Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Northampton Road, Harpole, Northamptonshire

April 2014

Report No 14/102

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Illustrators: Amir Bassir, John Walford

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MUSEUM OF LONDON
ARCHAEOLOGY

REGISTERED ORGANISATION IfA

Project Manager: Mark Holmes
Site Code: HNR14
NGR: SP 693 603

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Project Manager	Mark Holmes BA MA MIfA
Fieldwork	James Burke and Adam Reid BA MA
Prehistoric pottery	Andy Chapman BSc MIfA FSA
Post-medieval pottery and other finds	Tora Hylton
Animal bone	Adam Reid BSc MSc
Illustrations	Amir Bassir BSc, John Walford MSc

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	**OASIS No: molanort1- 178602**	
Project name	Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Northampton Road, Harpole, Northamptonshire, April 2014	
Short description (250 words maximum)	MOLA was commissioned by Wilbraham Associates, on behalf of Bowbridge Land, to conduct an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Northampton Road, Harpole, Northamptonshire, prior to development. Seven trenches were excavated, but the only features were three ditches, one in each of three trenches, and a posthole/small pit. One ditch produced a single sherd of prehistoric pottery, which may be Iron Age or earlier in date, while the other two produced post-medieval pottery and a clay tobacco-pipe stem, indicating that they are likely to be recent boundary/drainage ditches. Another sherd of prehistoric pottery was recovered from a furrow of the medieval to post-medieval ridge and furrow field system, and furrows were present in some trenches.	
Project type	Trial trench evaluation	
Site status	None	
Previous work	Geophysical survey NA (Chinnock 2013)	
Current Land use	Arable	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument period	Prehistoric /post-medieval	
Significant finds	1 sherd early Bronze Age , 1 sherd late Iron Age and post medieval pottery	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Land to the west of Northampton Road, Harpole	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	*c3ha*	
OS Easting & Northing	SP 69286 60335	
Height OD	*c* 70m AOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA	
Project brief originator	Liz Mordue, Assistant Archaeological Advisor, Northamptonshire County Council	
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton	
Director/Supervisor	James Burke	
Project Manager	Mark Holmes	
Sponsor	Bowbrige Land	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	23 April 2014	
End date	25 April 2014	
ARCHIVES	**Location**	**Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)**
Physical	MOLA	Pottery
Paper	MOLA	Record sheets, drawings
Digital	MOLA	Digital mapping, photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Northampton Road, Harpole, Northamptonshire, April 2014	
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Author(s)	Gemma Hewitt	
Page numbers		
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Contents

Figures

Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Northampton Road, Harpole, Northamptonshire April 2014

Abstract
MOLA was commissioned by Wilbraham Associates, on behalf of Bowbridge Land, to conduct an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Northampton Road, Harpole, Northamptonshire, prior to development. Seven trenches were excavated, but the only features were three ditches, one in each of three trenches, and a posthole/small pit. One ditch produced a single sherd of prehistoric pottery, which may be Iron Age or earlier in date, while the other two produced post-medieval pottery and a clay tobacco-pipe stem, indicating that they are likely to be recent boundary/drainage ditches. Another sherd of prehistoric pottery was recovered from a furrow of the medieval to post-medieval ridge and furrow field system, and furrows were present in some trenches.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA was commissioned by Wilbraham Associates, on behalf of Bowbridge Land, to conduct an archaeological evaluation at Northampton Road, Harpole, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 6930 603, Fig 1). The evaluation consisted of seven trenches across the *c*3ha site. The fieldwork was carried out on the 23 April 2014.

The work is intended to inform, in advance of determination, a planning application for development of the land. The works were carried out in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012), as specified in the brief issued by the Assistant Archaeological Advisor to Northamptonshire County Council (Mordue 2013 a and b)

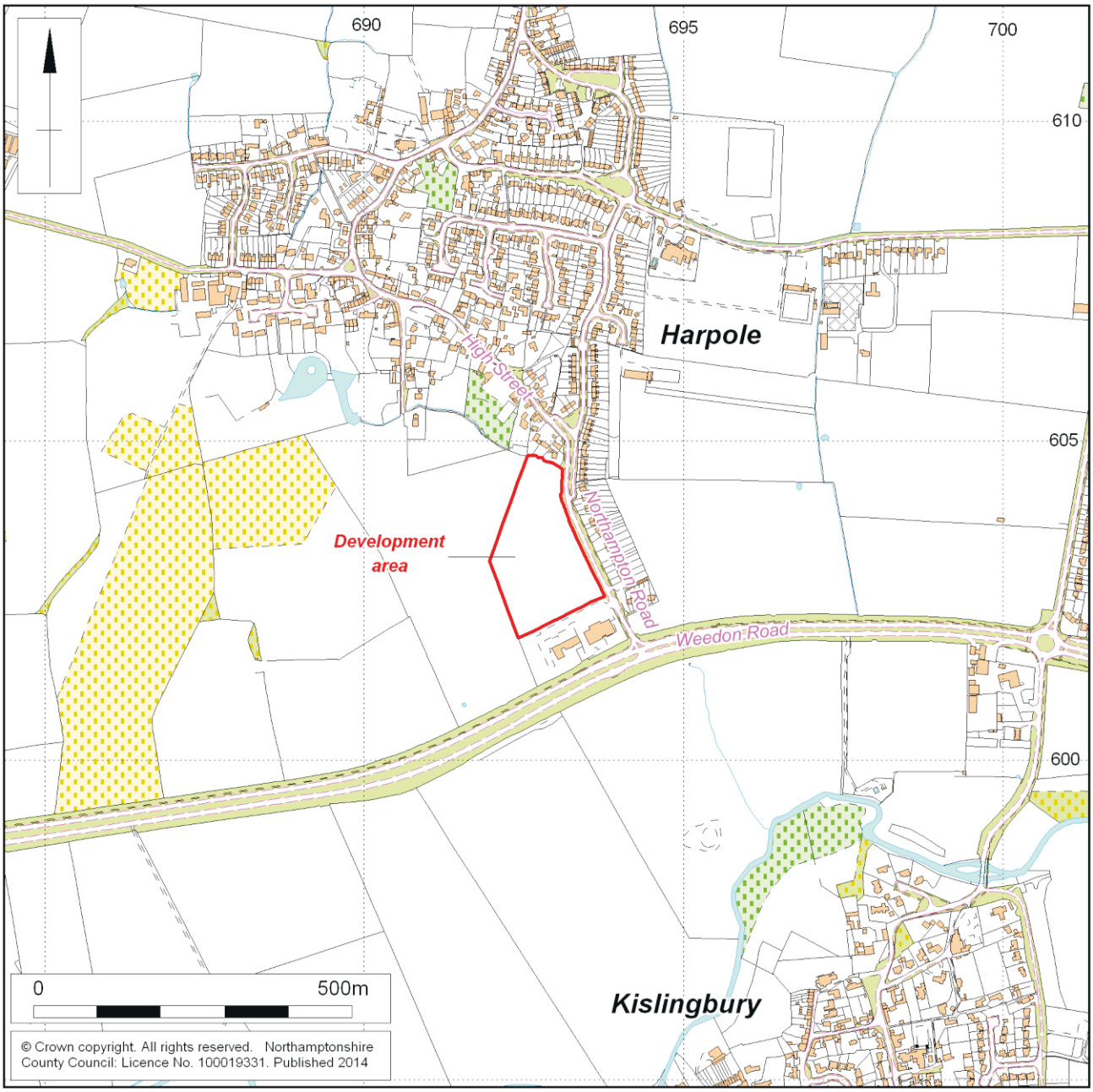
2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The evaluation of the site was designed to provide information that will allow for the effective targeting of further investigation of the site, if required, prior to or during the early phases of its development.

The following information was required to allow the development of a strategy for further investigation of the site:

- The location, extent, nature, and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;
- The integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present.

The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the IfA's *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008), the MOLA Northampton fieldwork manual (MOLA 2014) and, if relevant, the Updated Research Agenda for the East Midlands (Knight *et al* 2012).



Scale 1:10,000

Site location Fig 1

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Topography and geology

The site is bordered on the east by the Northampton Road and on the west by agricultural farm land. The Turnpike hotel and restaurant lies immediately to the south and a small stream separates the land parcel in the north from housing in Harpole village. The site is currently arable farmland.

The development area is located on the northern slope of the Nene Valley and is set at around 70m aOD. The bedrock geology across the site comprises Lias Group Mudstones, Siltstones, Limestones and Sandstones (BGS 2014).

3.2 Historical and archaeological background

Stray finds of prehistoric and Roman date are known from the parish, however, no finds or archaeological monuments are recorded from the application area itself.

Undated linear earthworks are present 750m to the north-west of the site (HER 939/0/27). Medieval ridge and furrow cultivation survives in the field immediately at the west of the site (HER 6942/0/3), an area which is also within the wider boundary of the former Harpole Hall Park (HER 1670). The current A45 Weedon Road, to the south of the site, follows the line of the former Warwick to Northampton turnpike road (HER 9418/1).

A World War II defensive road block is recorded as having been erected on the Northampton Road immediately outside the south-west corner of the site (HER 6571/0/1).

In August 2013, Northamptonshire Archaeology, now trading as MOLA, completed a detailed geophysical survey of the proposed development area (Chinnock 2013). A number of anomalies of potential archaeological interest were recorded including a possible enclosure in the central part of the field as well as lengths of roughly parallel ditches in the south-western corner of the proposed development area. A number of pit-like anomalies were also identified, particularly in the eastern part of the site. The survey also recorded the remnants of medieval ridge and furrow and a headland. An Ordnance Survey map from 1968 suggests that there was a former field boundary in the northern part of the site and its later infilling may be the reason for the area of magnetic noise in the data

4 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

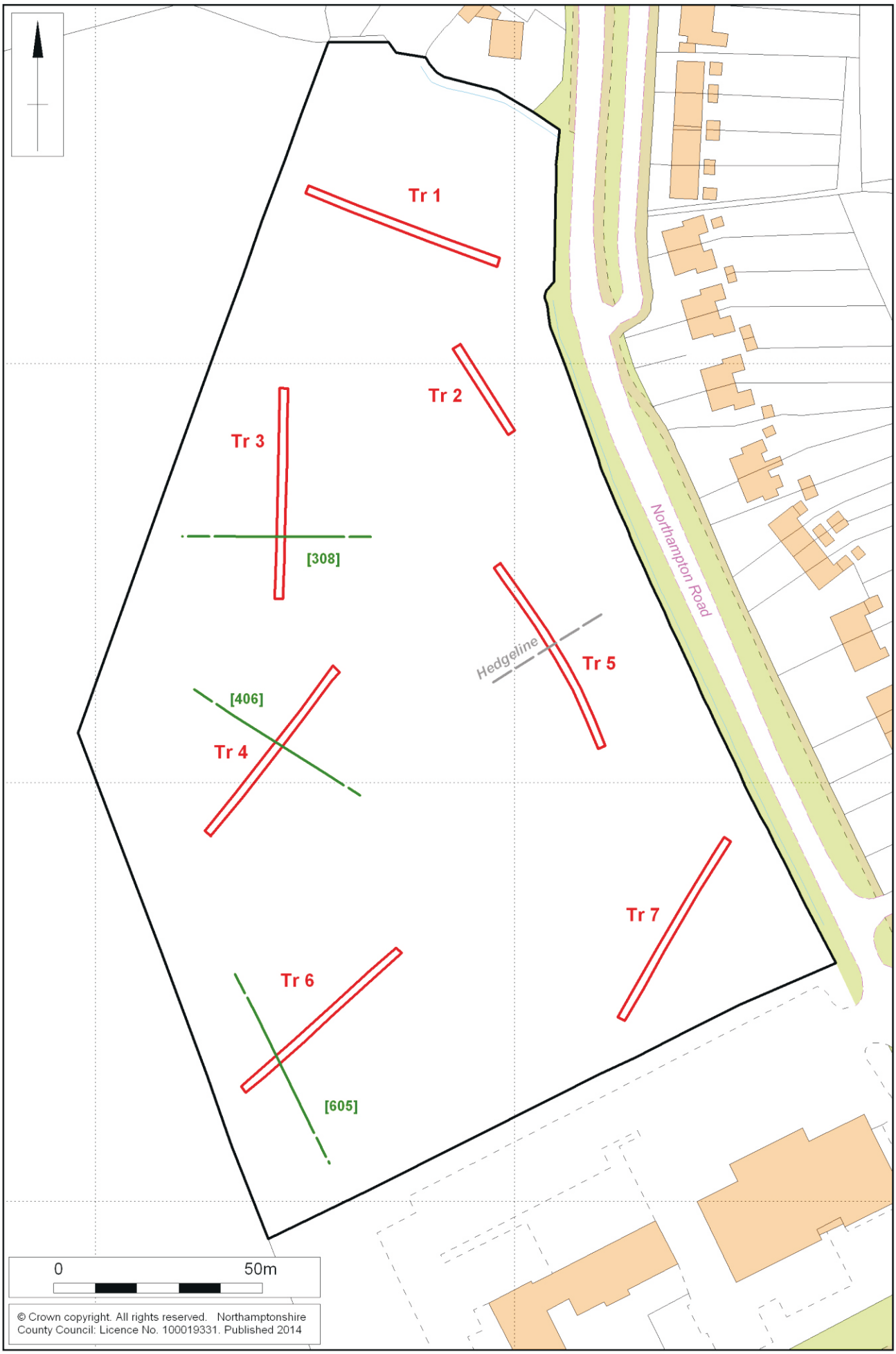
Six trenches 50m long and one trench 25m long were excavated using a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m-wide toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were targeted on geophysical anomalies and to sample blank areas. The topsoil and subsoil were removed under archaeological direction to reveal either archaeological features or, if these were absent, the natural substrate. The topsoil and subsoil were stacked separately at the side of the excavated area. All procedures complied with MOLA Health and Safety policy and MOLA Health and Safety Operational Procedures (MOLA 2014).

The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to define any features. The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval.

All archaeological deposits encountered during the course of the evaluation were fully recorded, following standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). All deposits were given a separate context number. They were described on *pro-forma* context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation. Unstratified animal bones and modern material were not retained.

The locations of the trenches were surveyed and related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. A full photographic record comprising both 35mm black and white negatives and digital images was maintained. The field data from the evaluation has been compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.

The evaluation conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (revised Oct 2008). All stages of the project were undertaken in accordance with English Heritage, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (EH 2006). The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by C Simmonds (MOLA 2014).



Scale 1:1250

The excavated trenches Fig 2

5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

The natural substrate comprised grey or orange-brown sandy clay with mixed gravels and small stones across some of the trenches.

In Trenches 1, 2, 5 and 7 the natural was overlain by subsoil and topsoil. Remnant furrows of medieval ridge and furrow field cultivation, identified in the geophysical survey (Chinnock 2013), could be seen in some trenches. A cow tooth and fragment of clay tobacco-pipe were present in a furrow in Trench 5.

Trench 7, looking north-west Fig 3

Trenches 3, 4 and 6 all had linear features which were of archaeological interest (Fig 9).

Trench 3 was aligned north to south. The natural was 0.5m below ground level. A posthole/small pit [305], 0.32m in diameter and 0.09m deep, had bowl-shaped profile with a fill (304) of dark orange-grey silty sand (Figs 4 and 8, section 1, Fig 9). Remnant furrows were aligned east-west and were 2-4 m apart.

Posthole [305], looking west Fig 4

A linear ditch [308],1.96m wide and 0.48m deep with a wide U-shaped profile, was aligned east-west (Figs 2 and 8, section 2, Fig 9) . The base was just under the water table. The primary fill (307) was blue-grey sandy clay. The upper fill (306) contained three sherds of post-medieval pottery. This ditch was possibly used as part of a drainage system.

Ditch [307], looking west Fig 5

Trench 4 was aligned north-east by south-west. The natural (403) was 0.42m below ground level.

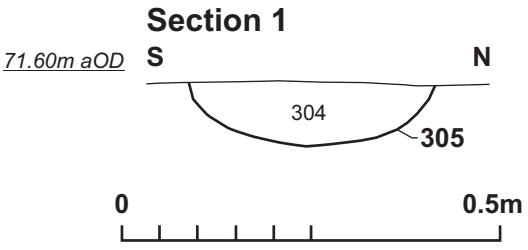
A wide V-shaped ditch [406], 3.0m wide and 0.82m deep, was aligned north-west (Figs 6 and 8, section 4, Fig 9). The secondary fill (404) contained one sherd of prehistoric pottery.

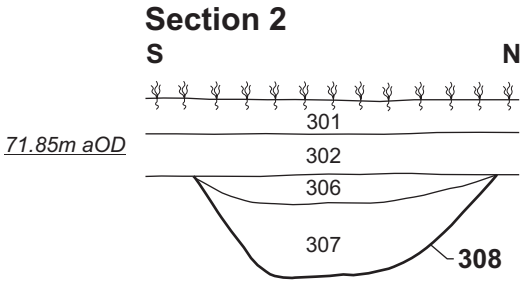
Ditch [406], looking south-east Fig 6

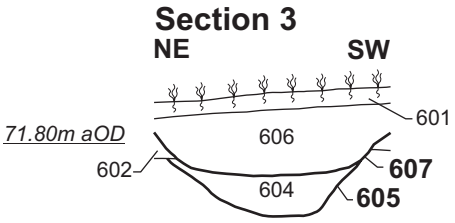
Trench 6 was aligned north-east by south-west. The natural was encountered at 0.27m below ground surface.

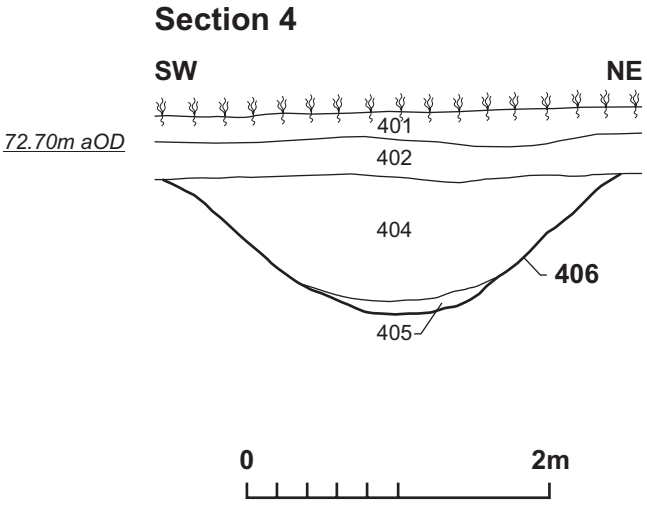
A wide V-shaped ditch [605], 1.31wide and 0.33m deep, was aligned north-west to south east. Fill (604) included fragments of clay tobacco-pipe. The north side of the ditch had been cut by a furrow. The furrows are 2-3m apart, aligned north-west to south-east.

Ditch [605], looking south east Fig 7

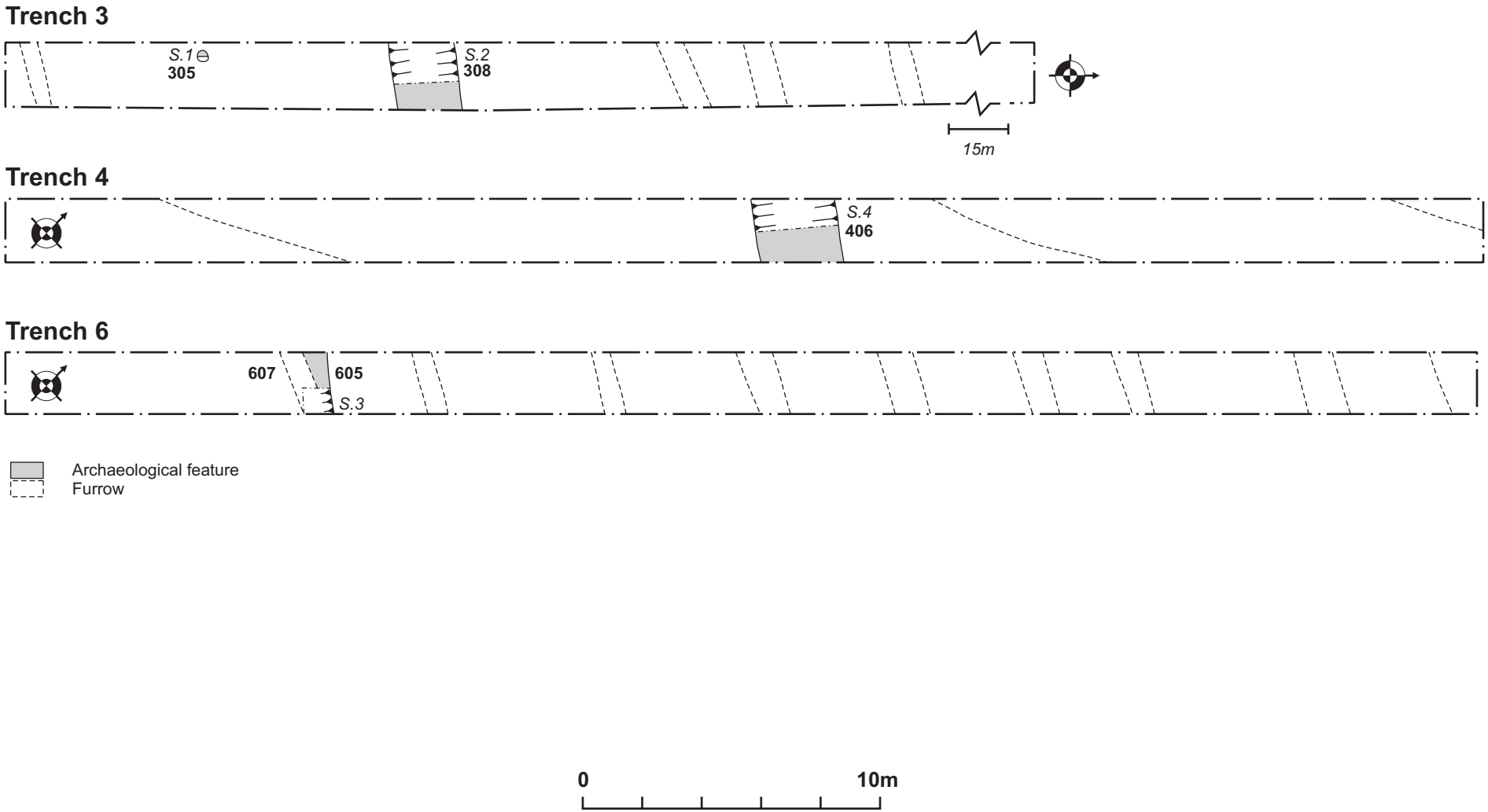

Section 1
71.60m aOD
S
N
304
305
0
0.5m


Section 2
S
N
71.85m aOD
301
302
306
307
308


Section 3
NE
SW
601
71.80m aOD
606
602
607
604
605


Section 4
SW
NE
401
72.70m aOD
402
404
406
405
0
2m

Scale 1:200



Plans of trenches 3, 4 and 6 Fig 9

6 THE FINDS

6.1 Prehistoric pottery by Andy Chapman

From a furrow in Trench 5, there is a single body sherd, weighing 3g, in a dark grey fabric with an orange-brown surface, containing small pellets of grog. From the fill (404) of ditch [406] in Trench 4, there is a single base sherd, weighing 9g, in a grey fabric containing small pellets of grog with an orange external surface.

These sherds are of prehistoric date, with the early Bronze Age and late Iron Age the two likely options.

6.2 Post-medieval pottery by Tora Hylton

Three abraded sherds of post-medieval pottery with a combined weight of 46g were recovered from Trench 3. A base sherd in red earthenware with an iron rich glaze on the interior surface (Northamptonshire County Type Series (CTS) 426) was recovered from a furrow deposit from Trench 3 and two joining rim sherds from a bowl/pancheon type vessel, in a coarse unglazed red earthenware fabric (CTS 427) was recovered from fill (306) of ditch [308]. The fabrics and form represented suggest an 18th/19th century date.

6.3 Other finds by Tora Hylton

A George II farthing, dated to 1733, was recovered from a furrow in Trench 7. Two small fragments of clay tobacco-pipes were found, one within a furrow fill in Trench 6 fill and one in a furrow fill in Trench 5. The fabric and bore size suggest a date in the early 18th century.

6.4 The animal bone by Adam Reid

One cattle tooth was recovered from a furrow in Trench 5. The lack of faunal remains from excavated features may indicate a low quality of preservation for organic material and suggests that the potential for further zooarchaeological analysis is limited, should any further work take place at the site.

7 DISCUSSION

Three ditches seen in the geophysical survey were recorded in the trial trenches, together with a posthole/small pit and remnant furrows of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation. One ditch contained a small sherd of prehistoric pottery and another sherd came from a furrow.

A few sherds of post-medieval pottery came from the other two ditches, and clay tobacco-pipe stems and a George II farthing were recovered from the furrows.

The evidence suggests a very low level of prehistoric activity. The post-medieval finds are likely to be losses from passing farm workers.

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www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html

MOLA
22 May 2014

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	**Length, width & alignment**	**NGR**	**Surface height (aOD)**	**Depth & height of natural (aOD)**
1	**50m x 2m, NE-SW**			
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
101	Topsoil	Firm, med brown sandy clay freq gravels, stone and modern disturbance	0.26m	-
102	Subsoil	Firm, grey-brown, silty sandy clay freq gravels and cobbles	0.30m	-
103	Natural	Firm mixed mottling blue-orange and orange-grey sandy clay gravels, root disturbance and land drains	0.16m	

Trench No	**Length, width & alignment**	**NGR**	**Surface height (aOD)**	**Depth & height of natural (aOD)**
2	**30m x 2m, NW-SE**			
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
201	Topsoil	Firm, dark grey-brown sandy silt freq gravels, some cbm	0.25m	-
202	Subsoil	Firm, mid brown-grey sandy clay freq gravels and root inclusions	0.26m	-
203	Natural	Firm, mid orange-grey to grey-brown sandy clay occ gravels and large cobbles and root inclusions		

Trench No	**Length, width & alignment**	**NGR**	**Surface height (aOD)**	**Depth & height of natural (aOD)**
3	**50m x 2m, N-S**			
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
301	Topsoil	Friable, dark grey-brown sandy silt freq small stones and root inclusions	0.25m	-
302	Subsoil	Friable, dark grey-brown sandy silt occ small stone and root inclusions	0.27m	-
303	Natural	Friable, light orange-grey silty sand occ small rounded stones		
304	Fill of [305]	Friable, dark brown-grey silty sand freq charcoal flecks	0.09m	-
305	Posthole	Circular, shallow bowl-shaped, with concave base	0.09m	
306	Fill of [308]	Friable, mid grey–brown sandy silt occ'l small rounded stones	0.14m	Post-med'l pottery
307	Fill of [308]	Friable, med blue-grey sandy silt freq charcoal flecks and iron panning	0.48m	
308	Ditch	Linear NE-SW steep-sided ditch with flat base	0.67m	-

Trench No	**Length, width & alignment**	**NGR**	**Surface height (aOD)**	**Depth & height of natural (aOD)**
4	**50m x 2m, NE-SW**			
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
401	Topsoil	Friable, dark grey-brown sandy silt freq small stones and root inclusions	0.14m	-
402	Subsoil	Friable, mid grey-brown sandy silt freq small stones and root inclusions	0.28m	-
403	Natural	Friable-firm, mid red-orange sandy silt freq small-med stones		
404	Fill of [406]	Firm, reddish-brown silty sandy clay freq ironstone panning and gravels	0.82m	1 sherd prehistoric pottery
405	Fill of [406]	Firm/hard, grey-brown to yellow-brown silty clay rare gravels	0.08m	-
406	Ditch	Linear NW-SE gentle sloping sides with slightly concave base	0.90m	-

Trench No	**Length, width & alignment**	**NGR**	**Surface height (aOD)**	**Depth & height of natural (aOD)**
5	**50m x 2m, NW-SE**			
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
501	Topsoil	Friable-loose, dark grey-brown sandy silt freq small stones and root inclusions	0.12m	-
502	Subsoil	Firm-friable, mid brown-grey sandy silt freq root inclusions	0.39m	-
503	Natural	Firm-friable, mid brown grey clayey silt with orange mottling occ small-med rounded pebbles freq manganese flecks		

Trench No	**Length, width & alignment**	**NGR**	**Surface height (aOD)**	**Depth & height of natural (aOD)**
6	**50m x 2m, NE-SW**			
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
601	Topsoil	Friable, dark grey-brown sandy silt occ'l small pebbles frequent root inclusions	0.12m	-
602	Subsoil	Friable, mid grey brown sandy silt freq root inclusions occ'l charcoal flecks	0.16m	-
603	Natural	Firm-friable, mid brown-orange sandy silt frequent stones & gravels		
604	Fill of [605]	Friable, mid red-brown sandy silt occ'l small stones	0.26m	-
605	Ditch	Linear NW-SE steep sided with concave base	0.26m	
606	Fill of [607]	Friable, mid red-brown sandy silt occ'l med stones	0.10m	-
607	Furrow	Linear E-W shallow, gentle sloping furrow with flat concave base	0.10m	

Trench No	**Length, width & alignment**	**NGR**	**Surface height (aOD)**	**Depth & height of natural (aOD)**
7	**50m x 2m, NE-SW**			
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
701	Topsoil	Friable-loose, dark grey brown sandy silt freq stones and root inclusions	0.09m	-
702	Subsoil	Friable mid brown-grey sandy silt freq root inclusions occ charcoal flecks	0.35m	-
703	Natural	Friable mid brown-orange sandy silt occ small rounded stones	-	

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