



**Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation
Land off Station Drive
Kirby Muxloe
Leicestershire
October 2014**

Report No. 14/216

Authors: Yvonne Wolfram-Murray
Adam Yates

Illustrator: Amir Bassir



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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. molanort1-194494	
Project title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation, Land off Station Drive, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire		
Short description	A trial trench evaluation was undertaken on land off Station Drive, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire in October 2014. Nine trenches were targeted on geophysical anomalies, 'blank areas and 'ridge and furrow identified by the geophysical survey. Archaeological features in Trench 8 comprised a medieval pit, an undated gully and probable hedge line. The remaining trenches were devoid of archaeological remains and it is likely that the geophysical anomalies related to variations in natural geology or disturbances in the topsoil.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Site Status	-		
Previous work	Geophysical survey (Walford and Chinnock 2013)		
Current land use	Pasture fields		
Future work	unknown		
Monument type and period			
Significant finds	-		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Leicestershire		
Site address	Land off Station Drive, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire		
Post code	-		
OS co-ordinates	452180 303440		
Area (sq m/ha)	7.25ha		
Height aOD	90-100 aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator			
Project Design originator	CgMS Consulting Ltd		
Director/Supervisor	Yvonne Wolframmm-Murray		
Project Managers	Adam Yates (MOLA) Paul Gajos (CgMs)		
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting Ltd for Taylor Wimpey		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	October 2014		
End date	October 2014		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	Leicestershire Museums X.A125.2014	Pottery and bone	
Paper		Site records (1 small archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)Archaeological trial trench evaluation, Land off Station Drive, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire		
Title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation, Land off Station Drive, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire		
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Archaeological trial trench evaluation

Land off Station Drive

Kirby Muxloe

Leicestershire

October 2014

Abstract

A trial trench evaluation was undertaken on land off Station Drive, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire in October 2014. Nine trenches were targeted on geophysical anomalies, 'blank areas and 'ridge and furrow identified by the geophysical survey. Archaeological features in Trench 8 comprised a medieval pit, an undated gully and probable hedge line. The remaining trenches were devoid of archaeological remains and it is likely that the geophysical anomalies related to variations in natural geology or disturbances in the topsoil

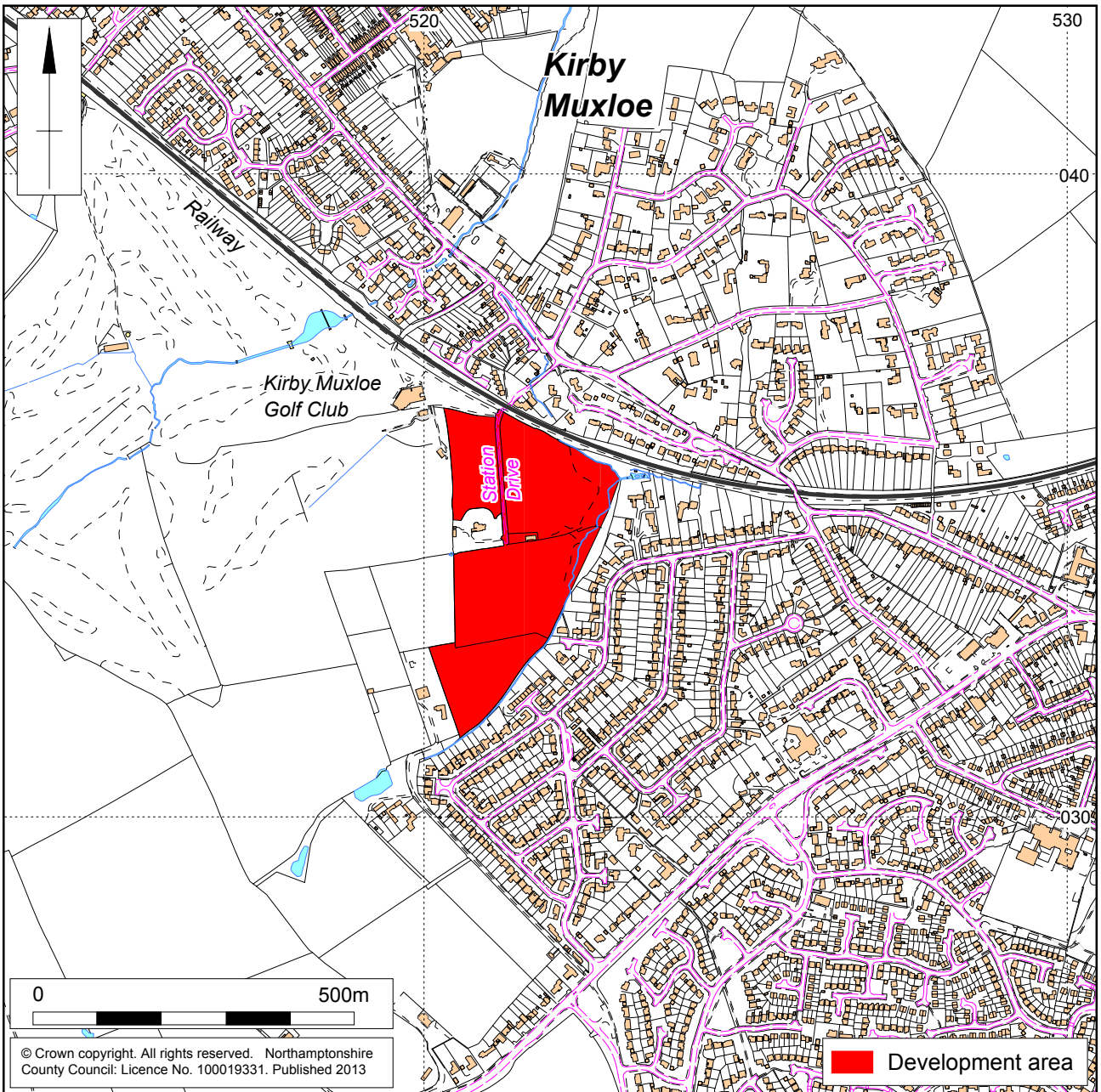
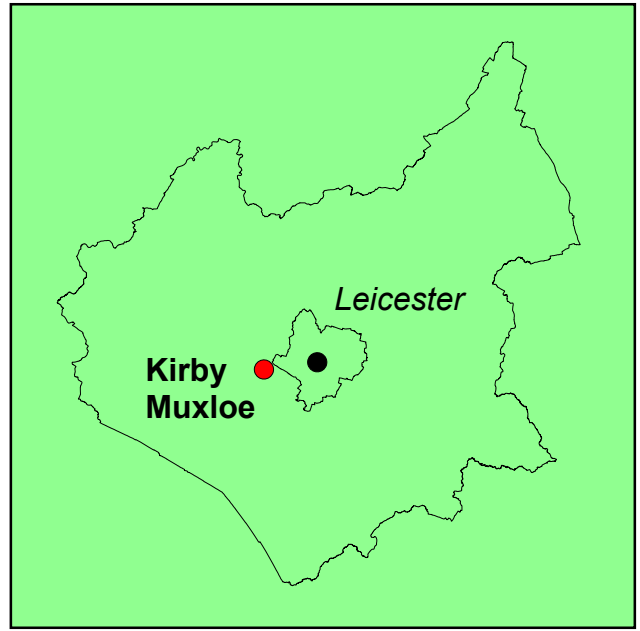
1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of Taylor Wimpey, to carry out a trial trench evaluation on land off Station Drive, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire (NGR 452180 303440, Fig 1) to assess the archaeological implications of development.

The works were required in line with *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012). The Assistant Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council recommended further archaeological work, following the geophysical survey, in advance of the determination of the planning application in order to allow reasoned and informed recommendations to be made to the local planning authority. A Written Scheme of Investigation was produced by CgMS Consulting (Gajos 2014). The works were monitored by Paul Gajos of CgMS Consulting on behalf of the client and by the Assistant Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council on behalf of the LPA.

MOLA is an Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) registered organisation. This document was prepared in accordance with the current best archaeological practice as defined in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008) and the procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (EH 2009).

The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums, accession number X.A125.2014 has been assigned.



Scale 1:10,000

Site Location Fig 1

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

The proposed development area consists of four irregularly-shaped pasture fields totalling approximately 7.25ha located alongside and to the south of Station Drive, in Kirby Muxloe (Fig 1). These fields stand at an elevation of 90-100m aOD and slope gently down towards the north and east. At the southern and eastern boundaries, there are steeper slopes down towards a stream which forms part of the site boundary.

The solid geology of the area comprises Wolston Sands and Gravel with some Thrusington Member diamicton in the north-west part of the site, overlying Mercia Mudstone Group (BGS 2012).

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

Kirby Muxloe is an ancient settlement, recorded as '*Carbi*' in the Domesday Book. Its most notable archaeological site is Kirby Muxloe Castle (SAM: 17114), a 15th-century castle built on the site of a 14th-century moated manor house and standing close to the historic core of the village.

The present survey area lies c1km to the south of the castle, beyond the known limits of medieval settlement. The closest archaeological sites are a Roman road (MLE 3019), which passes just beyond the north-western corner of the area, and a probable Roman settlement (MLE 208) which lies in the fields to the west. Fieldwalking of the latter site in the 1980s recovered in excess of sixty sherds of Roman pottery, and a quantity of worked flint (MLE 6997).

The 1903 Ordnance Survey provides the first record of the footpath which crosses Field 4 from north-west to south-east. It also shows the presence of a building, called 'the Links' at the southern end of Field 2, and a smaller building to the east, between Fields 3 and 4. On the 1915-16 edition of the map, the latter building is identified as a club house. These buildings were presumably associated with the golf course which currently occupies the land immediately to the west of the proposed development area (Appendix III).

Geophysical survey (Walford and Chinnock 2013) identified some potential archaeological features within the proposed development area, including ditches and a possible ring ditch.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The aims of the evaluation were as follows:

- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development site
- To assess the artefactual and environmental potential of the archaeological deposits encountered;
- To assess the impact of previous land use on the site;

- To inform formulation of a strategy to mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains;
- To produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Leicestershire HER.

3.2 Methodology

Nine (9) trial trenches, 4 x 50m long and 5 x 40m long, all 1.6m wide, with a total length of 400m were excavated. All areas of ground disturbance were accurately surveyed in using Viva GPS survey equipment and tied into the Ordnance Survey (Fig 2).

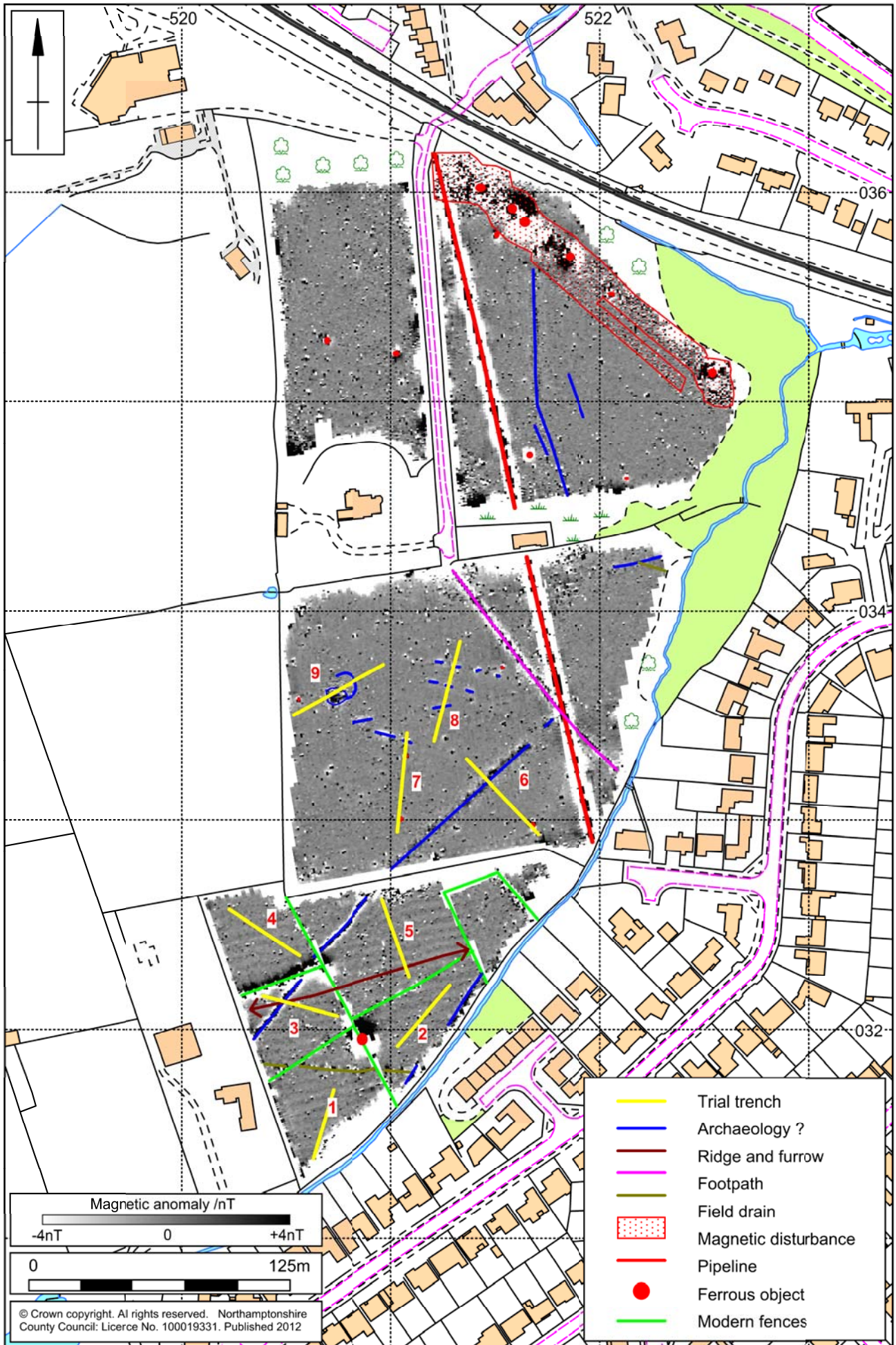
Machine excavation was undertaken under the direction of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Trenches were excavated by machine using a toothless ditching bucket 1.6m wide, to reveal archaeological remains or, where absent, undisturbed natural horizons. After archaeological remains were encountered all subsequent examination and excavation was carried out by hand to determine their date and character.

Each trench was cleaned sufficiently to enhance the definition of features. All archaeological features were investigated. All archaeological deposits and artefacts encountered during the course of evaluation were fully recorded. Recording followed standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). All archaeological features were given a separate context number. Deposits were described on pro-forma context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds.

Soil samples were taken from contexts with the potential for the preservation of charcoal and carbonised plant remains. The sampling strategy conformed to English Heritage guidelines (EH 2011).

Archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:50. Sections through features were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate. A photographic record was maintained using black and white film supplemented by digital photography. Photographic views of the site were taken prior to excavation and after backfilling.

Finds were collected from the individual deposits and appropriately packed and stored in stable conditions, by context. The field data was compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing. All records were compiled during fieldwork into a comprehensive and fully cross-referenced site archive.



1:2500 The excavated trenches, showing geophysical survey results and interpretation Fig 2

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

4.1 General comments

The natural substrate consisted of mid grey, mid grey-brown and mid brown-purple clay with patches of yellow-brown sands and fine-medium gravels. Subsoil was absent in the southern field (Trenches 1-5); in the northern field it comprised mid brown silty clay with occasional small stones. Topsoil comprised loose mid grey-brown silty clay.

Most of the anomalies identified by the geophysical survey were not present as archaeological features. The natural geology was very mixed and varied considerably between and within trenches, these variations probably account for the bulk of the anomalies. For instance, the strong ditch-like anomaly aligned north—east to south-west could be seen to correspond with a change from clays to sandy gravels in Trench 3 (the natural origin of this variation was confirmed by machine-cut sondage). Other anomalies may reflect topsoil conditions, including the putative ring ditch in Trench 9 which corresponded with a wetter patch where increased root disturbance was evident.

The only archaeological features present were identified in Trench 8.

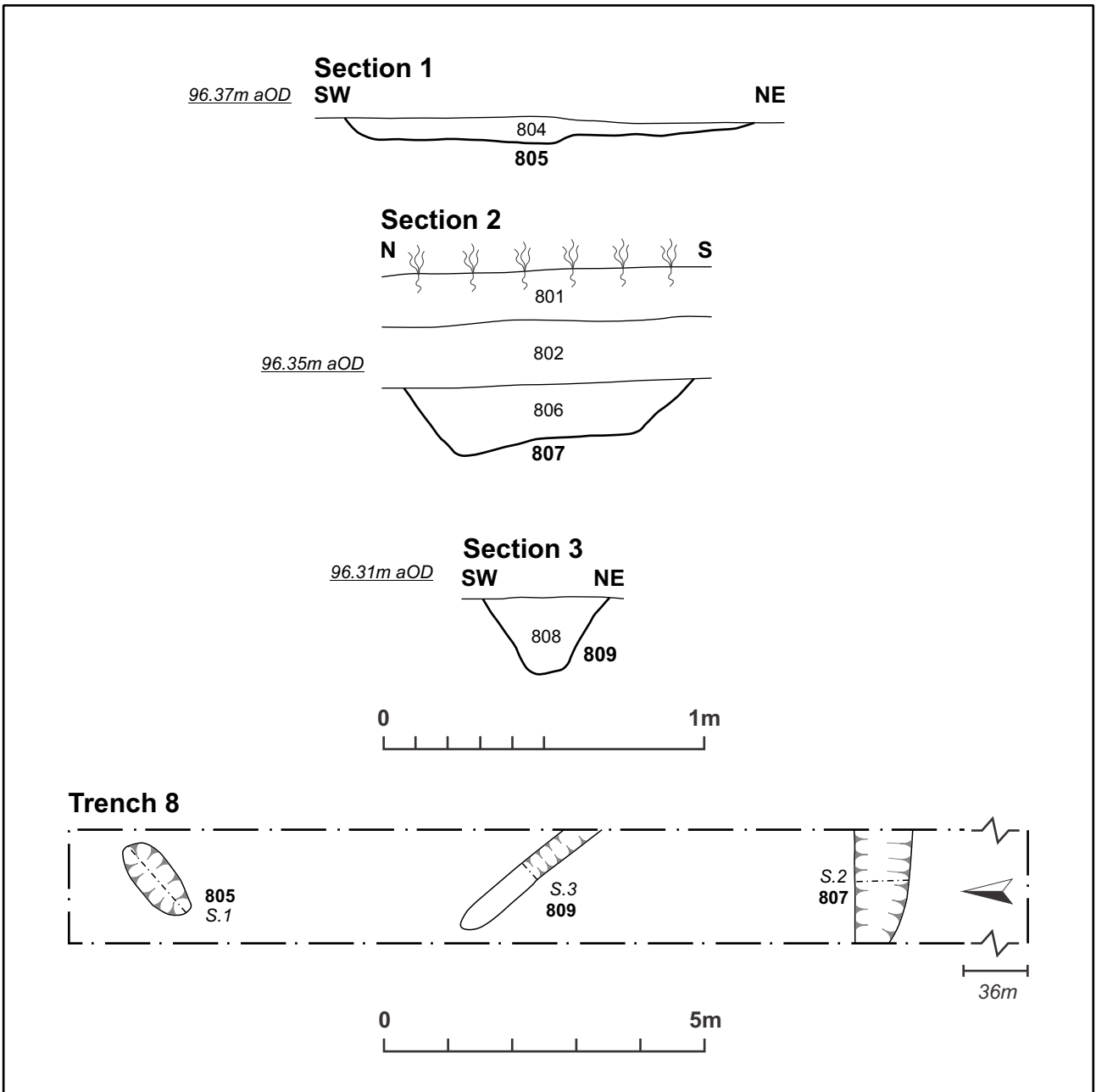
4.2 Trench 8

Three features were present towards the northern end of this trench, all were cut into the natural and overlain by subsoil (Fig 3).

Oval pit [805] measured 1.3m by 0.45m, with shallow sloping sides and an irregular base 0.15m deep. The fill was dark grey-brown silty clay (804) which contained a few small stones and moderate quantities of charcoal. Two small pieces of Potters Marsden ware pottery (1100-1300 AD) were recovered from the fill. The sample taken from this context produced a small quantity of heavily burnt or cremated undiagnostic bone together with charcoal.

Ditch [807] was aligned north-west to south-east. It was 0.9m wide with sloping sides to a flat base 0.2m deep, although was somewhat irregular in both plan and section. The fill (806) was mid grey-brown silty clay with occasional small rounded stones and charcoal fragments. This corresponded with one of the geophysical survey anomalies.

Rounded gully terminal [809] was aligned north-north-west to south-south-east. It was 0.4m wide and 0.25m deep, with steeply sloping sides and a flat base. The fill (808) comprised mid grey-brown silty clay with occasional charcoal fragments.



Scales, Sections 1:20, Plan 1:100

Trench 8, plan, sections and photograph Fig 3

5 THE FINDS

5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

Two sherds of pottery with a total weight of 14g occurred in fill (804) of pit [805]. They are both Potter's Marston ware, fabric PM in the Leicestershire County type-series (eg. Sawday 1994), and dated to AD1100-1300. The ware is a common find at medieval sites in the county. One of the sherds is very small and less than 1g in weight, but the other is in good condition, and appears reliably stratified.

5.2 Bone by Chris Chinnock and Adam Reid

Seventy-four fragments (totalling 9g) of burnt bone were recovered from fill (804) of pit [805]. The material was recovered from a sample taken from the fill, bulk floated and the flots were collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The bone was separated from other extraneous material in the sample and each fragment analysed separately. The largest fragment of bone was 23mm long, though the majority of the bone fragments were much smaller.

Both an animal, and human bone specialists assessed the material. Due to the small fragment size and lack of any diagnostic fragments, the origin of the material remains unclear. However, it was felt by bone specialists that given the context in which the material was found in it most likely derives from animal bone as waste material accidentally burnt in a fire.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS by Val Fryer

6.1 Introduction and method statement

A single sample for the retrieval of the plant macrofossil assemblage was taken from the charcoal rich fill (804) of medieval pit [805].

The sample was bulk floated by MOLA and the flot was collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flot was scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed below in Table 1. All plant remains were charred. Modern root, seeds and straw fragments were also recorded.

6.2 Results

With the exception of a single goosegrass (*Galium aparine*) seed, the plant macrofossil assemblage consists entirely of charcoal/charred wood fragments, including many larger pieces >10mm in size (Table 1). Some charcoal is heavily coated with a dense orange-buff mineral concretion, and the entire assemblage also appears to have undergone a high degree of mineralisation, with the remains being of a grey colour and also being of an exceptionally heavy weight. It is considered most likely that this has precluded full retrieval of the plant assemblage during flotation, with some macrofossils also being masked by mineral concretions within the non-floating residue. Other remains are also exceedingly scarce (possibly for the same reasons), although a single small fragment of calcined bone is recorded.

Table 1. Charred plant macrofossils and other remains

Sample No.	1
Context No / Type	804 / pit fill
<i>Galium aparine</i> L.	x
Charcoal <2mm	xxxx
Charcoal >2mm	xxxx
Charcoal >5mm	xxxx
Charcoal >10mm	xxxx
Charred root/stem	x
Bone	xb
Mineralised soil concretions	xx
Sample volume (litres)	
Volume of flot (litres)	0.2
% flot sorted	100%

Key to Table:

x = 1 0 10 specimens

xx = 11 – 50 specimens

xxxx = 100+ specimens

b = burnt

6.3 Conclusions and recommendations for further work

In summary, this assemblage is extremely limited in composition. However, it is unclear whether other remains, which have subsequently been masked by the deposition of soluble minerals from the local soil, may have been present at the time of deposition. Notwithstanding this, it would appear that the remains may be derived from hearth and/or midden waste, although the origin of the material is unclear due to the isolation of the context from which the sample was taken.

As quantification and identification of the charcoal/charred wood would add little to the data already included within this assessment, no further analysis is recommended. However, a summary of this report should be included within any synthesis of data from the site.

7 DISCUSSION

Archaeological features were restricted to Trench 8 in the central field. One of which corresponded with a geophysical survey anomaly, the remaining anomalies are likely the results of geological variations or features within the topsoil.

The Medieval pit was the only dated feature, this also produced charcoal and burnt/cremated bone. The bone was not diagnostic, however, given the date of the feature it is felt that an animal rather than human provenance is more likely. The profile of this feature is not convincing for a deliberately dug pit, and may represent a natural hollow within which waste material has been deposited or accumulated.

Neither the ditch or gully produced any diagnostic material, although the fact that both features were overlain by subsoil would argue against a recent origin. Whilst the gully appeared reasonably convincing as an archaeological feature, the irregular profile of the ditch probably derived from vegetation disturbance and this may represent a former hedge line or field boundary.

The small quantity of artefactual material recovered and the lack of any other remains other than those seen at the northern end of Trench 8 would argue that the features represent a localised area of activity within an otherwise rural landscape, probably associated with agricultural exploitation.

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APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
1	40m x 1.8m N-S	452062 303137 – 452071 303170	97.42 aOD	0.22m, 97.22m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/samples
101	Topsoil	Mid purple-brown sandy loam, root disturbance, moderate small round pebbles	0.22m thick	-
102	Natural	Mid brown-purple clay with gravel patches and patches of light yellow-brown clay sand; small to medium rounded pebbles and sub-angular flint fragments	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
2	40m x 1.8m N E - SW	452103 303192 – 452128 303221	96.83m aOD	0.21m, 96.62m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/samples
201	Topsoil	Mid purple-brown sandy loam, moderate small round pebbles	0.21m thick	-
202	Natural	Mid brown-purple clay with gravel patches and patches of light yellow-brown clay sand; small to medium rounded pebbles and sub-angular flint fragments	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
3	40m x 1.8m W-E	452038 303216 – 452073 303206	99.12m aOD	0.27m, 98.85 aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/samples
301	Topsoil	Mid purple-brown sandy loam, moderate small round pebbles	0.27m thick	-
302	Natural	Mid brown-purple clay with gravel patches and patches of light yellow-brown clay sand; small to medium rounded pebbles and sub-angular flint fragments	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
4	40m x 1.8m NW-SE	452022 303257 – 452051 303230	99.40m aOD	0.30m, 99.10m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/samples</i>
401	Topsoil	Mid purple-brown sandy loam, moderate small round pebbles	0.30m thick	-
402	Natural	Mid brown-purple clay with gravel patches and patches of light yellow-brown clay sand; small to medium rounded pebbles and sub-angular flint fragments	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
5	40m x 1.8m N-S	452095 303262 – 452108 303225	97.69m aOD	0.30m, 97.39m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/samples</i>
501	Topsoil	Mid purple-brown sandy loam, moderate small round pebbles	0.30m thick	-
502	Natural	Mid brown-purple clay with gravel patches and patches of light yellow-brown clay sand; small to medium rounded pebbles and sub-angular flint fragments	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
6	50m x 1.8m NW-SE	452135 303328 – 452169 303292	96.23m aOD	0.32m, 95.91m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/samples</i>
601	Topsoil	Loose, mid grey-brown sandy silt; occasional small stones	0.24m thick	-
602	Subsoil	Medium to mid grey-brown silty clay with occasional small stones	0.08m thick	-
603	Natural	Firm, mid brown-red clay with yellow sandy and stony patches	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
7	50m x 1.8m N-S	452107 303341	96.98m aOD	0.30m, 96.68m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/samples</i>
701	Topsoil	Loose, mid grey-brown sandy silt; occasional small stones	0.10m thick	-
702	Subsoil	Medium to mid grey-brown silty clay with occasional small stones	0.20m thick	-
703	Natural	Firm, mid brown-red clay with yellow sandy and stony patches	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
8	50m x 1.8m N-S	452132 303384 – 452107 303341	96.76m aOD	0.31m, 96.45m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/samples</i>
801	Topsoil	Loose, mid grey-brown sandy silt; occasional small stones	0.14m thick	
802	Subsoil	Medium to mid grey-brown silty clay with occasional small stones	0.17m thick	-
803	Natural	Firm to compact mid orange-brown clay with sandy and stony patches	-	-
804	Fill of [805]	Dark grey-brown silty clay which contained a few small stones and moderate quantities of charcoal	As [805]	Pot Burnt/cremated bone Sample *01
805	Pit	Shallow pit with irregular base	L:1.3m W: 0.45m D:0.15m	-
806	Fill of [807]	Mid grey-brown silty clay with occasional small rounded stones and charcoal fragments	As [807]	
807	Ditch	NW-SE aligned ditch, generally with sloping sides and a flat base although inconsistent in both plan and section	L:1.8m+ W: 0.9m D:0.2m	
808	Fill of [809]	Mid grey-brown silty clay with occasional small rounded stones and charcoal fragments	As [809]	
809	Ditch terminal.	Rounded gully terminal aligned NNW-SSE with sloping sides and flat base	L: 2m+ W:0.4m D:0.25m	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
9	50m x 1.8m NE-SW	452054 303350 – 452096 303374	97.40m aOD	0.25m, 97.15m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/samples
901	Topsoil	Loose, mid grey-brown sandy silt; occasional small stones	0.15m thick	-
902	Subsoil	Medium to mid grey-brown silty clay with occasional small stones	0.10m thick	-
903	Natural	Firm, mid brown-red clay with yellow sandy and stony patches	-	-



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