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Archaeological Excavation

FLAXBY BORROW PIT
North Yorkshire

for
Alfred McAlpine/AMEC

**Archaeological Investigations
Flaxby Borrow Pit
Flaxby, North Yorkshire.**

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Archaeological Investigation Flaxby Borrow Pit Flaxby, North Yorkshire.

1 Introduction

Archaeological excavation of the site known as Flaxby Borrow pit (SE 4000 5830 Figs 1 & 2) in the parish of Flaxby, North Yorkshire was undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd on behalf of Alfred McAlpine/Amec in advance of sand and gravel extraction

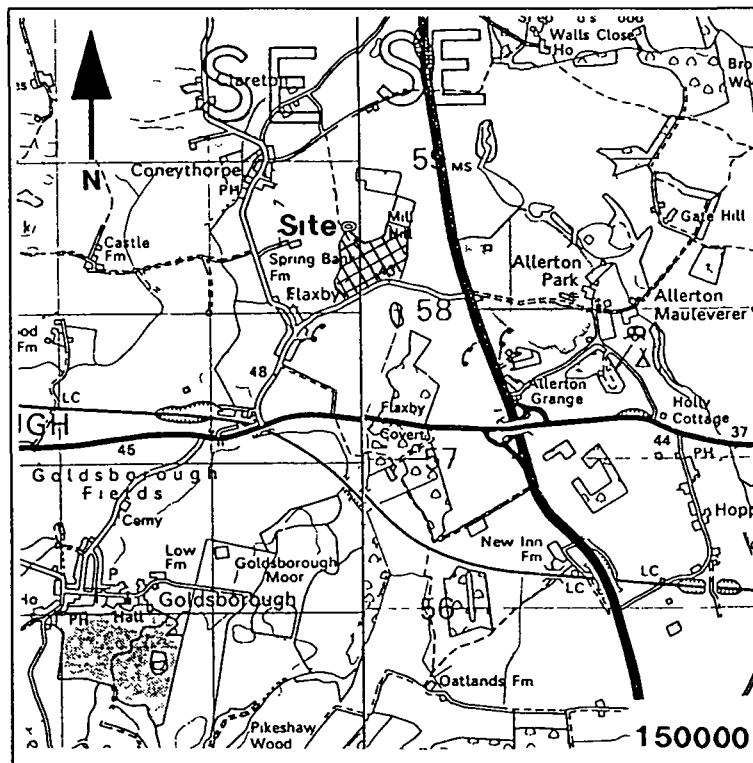


Figure 1

The site lies on drift geology derived from the Pennine glaciation in the late Pleistocene period overlying Permian and Triassic sandstones. The soils are of the Dunkeswick association (711p) and are of fine loams over glaciofluvial clayey soils (SSEW). A moraine alignment runs east-west along to the north of the site.

The site covers an area of approximately 11 hectares (Fig 2)

The excavation was undertaken in May and June, 1994, and the results and conclusions of the project are outlined in sections 5 & 6, following an evaluation by Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA Fraser). The report also details previous information on the site which is considered relevant to the main body of the report.

All work was funded by Alfred McAlpine/Amec and was undertaken with their full co-operation

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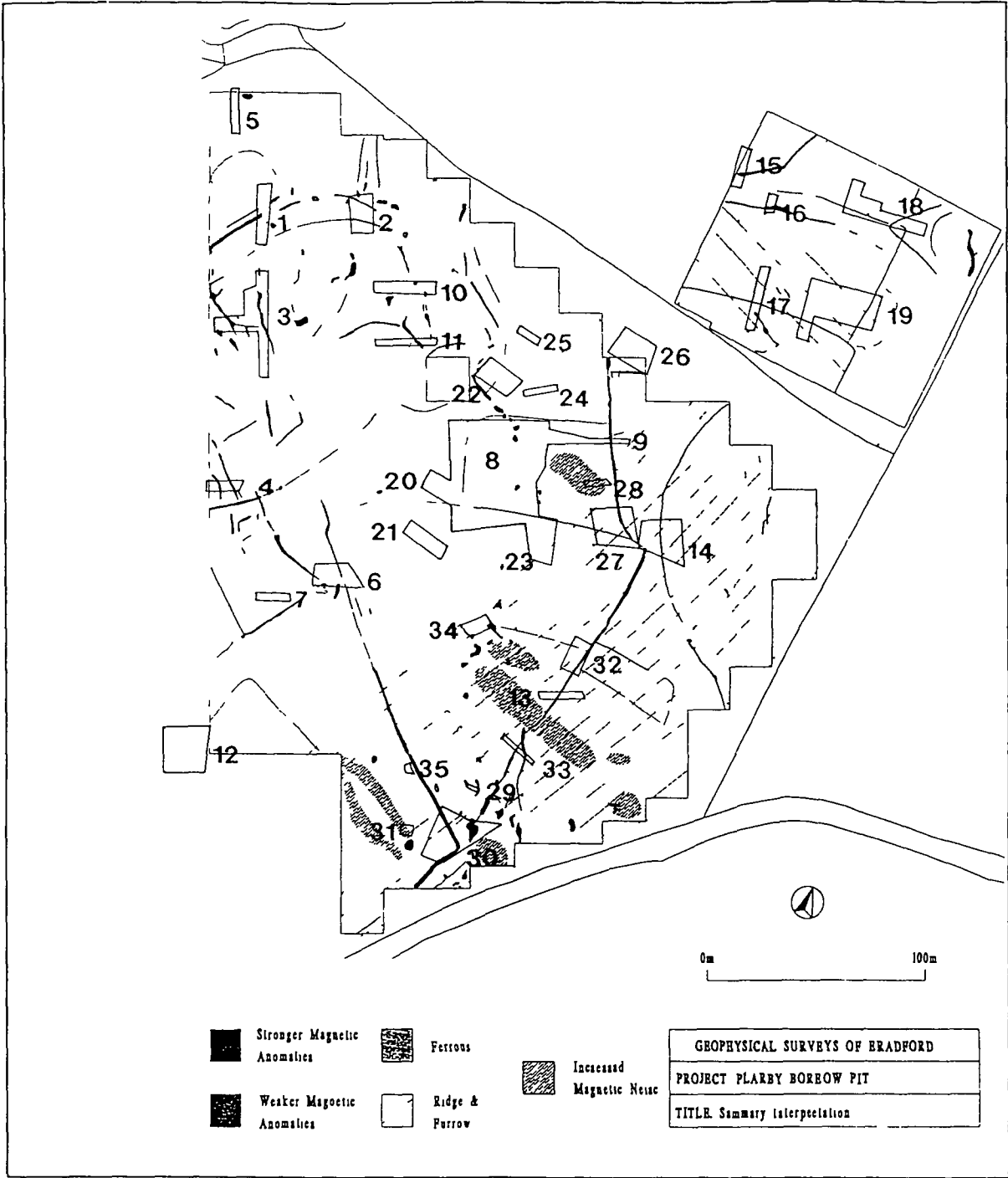


Figure 3
Figure 4

2 Archaeological and historical background

Aerial reconnaissance of the site showed no evidence for archaeological features

In 1956 two urns were located during sand and gravel extraction in the field to the west of the site and a further urn was discovered in 1960 to the east. A small scale excavation was undertaken and a large circular depression was located with an associated posthole. Pottery and bone, from this feature, was dated to the late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age.

In 1960 a beehive quern was located during gravel quarrying suggesting that there may be a settlement in the immediate vicinity of Ten Low Field, immediately to the west of Flaxby Borrow Pit.

Iron Age settlements in eastern England, between the River Tees and Don, are largely unexcavated. The region is known to have been occupied by the Brigantes, tribes covering an area from the Don to the south. Hadrian's Wall in the north and across to both coasts. The Brigantes is Celtic meaning the 'High Ones' or Hill dwellers. Most information comes from Roman sources, both historical and archaeological (Hartley 1988). One major problem is the lack of distinctive pottery or metalwork to help in dating the Iron Age period in the region.

Hillforts were not common in the north, unlike the south. Evidence points to single hut occupation, enclosed by a palisade or totally unenclosed. Larger settlements are known, for example at Ledston. The agricultural activity is mainly cattle rearing, but crop production increased towards the end of the Iron Age. In fact the large grain stores at Ledston suggest that the Brigantes were no longer subsistence farmers and were extending their economy and output.

Romano-British settlements in the area are frequently seen as continuations of an earlier Iron Age settlement. Rather than being considered as two separate units they should be viewed as a continuation and growth of an earlier homestead settlement.

3 Previous evaluation results

Prior to the excavation of the Flaxby site by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd, Northern Archaeological Associates undertook an evaluation of the site by means of fieldwalking, a geophysical survey and selected trial trenches

Fieldwalking results were inconclusive. The majority of the material recovered was of medieval date with only a very small assemblage of flint flakes and one sherd of possible Roman pottery

The geophysical survey of the site by Geophysical surveys of Bradford (GSB 94/29) identified a series of anomalies which were interpreted as a complex of ditches, pits, hearths and possible trackways associated with an extensive field system and possible settlement

The evaluation trenches, 25 m total, were excavated to determine the degree of survival of features located by the geophysical survey, also to provide a model for archaeological deposits across the site and to evaluate whether additional features would be revealed by excavation

Excavation showed that the majority of the features were sealed by a mixture of colluvial topsoil and plough drag. Northern Archaeological Associates concluded that the colluvial topsoil was the result of many centuries of cultivation, beneath which were the remains of both an Iron Age and Romano-British settlement with associated field systems

4 Methodology

The second phase of archaeological evaluation at the site consisted of a number of trenches excavated to assess the nature, form and date for the field system. This was achieved by excavation of specific sections of the ditches where there appeared to be a change in alignment or the junction of two or more linear features were noted. In addition a number of geophysical anomalies were located and investigated to assess the potential archaeological nature.

Trenches were located using the geophysical survey grid and some of NAA trenches. Topsoil and colluvial deposits were stripped away by a JCB with a ditching bucket. These areas were then shovel scraped and trowelled.

Trench locations were defined within the site by the use of a Wild TC1600 an electronic theodolite with a prism data recorder. Survey results were downloaded into MAT 400 and from there transferred to DGM (Digital Ground Modelling software) and Drafix (CAD software).

All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:20 or 1:100 and sections recorded at 1:10 or 1:20. A photographic record of the excavations was also produced (Appendix 4).

Trenches excavated during this second phase of excavation were numbered from 26 onwards. The original trench number was used if MAP undertook work in a pre-existing trench.

In addition to the field system excavations, MAP undertook an assessment of the "settlement area" in Trench 8. This trench was enlarged (Fig 4) to consider the extent and nature of the activity.

5 Excavation Results

Trench 4

Trench 4 was re-examined at the request of the County Archaeologist, Neil Campling, to investigate Graves 409 and 412 and linear features 403, 404 and 417. The investigation results were as stated in the NAA report (Fraser 1994). No further information was forthcoming.

Trench 8

Trench 8 was situated approximately in the centre of the Flaxby Borrow Pit site (Fig. 4). Measuring 45 by 15m, the trench was originally excavated by NAA to assess a series of geophysical anomalies (Fig. 3). Excavation located a number of pits, possible postholes, hearths and linear features, some of which were sectioned whereas others were only recorded in plan (Fraser 1994).

The trench was extended by MAP to 45m by 40m. The purpose of this extension was to evaluate further geophysical anomalies and to excavate further an area of the site which had been suggested as the location for Iron Age settlement. The extension of Trench 8 to the south meant it merged with Trenches 20 and 23.

The topsoil, context 8023, was a sandy silty loam covering the entire trench at an even depth of approximately 0.30m. Beneath the topsoil lay the subsoil/colluvium, context 8024, a sand with some rounded stone. The depth of the colluvium varied, being deeper in the south and west (0.30m–0.40m) than in the north and east where it measured between 0.15m and 0.30m in depth. This difference in depth is assumed to be the result of 'hillwash' movement downslope.

Ditch 8069, NAA context 1104, was located in Trenches 8 and 20 (Pls 7–8). This ditch was seen to cut the colluvium, context 8024. Ditch 8069 was aligned approximately north–west/south–east and measured in the region of 1.5m wide, up to 0.40m deep and continued into the south baulk of the trench beyond the area of excavation. Its single fill, context 8068, had a matrix of sandy silt and a stone content that amounted to nearly 75% of fill volume. This stone was rounded and averaged about 0.10m in size with a number being up to 0.30m. The cut, context 8069, was steep sided and had a rounded base. Ditch 8069, when excavated by NAA in Trench 20, was attributed a Romano-British date. No dating evidence was recovered by MAP, but its location so high up the soil profile would suggest a post Iron Age date. This feature (ditch 8069) was removed by machine in Trench 8 to expose an earlier palisade trench, excavated in segments 8031, 8054 & 8064. Geophysical anomalies suggest that ditch 8069 continues beyond the east baulk of Trench 8.

Sealed beneath the subsoil/colluvium was an ancient buried soil of sandy silt, context 8050 (NAA context 1003). Context 8050, measuring 24m by 13m and less than 0.18m in depth, was located in the central western portion of the trench (Figs 18–19, Pl 9). Context 8050 contained a large amount of stone, mostly well rounded and of the size range 0.05m–0.20m. Although some of this tended to

concentrate in clusters (see below) no meaningful spatial patterning was discernible. Where clustering was evident with context 8050 these potential features were half sectioned contexts 8039, 8041, 8043, 8045, 8047, 8049, 8052 and 8067 (Figs 6a–b 18–19). The surface appearance of all these anomalies was small stony clusters measuring no more than 0.70m in diameter, that were considered at the time to be potential postholes containing 'packing stones' cutting the buried soil context 8050. Upon excavation however, it proved impossible to find satisfactory edges to the features, the 'fills' being virtually identical to the surrounding matrix of buried soil. It was also noted that in all cases the stone concentrations did not continue beneath the lower level of the buried soil, terminating at the burial soil/'natural' interface, context 8065.

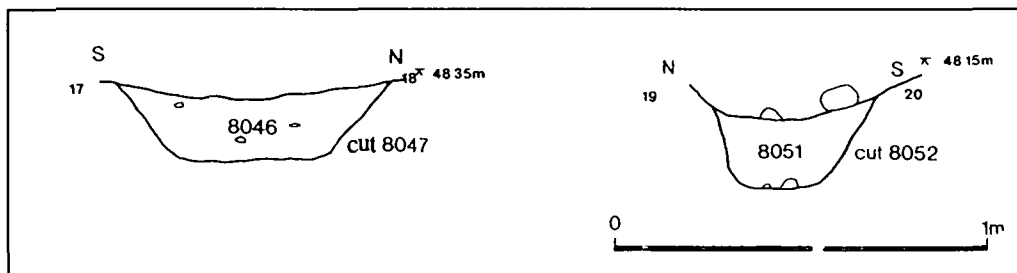


Figure 6a Features 8047 and 8052

In light of the above it is considered that these features are not stone packed postholes but merely slight concentrations of stone within the stone rich buried soil. Three exceptions to this were contexts 8041, 8049 and 8067. Feature 8041 proved on excavation to be a patch of stony 'natural' that was peaking through the buried soil, whilst 8049 displayed clear signs of burrowing which occurred throughout the area of the stone concentration. Feature 8067 was different in that once the surface stones had been removed a quantity of charcoal was found to be present. Excavation showed this to be contained within the buried soil and not within a discrete feature as such. No firm dating evidence for the buried soil was recovered despite the cleaning of its surface and the removal of a large area. NAA's evaluation of Trench 8 recovered several sherds of prehistoric pot from the buried soil, context 1003 (Fraser 1994).

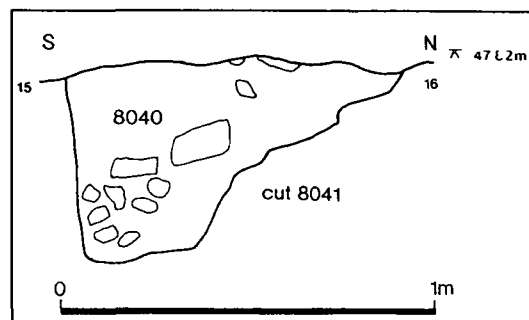


Figure 6b Feature 8041

To the south and east of the buried soil a number of further potential features were excavated that again proved to be of non-archaeological origin. The largest of these, context 8004 had a dense

gravel and boulder fill with a small amount of sand, context 8003 yet no clear edges to the feature were discerned. A similar though smaller feature was 8062, whose fill was predominantly sand with an increasing gravel content with depth, context 8061. Given the nature of the fills of both 8004 and 8062, they are considered to be of periglacial origin.

Feature 8002 was roughly circular in shape and measured 2m in diameter. Its fill consisted of a thin concentration of stone, well rounded and of a size measuring up to 0.15m, context 8001. Upon excavation the stone was found to be merely resting upon the surface of the natural sand, context 8065. It seems likely that this stony material may be derived from the base of the colluvium, context 8024, and be of no archaeological value.

A number of archaeological features were seen to be sealed by the colluvium (8024) and cutting the natural sands and gravel, context 8065. These consisted of contexts 8034, 8056, 8033, 8031, 8054, 8064, 8057, 8028 and 8021. Of these features, contexts 8034 and 8056, proved to be of minimal archaeological interest (Figs 6c-h 18-19). Observed initially as a linear band of stone rich silty sand excavation showed that feature 8056 contained clay land drainage pipes of relatively modern date. Feature 8034 was visible as a stone rich sandy silt band containing a small amount of post-medieval brick fragments and aligned approximately parallel to context 8056. Context 8034 had a broad 'V' shaped profile measuring 0.60m wide and 0.28m deep. Whilst it is possible that 8034 could represent the remains of a redundant land drain. It is also conceivable that 8034 may formerly have been a field boundary or division and its stony fill, context 8035, perhaps supporting a fence line.

In the south-west area of Trench 8 a pit, context 8033, measuring 1.50m across and up to 0.30m deep, was located. This pit had a dark silty sand fill, context 8032, that contrasted quite sharply with the surrounding natural, context 8065. The fill, context 8032, contained occasional small stones and a few flecks of charcoal that became slightly paler in colour towards its northern edge. A number of small animal burrows were seen near the northern edge and it is considered that the observed colour variation is due to the mixing of fill and surrounding natural by animal action. The cut of the pit was oval in shape with gently sloping edges and a concave base. No dating evidence was recovered from this pit. Therefore its function remains unknown. On its southern side pit 8033 was cut by a linear feature, context 8031. Therefore pit 8033 pre-dates both the palisade trench, context 8031, and the Romano-British ditch, context 8069. An environmental sample from feature 8033's fill, context 8032, produced a small amount of gram (Appendix 5).

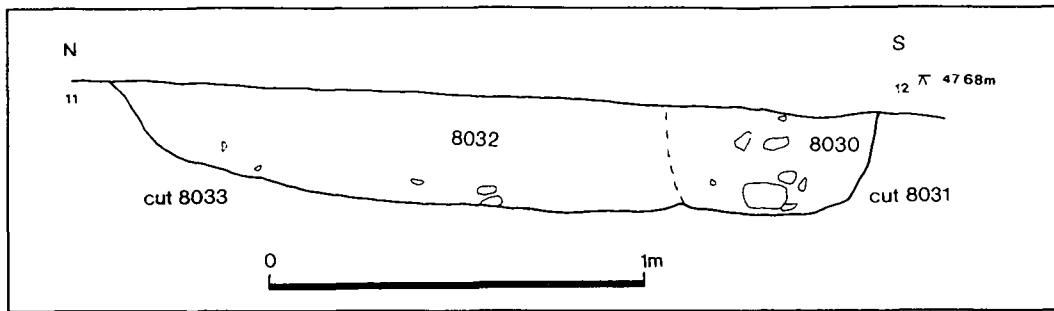


Figure 6c Features 8031 and 8033

The palisaded ditch was examined in a number of excavated segments, contexts 8031, 8054 and 8064 (Figs 6d-e, 18-19). The segments measured between 0.47m and 0.56m in width and ranged in depth from 0.24m to 0.32m. Aligned approximately east to west, the feature traversed the entire length of the southern portion of Trench 8 and was seen to continue into Trench 23, context 2305.

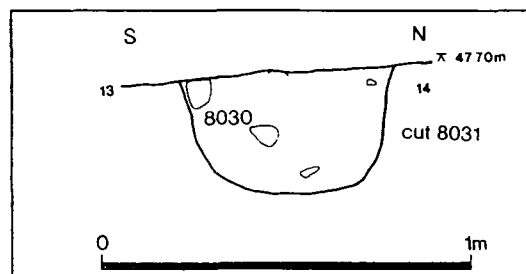


Figure 6d Feature 8031

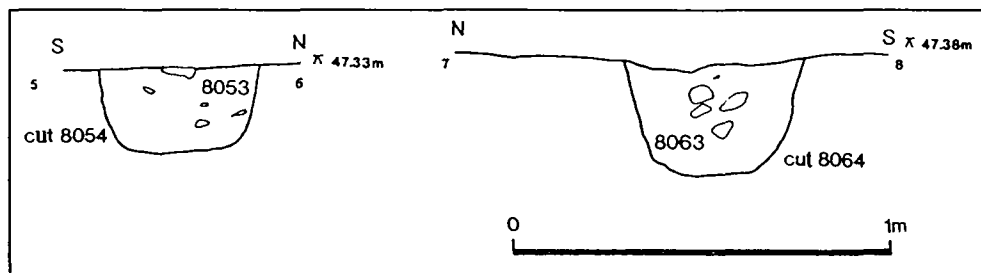


Figure 6e Features 8054 and 8064

The fills of the excavated segments, contexts 8030, 8053 and 8063, were silty sands containing occasional flecks of charcoal and large amounts of rounded stone of a size range of 0.02m to 0.14m. The stone within the fill was present from the uppermost parts to the base, but tended to concentrate in the centre away from the edges. Variations in the quantity of stone was quite noticeable, this ranging in the region of 5% to 35% of fill volume in different parts along its length. The cut of this feature had very steep edges, in most places approaching vertical, that at their lower level merged less sharply into the base. The base was generally quite flat with a few slight undulations (Figs 6d-e). Given the profile of this linear cut and the large quantity of stones within the fill, it is suggested that it functioned as a palisade trench. Although there were no clear indications of post settings at the base of the cut, nor of postpipes within the fill, it is likely that the stone element of the fill represents 'packing stones' for a timber palisade. No firm dating evidence for this palisade trench

was recovered. This feature was excavated by NAA in Trench 20, context 1118, and a sherd of undiagnostic pottery was recovered.

Some five metres to the south of pit 8033, a sub-circular feature, context 8057, was excavated measuring 1.30m in diameter and up to 0.34m in depth (Fig. 6f). This feature had three distinct fills, contexts 8058, 8059 and 8060. The primary fill, context 8060, was a silty clay sand containing a large amount of stones. Above this lay context 8059, a silty sand containing a small amount of gravel. The latest fill, context 8058 was a firm, silty sand with some clay and a large amount of small gravel. The cut, context 8057, had moderately steep sides except on the western side where they sloped much more gently, and a concave base. The edges of this feature were quite distinct from the fills and all fills contained some charcoal flecks. An interesting aspect of this feature was a marked degree of concretion on some of the stones and also the corrosion apparent on some of the stone within the fills. A sample was taken from fill 8059, which displayed the greatest amount of corrosion. The function of this feature is unknown. Environmental sampling indicated no conclusive indication for feature 8057's function. Due to the lack of archaeological evidence, this feature is probably periglacial in origin.

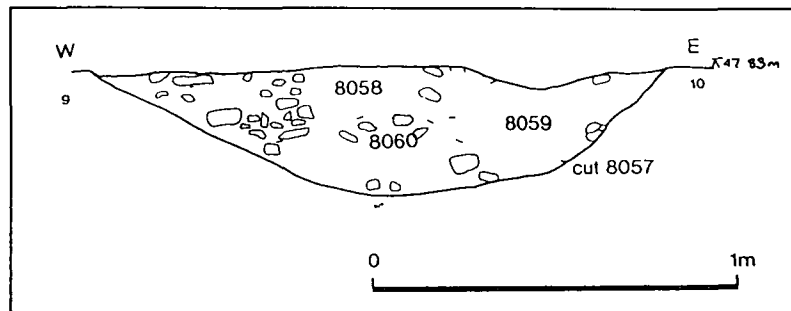


Figure 6f Feature 8057

Located in the central area of Trench 8 was an oval feature, context 8028 (Figs. 6g, 18-19), measuring 1.86m by 1.46m and up to 0.18m deep. The single fill, context 8029, was a compact sandy silt containing a small amount of gravel and small stone together with a few flecks of charcoal but no dating evidence. The cut was steep-sided and flat-based. It is assumed that this feature is a pit, though of an unknown function and its shallow nature suggests possible truncation.

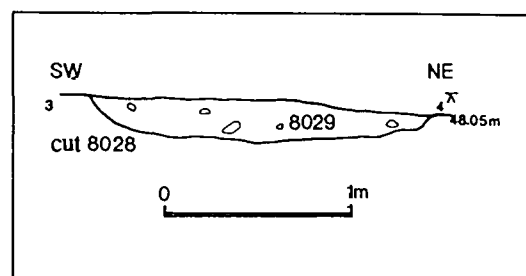


Figure 6g Feature 8028

In the northern central area was feature 8021 (Figs 6h 18–19 Pl 10) The fill, context 8022, was a compact silty sand of very mottled appearance with distinct variation in colour A large proportion of the fill, context 8022 in the region of 50%, consisted of rounded and angular stone ranging from 0.03m to 0.08m in size with occasional larger stones up to 0.23m in size Some of these stone were burnt, but the spatial distribution of burnt and unburnt stone in the fill showed no distinct concentrations but more of a random mix

The cut of feature 8021 had moderately steep sides with the lower edges merging into a concave base Given the nature of the fill it is likely that feature 8021 can be interpreted as a hearth, whilst the absence of surrounding stone and the intermixed character of the fill suggest that some disturbance has taken place subsequent to its initial function No dating evidence was located during excavation The fill of the excavated segment was sampled, but only charcoal of the *alnus* species was recovered (Appendix 5)

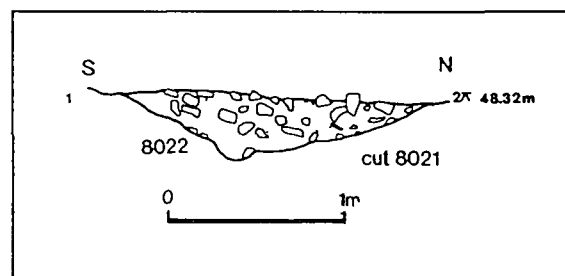


Figure 6h Feature 8021

In the north-eastern area of Trench 8 (Fig 18) a number of archaeological features had previously been excavated by NAA, these consisted of four pits

Pit 1037 The cut of this pit, MAP context 8008, was oval/sub square in shape, had moderately steep sides and a concave base, dimensions were 1.65m by 1.35m and up to 0.33m deep (Fig 18) This feature was seen to have three fills The primary fill, context 8007 consisted of a thick band of sand containing a very few small stone inclusions that covered the entirety of the base and most of the sides Above this lay context 8006, a silty sand containing large quantities of gravel and small pebbles that occurred in the western half of the section only The lower fill, context 8005 was a silty sand containing a large amount of angular and rounded stone, some up to 0.17m in size

Pit 1032 This probable pit continued beyond the northern limit of the excavation The cut of the pit, MAP context 8011, was 1.48m wide by up to 0.40m deep but of unknown length Sides, where visible were steep the base was flat The primary fill, context 8010, was a sand containing a very few small stones inclusions Above 8010 lay 8009 a sandy silt containing approximately 10–20% of mostly rounded stones measuring up to 0.11m

Together, pits 1037 and 1032 correspond with the south east end of a line of geophysical anomalies that extend away from Trench 8 in a north westerly direction. From these excavation results NAA concluded that these features were a pit alignment. Further excavation in Trench 8, carried out by MAP can neither confirm or deny this assumption.

Pit 1016 The cut, MAP context 8014, was steep sided with a flat base, oval in shape with a diameter of 1.21m and a depth of 0.52m. The primary fill of this pit, context 8013, was seen as a thin band of gravel in the west basal part of the cut. The remaining fill, context 8012, a silty sand contained occasional small stone and showed some slight colour and textural variation through the reported vertical postpipe was not observed.

Pit 1015 The cut, MAP context 8016, was oval in shape and measured 1.84m by 1.70m and up to 0.26m in depth. The edges were steep, the base flatish with a slight step down to the north. The single fill of this pit, context 8015 was an homogeneous silty sand of clean appearance containing occasional stone up to 0.07m in size.

Trench 17

Trench 17 was examined to establish relationships between the linear anomalies already visible from previous excavation. A linear feature context 1702, orientated north-south extended the full length of the trench (Fig 8). The fill of 1702 context 1701 was a compact silty clay. No finds were recovered from the excavated segment. A 1m segment was excavated to establish any relationships with east-west aligned linear features in Trench 17. Context 1702 was probably a linear field or hedge boundary post-dating the medieval plough furrow, context 1704, and the undated ditch NAA context 903 (Fraser 1994). Context 1702, was not visible, possibly ploughed out, in the southern part of the trench, so its relationship with hollow-way NAA context 918, is not known.

The medieval plough furrows, context 1704, were aligned to located north of ditch, NAA context 903 and hollow-way, NAA context 918. It was filled by context 1703, a compact sandy silt. Neither plough furrow was excavated.

Trench 18

Trench 18 was extended from its original size of 30m x 5m to 37m x 17m (maximum Fig 4). The trench was located to define an east-west/north-south anomaly and to determine its relationship with an open triangular feature (Fig 3).

Previous evaluation of this trench had concluded that the intersection of the features occupied the entire trench and that a linear feature, NAA context 919, although not excavated could have been either a hollow-way or a ditch.

A 2m wide section was excavated through the intersection of the features (Fig 9) Excavation showed that feature 1804 had removed all traces of feature 1806, the east-west linear shown on the geophysical survey (Fig 3) Feature 1804 measured 2.10m in width and survived to a depth of 0.72m In profile the ditch was a steep sided 'U' and filled with a uniform layer of silty sand, context 1803 The southern edge of 1804 had been cut by a much smaller ditch, context 1802, which measured 0.60m in width and survived to a depth of 0.50m Like 1804 the ditch was filled with a single uniform layer of silty sand, context 1801 Separating ditches 1802 and 1804 was a thin ridge of clay, context 1807

Stratigraphically it is clear that 1802 is later than ditch 1804, but as to their actual relationship, in terms of function one can only speculate Excavation of 1802 did not find any evidence for postholes/postpipes, although one can not rule out that 1802 acted as a palisade trench for 1804

No finds were located during the excavation

Trench 21

A deposit of colluvium, context 2102, was removed by machine to uncover the buried soil horizon, context 2103 The buried soil was cleaned by hand to see if any features were present either cut into or beneath this deposit No archaeological features were uncovered One fragment of degraded or burnt, possibly Roman pottery was recovered from context 2103

Trench 23

Trench 23 was located immediately to the south east of Trench 8 (Fig 4) This trench originally measured 18m by 3.5m, MAP extended Trench 23 to cover an additional area of some 17m by 13m to the south of the initial excavation in order to examine the east-west aligned linear geophysical anomaly that in Trenches 8 and 20 had been identified as a palisade trench, contexts 8031, 8054, 8064 and NAA context 1118

The topsoil, context 2301, was a sandy silt loam covering the entirety of Trench 23 at an even depth of approximately 0.30m Beneath the topsoil lay the subsoil/colluvium, context 2302, a sand containing some rounded stone The colluvium was not of constant depth it being deeper in the western, up to 0.45m than in the eastern part of the trench, up to 0.35m

The surface immediately beneath (2302) was cleaned twice and apart from a land drain of fairly recent date the only feature that could be observed was the linear cut, context 2305 (Figs 7 and 10) The fill of this cut context 2304, was a slightly silty sand containing some stone that on the surface was only just distinguishable from the surrounding 'natural' sands, context 2303, indeed in the extreme eastern part of the trench 2304 was not detectable at all Examination of this feature showed that its stone element which was rounded and of a size up to 0.11m became denser with increasing depth No finds were recovered from Context 2304 The cut, context 2305, had steep, near vertical,

sides and a slightly concave base (Fig 7) It is clear that context 2305 is the same feature as the palisade trench examined as contexts 8031 8054, 8064 and 1118 in Trenches 8 and 20

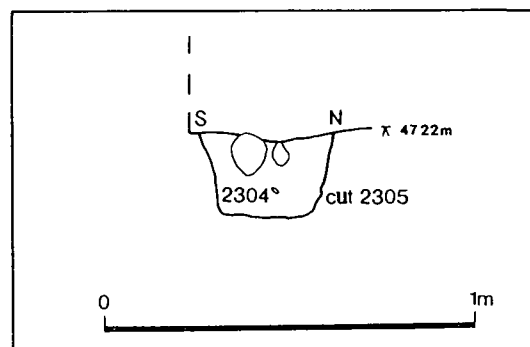


Figure 7 feature 2305

Trench 26

Trench 26 an area c 10m square (Fig 4) was located in order to investigate the junction of the main north-south ditch (context 2610 in this trench) with a supposed east-west anomaly suggested by the geophysical survey Excavation confirmed the presence of the north-south ditch and revealed two parallel linear features running to the east of the main ditch There was no trace of the intersecting east-west anomaly suggested by the geophysical survey (Figs 4 and 11)

Ditch 2610 was a clearly defined linear feature with a width of c 2.5m cutting into the natural silty sand along the entire length of the trench the feature was planned but not excavated The fill context 2609, was a brown sandy silt with frequent cobble inclusions situated below the 0.49m deep colluvial layer context 2602

Gully 2608 was situated c 1m east of 2610 (Figs 11 and 12) The width was 0.5m with the rounded-V profile having a depth of 0.18m The lower fill, context 2607, was a brown silty sand, which contained a cmmb of pottery of prehistoric character The upper fill context 2606, was a brown fine silty sand of brighter hue which was cut by ditch cut 2605 (Fig 12)

Ditch 2605 was c 1m wide with a dished profile (Fig 12) As stated above, 2605 cut the upper fill of the earlier gully cut 2608 though on a slightly more southerly alignment The basal fill, context 2604, was a brown fine sandy silt, with similar, though darker material context 2603, comprising the upper fill There were no finds

Trench 27

Trench 27 was excavated with the specific objective of locating the major geophysical anomaly which previous excavation had located and shown to be a 'V' shaped ditch aligned north-south The geophysical survey indicated that this anomaly appeared to change direction the area of Trench 27 and that there was also a marked break in the anomaly Excavation concentrated on locating the ditch or ditches and evaluating the possible entrance theory

After removal of the colluvium in this trench three distinct features were observed (Fig 13)

- 1 The southern extent of the ditch already seen in Trenches 9 26 and 26 contexts 803, 2610 and 2803 respectively,
- 2 the northern extent of the ditch, context 2706, which continues to the south in Trench 29 as context 2903, Trench 30 as context 3013 Trench 32 as context 3201 and Trench 33 as context 3303
- 3 A circular feature, context 2704

Feature 2711 represents the southern terminal of the north-south ditch (Figs 13-14 and Pls 1-2) It was shown to have steep sides (50-60 degrees) with a sharp break of slope at the top The terminal end was even steeper with an angle of 80 degrees The terminal was filled with layers 2709 and 2710 Layer 2709 consisted of silty sand with approximately 30-35% rounded stones which ranged in size from 0.10m to 0.35m It was noted that the boulders tended to increase in size with depth None of the stones were burnt although occasional flecks of charcoal were noted The primary fill of the terminal was a pure clay apart from 10-15% stone inclusion and the occasional fleck of charcoal

It was the opinion of the excavator that layer 2710 represented the primary fill of the terminal and suggested that the feature had been a ditch for a considerable period of time before its role was adapted and the ditch was deliberately filled to accommodate a palisade However it must be stressed that despite very careful examination of this feature no post pipes were seen within the stone packing

Associated with the terminal were two other smaller linear features contexts 2708 and 2713

Feature 2708 was aligned parallel to 2711 and situated on its eastern side The feature measured 0.65m in width and survived to a depth of 0.33m Its relationship to the main ditch 2711 is unknown as both features respected the other's alignment

Feature 2713 was very similar to 2708 but was situated to the west of, and parallel to, the main ditch 2711 It was approximately 0.7m in width and 0.3m in depth As with 2708 the relationship between these three features is unclear

Feature 2706 represents the excavated terminal of the southern section of ditch, measuring 1.65m in width and surviving to a depth of approximately 1.04m (Figs 13 and 14 Pls 3 and 4) The terminal had steep sides at an angle of 50-60 degrees and had a flat base The break in the slope at both the top and at the base was markedly sharp The fill of the feature, context 2705, was a silty sand with 64% rounded stone of size range 0.05m to 0.30m, of which none were burnt Only a very occasional fleck of charcoal was noted The stone content was evenly distributed throughout the fill As with 2711 it was felt that the stones probably represented packing for a palisade but again no postpipes were located

Features 2711 and 2706 would appear to form an opening? into a large enclosure. The southern terminal is both deeper and of steeper sides than the northern terminal segment.

In the area just to the east of the terminal a large oval feature was located, context 2704 (Figs 13 and 14 Pls 5 and 6). This feature measured 2.3m by 1.8m and when excavated was seen to be 0.37m in depth. The fill, context 2703, consisted of silty sand with 50–60% stone measuring 0.08m to 0.24m, none showed any traces of burning and there was only an occasional fleck of charcoal. The feature contained no finds.

A function for this feature is problematic. The stone could have formed packing, but no postpipes were observed. There is no indication of burning so the feature cannot be a hearth or roasting pit. The fill was very uniform and homogeneous and there was no indication that the feature was a cess pit. Therefore the feature's actual function is hard to conceive.

Trench 28

This trench was excavated to confirm the line of the north–south ditch in this area of the site.

Excavation located the ditch and as a number of sections had already been hand excavated this section was machined out except for the primary silt, context 2806, of the main north–south ditch, recorded here as context 2803 (Fig 12). To the west of the main ditch was a much shallower and smaller feature context 2805. This linear gully equates to 2713 in Trench 27. In this area there was no sign of feature 2708 on the eastern side of the main ditch.

Excavation located no finds.

Trench 29

Trench 29, measuring 15m by 2m was excavated to confirm the line of the main north–south ditch (2903 in Trench 29) which on geophysical survey appeared to have been removed by a series of abstract shaped anomalies or had been masked by these features.

Machining was taken down to the level of 0.5m which removed the colluvium and exposed the upper fill of the ditch (2901). From this point the ditch was hand excavated to provide information on profile and to provide dating evidence. The ditch was shown to be a shallow bottom 'V' in profile but no finds were located.

Trench 30

The southern most of the excavated trenches. Trench 30 was an area c 15m square positioned to examine the intersection of the main northeast–southwest ditch with a linear feature running from it in a northwest direction (Fig 15).

A box segment was excavated at the intersection of the two ditches, contexts 3017 and 3018. The fills, contexts 3014, 3015 and 3016 were common to, and contiguous in, both ditches, which would

therefore appear to be contemporary. A further segment of the north-east/south-west ditch context 3013, was excavated c 10m southeast of the intersection between 3017 and 3018.

Ditch cut 3013 was c 2.5m wide at the top with a depth of 0.94m. The profile was a rounded-V with a flare at the top of gentler gradient. Examination of the fills suggested the deposition of contexts 3010, 3011 and 3012 by rapid weathering of the ditch's edges, followed by the deposition of the more loamy fills contexts 3004, 3005, 3006, 3007, 3008 and 3009. The uppermost fill, context 3003, essentially constituted the 'sagging' of the overlying 0.60m deep colluvial deposit into the ditch. There were no finds.

To summarise, two large contemporary ditches (contexts 3013/3017 and 3018) were present in Trench 30, with the fills buried beneath a substantial deposit of colluvium (context 3002).

Trench 31

This trench was excavated to locate and evaluate a large isolated anomaly known from the geophysical survey.

The excavation showed that this feature was in fact of natural origin and most probably represented a large natural hollow which had over the centuries filled up with colluvium. This was substantiated by the associated finds of prehistoric flint, a large sherd of Iron Age pottery and a piece of Roman grey ware. All these finds were located within approximately 2m of each other and from the same horizon, context 3101.

Trench 32

Trench 32 was excavated to evaluate the possible junction of two east-west anomalies with the main north-south ditch, as shown by geophysical survey. Excavation showed that in this area of the site the north-south ditch was clearly visible context 3201, but the natural subsoil was so varied that it was considered that the geophysical anomalies probably recorded the marked changes in subsoil from sand to gravel and admixtures of the two (Fig 16).

Trench 33

Trench 33 was an area c 2 x 19m in size positioned to confirm the line of the northeast-southwest ditch observed in Trench 30, and in addition to investigate an area of increased magnetic noise shown by the geophysical survey.

The ditch was observed as a c 3m wide deposit of brown sandy silt, context 3003, covered by a 0.25m deep deposit of colluvium context 3002, cutting into the natural gravel.

The natural deposits were of mixed character in the area of Trench 33, with differing bands of sands and gravels present. It is likely that elements of the mixed natural deposits account for the increased

magnetic noise shown by the geophysical survey in the vicinity no anthropogenic features were present in the excavated area other than the ditch mentioned above

Trench 34

Excavation of this area of the site was designed to evaluate a series of anomalies As with Trench 32 the great variation in subsoil characteristics suggested that periglacial rather than archaeological features accounted for the anomalies

Trench 35

Trench 35 was excavated in order to confirm the presence of the northwest–southeast ditch shown by the geophysical survey and the excavation of Trench 30 The trench was L-shaped, with two joining areas 2 x 13m and 3.5 x 6m in size

The fill of the ditch was represented by context 3503 a 4m wide band of sandy silt buried by a 0.33m deep deposit of colluvium The only other man-made feature present in the trench was a modern field drain which ran across the trench on a similar alignment to that of the ditch