



**Archaeological trial trench evaluation
on land south of Main Street, Ullesthorpe
Leicestershire
May 2014**

Accession number: X.A153.2013

Report No. 14/121

Author: Jim Burke

Illustrator: James Lodocha



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Post-medieval pottery: Tora Hylton

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OAS/S REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Molanort1 - 180759	
Project title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land south of Main Street/Warren Farm, Ullesthorpe, Leicestershire, May 2014		
Short description	MOLA was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to carry out a trial trench evaluation on 2.6ha of pasture land south of Main Street, Ullesthorpe, Leicestershire. The trial trenching identified an undated circular ditch and postholes, extensive ridge and furrow cultivation and modern dumping.		
Project type	Trial Trench evaluation		
Previous work	Geophysical survey (Clements 2013)		
Current land use	Pasture		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period	Undated ditch and postholes. Medieval ridge and furrow cultivation		
Significant finds			
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Leicestershire		
Site address	Claybrook Road, Ullesthorpe		
Easting Northing	SP 503 877		
Area (sq m/ha)	2.6 ha		
Height aOD	105m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA		
Project brief originator	Leicestershire County Council, Planning Officer		
Project Design originator	CgMs Consulting Ltd		
Director/Supervisor	Jim Burke		
Project Manager	Mark Holmes MOLA, Simon Mortimer CgMs Consulting Ltd		
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	16/5/2014		
End date	17/5/2014		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession nos.)	Contents	
Physical	X.A153.2013		
Paper		Site records	
Digital		Site Pictures	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
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Contents

1	INTRODUCTION
2	BACKGROUND
2.1	Location and geology
2.2	Historical and archaeological background
3	METHODOLOGY
4	EVALUATION RESULTS
5	POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY by Tora Hylton
6	CONCLUSION
	BIBLIOGRAPHY
	APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Table 1: quantification of post-medieval pottery

Figures

Front Cover	General view of trench 1, looking north-east	
Fig 1	Site location	1:5000
Fig 2	Trench Location	1:2000
Fig 3	Ditch [107], looking north	
Fig 4	Posthole [105], looking east	
Fig 5	Trench 1, plan and sections, ditch and postholes, 1:125 (plan) & 1:25 (sections)	
Fig 6	Trench 5, sample of modern dumping	
Back Cover	General view of site, looking south	

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Abstract

MOLA was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to carry out a trial trench evaluation on 2.6ha of pasture land, south of Main Street, Ullesthorpe, Leicestershire. There was an undated circular ditch and postholes, and extensive medieval ridge and furrow cultivation and modern dumping.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to conduct a trial trench evaluation on 2.6ha of pasture land at Main Street, Ullesthorpe, Leicestershire (NGR SP 503 877). The field work was conducted on the 20 – 22 May 2014 and conformed to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CgMs consulting (Thornton 2014).

The trenching identified a ring ditch 12-13m in diameter with an entrance to the east and associated postholes. This form is consistent with Iron Age roundhouses but no dating evidence was recorded.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and geology

The survey area at Main Street comprised five small pasture fields. The site is bounded by Claybrook Road to the north, residential housing to the east and west and open pasture fields to the south. The site lies at c 105m aOD.

The site is underlain by Mercian mudstone, predominately red, less commonly green-grey, mudstones and subordinate siltstones with thick halite-bearing units in some basal areas. The overlying superficial deposits are Oadby Member Diamicton deposits (BGS 2013). The soils are identified as slowly permeable, seasonally wet, slightly acid base-rich loam and clay soils (Landis 2013).

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

A desk-based assessment (Thornton 2013) was prepared in advance of works and the following background information is taken from this.

A number of Mesolithic flint blades found 600m to the north-east of the site might suggest evidence of an occupation site. Further Neolithic and Bronze Age flint implements have been found in the vicinity, although only in quantities considered to represent a 'background noise' of prehistoric activity. It is considered that the site has moderate potential for prehistoric remains, but a low potential for significant remains. A few sherds of Roman pottery and a ring have also been found in the vicinity. It was considered that there was a low potential for Roman remains.

The site is recorded as lying adjacent to the historic core of the village of Ullesthorpe. While the village is likely to have Saxon origins, it is considered that activity of this date is likely to be concentrated further north. It was considered that the site had low potential for Saxon remains.

Some 130m south-west of the site are the scheduled earthwork remains of a possible medieval moated manor house and associated fishponds, as well as several house platforms. At some point in the medieval period the focus of the village shifted to its present location and this part of the village was deserted.

The site lies between the scheduled remains and the slightly later shifted village core. Earthwork ridge and furrow is visible within the southern fields of the site on aerial photographs. The presence of these features in earthworks was confirmed by a site visit. These earthworks may mask earlier settlement. The potential for medieval settlement remains was therefore considered to be high.

Geophysical survey carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 2013 recorded ditch-like anomalies indicating the corner of a plot or enclosure in the north-east corner. Ridge and furrow cultivation was confirmed in the other fields (Clements 2013).

3 METHODOLOGY

Before any work commenced on site, there was a requirement for the excavation to be monitored by an ecologist. The ecologist cleared all trench locations prior to any excavation commencing and in advance of backfilling. A ramp was left at each end of every trench to allow access and egress of anything that might enter the trench.

All trenches were excavated using a JCB 3CX excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig 2). Five of the six trial trenches each measured approximately 50m by 2m, the sixth trench, (trench 5) was only a test pit to clarify that a geophysical anomaly comprised modern dumping (with the agreement of Richard Clark Leicestershire County Council archaeological adviser).

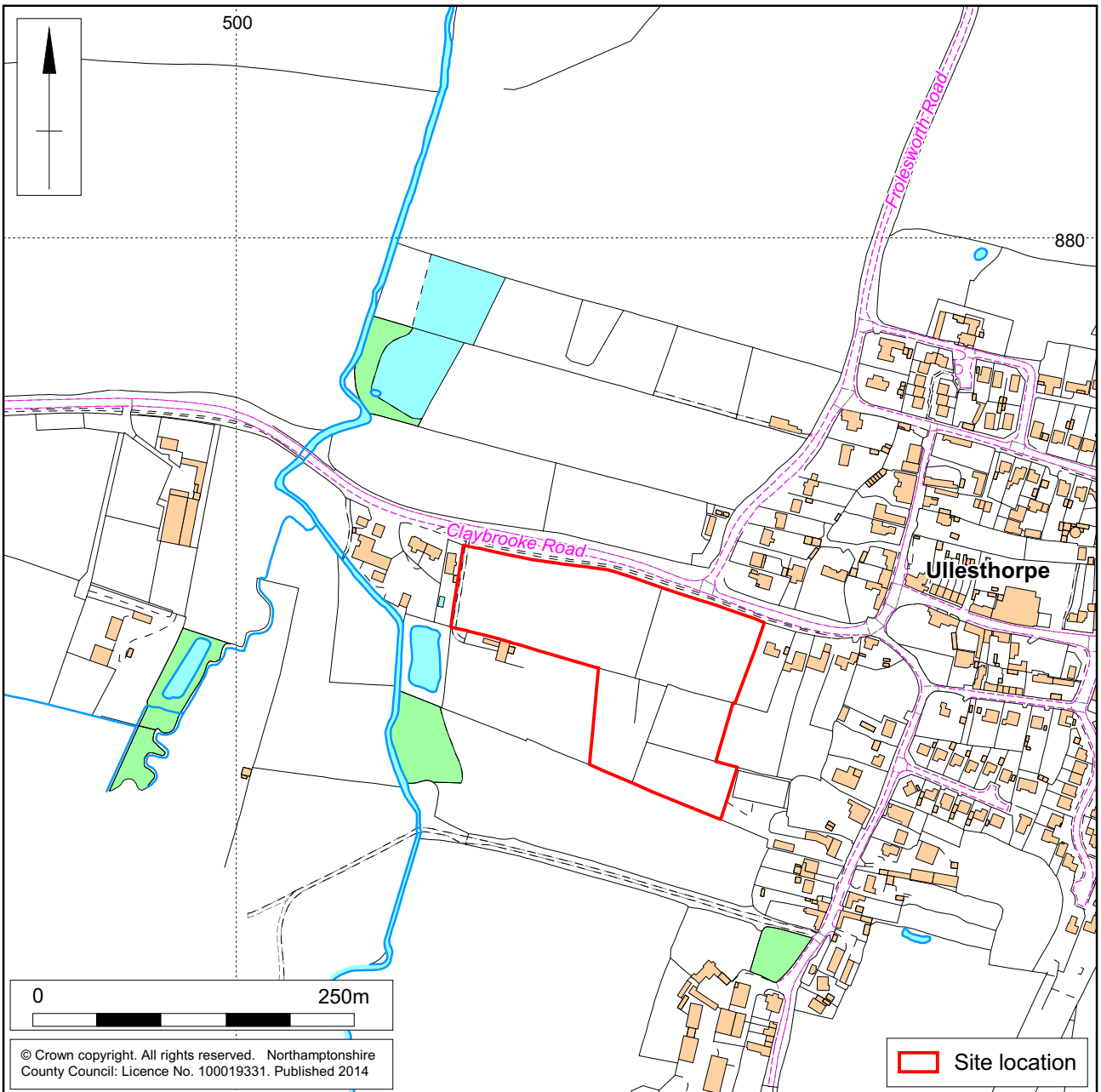
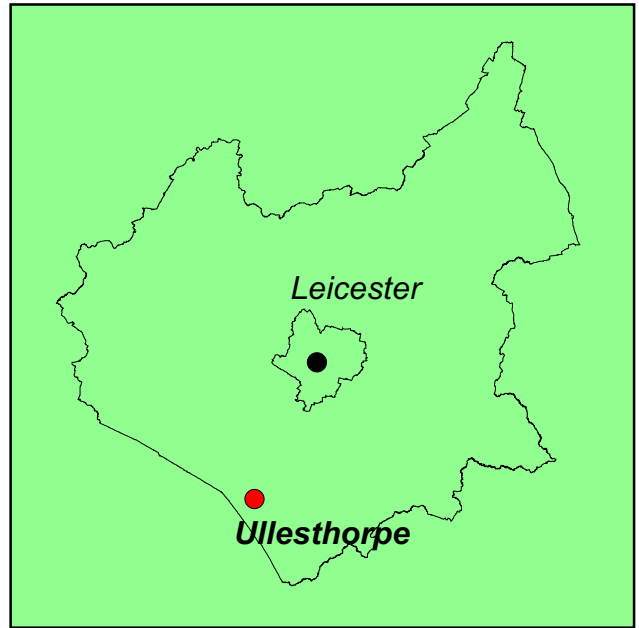
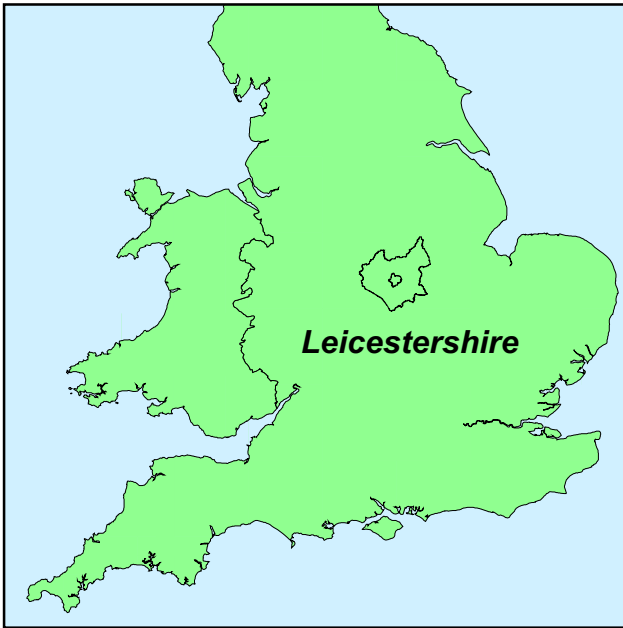
The trial trenches were surveyed using Leica System 1200 Global Positioning System (GPS) survey equipment using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of $\pm 0.05\text{m}$. All the trial trenches were excavated under constant archaeological supervision to reveal archaeological remains or, where these were absent, undisturbed natural horizons. The topsoil and subsoil were stacked separately at the side of the excavated trench.

The excavation and recording were carried out in accordance with MOLA guidelines, following the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008). All stages of the project were undertaken in accordance with English Heritage, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (EH 2006).

Each trench was hand cleaned sufficiently to enhance the definition of features, unless it was certain that there were no archaeological remains present.

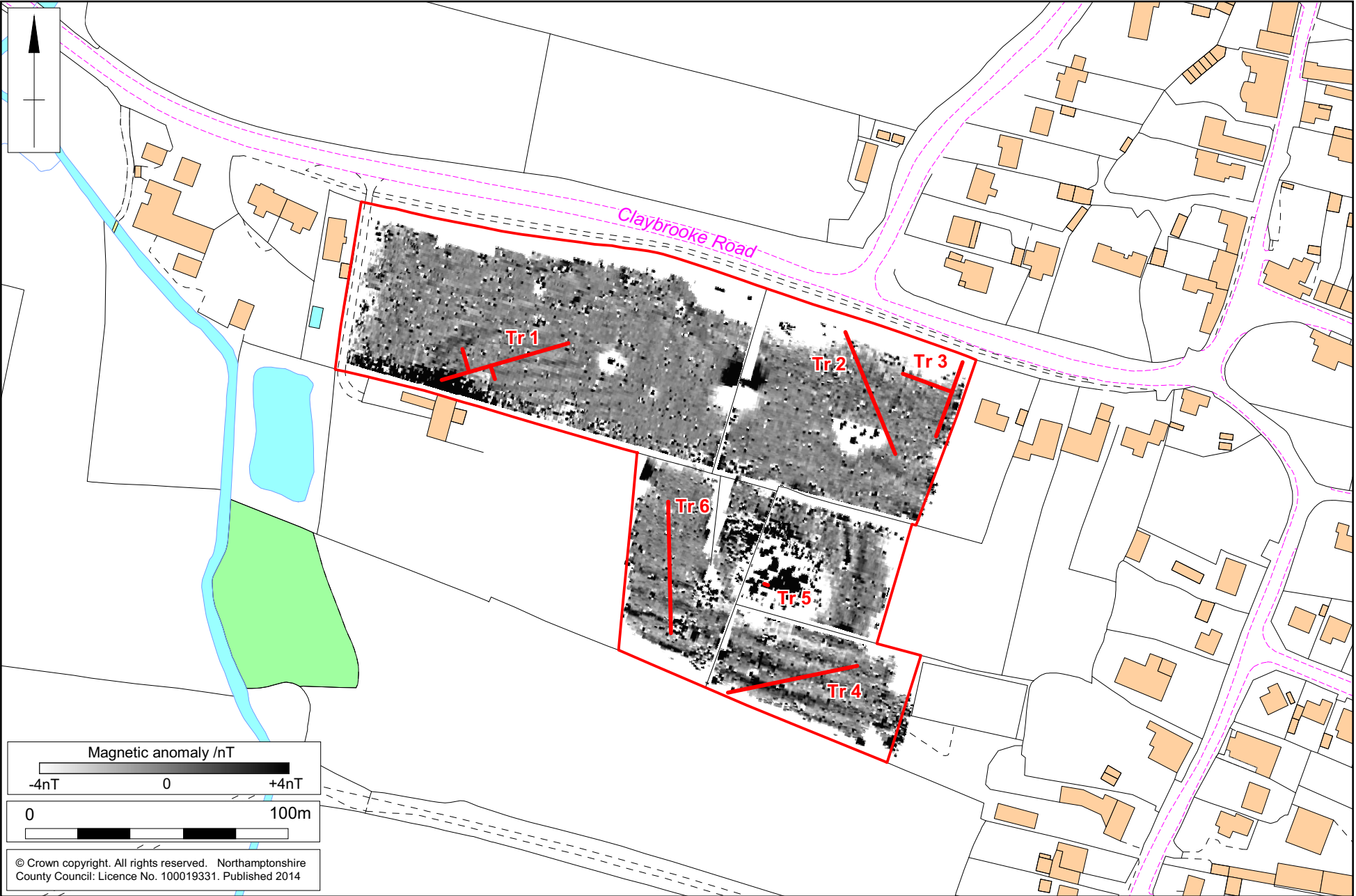
All archaeological deposits and artefacts identified during the course of evaluation were recorded following standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). Levels were related to the Ordnance Datum.

The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned by metal detector. Photographs were taken of all trenches and any relevant deposits on 35mm monochrome print film. High resolution digital images were also taken.



Scale 1:5000

Site Location Fig 1



Scale 1:2000 (A4)

Trench location

Fig 2

4 EVALUATION RESULTS

Within the evaluation area, only one trench contained archaeological features that pre-date the medieval ridge and furrow cultivation.

Towards the western end of Trench 1 there was a curving length of ditch, and extensions were made at right angles to establish the extent of this feature (Fig 6). It was established that this feature was a ring ditch with a terminal on the eastern side. It would have an internal diameter of c 12-13m.

The ditch [107] was 1.18m wide by 0.44m deep, with a fill of silty grey-brown mottled sandy clay (106), heavy worm disturbance was noted throughout the fill (Fig 3).



Ditch [107], looking north

Fig 3

The terminal of the ditch had a V-shaped profile, 0.68m wide by 0.39m deep with a fill similar to the main part of the ditch, but with heavy root disturbance from the nearby hedgeline (Fig 6, section 6).

To the east of the ditch were a number of postholes. Two of the postholes [105] and [115] had U-shaped profiles (Fig 6, sections 2 and 5).

Posthole [105] (Fig 4) 0.37m wide by 0.25m deep, contained rare flecks of charcoal, the other two postholes [111] and [113] had shallow U-shaped profiles approx 0.32m wide by 0.14m deep (Fig 6 sections 3 and 4). The fills of the postholes were all similar to the fills of adjacent ditch [107], and no finds were recovered.

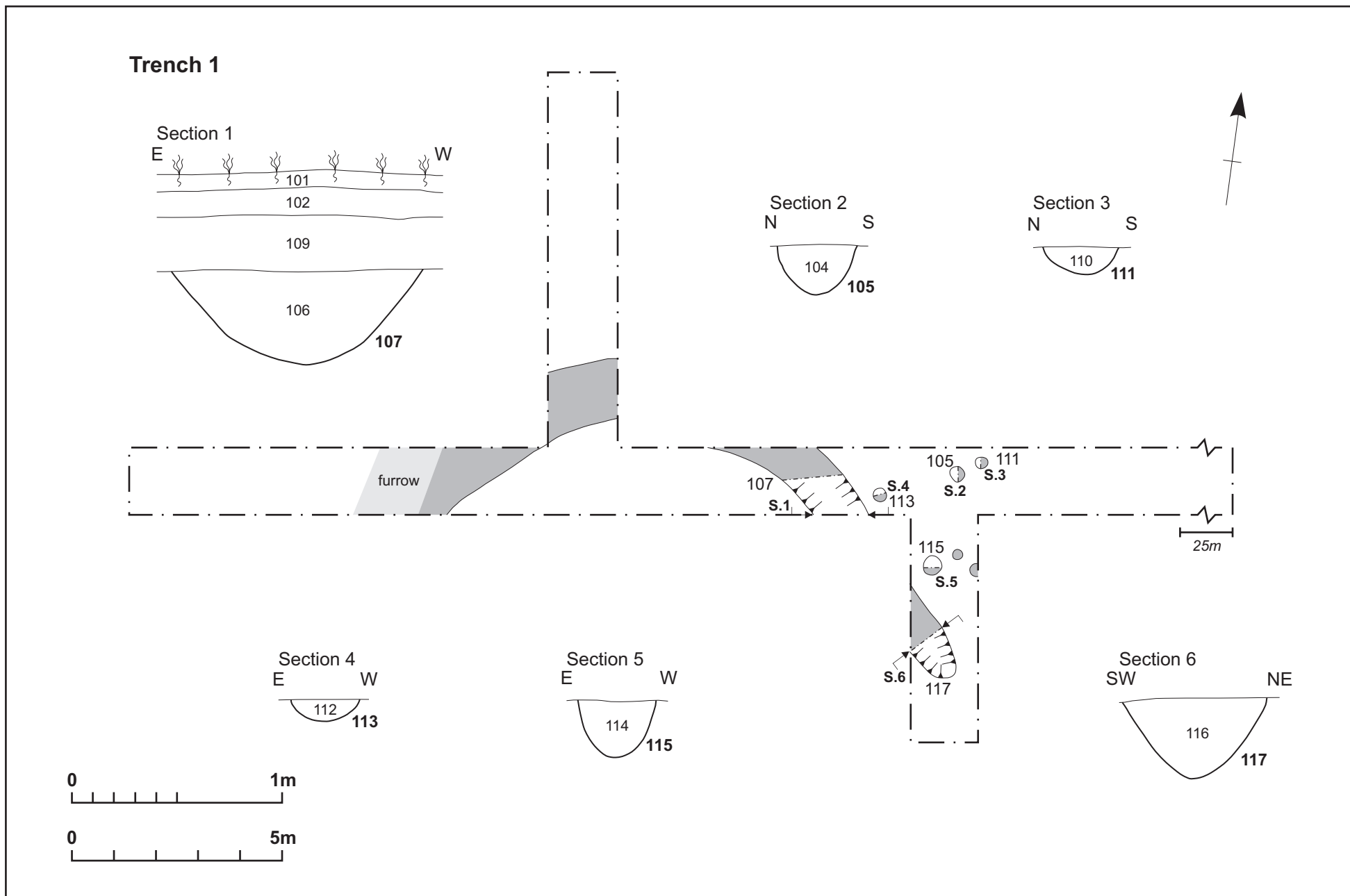


Posthole [105], looking east

Fig 4

Medieval ridge and furrow cultivation was seen in trenches 4 and 6. This is visible on the ground as earthworks and was defined in the geophysical survey (Clements 2013). Within trench 6 multi-directional north to south and east to west ridge and furrow cultivation and a possible headland were noted. These were removed to check for underlying archaeology but none was present.

Modern dumped material was encountered in Trench5.



Trench 5 sampled an area of magnetic disturbance identified by the geophysical survey. This equated with modern material visible on the field surface, and only a small area was excavated to establish the extent of modern dumping, within the re-deposited fill were plastic pipe, plastic bottles, bricks of various types, tile, glass bottle and window glass, metal and modern ceramics fragments from plates and cups (Fig 6). None of these were retained



Trench 5, sample of modern dumping,

Fig 6

The ditch-like anomalies in the north-east corner seen in the geophysical survey were not found in trench 3.

No datable material was recovered from any of the features within trench 1, a sample of the finds from the furrows dated from the c 17th – 19th centuries.

5 POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY

By Tora Hylton

Five sherds of pottery weighing 92g were recovered from furrow deposits in trench 1. The assemblage is unstratified and dates from the late 17th to the 19th century. The fabrics have been coded according to the Leicester Archaeology Unit fabric type series. Chronologically the earliest fabric represented is a rim sherd from a small Blackware bowl which dates to the c late 17th/early 18th century. The remaining fragments include two sherds of brown salt glazed stoneware, presumably from Nottingham/Derby, a base sherd from a pancheon in black glazed earthenware and an undiagnostic sherd of white earthenware. The pottery will be discarded.

Table 1: Quantification of unstratified post-medieval pottery

Fabric type (LAU Type series)	Number	Wt (g)
Blackware - late 17th century (MB)	1	14
Brown stoneware, Notts/Derby - late 18th/19th centuries (SW5)	2	17
Glazed earthenwares - late 18th/19th centuries (EA)	1	56
White earthenwares - 19th century (EA10)	1	5
Total	5	92

6 CONCLUSION

The evaluation identified a ring ditch, 12-13m in diameter with a terminal and possible entrance on the eastern side. This plan form is consistent with Iron Age roundhouses but no dating evidence was recovered, a number of postholes were found adjacent to the ring-ditch. The similarity fills of the ditch and postholes could indicate that they were contemporary.

These features was not detected by the geophysical survey, this is likely due to the similarity between the fills and the surrounding natural and the lack of anthropogenic material present. It is worth noting that the medieval ridge and furrow is also indistinct in this area.

The possible ditches seen in the geophysical survey in the north-east area were not found.

The remaining trenches had medieval ridge and furrow cultivation. The modern dumping seen in Trench 5 is likely to represent a backfilled pond or similar.

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MOLA
9 June 2014

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
1	2m x 50m, NE-SW 2m x 5.50m N 2m x 9m S			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
101	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy silt, occasional gravels.	0.10m	-
102	Subsoil	Light grey-brown sandy silt occasional gravels and roots disturbance	0.10-0.20m	-
103	Natural	Orange-brown sandy gravel/ironstone,	0.25m	-
104	Fill of [105]	Reddish-brown clayey silt occasional ironstone	0.25m wide 0.40m deep	-
105	posthole	U-shaped	0.25m wide 0.40m deep	-
106	Fill of [107]	Orange-brown mottled sandy clay rare charcoal	1.18m wide 0.44m deep	-
107	Ditch	U-shaped	1.18m wide 0.44m deep	-
108	Natural	Reddish brown sandy clay frequent gravels, ironstone and occasional flint	-	-
109	Colluvium	Yellow-brown sandy silty-gravel	0.32m	-
110	Fill of [111]	Reddish-brown silty clay	0.12m wide 0.35m deep	-
111	Posthole	U-shaped	0.12m wide 0.35m deep	-
112	Fill of [113]	Reddish-brown silty clay	0.30m wide 0.12m deep	-
113	Posthole	U-shaped	0.30m wide 0.12m deep	-
114	Fill of [115]	U-shaped	0.37m wide 0.26m deep	-
115	Posthole	Reddish-brown silty clay	0.37m wide 0.26m deep	-
116	Fill of [117]	Mottled reddish-orange silty sand	0.70m wide 0.40m deep	
117	Ditch terminal	U-shaped	0.70m wide 0.40m deep	



Trench 1, looking west



Trench 1, southern extension, looking north

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
2	2m x 50m, NW-SE			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
201	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown loam, frequent gravels	0.20m	-
202	Subsoil	Orange-brown loam, frequent gravels	0.19m	-
203	Natural/alluvium	Orange-brown sandy clay, frequent gravels,	0.25-0.28m	-



Trench 2, looking south-east

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
3	2m x 50m, N-S x E-W			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
301	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy clay, frequent gravels, and heavy root disturbance	0.12m	-
302	Subsoil	Orange-brown sandy clay, frequent gravels heavy root disturbance	0.15-0.18m	-
303	Natural	Yellow-brown sandy clay, frequent gravels, heavy root disturbance from large trees in boundary	0.10-0.36m	-



Trench 3, looking south

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
4	2m x 50m, NE-SW			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
401	Topsoil	Grey-brown clay loam, frequent gravels.	0.20-0.23m	-
402	Subsoil	Orange-brown sandy clay loam, frequent gravels remains of furrows	0.18-0.23m	-
403	Natural	Yellow-brown sandy clay, frequent gravels and stone, remains of furrows	0.05-0.18m	-



Trench 4, looking north-east

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
5	2m x 1.5m, NW-SE			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
501	Topsoil	Redeposited topsoil, with heavy modern disturbance	0.05m	-
502	Layer	Redeposited dumping layer	0.30m	-



Trench 5, looking west, view of dumped material

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
6	2m x 50m, NNW-SSE			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
601	Topsoil	Mid brown loamy clay occasional gravels	0.12-0.14m	
602	Subsoil	Orange-brown sandy clay loam, frequent gravels remains of furrows and headland	0.23-0.30m	
603	Natural	Light grey-brown sandy clay, occasional orange sandy pockets frequent gravels	0.15m	



Trench 6, looking south



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