow clay south side of ditch; 1250 x 200mm, 100mm depth

Cut [17]; primary fill (19): yellow clay with grey-blue mottling; 1250 x 220mm, 110mm depth

Cut [17]; secondary fill (18): brown silt clay; 1250 x 800mm, 220mm depth; inclusions – charcoal flecks, Late Iron Age pot sherd

Cut [21]; single fill (28): yellow-brown clay; 9500 x 480mm, 500mm depth; no inclusions

Cut [22]; single fill (29): yellow-brown silt clay; 4000 x 300mm, 200mm depth; no inclusions

Cut [27]; single fill (30): grey clay silt, 2000 x 520mm, 260mm depth; manganese staining concentrated in centre

Cut [201]; single fill (200): compact brown sandy clay; inclusions – small grit

Cut [203]; single fill (202): compact brown sandy clay; inclusions – small grit

Sub-group 6.1.3 construction and backfill of pit

Cut [6]: sub-circular pit, or possibly a depression formed by slumping of ditch infill, 0.55m N-S, 0.42m E-W, 0.05m depth; cut into the tertiary fill of Ditch [10] (context 14)

Cut [6]; fill (7): grey silt clay, 550 x 420mm, 50mm depth; inclusions – high proportion of carbonized material and pieces of fired clay

Discussion and Interpretation group 6.1

A group of linear features that probably formed the foundation for fence-lines. The profiles and depths of these ditches/gullies vary along their lengths, perhaps due to the variation of post/stake size and height. Ditch [10] is oriented east-west and appears to have a sinuous basal channel according to the excavated parts of the feature. It also has varying fill episodes along its length. Ditch [21] has an alteration in direction half-way along its length, the southern section is aligned N-S, but the northern section is north-west – south-east. Adjacent to its northern terminal lies Gully [22] which is broadly parallel, but the stratigraphic sequence between these two features could not be established. On the same alignment as Gully [22], and separated from it by a 6m gap to the west, Ditch [17] could form a continuation.

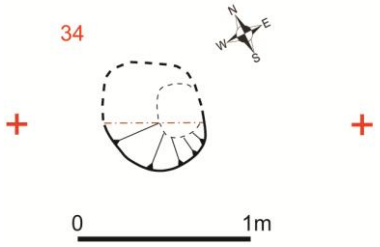
The pits in this group are not uniform and provide little evidence for their original function. They vary in size and form, but are all located to the north and east of the linear features. An approximate line 10m in length between the eastern terminal of Pit [27] and northern terminal of Gully [22] would run longitudinally through Pits [201] and [203], and it is possible, therefore, that these features would have served a related function, perhaps for a fence line. The southern terminal of Ditch [55] from a previous phase and group 7m north-east, would also coincide with this alignment.

All these features with the exception of Pits [201] and [203], were found to have been sealed beneath Layer (5), a possible buried soil. It is possible that this deposit, which extends in a band NW-SE, would also have sealed the pits, but that the relationship went unrecorded or was stripped away by mechanical excavator to reveal the pits beneath.

The interpretation given to these features is that they represent a focus of activity during the Late Iron Age or Roman period, as construction remains for fence lines.

Group 6.2 isolated post-pit in western area of excavation, (C1)

Cut [34]: circular pit, 0.67m diameter, 0.10m depth; sloping sided



Cut [37]: post-hole, 0.13m diameter, 0.19m depth; vertical sided, pointed base

Cut [34]; fill (39): sandy clay 550 x 290mm, 90mm depth

Cut [37]; fill (38): grey-brown silt, 130mm diameter, 190mm depth; inclusions frequent red organic matter;

Cuts [34] and [37] fill (33) brown silt clay, 67mm diameter, 40 – 60mm depth; inclusions – large pieces of charcoal

Interpretation group 6.2

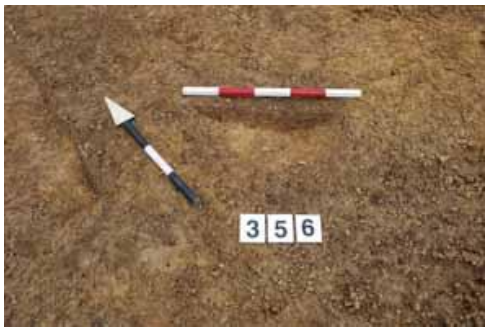
The interpretation is a simple post-hole ([34]) with post-pipe ([37]). Charcoal-rich sealing fill 33 may represent burning of post, whilst the base remained, and decayed in situ.

Group 6.3 pits and gully in western central area of excavation, (C4)

Cut [293]: rectilinear pit, 3.80m N-S, 1.60m E-W, 0.24m depth; steep sides, flat base

Cut [293]; single fill (291): brown silt sand, 3800 x 1600mm, 240mm depth; inclusions charcoal flecks and eight sherds of Iron Age pottery

Cut [356]: circular pit, 0.4m diameter, depth 0.07m; concave base



Cut [356]; single fill (355) brown silty clay, 400mm diameter, 70mm depth; sealed by colluvium

Cut [358]: gully, 4.2m SE-NW, 0.75m NE-SW, depth 0.17m; very steep sided, flat base

Cut [358]; single fill (357): brown clay silt 4200mm x 750mm, 170mm depth; very occasional charcoal flecks; sealed by colluvium

Interpretation group 6.3

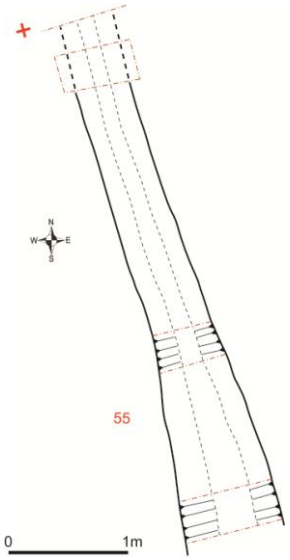
Two pits and a gully represent activity within this area of the site, and it is possible that other evidence might have been destroyed through ploughing and erosion, or was masked by colluvium. Pit [293] was probably a man-made feature, although a natural hollow infilled with cultural material is possible. The pottery might be dated to 100BC, but is more likely from the Late Iron Age.

5.7 Phase 7 Early medieval

Group 7.1 gully aligned NW-SE and pit in western area of excavation, (B1)

Sub-group 7.1.1 construction of gully and pit

Cut [55]: gully, 4.85m NW-SE, 0.82m width, 0.16m depth; sloping sided, flat base



Cut [35]: irregular pit, 1.20m NE-SW, 0.60m NW-SE, 0.15m depth; steep sided

Sub-group 7.1.2 backfill of gully and pit

Cut [55]; primary fill (57): yellow-grey clay 4850 x 820mm; inclusions very abraded pottery and occasional charcoal flecks

Cut [55]; secondary fill (56): orange-grey clay, 4850 x 480mm, 100mm depth; inclusions – occasional charcoal flecks and degraded sandstone

Cut [35]; single fill (36): orange-grey sandy silt clay; inclusions occasional charcoal

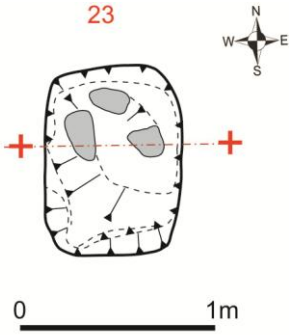
Discussion and interpretation group 7.1

Short straight section of ditch or gully, possibly associated with elongated pit located 3m to the east of it. The deposits suggest gradual accumulation as natural backfill rather than deliberate infill, and three sherds of Saxo-Norman pottery and a piece of fired clay/daub within the primary fill of the gully, allow this group to be assigned to the 10th - 11th centuries.

Group 7.2 pits in south-western corner of excavated area

Sub-group 7.2.1 construction of pits

Cut [23]: rectangular pit, 1.16m N-S, 0.72m E-W, 0.38m depth; vertical sided, concave base; slight step on western edge, narrower at S end; primary fill 26 orange clay found around edge and concentrated on eastern side, containing 15 sherds of Saxo-Norman pottery

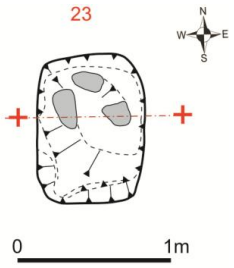


Cut [71] oval pit, 2.12m E-W, 0.65m N-S, 0.54m depth; sloping sides, concave base

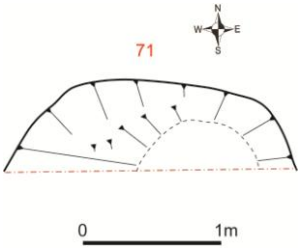
Sub-group 7.2.2 use of pits

Cut [23]; secondary fill (25): soft blue-grey silt clay, burnt red at centre of deposit; 740mm N-S, 500mm E-W, 160mm depth; base for re-use of pit evidenced by burning and arrangement of upright sandstone slabs

- three upright stones (41 and two as 44) set around W, N, and E side;
- fill (40): brown grey silty clay placed between stone 41 and western edge of pit; inclusions – occasional charcoal;
- fill (43): grey silt clay placed between stone 44 and eastern edge of pit; inclusions – charcoal and 18 sherds of Saxo-Norman pottery;
- fill (42): orange-grey clay placed between stone 44 and northern edge of pit; inclusions – occasional charcoal



Cut [71]; primary fill (72): orange-grey sandy clay; >850 x >600mm, 180mm depth; inclusions charcoal flecks, small stones



Sub-group 7.2.3 backfill of pits

Cut [23]; fill (24): charcoal-rich grey-brown sandy silt clay, 650mm N-S, 600mm E-W, 300mm depth; inclusions – 61 sherds of Saxo-Norman pottery;

Cut [71]; secondary fill (73): grey-brown silt clay; 2120 x 650mm, 430mm depth; inclusions – charcoal and 14 pot sherds dated to Saxon-Norman period

Discussion and interpretation group 7.2

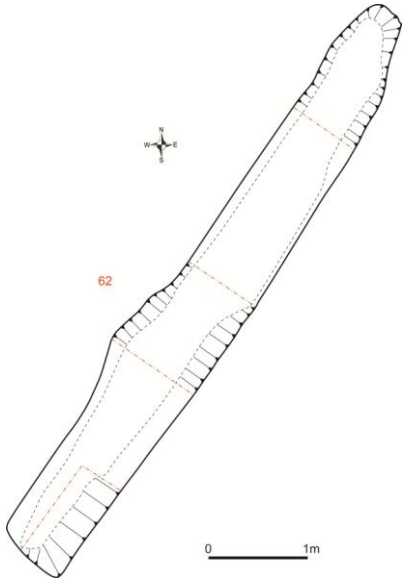
These two pits contain an abundance of ceramic material of 10th – 11th century date. Use of Pit [23] for a hearth is clearly indicated by the upright stones and burning, and the ceramic report identifies at least two cooking pots.

The interpretation given to Pit [23], and by association also to Pit [71], is that of cooking pits.

Group 7.3 ditches aligned NE-SW in south-eastern-most part of site (B6)

Sub-group 7.3.1 construction and use of ditch aligned NE-SW

Cut [62]=[112]=[153]: ditch with causeway between segments; total length 25m (6.5m SW segment, 3m causeway, 15.5m NE segment), 0.75 – 0.83m width, 0.15 – 0.30m depth; steep sided, flat base



Sub-group 7.3.2 backfill of ditch aligned NE-SW

Cut [62]=[112]=[153]; fill (63), (126), (152): yellow brown firm silty clay, width 600 – 800mm, depth 120 – 260mm

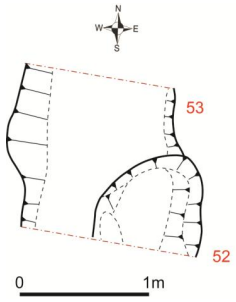
Cut [112]; secondary fill (113): grey silty clay, length 10200mm, width 750mm, depth 150mm; charcoal flecks

Discussion and interpretation Group 7.3

This group comprises a single linear feature which cuts through a pit and ditches of Middle Iron Age date (Groups 5.9 and 5.10). It does not display evidence for erosion and is therefore believed to have been constructed for holding posts to create a fence line. The primary fill would have been backfill around the posts, whilst the secondary fill is interpreted as natural infill following disuse. Proximity to Pit [52], which also cuts one of the Group 5.10 features, suggests that this fence line can be attributed to the early medieval period.

Group 7.4 isolated pit in south-eastern-most part of site (B6)

Cut [52]: sub-circular pit, >6.5m N-S, 8.2m E-W, 0.25m depth; steep sided, flat base



Fills (68) and (69): yellow-brown clay, 260mm depth; inclusions – three Late Saxon pot sherds

Fill (67): brown clay silt; 380mm E-W, 370mm depth; found within central area of pit cut through fills (68) and (69); possible staining from organic remains

Discussion and interpretation Group 7.4

The pit extended southwards beyond the area of excavation. It was partially cut into the infilled Middle Iron Age ditch [53], and contained a small ceramic assemblage of the 9th – 11th centuries AD. The deposit sequence suggests a possible post-pipe (67), and this feature is therefore interpreted as a post-pit.

5.8 Phase 8 Late medieval and post-medieval

Group 8.1 buried soil

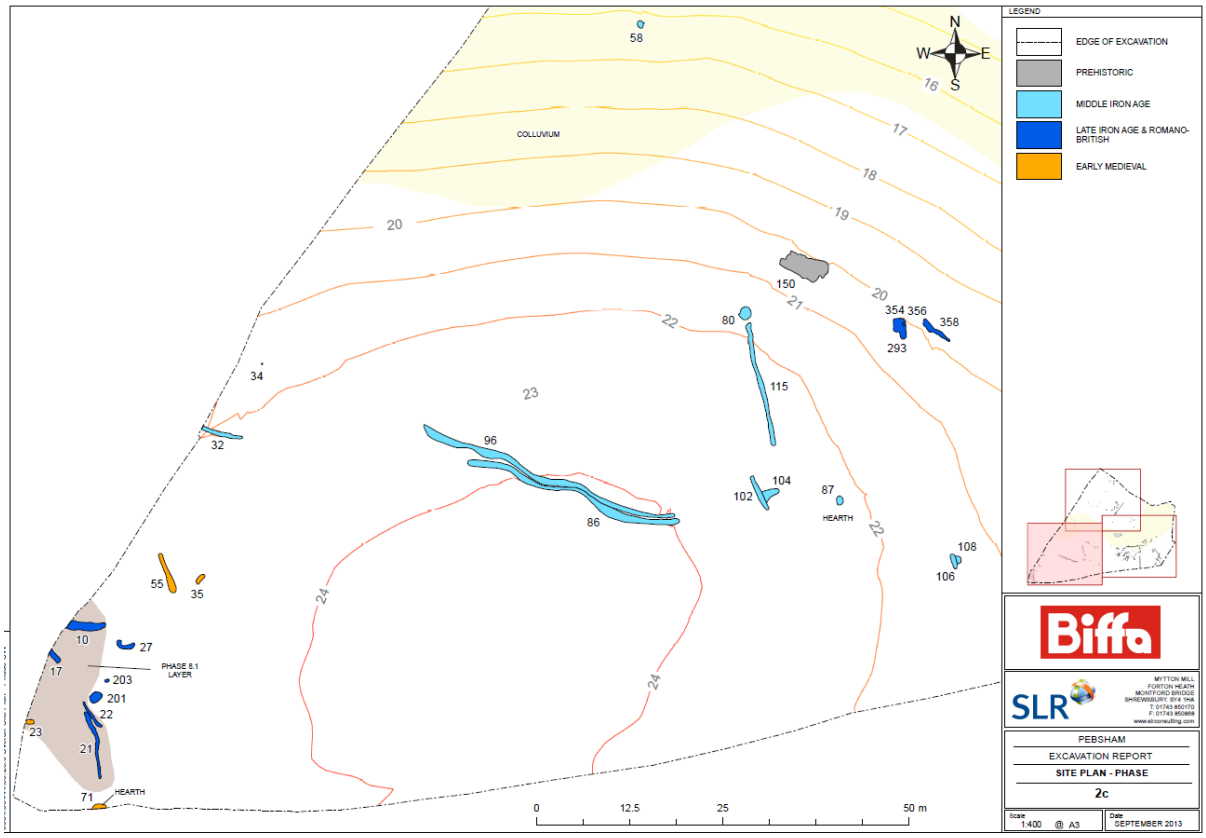
Layer (5): brown silt clay. 22m NW-SE, 10m NE-SW, 0.10m depth; covering infilled Ditch [10], Pit [27], and lying uphill to south covering Ditch [17], Ditch [21], Gully [22], and Pit [23].

Interpretation

Later medieval buried soil or deposit accumulated against boundary, perhaps edge of medieval lynchet.

Group 8.2 unstratified metalwork

Medieval and modern items were found during a metaldetector survey prior to topsoil stripping. Notable finds included a silver penny or groat and a small Jew's Harp of iron, probably of medieval date. Metal artefacts of later date included a copper-alloy penny of 19th-20th century, and various brass or copper-alloy and lead objects of probable military origin.



Plan of western part of site by phase and cut number

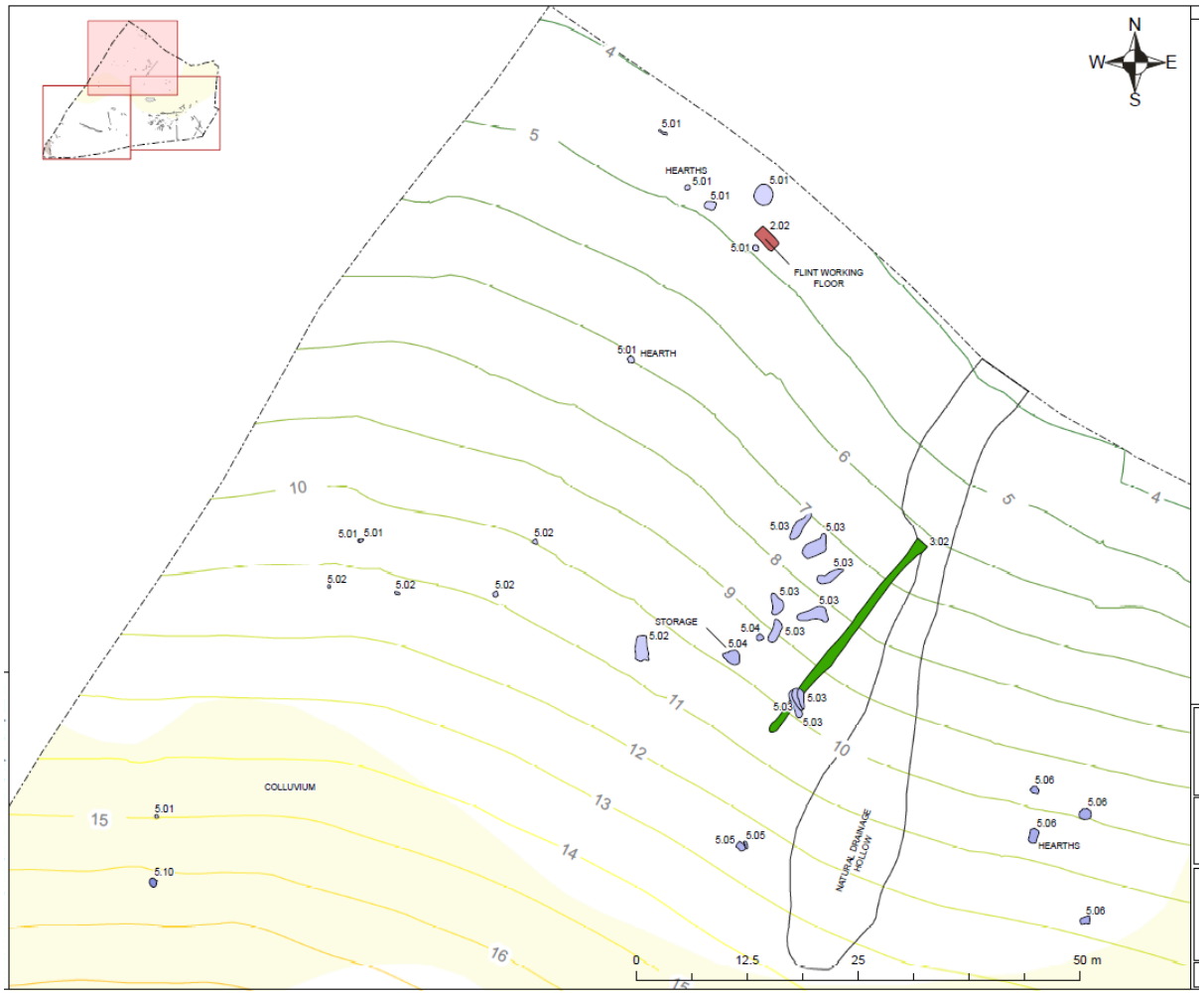
6.0 PERIOD DISCUSSIONS

6.1 Phase 2: Mesolithic and Neolithic

Beyond the background noise of worked flint there were few features represented by this phase of activity. These are shown on Drawing 6 and consist of a possible flint knapping floor near the northern edge of excavation, perhaps within a rectangular structure, and a quarry (a series of pits intercutting) located on the 20m AOD contour line within the central part of the site. These remains are interpreted as remnants of hunting activity, with people making use of the hillside to overlook the marshy creek to the north.

6.2 Phase 3 – 4: Bronze Age

The features of Bronze Age date are represented on Drawing 7 and consist of one linear in the northern part of the site, and some pits in the south-eastern area. A complex of possible quarry pits with carbonized wood as a final episode of backfill, which might indicate contemporary domestic activity in the locality, was identified in the south-eastern part of the site. Bronze Age pottery was retrieved which provided dating evidence. A single small pit was located further west, amidst a scatter of Iron Age features, but as this contained EBA pottery it was assigned to this period. The ditch in the north of the site also contained EBA pottery and carbonized wood fragments, and could represent some initial land division, following the slope downwards to the north. The evidence may indicate clearance of the landscape and agricultural use.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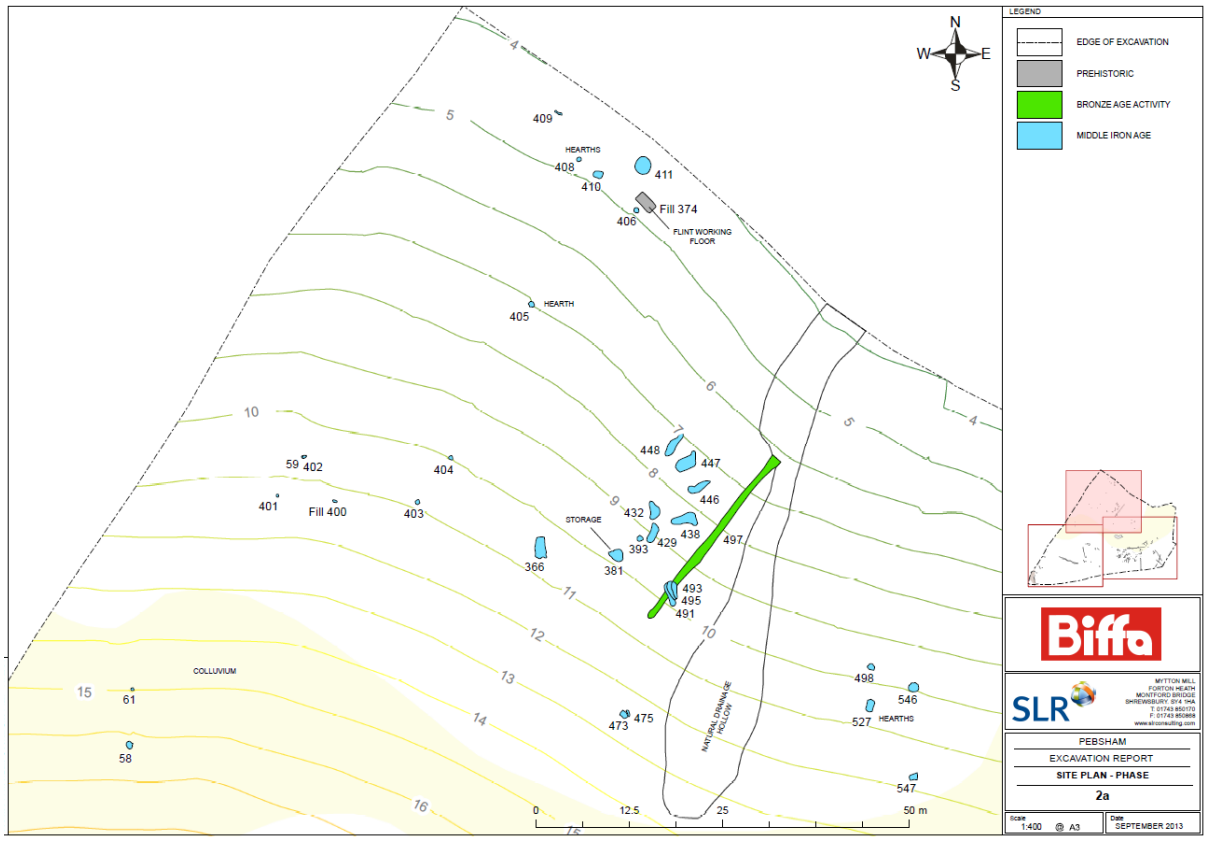


Figure 5
Plan of northern part of site: top by Group, base by Phase and cut number

6.3 Phase 5: Middle Iron Age

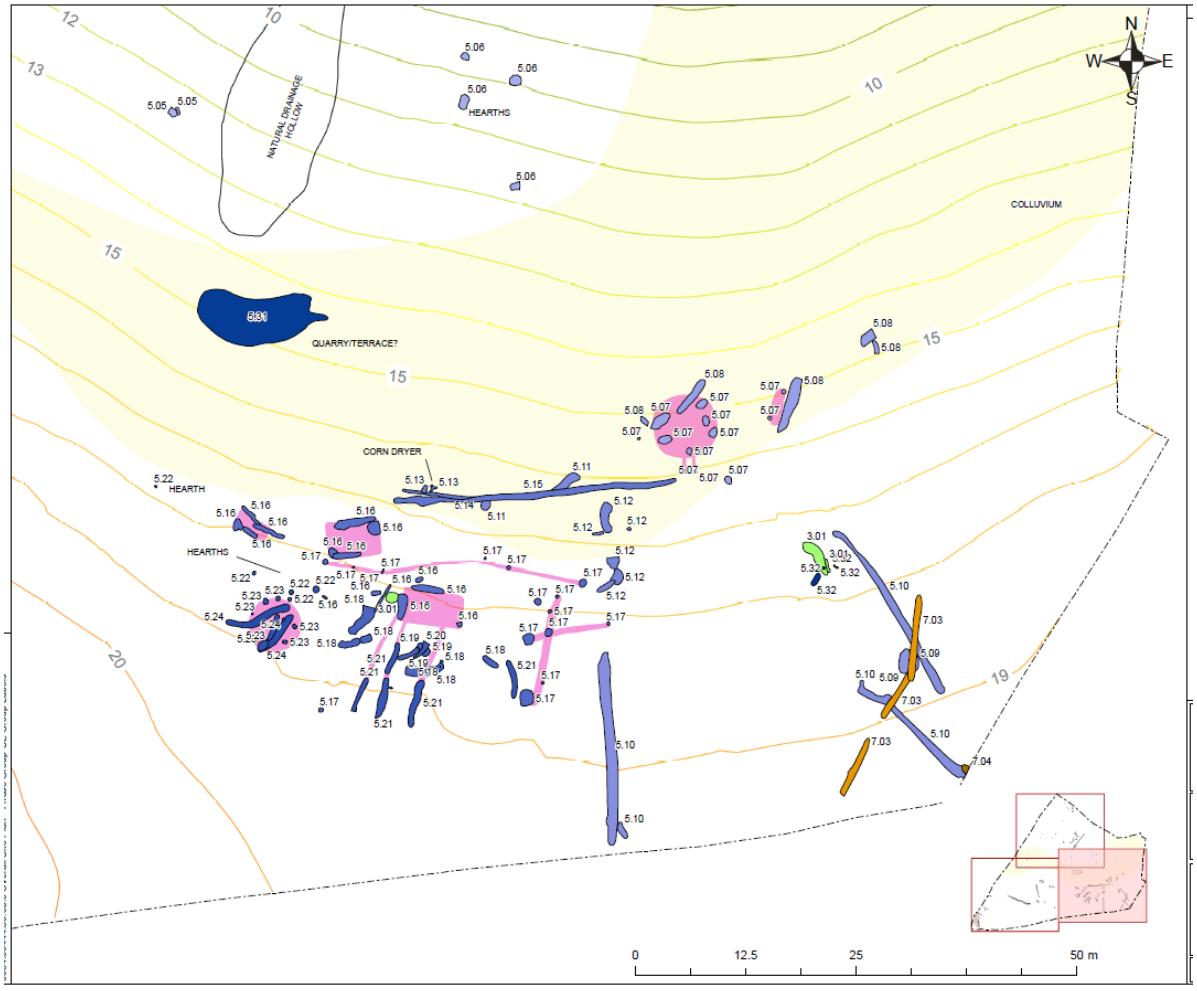
This period is represented over much of the excavated area and consists of several separate activities which appear to be zoned across the site (see Drawing 8). Within this period there are a small number of stratigraphic relationships which show that some activities were concluded and the features disused before being disturbed by a new event, but there is little to connect these events as part of a single phase. They have been interpreted as alterations and additions over a lengthy duration which this period represents, although some groups probably amount to single episodes of activity, whist others might have continued as features in the landscape for a considerable length of time.

The topography of the site probably contributed to the choice of how it was divided between various activities. The lower slopes (5 – 13m AOD) at the northern end of the site appear to have been the location of preference for pyro-technical activity (not exclusively but predominantly), represented by Groups 5.1, 5.5 and 5.6 (in areas E4, E5, F3, G4 and H4). These groups comprise small pits with evidence of heat having affected the natural clay into which they were cut. Charred wood formed a major component of primary fill, and a number of radiocarbon dates have been established which show a broad correlation for this activity (see Table 1). Additional pits without evidence of burning were also found within the lower, northern part of the site. These do not group into coherent structures and a general lack of artefactual or ecofactual data hampers interpretation. Some might have had a secondary function for rubbish disposal or were used as post-pits for isolated timber stakes, but one large re-cut pit (Group 5.4) strongly resembled a storage pit in size and shape, and infill sequence (for a parallel example see Bersu 1940, Figure 12 Pit [15] (p.56)).

Table 1
Radiocarbon dates for Phase 5

Group	Sub-group	Context	Lab number	Material	Date
5.1	5.1.1	375	SUERC-43749 & 43750	Charcoal: *Alnus*	111 – 58 Cal BC 165 – 24 Cal BC
5.1	5.1.1	414	SUERC-43758 & 43759	Charcoal: *Quercus*	196 – 41 Cal BC 197 – 46 Cal BC
5.6	5.6.1	526	SUERC-43756 & 43757	Charcoal: *Quercus*	210 – 53 Cal BC 211 – 86 Cal BC
5.17	5.17.1	350	SUERC-43751 & 43755	Charcoal: *Quercus*	204 – 48 Cal BC 195 – 40 Cal BC

A platform terraced into the hillside (Group 5.31) occupied an otherwise largely empty space between the industrial activity areas at the northern end of the site, and the focus of domestic activity in the south-eastern quarter. This terrace could have been formed as part of quarrying or to create a level area for buildings (e.g. see Drewett 1982 for buildings terraced into the hillside), but only a single 1m wide slot was excavated N-S across it to record the infill deposit sequence. Drainage channels or a possible Holloway ran downslope north-eastwards from the terrace



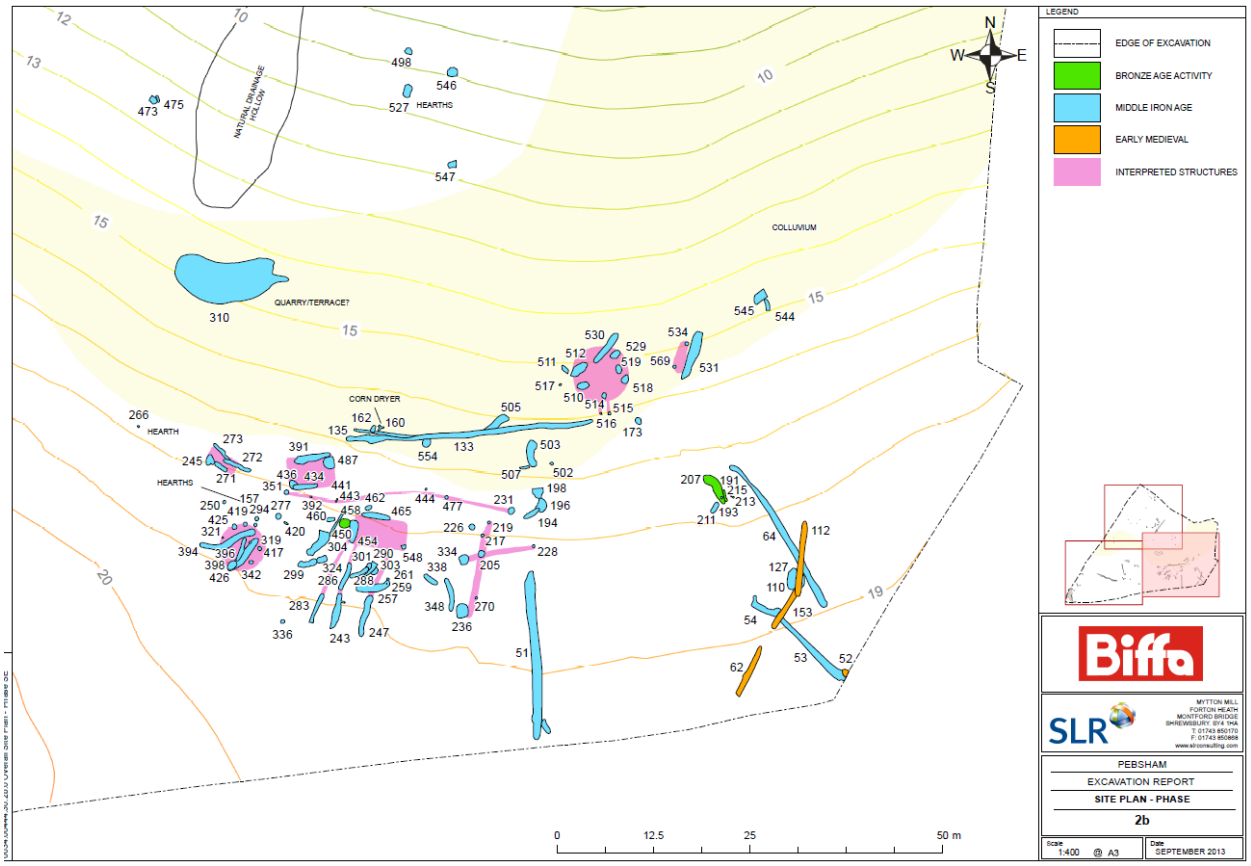


Figure 6
Plan of south-eastern part of site: top by Group, base by Phase and cut number

Further upslope towards the southeast, the greatest concentration of archaeological features were found clustered between 15 and 20m AOD. These comprised predominantly structural evidence in the form of platforms, post-holes and beam-slots, and of land divisions represented by short stretches of ditch or palisades. Some pyro-technical activity was also evident, a possible corn-dryer (Group 5.13), four hearths (Group 5.22), and some additional hearths in sub-group 5.17.3.

Two post-built round-houses are possibly represented by Groups 5.7 and 5.23, whilst a series of possible rectangular buildings consisting of beam-slots and large post settings (Group 5.16) extend over an area approximately 30 x 15m (which also includes the roundhouse Group 5.7). A less well-defined collection of possible beam-slots and related features (Group 5.12) could represent further structural evidence located in the area between Group 5.7 and Group 5.16.

Comparison with other excavated sites is compromised by the degree of erosion suffered at Pebsham, which has resulted in shallow survival of negative features cut into the natural clay. The Group 5.7 round-house has an inner circuit of substantial uprights at 6m diameter, and a less complete outer circuit of smaller post-holes which would make a footprint c.10m in diameter. The Group 5.23 round-house has a similar inner circuit at 6m diameter, but no outer circuit was detected. This round-house also appears to be more conjectural on its western side than eastern side (a possible parallel can be seen in Bedwin and Holgate 1985, Figure 3, p.218). The putative rectangular buildings in Group 5.16 consist of 4 x 6m and 4 x 8m floor plans, and possibly 4 x 4m. These are similar to a two-phase building identified at Manchester Airport (Garner 2007) with dimensions 11 x 7m, although radiocarbon dating placed this example within the Neolithic period. Although rectangular buildings are known

from Iron Age sites such as Crickley Hill and Danebury where they measured c.5m square and were interpreted as granaries (Cunliffe 1986, 106-8), these are generally of earth-fast post type, and do not include sill beam elements, which would seem to be what the evidence suggests at Pebsham. Other structures such as hay ricks or animal pens could therefore be represented by these remains as an alternative interpretation to buildings.

All these structures appear to have been located within a zone that was sub-divided by fence lines (represented by gullies, ditches and post-holes) into an east – west and north-east – south-west coaxial arrangement. Groups 5.15 and 5.17.1 form the east-west components which approximately follow the contours, and Groups 5.8 and 5.17.2 form the components running up and down slope. A single radiocarbon date from one of the postholes in sub-group 5.17.1 correlates closely with the pyrotechnical activity in the northern part of the site.

West of this settlement area, isolated pits can be found in Areas B3 and B4 (Groups 5.25, 5.26, and 5.27), whilst further division of the landscape is represented by Groups 5.28, 5.29 and 5.30. These gullies and ditches possibly form part of a coaxial system, oriented east – west, and north – south.

6.4 Phase 6: Late Iron Age/Roman

This phase is only found in the south of the site, along the crest of the hill (Drawing 9). A single radiocarbon date was recovered, in addition to a small collection of pottery. In the south-western corner of the site ditches and gullies following north-south and east-west alignments were found (Group 6.1) in association with several small pits or post-holes (Group 6.2), and a buried soil which extended in a band south-eastwards from the western boundary to the site. A single pit within the central part of the site (Group 6.3) has also been assigned to this phase due to eight sherds of Late Iron Age pottery found within its backfill.

Table 2
Phase 6 radiocarbon dates

Group	Sub-group	Context	Lab number	Material	Date
6.1	6.1.2	8	SUERC-43747 & 43748	Charcoal: *Acer campestre*, and *Malideae*	2 – 137 Cal AD 118 – 247 Cal AD

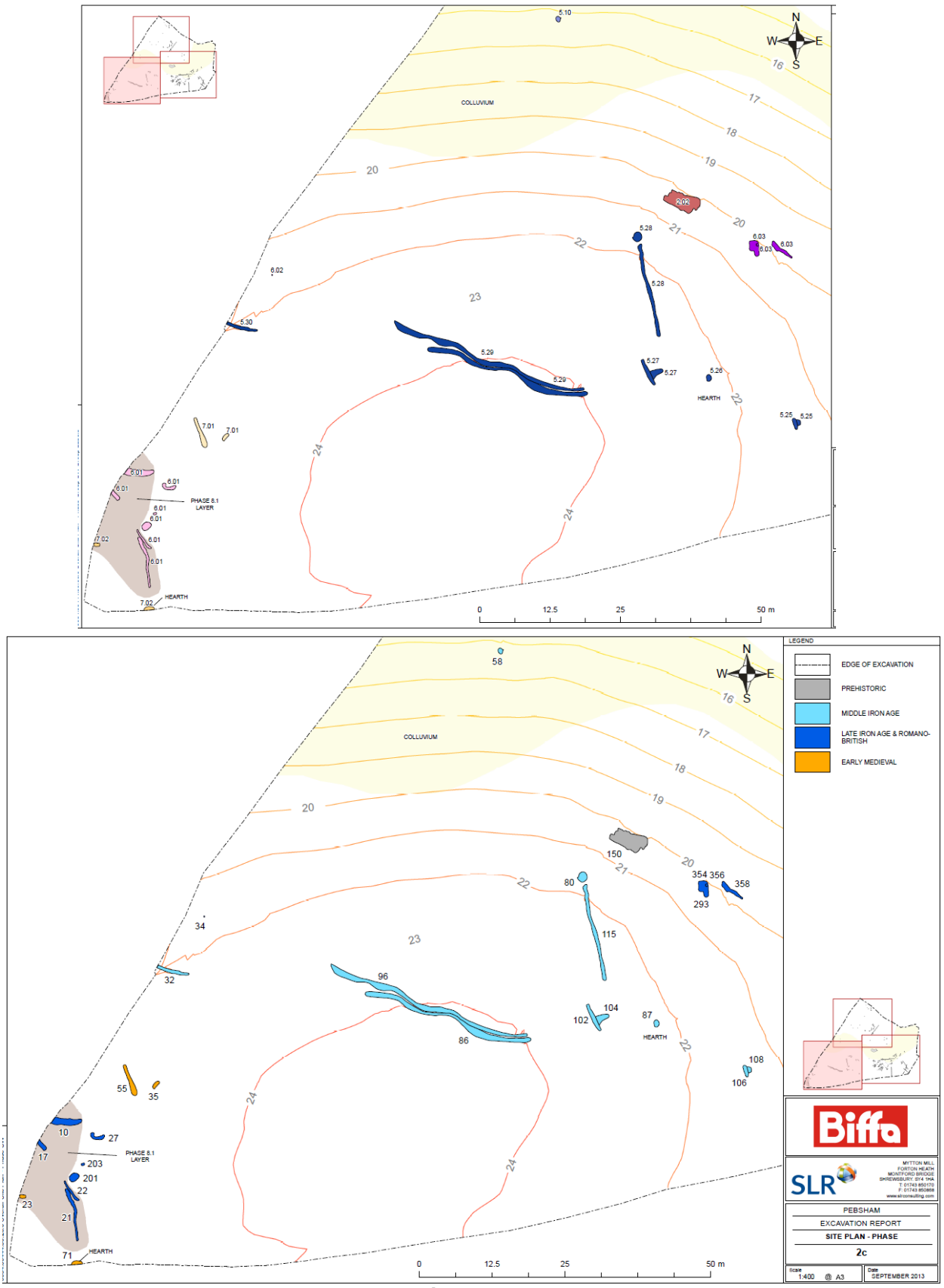


Figure 7
Plan of western part of site: top by Group, base by Phase and cut number

6.5 Phase 7: Late-Saxon, early medieval

The Late Saxon evidence consists of a comparatively rich assemblage of pottery, although this comes almost entirely from a single pit in the southwestern part of the site on the crest of the ridge. The sherds are predominantly from two vessels, cooking pots, and were found associated with charcoal and an arrangement of three stones which could have acted as support for the cooking pot above a hearth. Two other pits and a gully within close proximity demonstrate that this cooking pit was not an isolated activity, and within the south-eastern part of the site a south-west – north-east oriented palisade trench and a post-pit are also attributed to this period (Drawing 10).

6.6 Phase 8: Late medieval and post-medieval

Evidence for continued activity on site is sparse, but consists of a small area of buried soil in the south-western part of the site, partially obscuring earlier features. This deposit is located in a band running south-eastwards and could have derived from cultivation and lynchet formation. Metal-detecting finds demonstrated intermittent activity over successive centuries.

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8.0 CLOSURE

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SLR

global environmental solutions

AYLESBURY
7 Wornal Park, Menmarsh Road,
Worminghall, Aylesbury,
Buckinghamshire HP18 9PH
T: +44 (0)1844 337380

BELFAST
24 Ballynahinch Street, Hillsborough,
Co. Down, BT26 6AW Northern Ireland
T: +44 (0)28 9268 9036

BRADFORD-ON-AVON
Treenwood House, Rowden Lane,
Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire BA15 2AU
T: +44 (0)1225 309400

BRISTOL
Langford Lodge, 109 Pembroke Road,
Clifton, Bristol BS8 3EU
T: +44 (0)117 9064280

CAMBRIDGE
8 Stow Court, Stow-cum-Quy,
Cambridge CB25 9AS
T: + 44 (0)1223 813805

CARDIFF
Fulmar House, Beignon Close, Ocean
Way, Cardiff CF24 5PB
T: +44 (0)29 20491010

CHELMSFORD
Unit 77, Waterhouse Business Centre,
2 Cromar Way, Chelmsford, Essex
CM1 2QE
T: +44 (0)1245 392170

DUBLIN
7 Dundrum Business Park, Windy
Arbour, Dundrum, Dublin 14 Ireland
T: + 353 (0)1 2964667

EDINBURGH
No. 4 The Roundal, Roddinglaw
Business Park, Gogar, Edinburgh
EH12 9DB
T: +44 (0)131 3356830

EXETER
69 Polsloe Road, Exeter EX1 2NF
T: + 44 (0)1392 490152

FARNBOROUGH
The Pavilion, 2 Sherborne Road, South
Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 6JT
T: +44 (0)1252 515682

GLASGOW
4 Woodside Place, Charing Cross,
Glasgow G3 7QF
T: +44 (0)141 3535037

HUDDERSFIELD
Westleigh House, Wakefield Road,
Denby Dale, Huddersfield HD8 8QJ
T: +44 (0)1484 860521

LEEDS
Suite 1, Jason House, Kerry Hill,
Horsforth, Leeds LS18 4JR
T: +44 (0)113 2580650

LONDON
83 Victoria Street,
London, SW1H 0HW
T: +44 (0)203 691 5810

MAIDSTONE
19 Hollingworth Court, Turkey Mill,
Maidstone, Kent ME14 5PP
T: +44 (0)1622 609242

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
Sailors Bethel, Horatio Street,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE1 2PE
T: +44 (0)191 2611966

NOTTINGHAM
Aspect House, Aspect Business Park,
Bennerley Road, Nottingham NG6 8WR
T: +44 (0)115 9647280

ST. ALBANS
White House Farm Barns, Gaddesden
Row, Hertfordshire HP2 6HG
T: +44 (0)1582 840471

SHEFFIELD
STEP Business Centre, Wortley Road,
Deepcar, Sheffield S36 2UH
T: +44 (0)114 2903628

SHREWSBURY
Mytton Mill, Forton Heath, Montford
Bridge, Shrewsbury SY4 1HA
T: +44 (0)1743 850170

STAFFORD
8 Parker Court, Staffordshire Technology
Park, Beaconside, Stafford ST18 0WP
T: +44 (0)1785 241755

WARRINGTON
Suite 9 Beech House, Padgate Business
Park, Green Lane, Warrington WA1 4JN
T: +44 (0)1925 827218

WORCESTER
Suite 5, Brindley Court, Gresley Road,
Shire Business Park, Worcester
WR4 9FD
T: +44 (0)1905 751310