

**Marfield Quarry
Masham
North Yorkshire
Area 14
Archaeological Sample Excavations**

December 1996
MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd.

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Area 14
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1. Introduction

This report concerns the results of archaeological sample excavations carried out in Area 14, which forms part of the proposed extension to Marfield Quarry. Area 14 is located immediately west of the existing quarry in the parish of Ellington High and Low (SE 2095 8290 centre : Fig. 1).

Area 14 is now "permanent pasture", however, it has been ploughed in the past. Hedges form all the boundaries to the area. The surface of the field rises gradually from the northern boundary to c. 105m AOD at the centre; thereafter the surface falls to a marked depression in the field's south-west corner.

The soils at the site are brown earths of the East Keswick Association, overlying drift derived from Palaeozoic and Mesozoic sandstones and shales (Mackney *et al.* 1983).

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All work was funded by Redland Aggregates Ltd.

2. Previous Archaeological Work

The archaeological evaluation of Area 14 had previously taken the form of (a) Desktop Study, and (b) Geophysical Survey.

(a) Desktop Study

No information specific to Area 14 was forthcoming from the Desktop Study..

(b) Geophysical Survey

Area 14 was totally scanned by gradiometer, followed by a 50% detailed magnetometer survey. The survey showed a metal pipe crossing the site on an approximate east to west alignment, with other isolated ferric anomalies. Much weaker anomalies were also present, including a curvilinear feature intercepted by a north-south linear in the southern part of the site. These anomalies were interpreted by the surveyors (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford) as possibly of geological origin, or the remains of ploughing (GSB 95/ 95).

3. Excavation Methods

A total of three trenches (Trenches 1-3 : Fig. 2) were excavated in November 1996 to examine the apparent intersections between linear anomalies, and also some assumed ferric anomalies.

The modern turf and topsoil was removed by a rear-acting JCB excavator using a toothless bucket, down to the surface of undisturbed natural deposits. The trenches were then hand cleaned, examined for features and subjected to limited hand excavation. Recording was carried out using the continuous context recording system on standard forms. Plans were drawn at 1:50 and 1:10 scales. A colour print and colour slide photographic records were taken.

4. Excavation Results

Trench 1

Trench 1 was situated in the northern half of the area and was located to examine the intersection of a north-south linear anomaly with a weaker east-west linear anomaly (Fig. 2). The trench measured 9.5m in length, north-south and c. 4m in width, east-west.

No archaeological deposits were present in the trench. The surface of the natural deposits (context 1002) displayed a north-south aligned linear band of gravel within the overall sandy silt. Excavation showed the thin gravel band was a natural feature due to its clean nature and the general character of its fill.

A 0.26m deep layer of modern plough-soil and turf (context 1001) overlay the natural deposits.

Trench 2

Trench 2, measuring 9.5m by 3.5m was located c. 40m south of Trench 1 and positioned to examine a vague north-south aligned linear anomaly and two separate anomalies of possible ferric origin (Fig. 2).

Excavation failed to locate any archaeological deposits. As with Trench 1, the linear anomaly equated to a natural gravelly band within the general sandy silt. There was no trace of the two separate geophysical anomalies, these were presumably caused by ferrous objects within the plough-soil. A 0.33m deep layer of plough-soil and turf (context 2001) overlay the natural deposits.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was situated c. 80m south-west of Trench 2, on the west facing slope of the depression at the south-west corner of the field and measured 9m². The trench was intended to examine the area where a north-south linear anomaly coincided with an apparent sub-circular feature on its eastern side.

Excavation again failed to locate any archaeological deposits, and showed that the anomalies were the result of banding within natural deposits. Linear bands observed varied between coarse sandy gravel along the eastern margin of the trench (context 3004), through to silt with cobbles (context 3003) and gravely silt (context 3002) over the central and western parts of the trench.

The natural deposits were overlain by a 0.30m deep layer of modern plough-soil and turf (context 3001).

5. Discussion and Conclusions

Excavation of all three trenches showed that the linear anomalies revealed by the geophysical survey were the result of differences within the drift geology forming the natural subsoil. Two separate and distinctive anomalies in Trench 2 were not accounted for, but were probably caused by ferrous objects within the topsoil, as had been suggested by geophysical survey.

Unlike the other three areas (Areas 6, 9 and 12; MAP 1996) so far examined by sample excavation within the proposed quarry extension, Area 14 has failed to show any kiln like features. This is possibly due to the fact that this area was cultivated, unlike the more marginal hilly areas such as Areas 6 and 9, where waste land would be more liable to be used for industrial activity.

6. Bibliography

GSB 95/95 1995 'Report on Geophysical Survey - Marfield Quarry, Masham'. Geophysical Surveys of Bradford.

Mackney D. Et al. 1983 Soil Surveys of England and Wales. Sheet 1: Northern England.

MAP 1996 Marfield Quarry, Masham. Proposed Quarry Extension. Areas 6, 9 and 12. Sample Excavations. MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd.

APPENDIX 1

Context Listing

Trench 1

- 1001 10YR 4/2 silty sandy loam (modern topsoil)
- 1002 10YR 5/6 sandy silt with gravel and cobbles (natural)

Trench 2

- 2001 10YR 4/2 silty sandy loam (modern topsoil)
- 2002 10YR 4/4 sandy silt with gravel (natural)

Trench 3

- 3001 10YR 4/2 silty sandy loam (modern topsoil)
- 3002 10YR 3/6 silty loam (natural)
- 3003 10YR 6/3 sandy silt with large rounded sandstones
- 3004 10YR 4/6 coarse sandy clay with gravel

APPENDIX 2

Archive Summary

8 context sheets - checked for consistency

1 x A2 permatrace drawing. Scale 1:20.

6 colourprints

6 colour transparencies

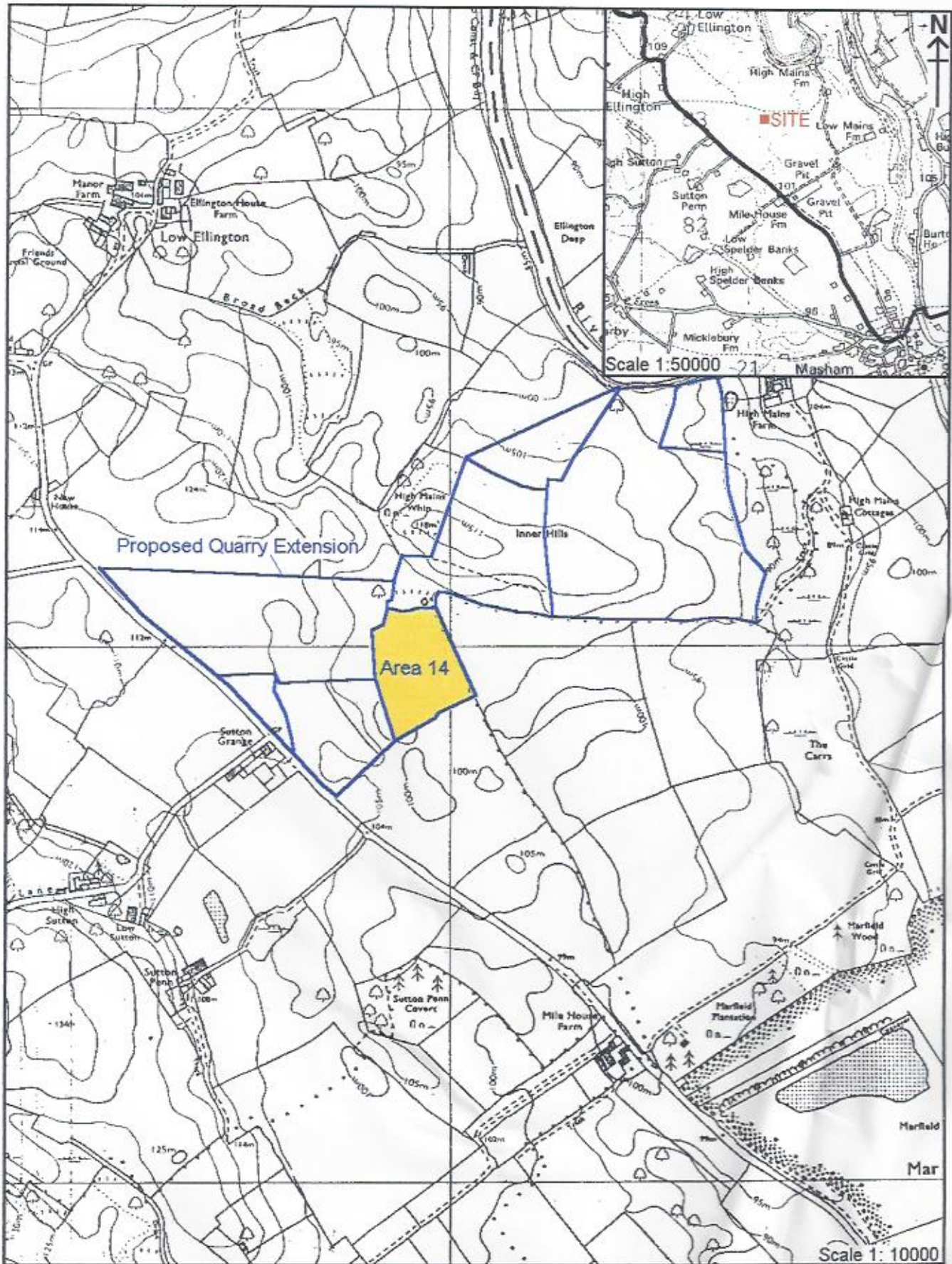


Figure 1. Site Location.

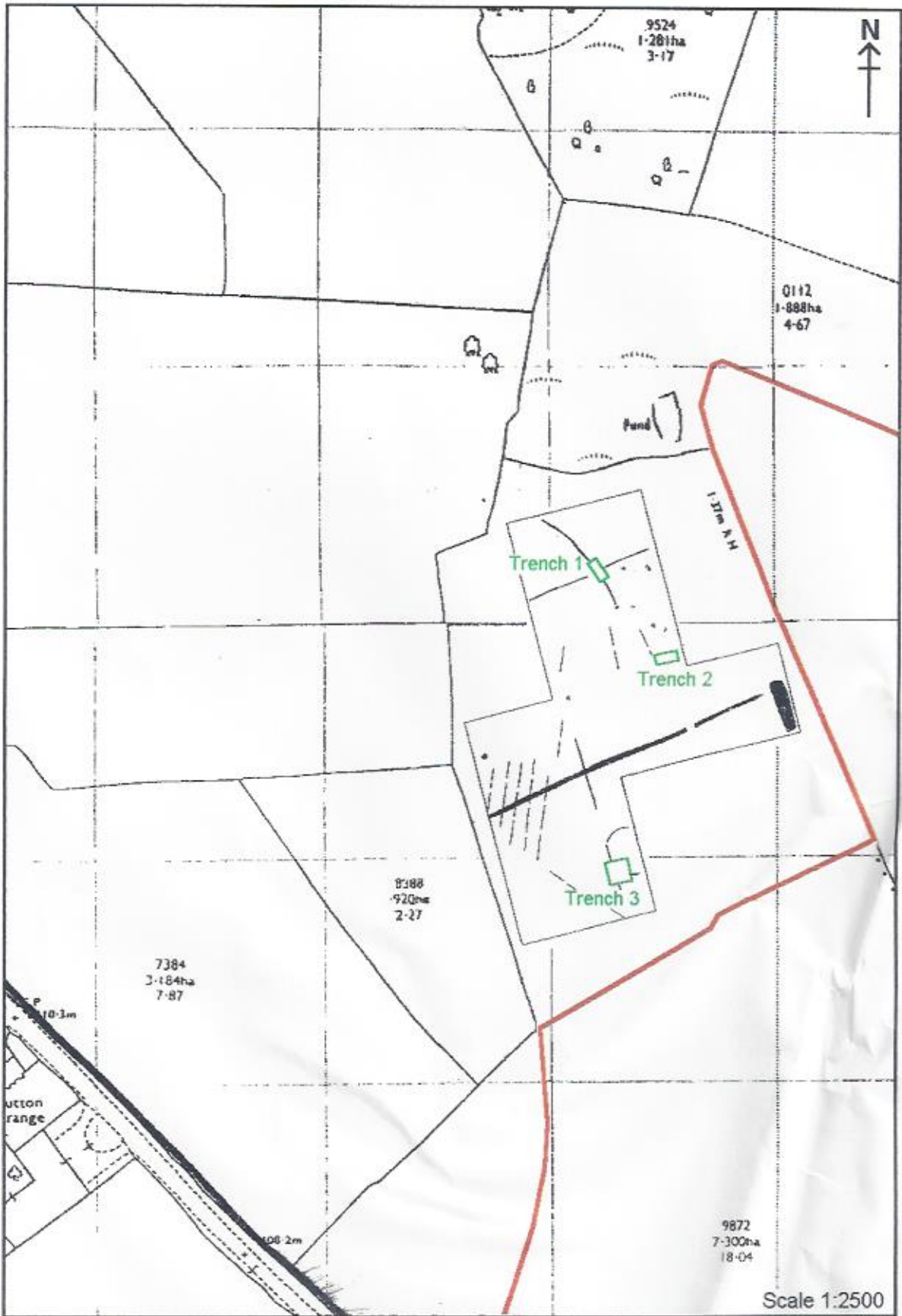


Figure 2. Trench Location in relation to Geophysical Anomalies.