

# Archaeological Monitoring & Earthwork Survey at Weasenham Great Barrow, Weasenham Lyngs, Weasenham All Saints, Norfolk.



Prepared on behalf of Mr.C.W.Ellison

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**Archaeological Monitoring and Earthwork Survey at  
 Weasenham Great Barrow, Weasenham Lyngs,  
 Weasenham All Saints, Norfolk.**

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Location:</b>          | Weasenham All Saints                                 |
| <b>Grid Ref:</b>          | TF 85358 19830                                       |
| <b>NHES Event No:</b>     | ENF133582  |
| <b>Date of fieldwork:</b> | 6 <sup>th</sup> to 20 <sup>th</sup> of February 2014 |

## 1.0 Introduction

Norvic Archaeology was commissioned by the tenant farmer Mr.C.W.Ellison, to undertake archaeological monitoring during the removal of bracken litter from the mound, ditches and banks of Weasenham Great Barrow. The Great Barrow is a Scheduled Monument (NF 164B) and one of a number of barrows that form part of a late Neolithic or Bronze Age barrow cemetery. The Great Barrow is one of the largest and most impressive extant burial mounds in Norfolk, comprising of a bell barrow form with a large mound c. 30m in diameter and c. 2m in height, surrounded by two ditches and an external bank.

This project forms part of a Higher Level Stewardship Historic and Archaeological Feature Protection scheme (HAP), which aims to assist the tenant farmer in improving the condition of the site and to enable the monument to be maintained in an improved condition. The funds for this work have been provided by Natural England and the project was overseen by the Norfolk Monuments Management Project. The work required Scheduled Monument Consent, which was secured by the Norfolk Museums Management Project.

The archaeological monitoring was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by David Robertson of the Historic Environment Service (HES Ref: CNF45047) on behalf of English Heritage. The aim of the monitoring work was to oversee the depth of bracken litter removed and to record any archaeological contexts and artefacts revealed during the work. This report presents a brief description of the methodology followed and an archaeological interpretation of the results.

On completion of the project, the site archive will be offered for long term deposition with Norfolk Museums Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

## 2.0 Summary of Results

An assemblage of worked flints was collected from the surface of the monument following clearance of bracken litter. The flint is of poor quality with a small number of recognisable tool types present, in the form of notched pieces and a heavy edged scraper. Overall, the flint industry represented here appears to be consistent with a Late Bronze Age period of activity at the Barrow site. A single fragmentary piece of prehistoric pottery was collected from the central mound which may be from a small Bronze Age vessel.

The morphology of the central mound and its surrounding banks and ditches became much clearer and well defined following removal of the bracken litter. This allowed an opportunity to conduct a rudimentary earthwork survey to augment existing records of the monument. Several profiles of the monument have been generated along with a sketch hachured plan to assist in preliminary analysis of the earthwork. Several depressions and a possible spoil mound were noted which may indicate some form of antiquarian activity to investigate the mound or more recent but concerted 'robbing' intrusions.

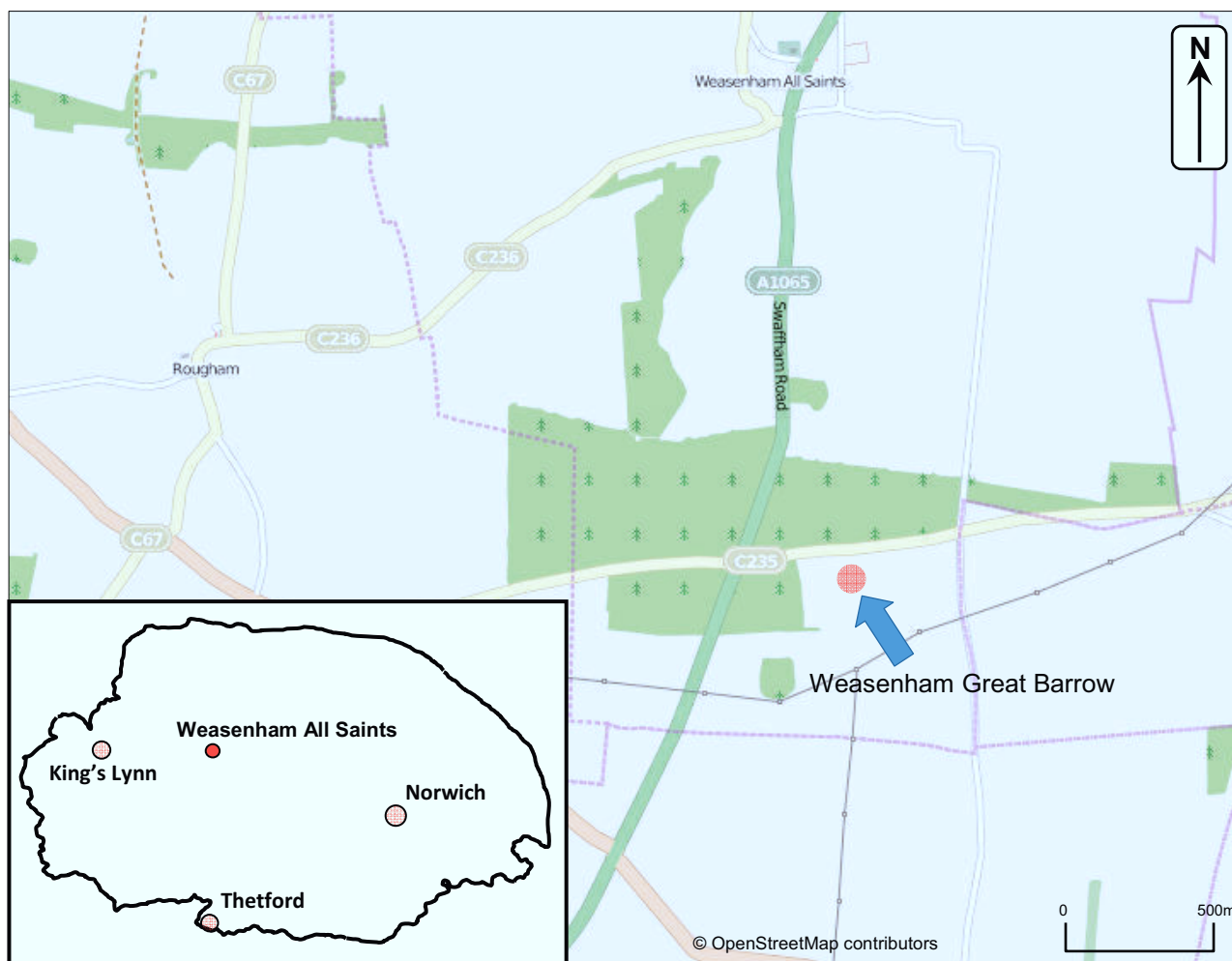


Figure 1: General Site Location Plan

### 3.0 Geology and Topography

The site is located at Weasenham Lyngs, amongst the relatively high ridges and plateaus of Weasenham All Saints which generally run east-west. The Great Barrow is located at c. 65m OD within arable fields sheltered by stands of mixed and coniferous woodland, with Sawmill Wood to the north and west, amongst a patchy heathland setting.

The underlying geology is Upper Chalk (cretaceous period), overlain by Quaternary Period sands and gravels with a distinctively high flint content and occasional glacial erratics (Briton's Land Sand and Gravel Member) – Geology of Britain Viewer at a scale of 1:50 000 (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). Upper soils are free draining sandy-loams with low to medium organic content with podsol formations a common occurrence, typical of Breckland heath zones.

### 4.0 Brief Archaeological and Historical Background (Figures 2 & 3)

The Breckland parish of Weasenham All Saints is situated in northwest Norfolk, north of Lexham and south of Weasenham St Peter. All Saints relates to the parish church, but the origins of the name Weasenham are more obscure, possibly coming from the Old English for 'Wisa's homestead' (Rye 1991). Settlement within the parish was certainly well established by the time of the Norman Conquest, when its population, land ownership and productive resources were detailed in the Domesday Book of 1086.

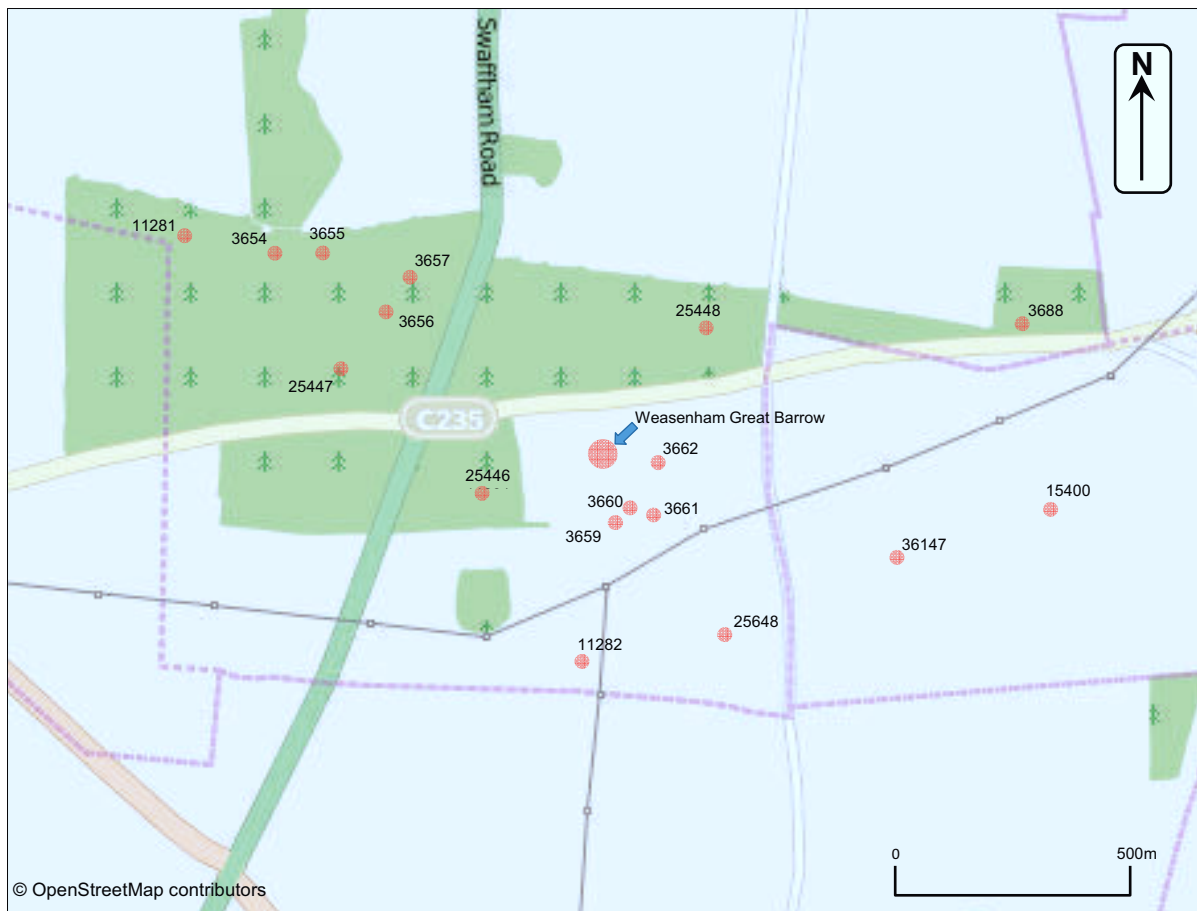


Figure 2: Prehistoric Funerary Monuments in proximity to The Great Barrow (utilising NHER data)

The earliest OS maps of the area depict the site of the Great Barrow. On the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition plan of 1885, the barrow is shown as a roughly circular outline with no associated monuments or annotation. The 1905 plan shows the barrow with a central mound and outer ditch labelled as a *Tumulus*, with two additional *Tumuli* to the south-east which have since been lost to ploughing (NHER 3659 & 3660). 1970s plans show the Great Barrow depicted with a central mound and two banks and ditches marked by hachures, the sites of the two lost barrows are also marked.

The Weasenham Great Barrow is classified as a Bronze Age Bell Barrow. It stands just over 2m high and measures c. 30m in diameter with surrounding banks and a perimeter ditch and bank. The outer bank is c. 3.5m wide and 0.6m high with a 3m wide ditch, 0.6m deep and the inner bank 2m wide, 0.3m deep with a 5m wide berm (observed by A.J.Lawson, March 1975).

Although impressive in itself, the Great Barrow is part of a wider prehistoric funerary landscape (see Figure 2). A nationally important group of some of the best preserved round barrows in the country (NHER 56103), they are located on the former Weasenham Heath, originally comprising over 20 barrows and an oval enclosure (NHER 3661). Eleven of the barrows are currently scheduled. Currently 12 barrows are extant, many in woodland with some retained in arable fields or surviving as slight earthworks.

A further six have been completely levelled through ploughing, including two in very close proximity to the Great Barrow. This near total destruction prompted their excavation by the Department of the Environment and both were totally excavated in the 1970s (NHER 3659 & 3660). The work revealed evidence for multiple Bronze Age cremations, a few fragments of Iron Age pottery and pieces of Roman pot suggesting a possible cremation of this period



(Lawson et al, 1981). An oval earthwork enclosure (NHER 3661) was also partially excavated in the same area in the 1970s, although its function remains unclear and it has since been ploughed flat (Lawson et al, 1981).

An additional eight or nine ring ditches have been identified in the area from aerial photographs. Numerous Neolithic and Bronze Age finds have also been discovered within the landscape with a large number of prehistoric worked flints recovered as surface finds across the parish. Neolithic flint finds include a range of tools including arrowheads, axeheads, scrapers and knives.

Excavations ahead of a gas pipeline to the south of The Great Barrow in 2003 (NHER 37827 & 37278) revealed Neolithic and Bronze Age features including pits and ditches and two Iron Age pits. Several good examples of Early Neolithic to Bronze Age ceramics were also recovered.

**Sites in the immediate proximity or of particular relevance or interest which fall in close proximity to the site include:**

*The following information has been sourced from the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER)*

**NHER 3658: Great Barrow, Weasenham Lyngs.** The Great Barrow is classified as a bell barrow. It stands just over 2m high and measures c. 30m in diameter with surrounding banks and a perimeter ditch and bank. The outer bank is c. 3.5m wide and 0.6m high with a 3m wide ditch, 0.6m deep and the inner bank 2m wide, 0.3m deep with a 5m wide berm (observed by A.J.Lawson, March 1975). It is covered in bracken and has been much eroded by rabbits and tree roots.

**NHER 56103: Bronze Age Barrow Cemetery, Weasenham Heath.** Barrow cemetery predominantly located on the former Weasenham Heath originally comprising over 20 barrows and an oval enclosure. Numerous Neolithic and Bronze Age finds have also been discovered within the landscape. Currently 12 barrows are extant, many in woodland with some retained in arable fields or surviving as slight earthworks. A further six have been completely levelled through ploughing and two on Weasenham Lyngs were totally excavated in the 1970s. An additional eight or nine ring ditches have been identified within the area from aerial photographs. Eleven of the barrows are currently scheduled. An oval earthwork enclosure (NHER 3661) was located close to the barrows on Weasenham Lyngs and was also partially excavated in the 1970s although its function remains unclear. Numerous Neolithic and Bronze Age finds have also been discovered within the landscape.

Sites & monuments associated with this cemetery include: 3654 Bronze Age barrow, 3655 Bronze Age barrow, 3656 Black Hill Bronze Age barrow, 3657 Bronze Age barrow, 3658 Great Barrow, Weasenham Lyngs, 3659 Site of Bronze Age barrow, 3660 Site of Bronze Age barrow, possible Roman cremation, and multi-period finds, 3661 Neolithic to Bronze Age enclosure and finds, 3662 Site of Bronze Age barrow, 3688 Bronze Age barrow north of Litcham Heath, 3696 Site of round barrow, 3701 Bronze Age round barrow, 3702 Possible Bronze Age round barrow, 4071 Three probable Bronze Age ring ditches, 11282 Bronze Age barrow northwest of Lodge Farm, 11592 Site of round barrow, 15400 Probable Bronze Age ring ditch, 25446 Bronze Age barrow, 25447 Bronze Age barrow, 25448 Bronze Age barrow, 25648 Bronze Age barrow, 36137 Two undated ring ditches, 36147 Three or four undated ring ditches.

*Sites in particularly close proximity to The Great Barrow include:*

**NHER 3659: Site of a Bronze Age Bowl Barrow.** The site of a Bronze Age bowl barrow c. 25m in diameter, recorded in the early 20th century. It has since been ploughed flat and no trace of the mound remains today. The site was excavated in 1972 by the Department of the Environment when evidence of multiple cremations in the form of a fragment of Bronze Age pottery urn, charcoal and charred cloth were revealed. The barrow was one of a group in the area including NHER 3660, 3662 and 3658. [c. 140m S]

**NHER 3660: Site of a Bronze Age Bowl Barrow.** The site of a Bronze Age bowl barrow c. 30m in diameter, recorded in the early 20th century. It has since been ploughed flat and no trace of the mound remains today. The site was excavated in 1972, when its surrounding ditch was recorded and Bronze Age cremations uncovered. Also found were Neolithic and Bronze Age flint tools and Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery fragments. Pieces of Roman pottery recovered suggest a possible cremation from this period. [c. 145m SE]

**NHER 3661: Neolithic to Bronze Age Enclosure and Finds.** The site of a large oval earthwork, standing about 60cm high with a surrounding ditch, recorded in the early 20th century. It has since been ploughed flat. Partial excavation in 1972 recovered Neolithic flints and pottery fragments and pieces of Bronze Age pottery, but the exact date and function of the site are still unknown. [c. 160m SE]

**NHER 3662: Site of Bronze Age Barrow.** The site of a circular earthwork, possibly a damaged Bronze Age barrow, recorded in 1938. It has since been ploughed flat, though a slightly raised bump in the field may mark its former presence. [c. 120m E]

**NHER 13209: Find Spot.** A piece of Neolithic or Bronze Age pottery was found on the surface of a ploughed field in 1978. [c. 145m SE]

**NHER 13210: Prehistoric Flint Finds Scatter.** A scatter of Neolithic flints including scrapers and a blade core was found on the surface of a field in 1978. [c. 90m SE]

**NHER 14615: Find Spot.** A fragment of quartzite mortar stone of uncertain date was found on the field surface in 1978. [c. 70m ENE]

**NHER 15721: Prehistoric Flint Finds Scatter.** Palaeolithic, Neolithic and undated prehistoric flint tools, and a piece of Roman pottery found on Weasenham Lyngs in the 1970s. The assemblage includes numerous flint artefacts collected as surface finds which include as many as 70 scrapers, cores, arrowheads and knives. [c. 60m SE]

**NHER 19823: Find Spot.** Half a Neolithic polished flint axehead was found on the surface of a ploughed field in 1983. [c. 150m WSW]

*Site of interest within c. 1km of The Great Barrow include:*

**NHER 3654: Bronze Age barrow.** A Bronze Age saucer barrow, in fair condition, but covered in rhododendrons and with a large beech tree at its centre. It forms part of a group of barrows in the New Wood area. [c. 650m NW]

**NHER 3655: Bronze Age barrow.** A well preserved bell barrow c. 50m in diameter, covered in trees. It forms part of a group of barrows in the New Wood area. [c. 600m NW]

**NHER 3656: Black Hill Bronze Age barrow.** A Bronze Age bowl inside New Wood barrow covered in trees. It forms part of a group of barrows in the area. [c. 423m WNW]

**NHER 3657: Bronze Age barrow.** A Bronze Age saucer barrow. It forms part of a group of barrows in the New Wood area. [c. 425m NW]

**NHER 3688: Bronze Age barrow north of Litcham Heath.** A Bronze Age bowl barrow in a plantation adjacent to the Weasenham to Wellington road. [c. 750m ENE]

**NHER 4071: Three probable Bronze Age ring ditches.** Three ring ditches are visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs. They are probably the remains of flattened Bronze Age barrows. [c. 600m E]

**NHER 11281: Possible Bronze Age barrow.** A circular bank with an external ditch in Weasenham Lyngs Plantation, suggested as a Bronze Age pond barrow. [c. 850m WSW]

**NHER 11282: Bronze Age barrow northwest of Lodge Farm.** The low-lying remains of a tree-covered Bronze Age bowl barrow, part of a wider group of round barrows in the area. [c. 350m S]

**NHER 15400: Probable Bronze Age barrow.** A ring ditch with a central pit is visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs. These are probably the remains of a Bronze Age barrow. [c. 825m E]

**NHER 17057: Prehistoric flint finds, Big Field, Weasenham High House Farm.** Prehistoric and Neolithic flint tools were found on the surface in the 1970s. Excavation in the south-east corner of the site in 2003 for a pipeline revealed prehistoric finds and features (See NHER 37827 and 32788). [c. 250m S]

**NHER 21243:** A Neolithic or Bronze Age partly polished flint axehead was found in a field north of Sawmill Wood in 1982. [c. 320m N]

**NHER 25446: Bronze Age barrow.** A Bronze Age round barrow in woodland. [c. 230m WSW]

**NHER 25447: Bronze Age barrow.** A barrow inside New Wood about 20 metres in diameter and 0.60 metres high. It is similar to Black Hill (NHER 3656) nearby. [c. 450m WNW]

**NHER 25448: Bronze Age barrow.** A Bronze Age barrow covered with larch, sycamore and bracken. [c. 250m NE]

**NHER 25449: ?Medieval Rabbit Warren.** An enigmatic earthwork consisting of two banks surrounded by ditches. It may be a medieval rabbit warren. [560m NW]

**NHER 25648: Bronze Age barrow.** A probable Bronze Age barrow consisting of a circular mound covered in trees. [c. 380m SE]

**NHER 36147: Three or four undated ring ditches.** Three or four ring ditches are visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs. The three certain ring ditches may be the remnants of Bronze Age round barrows. The fourth and possible ring ditch could be the remains of an in-filled pit or a pond. [c. 600m ESE]

**NHER 37827: Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age features excavated on the Bacton to King's Lynn Transco**

**Pipeline.** Excavation in 2003 at Weasenham Big Field by Network Archaeology at Weasenham All Saints (Excavation Area A) uncovered archaeological features, including a Neolithic ditch and pits, a Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age pit, two Late Bronze Age pits and two Iron Age pits. Finds include prehistoric pottery, flint blades, flakes and scrapers. [c. 275m SSE]:

*Excavation revealed a series of Neolithic ditches, which may define an elongated enclosure or field system, and a series of pits. Early Neolithic pottery was recovered from a posthole and ditch. A Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age circular ditch and a large pit were also recorded. Three sherds of Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age pottery was recovered from the ring ditch including two sherds of beaker pottery with comb-impressed decoration and a pottery sherd with an overall tool-impressed decoration was recovered from the large pit. The large quantity of flint debitage recovered is likely to date to the Early Neolithic and a scraper was recovered from the small ring ditch of likely Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date. A microlith of Mesolithic date was also recovered from a ditch but is probably residual. A Late Bronze Age pit contained 39 sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery including a semi-complete vessel with fingertip impressed decoration on the rim top and shoulder. The pot also had possible signs of repair in the form of a post firing perforation. The vessel is similar to those found at Grimes Graves and pottery of this date is quite uncommon in East Anglia. Three clusters of Iron Age post holes were excavated and contained pottery possibly associated with occupation. The pottery was undecorated and possibly dated to the 5th century BC.*

**NHER 37828: Neolithic and Iron Age pits excavated on the Bacton to King's Lynn Transco Pipeline** Excavation in 2003 at Weasenham Big Field by Network Archaeology (Area B) revealed a small, heavily truncated Neolithic pit, as well as two Iron Age pits and a ditch probably of medieval to post medieval date Neolithic and Iron Age pits. [c. 450m S]



Plate 2: Weasenham Great Barrow in 2007 (looking SE) [taken by D.Robertson]

## 5.0 Methodology

Various and repeated efforts have been made in the past few decades to manage the vigorous bracken growth and rabbit infestation of the monument, including sporadic strimming, herbicides, rabbit proofing and poisons. The monument is currently the subject of a Higher Level Stewardship Historic and Archaeological Feature Protection scheme, which aims to assist the tenant farmer in improving the condition of the site and to enable the monument to be maintained in an improved condition. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by David Robertson of the Historic Environment Service (HES Ref: CNF45047) on behalf of English Heritage

The hand removal of bracken litter and scrub from the full extent of the earthworks aims to encourage the development of a grass and/or herbaceous sward. The initial use of herbicides and a programme of rabbit control will be implemented to this end. Currently there is no fresh sign of a resident rabbit population, with regular shoots carried out by local residents who also use the site to set bait for fox control.



The objective of the archaeological monitoring was to oversee the hand removal of bracken litter to the depth agreed with the Historic Environment Officer (this amounted to between c. 50 to 100mm of litter) and to record any archaeological evidence revealed during the works.



Plate 3: Bracken litter clearance (looking S)  
[taken by D.Robertson]

The litter was removed by hand using rakes. Full sacks were slid off the monument by winch over areas yet to be de-scrubbed, while

wheelbarrows were used in other areas. Following the removal of bracken litter, a final walkover was carried out to scan for further surface finds.

All artefacts were given an individual Recorded Find number and their position recorded in three-dimensions using a total station. Where up-cast mounds from rabbit activity was identified, these were searched by hand for artefact recovery. Spoil up-cast from exposed rabbit holes and exposed surfaces were scanned with a metal detector (Minelab XTerra 705). No metal-detected finds of any antiquity were discovered.

Deposits were recorded using Norvic Archaeology pro forma sheets. The trench location, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

During the process of the work an opportunity was also made to undertake a rudimentary earthwork survey, with profiles through cardinal axis and a general layout plot made of the mound, ditches and banks.

The work was undertaken in fairly inclement weather with heavy rain showers on several of the first few days of work.



Plate 4: The Barrow post-strimming, during bracken litter clearance (looking SW)



Plate 5: Clearance of the north part of the Barrow in progress. (looking W)



Plate 6: The north part of the Barrow post bracken litter clearance. (looking W)



## 6.0 Observations (Figures 4 to 7)

The surface of the monument observed below the vegetation cover can be characterised as a soft, mid-greyish brown silty-sand-loam riddled by bracken rhizomes and occasional grasses and moss. Where rabbit activity was identified, no spore or fresh up-cast was present and the spoil around these inactive tunnels was well weathered. The up-cast represents a mix of material excavated from below the surface of the monument and comprised of mid yellowish-brown sands.

The morphology of the central mound and its surrounding banks and ditches was much clearer and well defined following removal of the bracken litter. This allowed an opportunity to conduct a rudimentary earthwork survey, with profiles through cardinal axis and a general layout plot made of the mound, ditches and banks. A rapid hachured sketch plan was also made at an approximate scale of 1:200 to assess the morphology of the monument. Several depressions were noted which include a shallow sub-rectangular pit on the top of the mound measuring c. 5m by 2.7m . This may relate to the hollow recorded by Dr Puddy in 1935. A c.8m wide hollow was also evident against the steeper south-west part of the mound. In addition, the surface morphology here may indicate that spoil has been mounded in this south-west part of the mound. These features may indicate some form of antiquarian activity to investigate the mound or more recent but concerted 'robbing' intrusions. A slight depression runs down from the mound on the northern side which may be the result of natural erosion, or possibly an active agency such as animal movements.

Overall, the morphology appears generally similar to that recorded on the 1970s OS plans, with a central mound slightly off-centre, surrounded by an inner and outer bank and ditch. The mound is markedly steeper on its western and north-western side and more gradually sloping on its eastern and south-eastern sides. Both the outer and inner banks and ditches are significantly less clear around the north western perimeter of the mound and are eroded or less well defined in one particular area of the north-eastern perimeter. The inner bank appears to be generally lower, narrower and less well defined than the outer bank.

During the monitoring process, all artefacts were given an individual Recorded Find number and their positions recorded in three-dimensions using a total station. The distribution pattern has been presented as Figure 7. No meaningful patterns or concentration of finds or finds types can be discerned; where some clustering occurs this has been attributed to a greater concentration of rabbit disturbance rather than past human activity or clearer surface conditions with less ground cover obscuring the soils. However, the exercise does appear to demonstrate that if viewed as a small sample of sub-surface finds present the collection indicates that the monument has gained a significant scatter of late prehistoric worked flint across its former surface during the Late Bronze Age period.

## 7.0 Finds Analysis *(Appendix 2)*

- **Pottery**

A single highly fragmentary example of prehistoric pottery with finely crushed flint temper, weighing c.1g was collected from the site as Recorded Find 08. The piece is 5mm thick and exhibits a smooth flat 'inner' surface and a rougher opposing surface. It was collected from amongst the up-cast of a former rabbit burrow on the central mound and appears to be from a small Bronze Age to Early Iron Age vessel. The particularly fine nature of the fabric may indicate a Bronze Age date (Sarah Percival pers comm).

- **Flint** *(Appendix 3)*

### **Introduction**

A total of 42 struck or modified flints weighing a total of 1248g were collected during the monitoring work. Of these, five examples are burnt flints with a combined weight of 81g. Each piece was examined by eye and with the aid of a hand lens (x6 magnification) before being catalogued according to a basic typology using standard lithic terminology where possible. A detailed catalogue of the flint analysis is included as Appendix 3.

| Type                                     | Qty       | Weight (g)  |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| Burnt Flint                              | 3         | 71          |
| Burnt (worked)                           | 2         | 10          |
| Chip                                     | 3         | 4           |
| Core fragment                            | 1         | 45          |
| Debitage                                 | 5         | 10          |
| Flake                                    | 9         | 84          |
| Flake - utilised                         | 1         | 24          |
| Fragment                                 | 2         | 24          |
| Shatter                                  | 5         | 62          |
| Utilised Thermal Flake                   | 1         | 38          |
| Utilised Thermal Fragment                | 6         | 491         |
| Utilised Thermal Fragment – ad hoc core  | 1         | 121         |
| Utilised Thermal Fragment – notched tool | 2         | 195         |
| Utilised Thermal Fragment – scraper      | 1         | 70          |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>42</b> | <b>1249</b> |

### **Raw materials**

This assemblage is made from parent sources of two main fabric types:

The poorer quality fabric is a mid-orange to greyish brown, fairly opaque fabric with a vivid reddish to orange 'amber' colour when viewed through a strong white light. The pieces have very frequent interclasts and flaws and several are thermally shattered, irregular shaped fragments of larger cobbles with a thin iron rich cortex. Fifteen pieces are clearly derived from this fabric type. This material is likely to have been collected as either surface material or from the spoil of sands and gravels disturbed by prehistoric excavation to create the various Bronze Age monuments in the vicinity of the site.

The second main fabric type is a medium-grained fairly mottled grey flint (with a pale yellow hue when viewed through a strong white light) with fairly common interclasts and flaws. Those examples which include cortex show a fairly thin weathered chalky surface. This material may have been collected as erratic material or from chalky deposits exposed by river action some distance from the site.

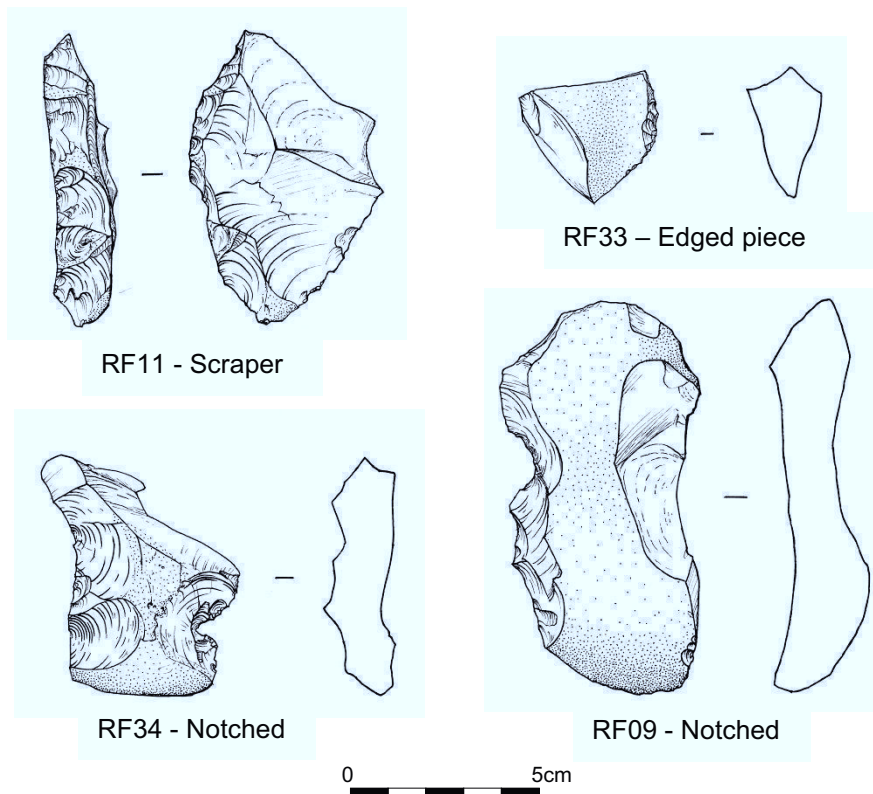


**Condition**

The condition of the assemblage is good, with nearly all pieces in fresh condition, indicating that they have not experienced extensive post-depositional damage or abrasion. This would normally indicate that they have been recovered close to where they were originally discarded/buried.

**Burnt Flint**

Just five pieces of burnt flint were collected, which amounts to c. 12% of the assemblage. The burnt flint includes both heavily calcined/fire-cracked pieces and heat reddened pieces. Two of the burnt flints (RF06 and RF43) show signs of having been worked. RF43 has what appears to be a freshly knapped surface and may be evidence for *ad hoc* flint working of a heat affected core.



Illustrations: Late Bronze Age flint tools. Scale 1:2

**Discussion**

The assemblage consists of two fabric types. The very poor quality fabric is primarily represented by thermal fragments, shatter pieces and hard hammer flakes/fragments. Several of these pieces have been selected as *ad hoc* tools with a few examples of minor retouch and use/wear along natural or incidentally created edges (RF33) while a small number of pieces have been weakly modified to create cutting/scraping edges. One large fragment is a notched piece (RF09) and one has been more intensively but crudely worked to create a heavy edged scraper (RF11). None of this material shows any signs of core preparation or purposeful and successful flake removal aside from a single fragment where a single feather flake has been removed from a natural platform (RF14).

The better but more variable quality flint comprises primarily of unmodified hard struck secondary flakes, many of which are short, broad and wedge shaped – produced by fairly

uncontrolled hits and miss-hits. A smashed fragment from an exhausted core with opposing platforms and evidence of several hard hammer mishits is present (RF23), along with a few pieces of debitage. Only two pieces show signs of *ad hoc* use; a flake produced from a shatter blow (RF35), which has a small area of micro-denticulation, and an irregular shatter fragment (RF34) with an invasive notch and a crudely knapped edge with signs of use-wear.

This 'relaxed' and expedient knapping method is broadly representative of late prehistoric techniques. Overall, the flint industry represented here appears to be consistent with a Late Bronze Age period of activity at the Barrow site. This can be characterised by hard hammer and shatter blows used to produce useable pieces from thermal fragments and poor quality materials with varying degrees of success. The only recognisable tools present are notched pieces and a heavy edged scraper, also consistent with Late Bronze Age sites, where scrapers, pierces and notched pieces are the only consistently produced tool types (Butler 182, 2005). It is fairly common to find residual evidence of later prehistoric activity at barrow sites, which appear to continue as a focus of *ad hoc* activity in the landscape many centuries after their original construction and subsequent periods of modification have passed.

## 8.0 Conclusions

An assemblage of worked flints was collected from the surface of the monument following clearance of bracken litter. Some of these finds were collected from areas of up-cast created by past rabbit disturbance while others were discovered as surface finds. The flint is of poor quality with a small number of recognisable tool types present in the form of notched pieces and a heavy edged scraper. Overall, the flint industry represented here appears to be consistent with a Late Bronze Age period of activity at the Barrow site. The assemblage is characterised by hard hammer and shatter blows used to produce useable pieces from thermal fragments and poor quality materials with varying degrees of success. The discovery of residual evidence of later prehistoric activity on a barrow site is not unusual, such sites appear to continue as a focus of *ad hoc* activity in the landscape many centuries after their original construction and subsequent periods of modification have passed.

A single fragmentary piece of prehistoric pottery with finely crushed flint temper was collected from amongst the up-cast of a former rabbit burrow on the central mound and may be from a small Bronze Age vessel. This could be taken as circumstantial evidence for the potential presence of later prehistoric cremations inserted into the central mound.

The morphology of the central mound and its surrounding banks and ditches was much clearer and well defined following removal of the bracken litter. This allowed an opportunity to conduct a rudimentary earthwork survey to augment existing records of the monument.

Several depressions were noted which include a shallow sub-rectangular pit on the top of the mound, a wide hollow against the steeper south-west part of the mound and an area of possible spoil mounded in this south-west part of the mound. Together these features may indicate some form of antiquarian activity to investigate the mound or more recent but concerted 'robbing' intrusions.

The mound is markedly steeper on its western and north-western side and more gradually sloping on its eastern and south-eastern sides. Both the outer and inner banks and ditches are significantly less clear around the north western perimeter of the mound and are eroded or less well defined in one particular area of the north-eastern perimeter. The inner bank appears to be generally lower, narrower and less well defined than the outer bank.

The additional survey work was undertaken with minimal resources but has successfully demonstrated that the opportunity to examine and interpret this relatively well preserved monument in more detail is now available thanks to the clearance of surface vegetation. It is hoped that this preliminary work may be followed by a more detailed topographical survey as part of any future study of the monument.

## 9.0 Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to David Robertson of the Historic Environment Service who commissioned Norvic Archaeology to carry out this work on behalf of Mr C.W.Ellison. Thanks are also due to the on-site staff of CGM Landscapes for their assistance and cooperation on site.

Monitoring work was carried out by John Percival, Sarah Bates, Jack Price and the author, with on-site survey and geomatics carried out by John Percival. Post-excavation analysis and finds illustration work was carried out by the author with digital mapping contributions from John Percival. The author is grateful to Sarah Percival (Prehistoric Pottery Specialist) for her comments on the pottery. NHER and cropmark data was obtained directly from the archives held by the Historic Environment Service at Gressenhall.

Images for Plate 2 & 3 were kindly supplied by David Robertson.

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### Appendix 1: OASIS feature summary table

| Period                     | Feature type | Quantity |
|----------------------------|--------------|----------|
| Bronze Age (2500 to 701BC) | Bell Barrow  | 1        |

### Appendix 2: Finds summary table

| Period                          | Material | Quantity |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Bronze Age (2500 to 701BC)      | Pottery  | 1        |
| Late Bronze Age (1000 to 701BC) | Flint    | 42       |

### Appendix 3: Flint Catalogue

| RF   | Type   | * illustrated | Height OD | Weight (g) |
|--|--|---------------|-----------|------------|
| 01   | Flake (RBS)                                      |               | 64.552m   | 8          |
| Secondary flake, cortex on platform and distal end, thick chalky cortex. Fair quality fabric, light greyish-yellow (WL). Moderately struck. Fresh condition.   |  |               |           |            |
| 02   | Flake (RBS)                                      |               | 64.403m   | 13         |
| Secondary wedge-shaped, flake, thin iron rich cortex. No true platform. Moderate quality fabric light greyish-yellow (WL). Hard struck. Fresh condition.   |  |               |           |            |
| 03   | Shatter fragment                                 |               | 65.507m   | 3          |
| Irregular debitage. Thin cortex, vivid 'amber' coloured fabric (WL). Fresh condition.  |  |               |           |            |
| 04   | Shatter fragment                                 |               | 64.388m   | 2          |
| Irregular debitage. Thin cortex, vivid 'amber' coloured fabric (WL). Fresh condition.  |  |               |           |            |
| 05   | Shatter fragment                                 |               | 64.318m   | 7          |
| Wedge shaped debitage. Thin cortex, light yellowish-grey' coloured fabric (WL). Fresh condition.   |  |               |           |            |
| 06   | Burnt (?struck) Flint                            |               | 64.308m   | 3          |
| Well calcined and fire-cracked, thin ?struck/shatter piece   |  |               |           |            |
| 07   | Chip   |               | 64.402m   | <1         |
| Amber coloured (WL). Fresh condition.  |  |               |           |            |
| 09   | *Utilised Thermal Fragment – notched ad hoc tool |               | 64.549m   | 147        |
| Heavy, well patinated thermal fragment. Reddish-orange 'amber' coloured (WL). Thin iron rich cortex. Poor quality fabric. Short flakes removed unilaterally to create a fresh edge - followed by worn notch.   |  |               |           |            |
| 10   | Utilised Thermal Fragment                        |               | 64.200m   | 159        |
| A heavy fragment (thermal piece), slightly trapezoidal in shape. V.poor quality fabric. Reddish-orange 'amber' coloured (WL). Thin cortex. Shattered produced from a larger ?cobble, two or three test flake removed from a natural platform, wear surrounding concave cortex face of this piece shows possible use as an ad hoc tool or even a hammer stone. Fresh.   |  |               |           |            |
| 11   | *Utilised Thermal Fragment – edge scraper        |               | 65.062m   | 70         |
| A heavy fragment (thermal piece), slightly triangular in shape. V.poor quality fabric. Reddish-orange 'amber' coloured (WL). Two modified edges are present, one has minor bifacial retouch/wear, the other has been clearly modified uniaxially to create a heavy edge-scraper which has a glossy, polished appearance – handles well in the right-hand thanks to an initial flake removal. Fresh, polished from use. |  |               |           |            |
| 12   | Utilised Thermal Fragment - shatter              |               | 64.884m   | 66         |
| A shatter fragment (thermal piece), slightly triangular in shape. V.poor quality fabric. Reddish-orange 'amber' coloured (WL). Several uniaxial flake removals – probably to create an ad hoc cutting/scraping edge  |  |               |           |            |
| 13   | Burnt Flint                                      |               | 65.514m   | 59         |
| Heat reddened and granulated appearance.   |  |               |           |            |
| 14   | Thermal Fragment – ad hoc core                   |               | 65.605m   | 121        |
| A heavy fragment (thermal piece), irregular in shape with a thin iron rich cortex. V.poor quality fabric. Reddish-orange 'amber' coloured (WL). A single feather flake has been removed from a natural platform.   |  |               |           |            |
| 15   | Burnt Flint                                      |               | 63.821m   | 9          |
| Heavily calcined and fire cracked piece.   |  |               |           |            |
| 16   | Fragment   |               | 63.420m   | 2          |
| Amber coloured (WL). Fresh condition.  |  |               |           |            |
| 17   | Shatter fragment                                 |               | 63.351m   | 19         |
| Irregular wedge shaped fragment. Thin cortex, light yellowish-grey' coloured fabric (WL). Fresh condition.   |  |               |           |            |
| 18   | Chip (RBS)                                       |               | 64.476m   | 2          |
| Thin chip produced as debitage. Pale yellow coloured (WL), fair quality fabric. Fresh condition.   |  |               |           |            |
| 19   | Flake  |               | 64.524m   | 11         |
| Secondary wedge-shaped, flake, thin chalky cortex. Moderate quality fabric light greyish-yellow (WL). Hard struck. Fresh condition.  |  |               |           |            |
| 20   | Fragment   |               | 64.727m   | 22         |
| Poor quality fabric light greyish-yellow (WL). Hard struck. Evidence that was part of a platform. Fresh condition.   |  |               |           |            |
| 21   | Flake  |               | 64.471m   | 4          |



|   |  |         |     |
|---|--|---------|-----|
| Thin flake produced as debitage. Pale yellow coloured (WL), fair quality fabric. Hard hammer struck. Fresh condition.   |  |         |     |
| 22  | Shatter (RBS)                            | 63.853m | 31  |
| A shatter fragment, irregular in shape with a thin iron rich cortex. V.poor quality fabric. Reddish-orange 'amber' coloured (WL). Fresh condition.  |  |         |     |
| 23  | Core fragment (plunging irregular flake) | 63.861m | 45  |
| Fairly opaque, pale yellow fabric (WL). Poor quality flint. Remnants of two opposed platforms with scars from several hard hammer mishits and failed removals prior to the creation and discard of this fairly irregular, thick, plunging flake. Fresh condition.   |  |         |     |
| 24  | Flake                                    | 64.142m | 6   |
| Thin, wedge shaped flake, fairly hard hammer struck. . V.poor quality fabric. Reddish-orange 'amber' coloured (WL). Thin iron rich cortex.  |  |         |     |
| 25  | Utilised Thermal Fragment                | 63.359m | 218 |
| A heavy fragment (thermal piece), irregular in shape. V.poor quality fabric. Reddish-orange 'amber' coloured (WL). Part of a natural cobble has been broken and this piece has been selected for further use – with one or two attempts to remove flakes and one edge roughly modified by retouch for use as an ad hoc cutting edge/scrapper with little obvious signs of use/wear prior to discard. Fresh condition. |  |         |     |
| 26  | Thermal Fragment                         | 63.774m | 13  |
| Poor quality well patinated irregular and well abraded 'pebble' fragment with unifacial retouch.  |  |         |     |
| 27  | Thermal Fragment                         | 63.817m | 18  |
| Poor quality, fabric. V. opaque, reddish-orange/amber (WL) colour. Slight evidence of use/wear.   |  |         |     |
| 28  | Debitage                                 | 65.476m | 2   |
| Thin debitage piece. Pale yellow coloured (WL), fair quality fabric. Hard hammer struck. Fresh condition.   |  |         |     |
| 29  | Debitage                                 | 64.530m | 3   |
| Mid-orangey-yellow 'honey coloured', fair quality fabric. Fresh condition   |  |         |     |
| 30  | Flake                                    | 63.500m | 12  |
| Hard hammer struck, secondary flake, broad and fairly squat. Thin chalky cortex, light yellowish-grey' coloured fabric (WL). Moderate quality. Struck from a platform with no sign of abrasion. Fresh condition   |  |         |     |
| 31  | Debitage                                 | 64.074m | 1   |
| Thin debitage piece. Pale yellow coloured (WL), fair quality fabric. Fresh condition.   |  |         |     |
| 32  | Chip (RBS)                               | 64.477m | 1   |
| Light greyish-yellow (WL). Fresh condition.   |  |         |     |
| 33  | *Utilised Thermal fragment               | 63.477m | 17  |
| Poor quality, fabric. V. opaque, reddish-orange/amber (WL) colour. An edge with thin iron rich cortex, has been partly and delicately modified to create a small cutting/scraping convex edge c. 25mm in length.  |  |         |     |
| 34  | *Utilised fragment - notched             | 63.635m | 48  |
| Irregular shatter fragment of poor quality flint with a thin chalky cortex, light yellowish-grey' coloured fabric (WL). Modified bilaterally, both unifacial. One side has an invasive and narrow V-shaped notch, the other has been crudely napped to create a fresh and irregular edge with slight sign of use/wear and an undeveloped notch. Fresh condition   |  |         |     |
| 35  | Flake (shatter) – utilised               | 63.762m | 24  |
| Irregular plunging hard hit 'shatter flake' fragment of poor quality flint from a decorticated parent, light yellowish-grey' coloured fabric (WL). A single area of use-wear is present in the form of micro-denticulation for a length of 25mm. Fresh condition.   |  |         |     |
| 36  | Flake                                    | 63.676m | 20  |
| Hard hammer, secondary flake, short, broad, wedge-shaped, plunging with thin chalk cortex. Light yellowish-grey' coloured fabric (WL), moderate quality fabric. Fresh condition.  |  |         |     |
| 37  | Flake                                    | 63.737m | 9   |
| Hard hammer, secondary flake, very short, broad with thin chalk cortex. Light yellowish-grey' coloured fabric (WL), poor quality fabric. Fresh condition.   |  |         |     |
| 38  | Utilised Thermal flake                   | 64.844m | 38  |
| Poor quality, fabric. V. opaque, reddish-orange/amber (WL) colour. Thin iron rich cortex, has minor use-wear on a broken edge where it is also glossy in appearance.  |  |         |     |
| 39  | Debitage                                 | 63.705m | 2   |
| Thin piece. Light yellowish-grey coloured fabric (WL), fair quality fabric. Fresh condition.  |  |         |     |
| 40  | Burnt flint                              | 63.640m | 3   |
| A small, well calcined and fire-cracked fragment.   |  |         |     |
| 41  | Flake                                    | 63.547m | 1   |
| Snapped (distal end), thin feather flake. Light greyish-yellowish coloured fabric (WL), fair quality fabric. Fresh condition.   |  |         |     |
| 42  | Debitage                                 | 63.704m | 2   |
| Thin piece. Light yellowish-grey coloured fabric (WL), moderate quality fabric. Fresh condition.  |  |         |     |
| 43  | Burnt flint – worked                     | 63.854m | 7   |
| Heat reddened and slightly granulated appearance. Appears to have been produced as knapping waste post heating. Fresh condition.  |  |         |     |

NB: RBS = clearly collected from Rabbit Burrow Spoil

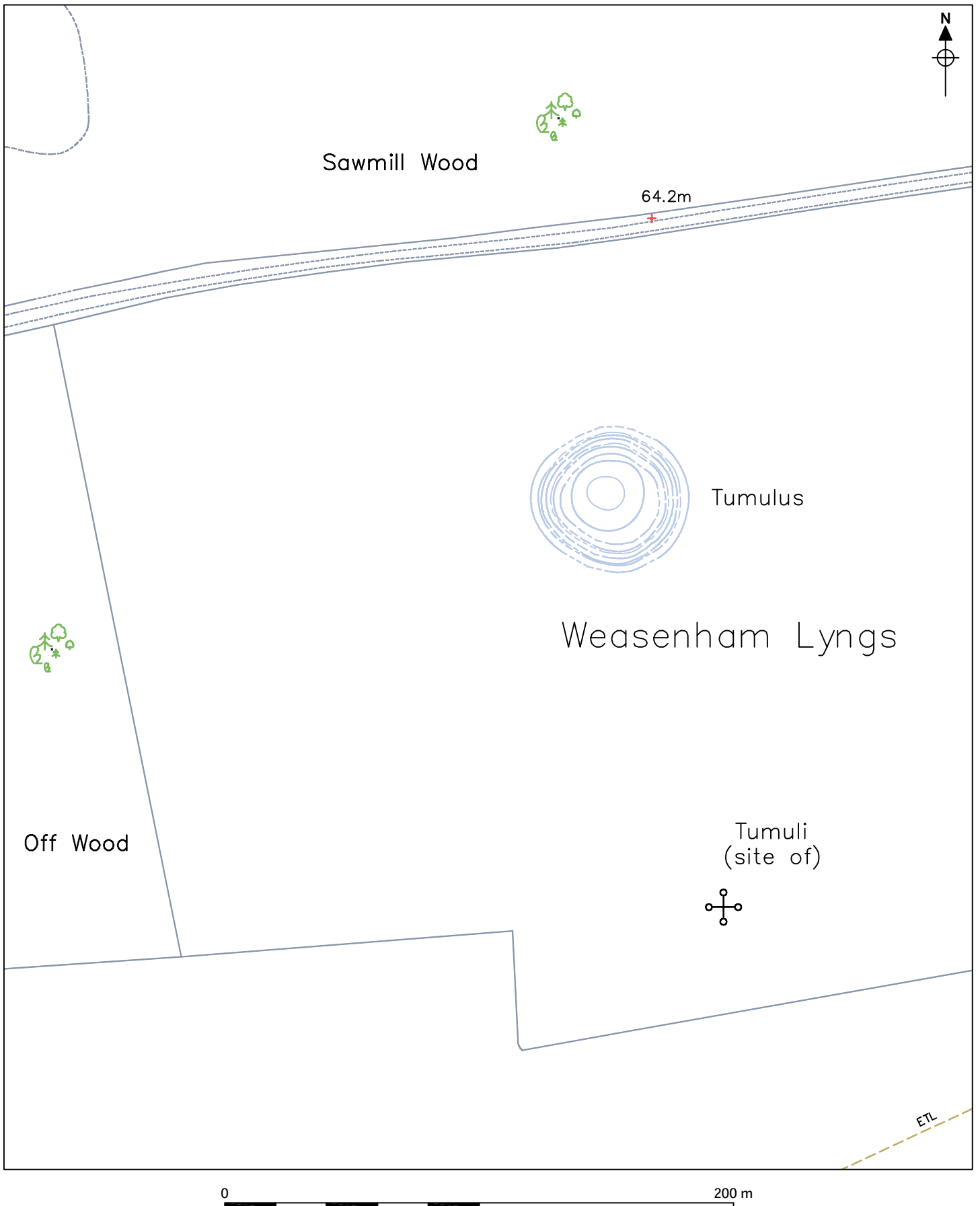


Figure 3. Site plan. Scale 1:2000

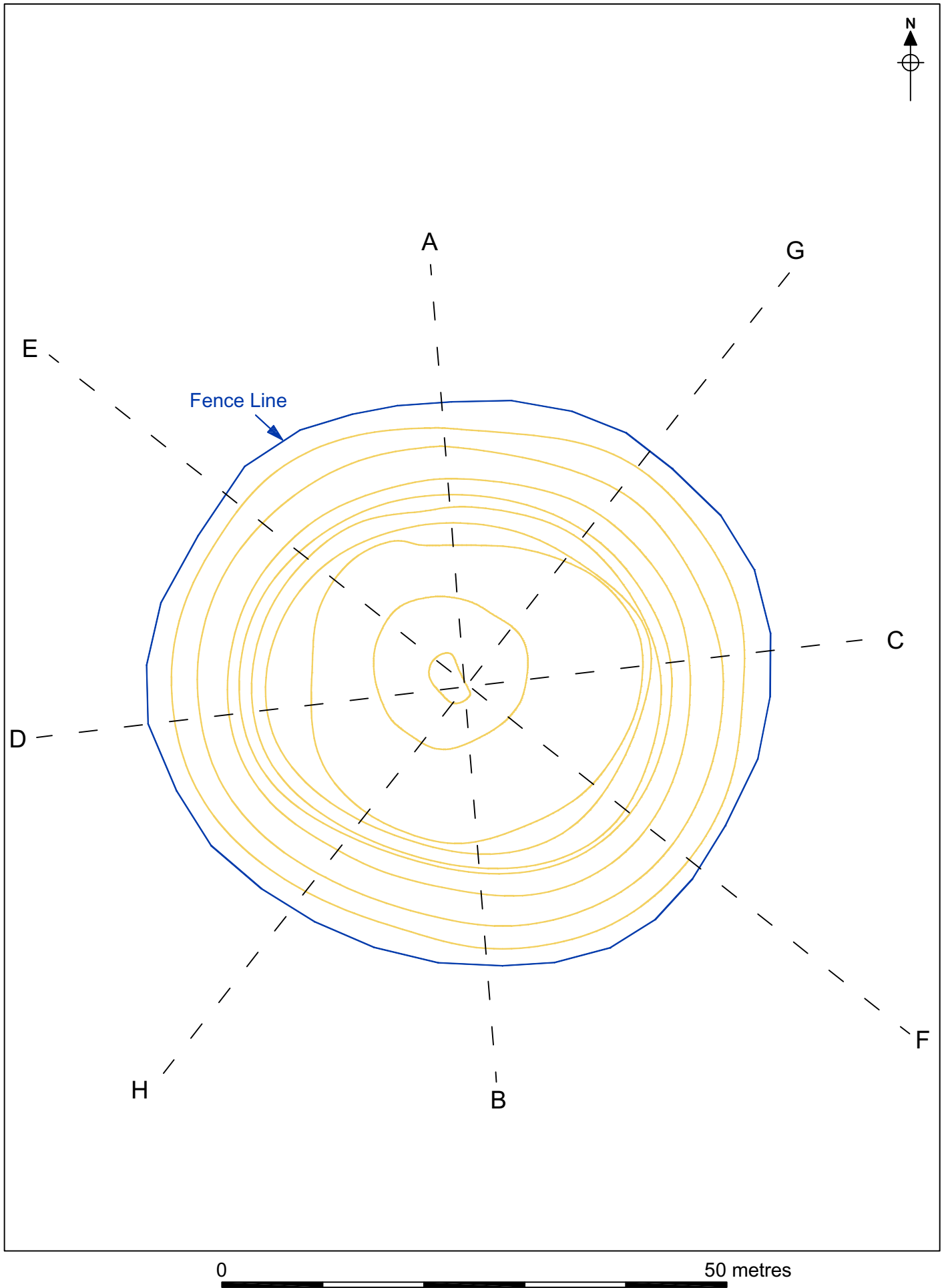


Figure 4. Location of profiles overlaying simplified survey data. Scale 1:500.

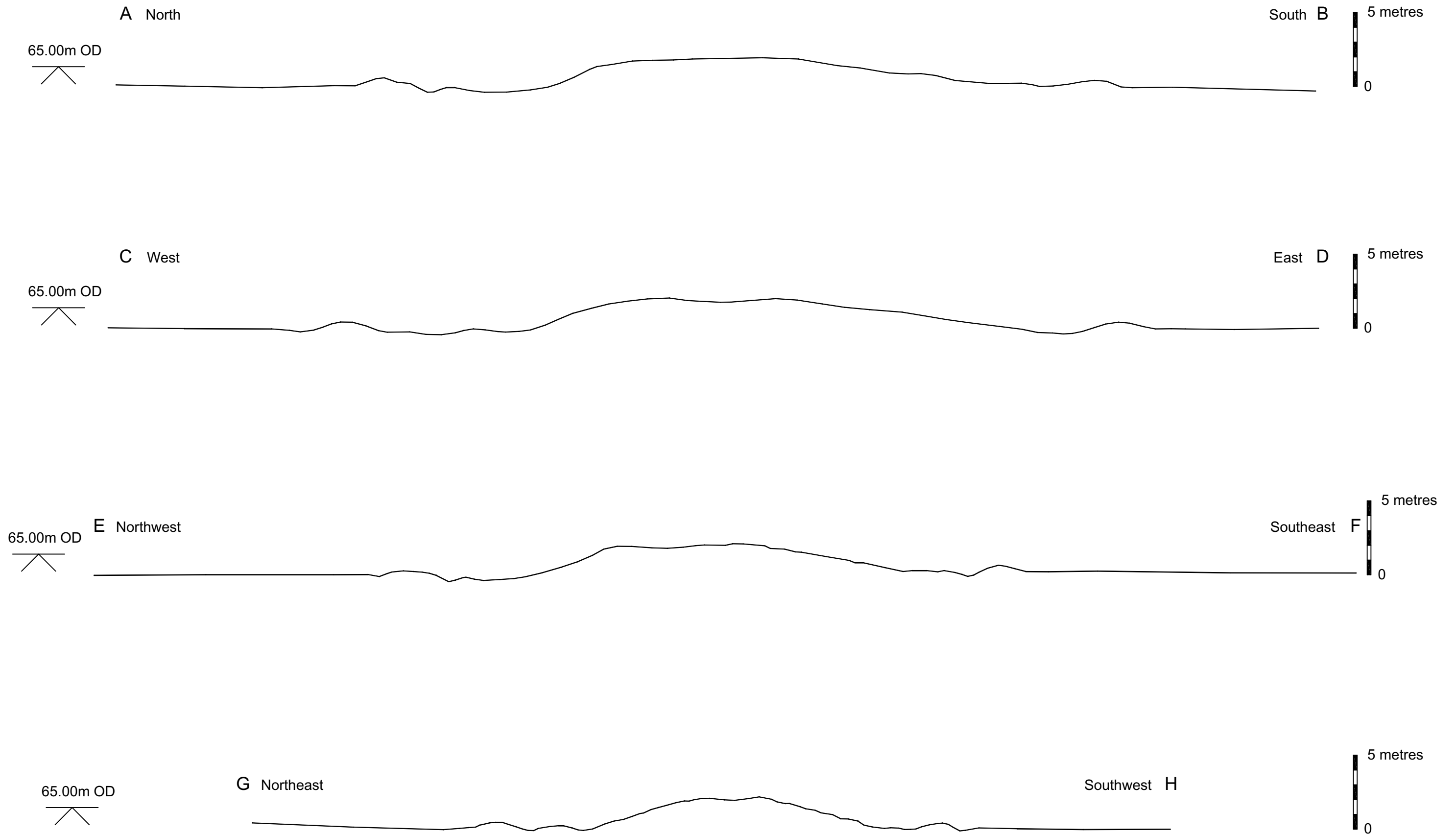


Figure 5. Profiles. Scale 1:250.





Figure 6. Sketch Hachures to show generalised morphology . Scale 1:500.

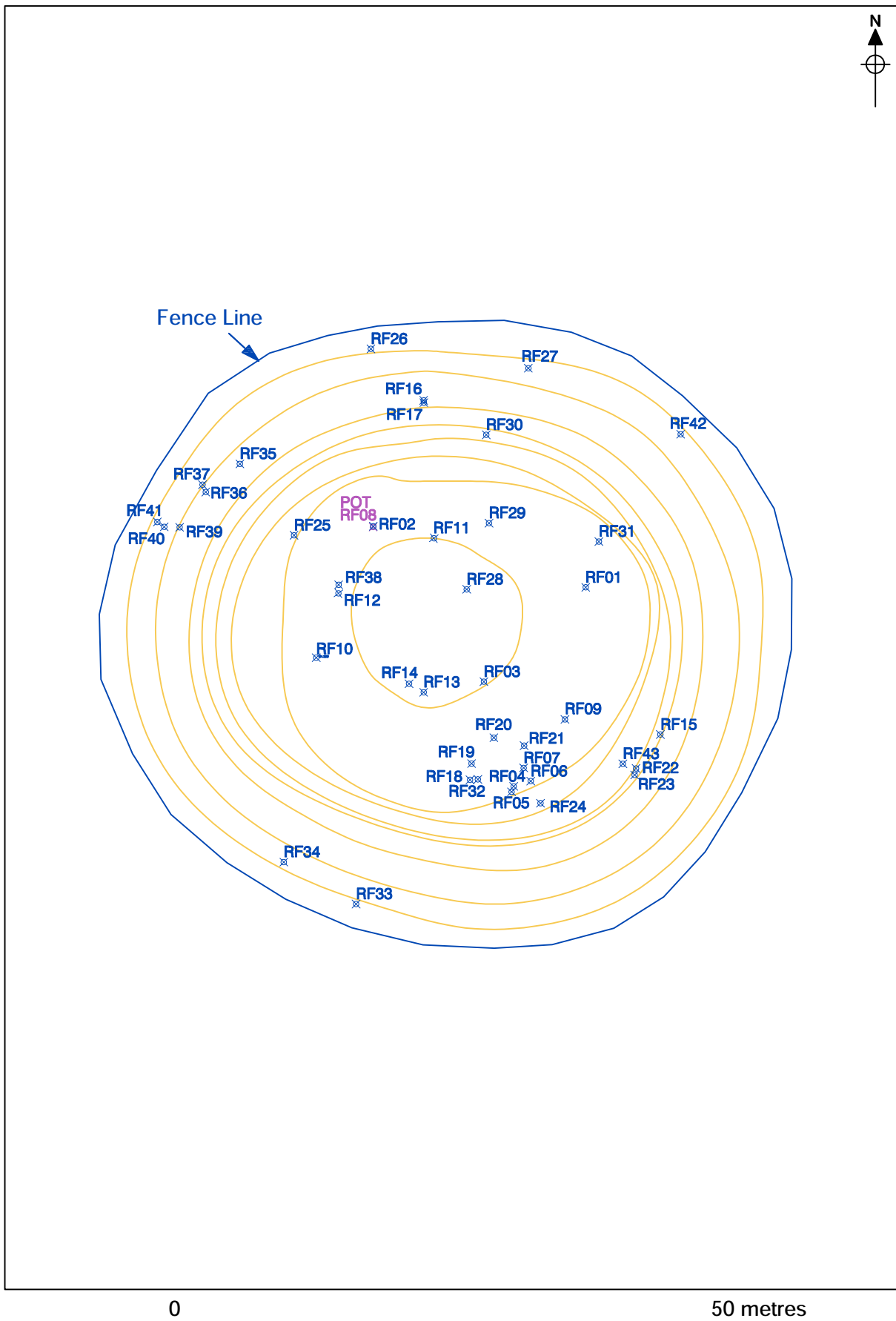


Figure 7 Location of Recorded Finds. Scale 1:500.

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**OASIS ID: norvicar1-183472**

### Project details

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Project name                           | Archaeological Monitoring and Earthwork Survey at Weasenham Great Barrow, Weasenham All Saints, Norfolk  |
| Short description of the project       | The results of archaeological monitoring during the removal of bracken litter from the mound, ditches and banks of Weasenham Great Barrow. The Great Barrow is a Scheduled Monument (NF 164B) and one of a number of barrows that form part of a late Neolithic or Bronze Age barrow cemetery. The Great Barrow is one of the largest and most impressive extant burial mounds in Norfolk, comprising of a bell barrow form with a large mound c. 30m in diameter and c. 2m in height, surrounded by two ditches and an external bank. An assemblage of worked flints was collected from the surface of the monument following clearance of bracken litter. The flint is of poor quality with a small number of recognisable tool types present in the form of notched pieces and a heavy edged scraper. Overall the flint industry represented here appears to be consistent with a Late Bronze Age period of activity at the Barrow site. A single fragmentary piece of prehistoric pottery was collected from the central mound which may be from a small Bronze Age to Early Iron Age vessel. The morphology of the central mound and its surrounding banks and ditches was much clearer and well defined following removal of the bracken litter. This allowed an opportunity to conduct a rudimentary earthwork survey to augment existing records of the monument. Several depressions and a possible spoil mound were noted which may indicate some form of antiquarian activity to investigate the mound or more recent but concerted 'robbing' intrusions. |
| Project dates                          | Start: 06-02-2014 End: 20-02-2014  |
| Previous/future work                   | Not known / Not known  |
| Any associated project reference codes | ENF133582 - HER event no.  |
| Any associated project reference codes | NVC/2013/GE150 - Contracting Unit No.  |
| Type of project                        | Recording project  |
| Site status                            | Scheduled Monument (SM)  |
| Current Land use                       | Woodland 7 - Scrub   |

|                    |                                |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Monument type      | BELL BARROW Bronze Age         |
| Significant Finds  | FLINT Late Bronze Age          |
| Significant Finds  | POTTERY Bronze Age             |
| Investigation type | "Part Survey","Watching Brief" |
| Prompt             | Scheduled Monument Consent     |

### Project location

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Country          | England   |
| Site location    | NORFOLK BRECKLAND WEASENHAM ALL SAINTS Weasenham Great Barrow, Weasenham Lyngs, Weasenham All Saints, Norfolk |
| Postcode         | PE32 2TS  |
| Study area       | 0 Square metres   |
| Site coordinates | TF 85358 19830 52.7438537379 0.746315616285 52 44 37 N 000 44 46 E Point                                      |

### Project creators

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Name of Organisation         | Norvic Archaeology  |
| Project brief originator     | Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist) |
| Project design originator    | Norvic Archaeology  |
| Project director/manager     | Giles Emery   |
| Project supervisor           | Giles Emery   |
| Type of sponsor/funding body | Landowner   |
| Name of sponsor/funding body | Mr C W Ellison  |

### Project archives

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Physical Archive recipient | NMAS and Norvic Archaeology                  |
| Physical Contents          | "Ceramics","Worked stone/lithics"            |
| Digital Archive recipient  | NMAS   |
| Digital Contents           | "Survey"                                     |
| Digital Media available    | "Images raster / digital photography","Text" |
| Paper Archive recipient    | NMAS   |
| Paper Contents             | "Survey"                                     |
| Paper Media available      | "Context sheet","Map","Plan","Report"        |



## Project bibliography 1

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Publication type              | Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)   |
| Title                         | Archaeological Monitoring and Earthwork Survey at Weasenham Great Barrow, Weasenham Lyngs, Weasenham All Saints, Norfolk. |
| Author(s)/Editor(s)           | Emery, G.   |
| Other bibliographic details   | Norvic Archaeology Report No. 49  |
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