



**Archaeological trial trench evaluation
and earthwork survey on land at
Mill Lane, Isham, Northamptonshire
July 2015**

Report No. 15/167

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Illustrator: James Ladocha



Archaeological trial trench evaluation and earthwork survey on land at Mill Lane, Isham, Northamptonshire

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Clay tobacco pipe: Tora Hylton

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: molarnort1 – 223319
Project name	Archaeological trial trench evaluation and earthwork survey on land at Mill Lane, Isham, Northamptonshire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	MOLA Northampton was commissioned by Welland Design and Build Ltd to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation and earthwork survey on land at Mill Lane, Isham, Northamptonshire in support of a planning application for residential development. The earthwork survey identified features that are likely to be on the periphery of the medieval village of Isham. These include an area of landscaping and terracing that is separated from the ridge and furrow of the open-field system by a possible hollow-way or field boundary. The evaluation trenches revealed at least one prehistoric or Roman ditch, medieval to post-medieval ditches, pits, cobbled surfaces and a possible structure and traces of ridge and furrow. The later medieval pits may indicate backyard activity from a plot fronting Mill Lane.	
Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc)	Trial trench evaluation	
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	None	
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	Earthwork survey (RCHME 1979); Geophysical survey (MOLA Northampton 2015)	
Current Land use	Pasture	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Yes	
Monument type/ period	Ditches, pits: medieval and post-medieval	
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	Pottery, glass, tile, brick: Medieval and post-medieval	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address (including postcode)	Land off Mill Lane, Isham	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	2.1ha	
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. letter code)	SP 88875 74040	
Height OD	50m to 60m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA Northampton	
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council	
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton	
Director/Supervisor	James Ladocha (Earthwork survey); Mo Muldowney (Evaluation)	
Project Manager	Adam Yates	
Sponsor or funding body	Welland Design and Build Ltd	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date/End date	20.07.2015 to 23.07.2015	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	Northampton temporary store ENN107978	Pottery, CBM, glass, Fe nails
Paper		Site file, plan and section drawings, maps
Digital		Mapinfo plans, Word report
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)	
Title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation and earthwork survey on land at Mill Lane, Isham, Northamptonshire July 2015	
Serial title & volume	15/167	
Author(s)	Claire Finn, James Ladocha & Mo Muldowney	
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Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	
2	BACKGROUND	
	3.1	Topography and geology
	3.2	Historical and archaeological background
3	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	
4	METHODOLOGY	
5	THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE	
	5.1	General stratigraphy
	5.2	Overview of archaeological features
	5.3	Possible Iron Age or Romano-British ditch
	5.4	The medieval features (12th and 13th centuries)
	5.5	Late medieval to post-medieval features (15th to 17th centuries)
	5.6	Undated features
6	THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE	
	6.1	Medieval and post-medieval pottery by Paul Blinkhorn
	6.2	Ceramic building material by Pat Chapman
	6.3	Animal bone by Rebecca Gordon
	6.4	Glass by Claire Finn
	6.5	Clay tobacco-pipe by Tora Hylton
	6.6	Other finds by Tora Hylton
	6.7	Plant macrofossil and other remains by Val Fryer
7	THE EARTHWORK SURVEY	
	7.1	Methodology
	7.2	General comments and condition
	7.3	Terraces
	7.4	Sub-division banks
	7.5	Hollow-way/field boundary
	7.6	Ridge and furrow
	7.7	Later intrusions
8	DISCUSSION	
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Tables

Table 1:	The medieval and post-medieval pottery
Table 2:	Quantification of ceramic roof tile
Table 3:	Number of hand-collected specimens by context
Table 4:	Quantification of glass
Table 5:	The charred plant macrofossils and other remains

Figures

Front cover: Trench 3, stone-lined drain, facing south-east

- Fig 1: Site location
- Fig 2: Excavated trenches with geophysics interpretation (a) and earthwork survey (b)
- Fig 3: Evaluation features with geophysical survey interpretation and phasing
- Fig 4: Medieval features in Trenches 1, 2, 5 and 6
- Fig 5: Sections of medieval features
- Fig 6: Trench 2: feature [218] pre-excavation, facing north-east
- Fig 7: Late medieval features
- Fig 8: Trench 4: charcoal-rich and burnt material in pit [406], facing south-west
- Fig 9: Stone drain/culvert [313], Trench 3, looking south-east
- Fig 10: Cobbled surface (310), Trench 3, looking north-west
- Fig 11: Trench 7: Cobble surfaces (703), (704) and (705), facing north-east
- Fig 12: Undated features
- Fig 13: Terrace 1, looking west
- Fig 14: Hollow-way/field boundary 1, looking south-west
- Fig 15: Hollow-way/field boundary 1 profile, scale 1:100
- Fig 16: Ridge and furrow, looking north-west
- Fig 17: Ridge and furrow profile, scale 1:200
- Fig 18: Earthwork survey results showing topography (top) and slope (bottom)
- Fig 19: Earthwork survey hachure plan

Archaeological trial trench evaluation and earthwork survey on land at Mill Lane, Isham, Northamptonshire July 2015

Abstract

MOLA Northampton was commissioned by Welland Design and Build Ltd to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation and earthwork survey on land at Mill Lane, Isham, Northamptonshire in support of a planning application for residential development. The earthwork survey identified features that are likely to be on the periphery of the medieval village of Isham. These include an area of landscaping and terracing that is separated from the ridge and furrow of the open-field system by a possible hollow-way or field boundary. The evaluation trenches revealed at least one prehistoric or Roman ditch, medieval to post-medieval ditches, pits, cobbled surfaces and a possible structure and traces of ridge and furrow. The later medieval pits may indicate backyard activity from a plot fronting Mill Lane.

1 INTRODUCTION

Welland Design and Build commissioned MOLA to undertake archaeological trial trenching and earthwork survey on the proposed development site on land on at Mill Lane, Isham, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 88875 74040, Fig 1). The work 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 (NPPF; DCLG 2012).

The Assistant Archaeological Advisor for Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) had advised that a programme of archaeological evaluation should be undertaken to determine the nature and extent of any archaeological remains within the Development Area. The requirements were outlined in a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by MOLA (MOLA 2015).

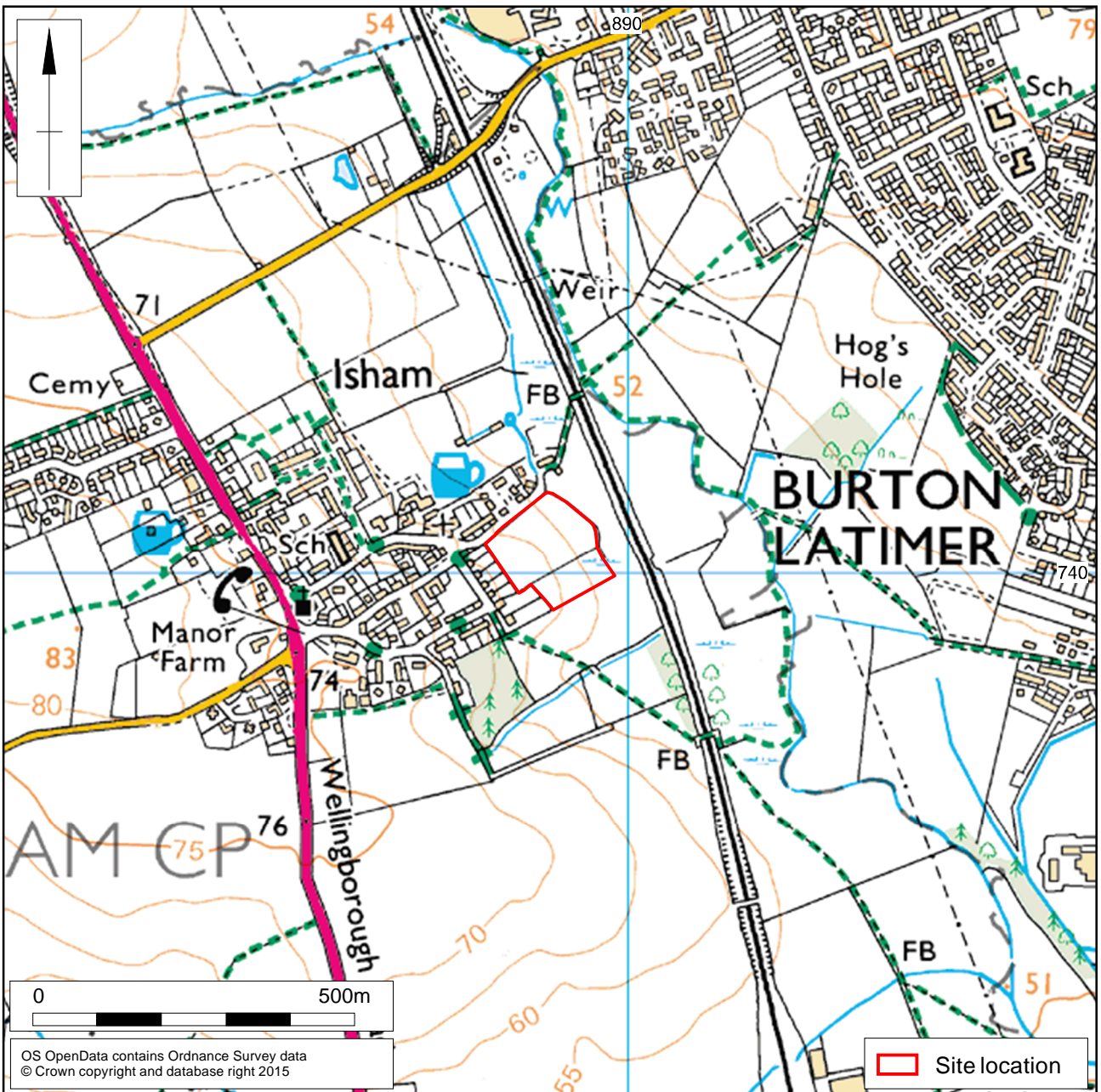
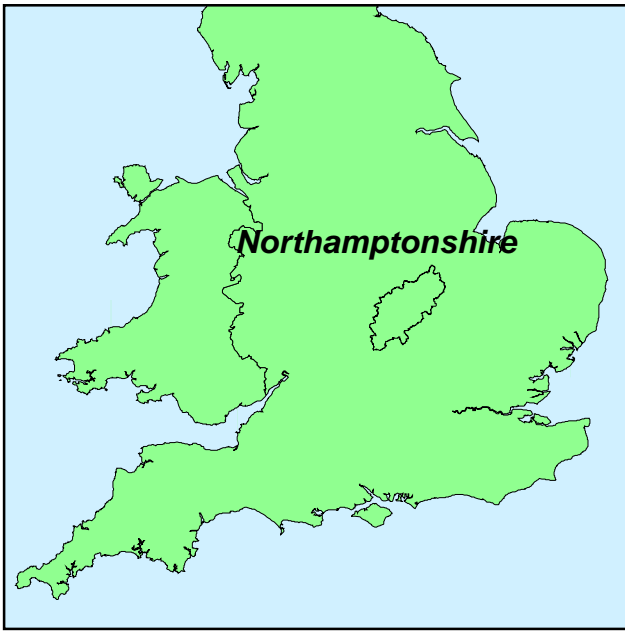
The evaluation conformed to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (2014a). All stages of the project were undertaken in accordance with Historic England procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (HE 2015a).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and geology

The 2.1ha survey area is located on the east side of the village of Isham, south of Mill Lane and west of the old course of the River Ise (Fig 1). The area comprises part of a larger, currently undivided, pasture field; a farm track runs across the western half of the area. A set of overhead electricity cables cross the very south-western corner of the field.

The site is located on a gradual slope down from the west at approximately 60m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to 50m aOD in the old river valley.



Scale 1:10,000

Site location Fig 1

The geology of the survey area comprises Whitby Mudstone Formation mudstone in the eastern part of the field and Northamptonshire Sand Formation ironstone in the west. Superficial alluvial deposits have been recorded close to the river channel, no superficial deposits are recorded further west (BGS 2015).

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Northamptonshire lists some evidence for Iron Age and/or Romano-British settlement within the vicinity of the survey area. An area of settlement (3620) of this date has been identified approximately 200m to the south-west around Allerton House south of South Street. A second area of similarly dated settlement activity (8842) has also been identified 600m to the north. Roman ditches, pottery and building debris was recorded during building works close to the church within the core of the village (Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME 1979).

The open fields were enclosed by Act of Parliament during the 18th century. The mill was located on the river immediately to the north of the survey area. The footings of the mill constructed in 1848 remain; this mill was built on the site of an earlier mill which may have had its origins in the medieval period.

The survey area contains the remains of the shrunken medieval village (SMV) of Isham (3619), comprising earthworks of house platforms (RCHME 1979). These include a feature identified as a hollow-way aligned east to west forming the original continuation of South Street leading down to the River Ise. To the north of the hollow-way a series of plots have been identified forming part of a possibly planned medieval settlement between South Street and Middle Street/Mill Lane. South of the South Street hollow-way within the survey area traces of ridge and furrow were recorded on aerial photographs taken in the years following the Second World War. It is not known when the settlement shrank back towards its core around the church; the earliest maps available for the village date to around 1800 and the area had been deserted by that period.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principal aim of the archaeological evaluation was to quantify the quality and extent of the archaeological resource, the nature of which has been indicated by an earthwork survey carried out by RCHME in the late 20th century, through trial trench evaluation. These types of project are designed to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the location, extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of important archaeological remains within the application area.

The specific aims and objectives of this project were as follows:

- to record the extant earthworks visible on the site;
- to establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation on the development site;
- to recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- to recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

Specific research objectives will be drawn from national and regional research frameworks documents (Knight, Vyner and Allen 2012) as relevant depending upon the results of the evaluation.

4 METHODOLOGY

The original proposal was for six trenches, each 40m long (MOLA 2015). However, it was not possible to excavate the full length of Trench 1 due to an overhead electricity line. The 10m shortfall in this trench was made up by excavating a small trench (Trench 7) near the north edge of the site (Fig 2).

The trenches were excavated using a JCB 3CX mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m-wide toothless ditching bucket. The topsoil and subsoil were removed under archaeological direction to reveal natural substrate and were stacked separately at the side of the trench. All procedures complied with MOLA Health and Safety provisions and MOLA Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.

All archaeological deposits encountered during the course of the excavation were fully recorded, following standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). All deposits were given a separate context number in a sequence assigned to each trench. They were described on *pro-forma* context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation.

All trench locations were recorded using Leica Viva Global Positioning System (GPS) survey equipment using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of $\pm 0.05\text{m}$. A full digital photographic record was maintained. The field data from the evaluation has been compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.

All trenches were backfilled with their up-cast material and compacted by the mechanical excavator. Prior to backfilling, Trench 7 was covered with permeable terram sheeting to protect its contents.

All stages of the evaluation conformed to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (2014a) and *Code of Conduct* (2014b). All stages of the project were undertaken in accordance with Historic England, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (HE 2015a).

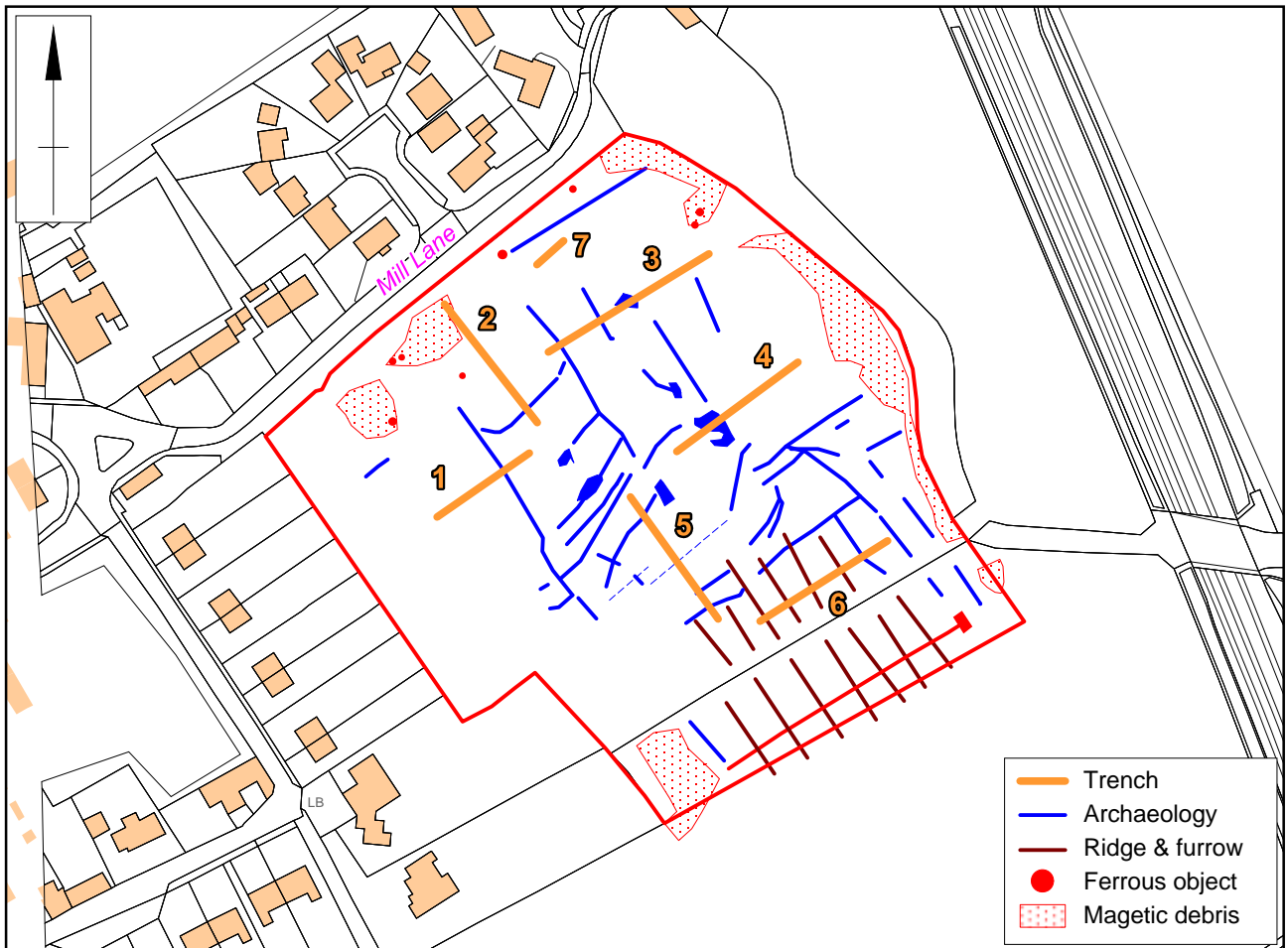
5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

5.1 General stratigraphy

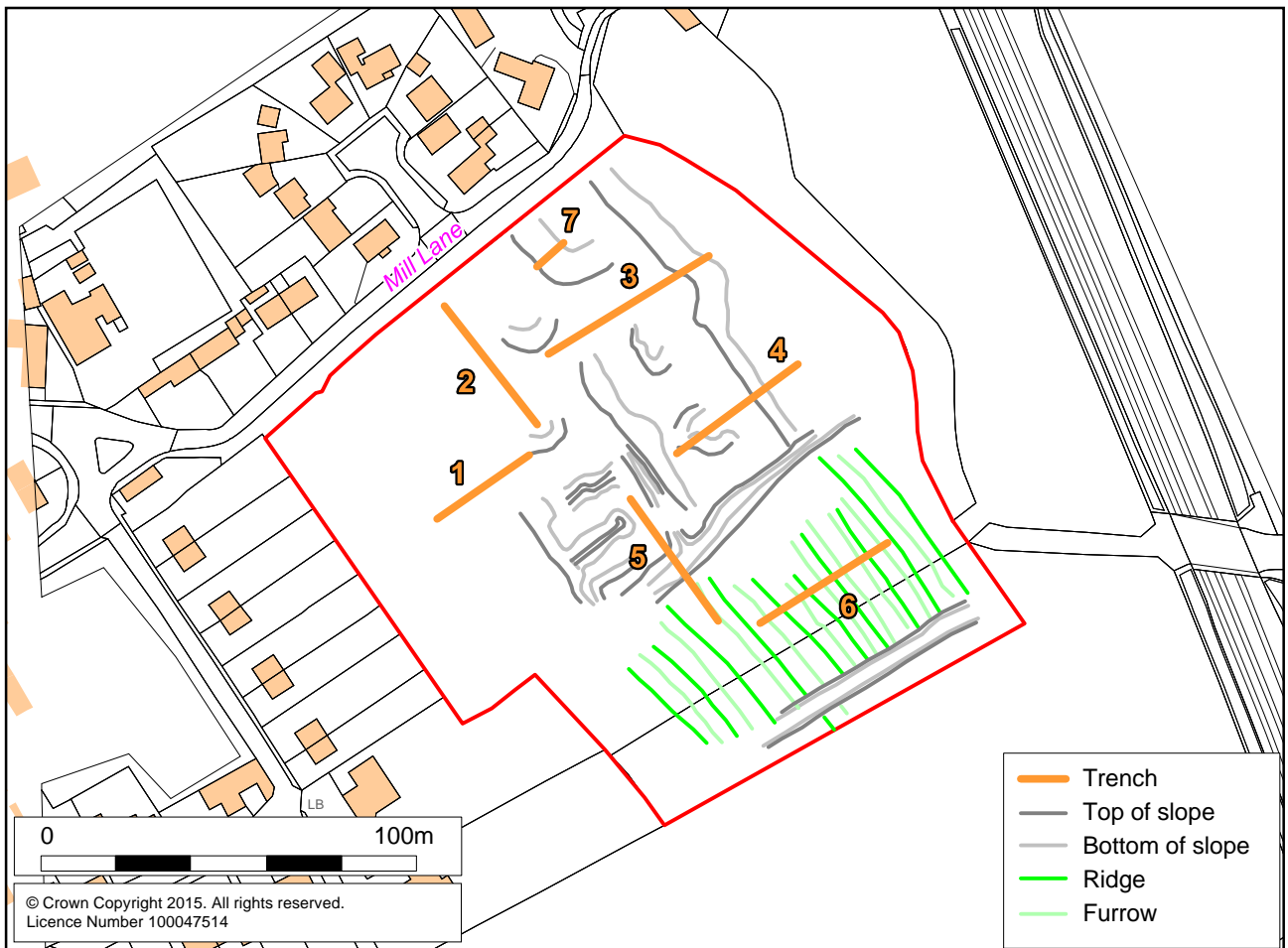
The natural substrate comprised mid orange-brown silts with light yellow-blue clay patches and outcroppings of ironstone brash and tabular light yellow-white limestone. It was encountered between 0.2m and 0.60m below the present ground surface. Mid brown-orange colluvium overlay the natural in the north-east ends of trenches 4 and 6 only, where the ground dropped away towards the River Ise. At its greatest depth, the colluvium was up to 1m thick. Subsoil was mid orange-brown silt between 0.15m and 0.44m thick. It was present in trenches 1 and 4 to 6 only. The topsoil, dark brown clay silt, varied in thickness from 0.12m to 0.3m thick.

5.2 Overview of archaeological features

Archaeological remains were present in all trenches. They comprised ditches and pits as well as layers, surfaces and a drain. The earliest remains may date from the Roman period, but most were dated to the medieval and post-medieval periods. Medieval features comprising ditches and pits were identified in trenches 1, 2, 5 and 6 (Fig 2), whilst the post-medieval pits and cobbled surfaces were identified in trenches 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7. Post-medieval build-up deposits were also observed in Trench 1.



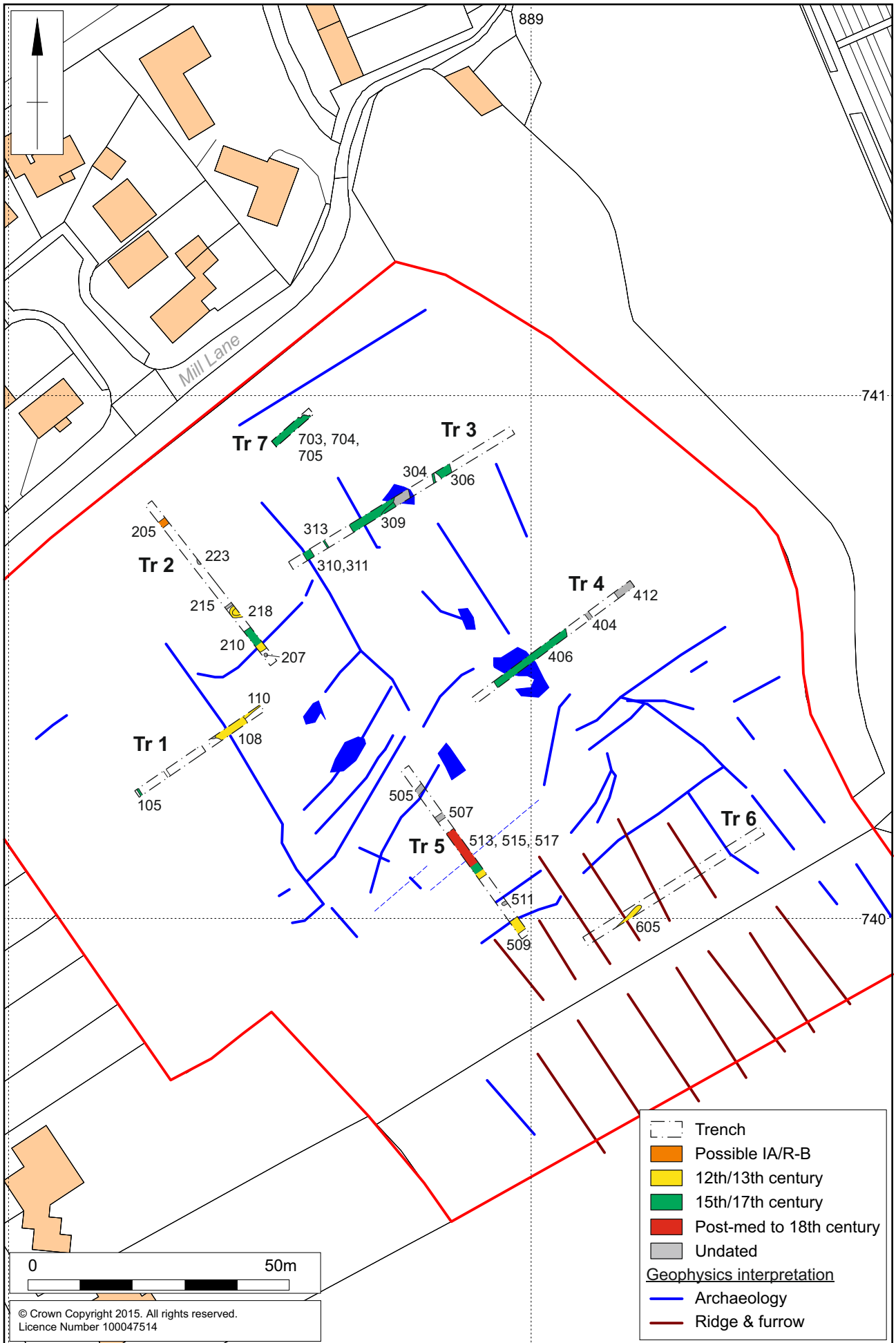
a



Scale 1: 2000

Excavated trenches with geophysics interpretation (a) and earthwork survey (b)

b
Fig 2



Scale 1: 1000

Evaluation features with geophysical survey interpretation and phasing

Fig 3

The spatial distribution of the features demonstrated that the post-medieval activity was predominantly confined to the north and west corner of site, covering an area of approximately 640sq m and that the medieval activity was present on the higher ground to the south and east (Fig 3).

5.3 Possible Iron Age or Romano-British ditch

Ditch [205], was aligned south-west to north-east was located 4m from the north-west end of Trench 2 (Fig 5, section 6). It had a U-shaped profile with a concave base and was 0.95m wide by 0.52m deep. It had an unusually dark fill when compared with the other medieval features and contained an unusually high proportion of charred spelt (see section 6.7). One sherd of pottery recovered from fill (204) was dated to the 12th century, but due to the high concentration of spelt, a grain not used in the post-Roman period, it is likely to be intrusive. The ditch therefore must pre-date the 12th century.

5.4 The medieval features (12th and 13th centuries)

The medieval period was characterised by a series of ditches, some of which corresponded well with the earthwork and geophysical surveys. In addition, there was a possible structure. The features were identified in Trenches 1, 2, 5 and 6 (Fig 3 and Fig 4).

Ditches

At the north-east end of the trench was ditch [110], aligned north-west by south-east. It extended beyond the north edge of the trench so its full extent and character was not visible, but had a probable concave profile with a flat base and was at least 0.6m wide by 0.3m deep. No finds were recovered but it was cut by medieval ditch/pit [108], indicating that it was also medieval, or earlier.

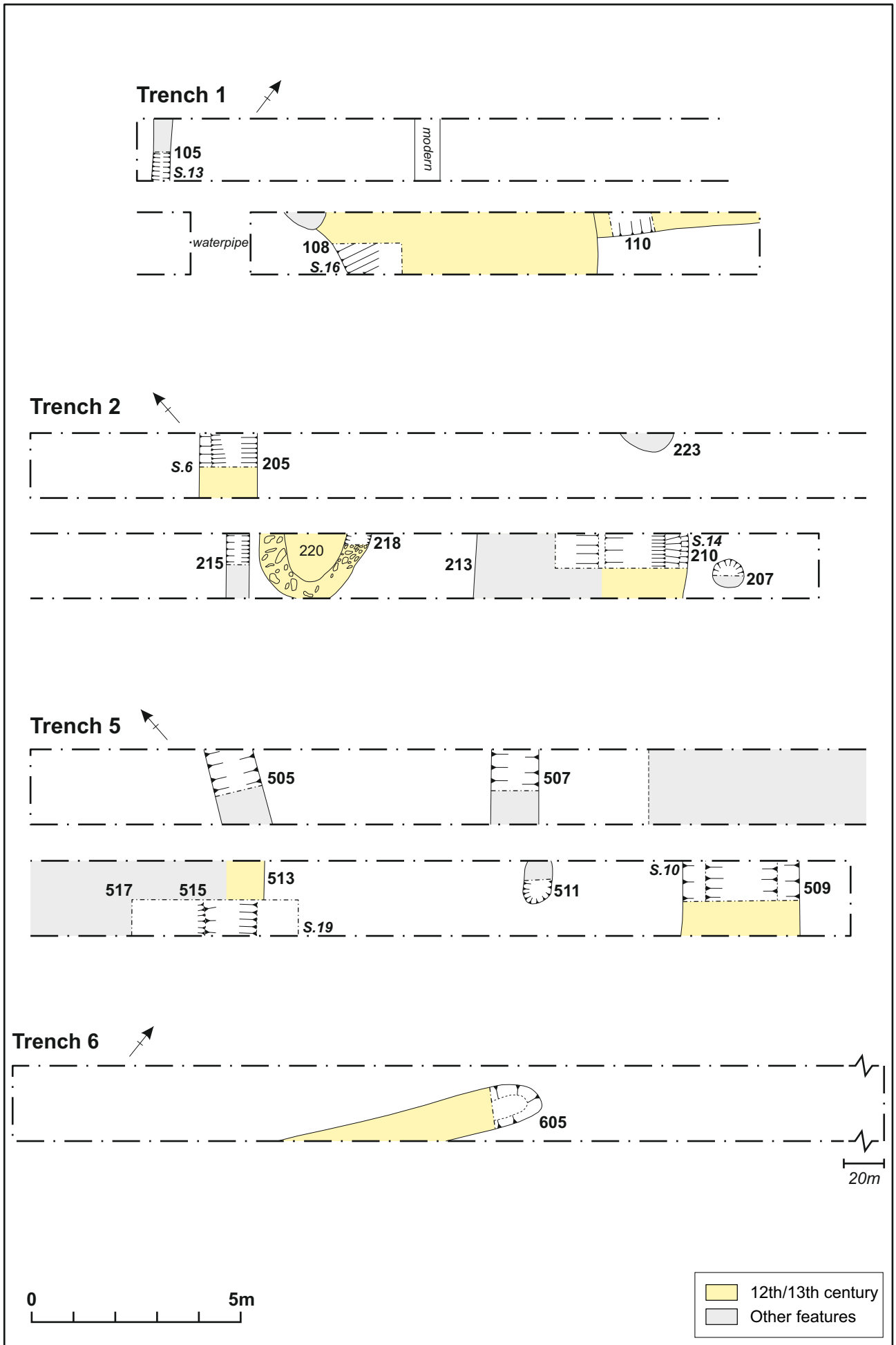
Large ditch or pit [108] (Fig 5, section 16) corresponded well with a linear feature aligned south-east to north-west shown on the geophysical survey. Although the full extent of the feature was not exposed it was at least 7m wide and 0.75m deep. Pottery recovered from the upper fill (106) is dated to the 12th century.

Ditch [213] aligned south-west to north-east was located 2.5m south-east of structure [218] in Trench 2 (see below). It was not fully excavated, but was at least 2.75m wide by 0.63m deep with a wide, shallow V-shaped profile. Pottery recovered from the upper fill (212) was dated to the mid-13th century. It was truncated by late medieval ditch [210] (see 5.4 below). Both features correspond with the linear anomaly identified by the geophysical survey (Fig 3 and Fig 5, section 14).

Ditches [513] and [509] (Fig 5, sections 10 and 19) were aligned south-west to north-east in Trench 5. Ditch [513] corresponded with a linear earthwork, previously interpreted as a 'hollow-way' leading down to the River Ise. It was located 14m from the south-east end of the trench and was the earliest in a sequence of at least three ditches. It had a U-shaped profile and was at least 1.2m wide by 0.7m deep. Pottery recovered from near the base of the ditch was dated to the mid-12th century.

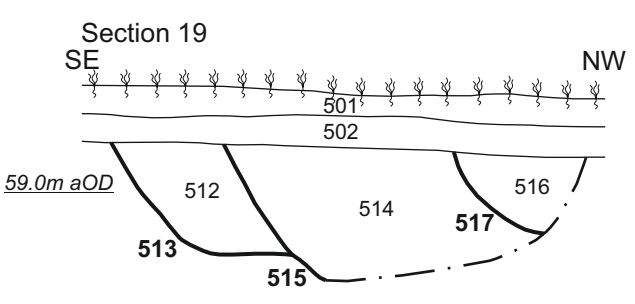
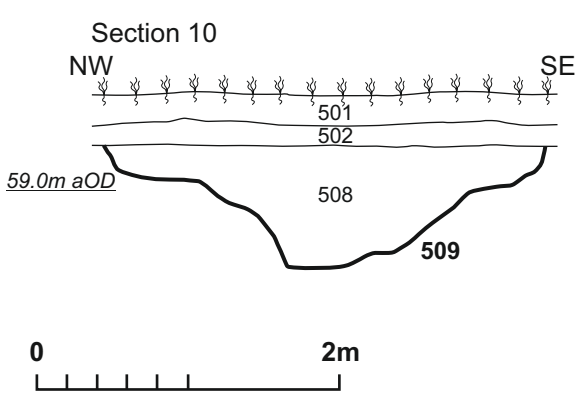
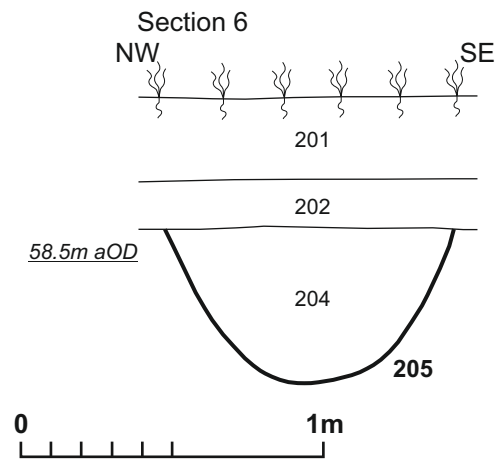
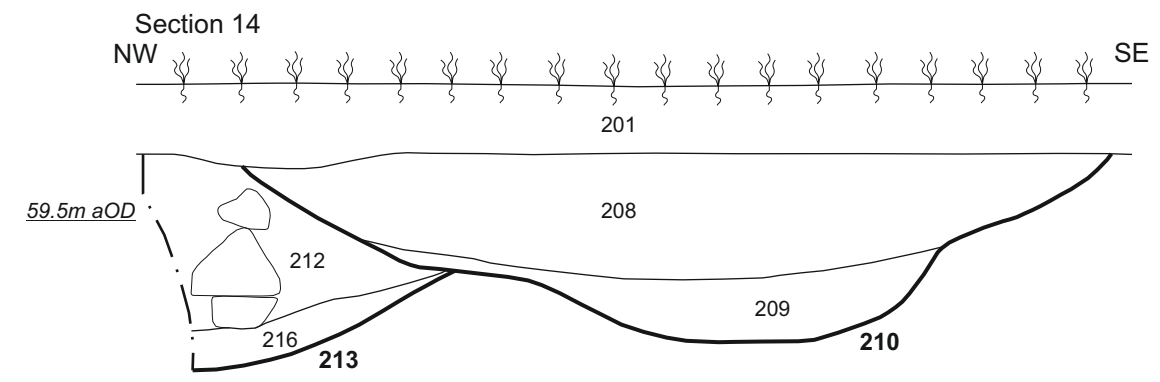
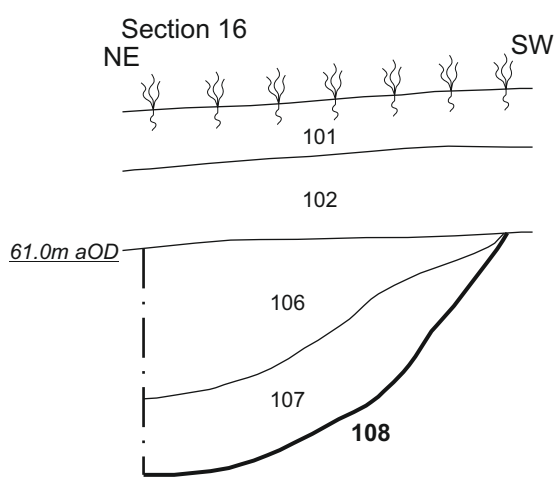
Ditch [509] was located just over 1m from the south-east end of the trench and corresponded with a linear anomaly. It had an uneven, V-shaped profile and was 2.9m wide by 0.8m deep. Pottery dated to the 13th-century was recovered from the fill.

A ditch [605], aligned north-east to south-west, ending at a terminal, had a shallow (Fig 4) U-shaped profile and was 0.74m wide by 0.15m deep. A single fragment of abraded and probably residual 12th-century pottery was recovered from fill (604).



Scale 1:125

Medieval features in Trenches 1, 2, 5 and 6 Fig 4



Scale 1:25 & 1:50

Sections of medieval features Fig 5

Feature

Feature [218] was located 11m from the south-east end of the trench and comprised a tightly curving ditch, U-shaped in plan, that was filled with abundant and tightly packed small to large sub-rounded limestone and ironstone flat 'slabs' (Figs 4 and 6). The ditch had an open, V-shaped profile with a concave base and was 1.1m wide by 0.34m deep. Pottery recovered from amongst the stones (221) was dated to the mid-12th century, whilst pottery recovered from the ditch fill (217) was mid-13th century in date.

Deposit (219) lay within the curve of the stones and was 0.1m thick. Although its relationship with the structure was unclear a modern nail was recovered indicating that it was subsoil.



Trench 2: feature [218] pre-excavation, facing north-east Fig 6

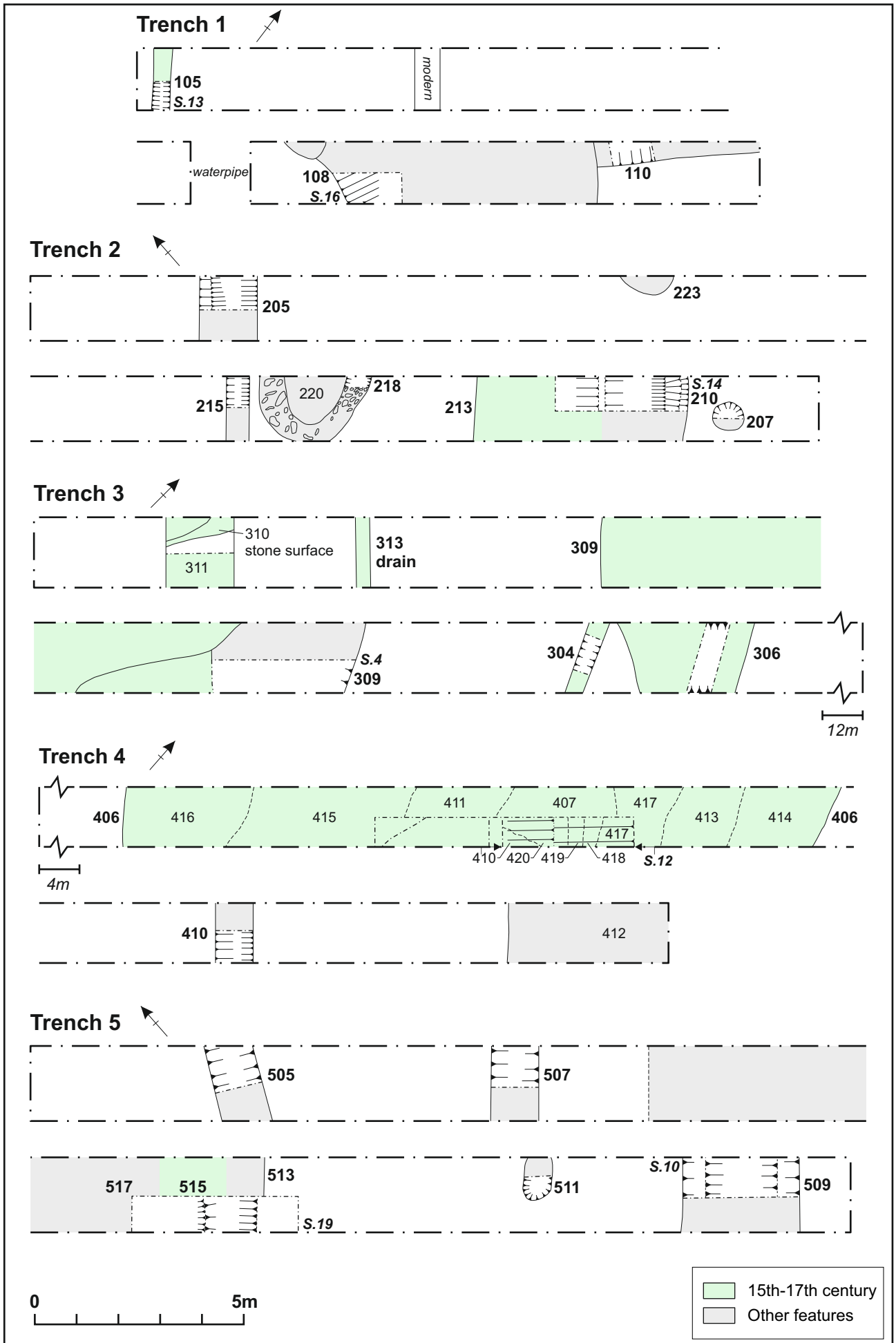
5.5 Late medieval to post-medieval features (15th to 17th centuries)

Late medieval to post-medieval features were located in Trenches 1 - 5 and 7. They comprised four ditches and three or more pits as well as a drain and cobbled surfaces. Some of these features corresponded with the geophysical survey, but not the RCHME (1979) earthwork survey (Figs 2, 3 and 7).

Ditches

Narrow ditch [304], aligned north-north-west to south-south-east, 18m from the north-east end of Trench 3, was 0.6m wide by 0.38m deep, with a U-shaped profile. Mid-15th century pottery was recovered from fill (303) as well as intrusive fragments of 18th-century glass.

Ditch [210] cut medieval ditch [213] (Fig 5). It had a wide, irregular, rounded V-shaped profile with heavily eroded upper edges and was 2.9m wide by 0.69m deep. Pottery recovered from upper fill (208) was indicate that the feature may have been medieval in origin and went out of use in the late 17th century. It is likely to have been a re-establishment of the earlier medieval boundary. This sequence of ditches corresponds with a linear anomaly identified by the geophysical survey (Fig 3).



Scale 1:125

Late medieval to post-medieval features Fig 7

Medieval ditch [513] was cut on its north-west side by ditch [515] (Fig 5), which was more than 2.2m wide by over 0.85m deep, with a similar profile. Pottery recovered from fill (514) was dated to the mid-15th century. A sherd of residual Roman roof tile was also recovered. Only a small part of ditch [517] was exposed but it was seen to be similar to both [513] and [515]. It was more than 0.85m wide by 0.45m deep and, although undated, is likely to be late medieval in origin, at the earliest 15th to 16th centuries. These correspond with a weak linear anomaly and, in part, the earthwork survey.

Ditch [105] (Fig 7), aligned south-east to north-west, at the south-west end of Trench 1, was 0.45m wide by 0.2m deep and had a round-based, V-shaped profile. It was probably medieval in date as it was directly overlain by a post-medieval limestone-rich made-ground deposit dated to the late 17th century.

Pits

At least two large pits [309] and [406] were identified in trenches 3 and 4, with a third smaller pit [306] in Trench 3 (Fig 7). The large pits were between 13m and 18m in diameter and although the bases were not reached will have been considerably deeper than 1m (hand-excavation depth).

The upper fills of pit [309] comprised clay-based rubble-rich deposits. The upper fill (307) had a lens of charcoal/coal at the base indicating the deposition of domestic or industrial waste and ten sherds of pottery were recovered, as well as a fragment of clay tobacco-pipe and a medieval roof tile, which indicate a late 17th or 18th-century date for its disuse. Similar finds from pit [306], to the north-east of pit [309] indicate that the features might have been contemporary. It was at least 3m wide by 0.5m deep and was probably oval in plan (the pit extended beyond the limits of the trench). The fill (305) contained large sub-rounded limestone slabs.

Pit or pits [406] was located in Trench 4 (Fig 8). Due to the large size of the feature – at least 18m in diameter – only the uppermost, latest fills were excavated.



Trench 4: charcoal-rich and burnt material in pit [406], facing south-west Fig 8

The pit was initially filled with multiple large dumps of stoney material (411) to (418) followed by burnt fills (410) and charcoal rich fills (408) and (409) indicating possible industrial activity (Fig 8). Pottery recovered from mid fill (409) was dated to the mid-16th century, whilst from upper fill (407) the pottery was late 16th century. This indicates that the pit was in use during the 16th century and earlier. A fragment of clay tobacco pipe recovered from the upper fill indicates that the backfilling of the pit continued into the 18th century. Environmental samples taken from fills (407) and (409) contained unusual but very likely domestic fragments of eggshell, fish bone and marine mollusc shell as well as a number of soft, burnt, red-brown mineral concretions indicative of high temperatures.

Stone-lined drain and cobbled surfaces

A stone-lined drain or small culvert [313], aligned south-east to north-west, lay 8m from the south-west end of Trench 3. The sides were constructed of angular blocks of limestone, roughly-hewn to form a channel and capped with flat roughly-squared slabs of limestone (Fig 9). No finds were recovered from the fill (312) of the drain. Although not seen within the trench, the drain/culvert may have been associated with cobbled surfaces in Trench 3 and/or Trench 7 to the north.



Stone drain/culvert [313], Trench 3, looking south-east Fig 9

The cobbled surface (310) in Trench 3 (Fig 10) lay less than 3m to the south-west and consisted of large to medium limestone sub-rounded cobbles laid on-edge in rows, aligned approximately north to south, and edged with large stones laid perpendicular and on-edge in parallel rows. The surface was associated with a spread of medium mid-brown sandy silt mixed with small stones (311).

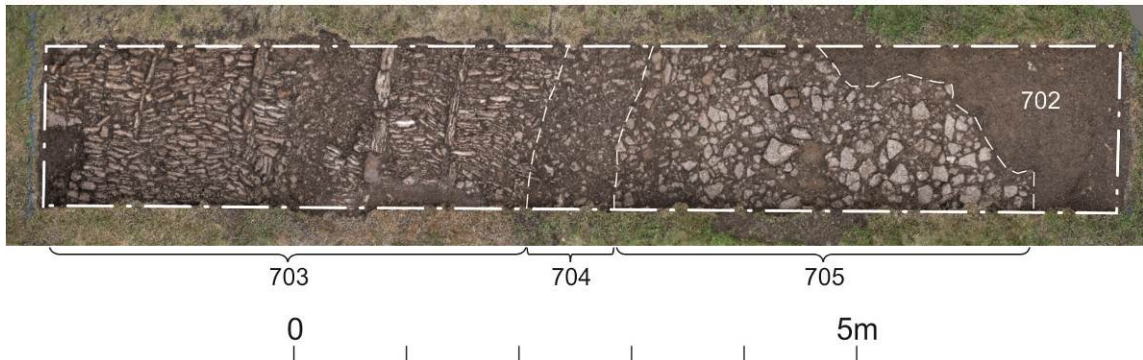
Cobbled surface (703, 704 and 705) extended across and beyond the limits of Trench 7 (Fig 11). It was very similar in composition to surface (310) but aligned south-west to north-east, with occasional ironstone cobbles as well as limestone cobbles. The upper surface (703) at the south-west end of the trench had been eroded in a 0.6m linear band by an unknown method, revealing the underlying layer of stones. Underlying (703) was bedding layer (704) consisting of small to medium angular pebbles mixed into a mid-grey silt matrix. The surface extended down the slope to the north-east end of the trench, where the upper two surfaces and already been lost, revealing a surface of flat limestone cobbles laid roughly side by side in a mid grey silt

matrix (705). All three surfaces were overlain by mid orange-grey silt (702) possibly a former topsoil from which 19th century pottery was recovered.



Cobbled surface (310), Trench 3, looking north-west Fig 10

Trench 7



Trench 7: Cobble surfaces (703), (704) and (705), facing north-east Fig 11

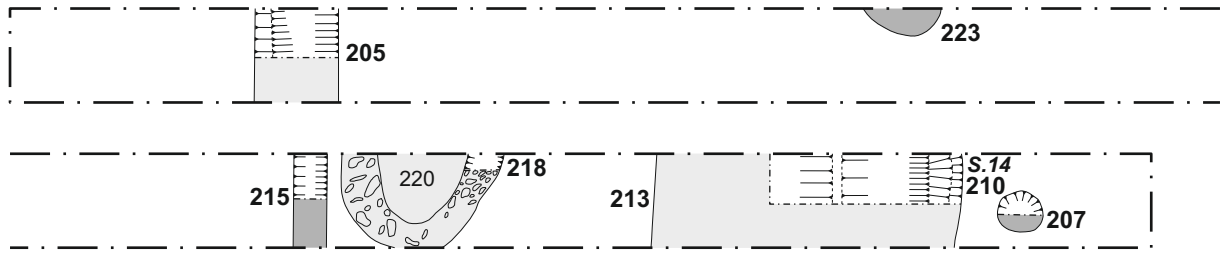
5.6 Undated features

Undated features in trenches 2, 4 and 5 (Figs 3 and 12) comprised ditches and pits and a layer. Some were probably post-medieval or earlier in date, based on their position in the stratigraphic sequence.

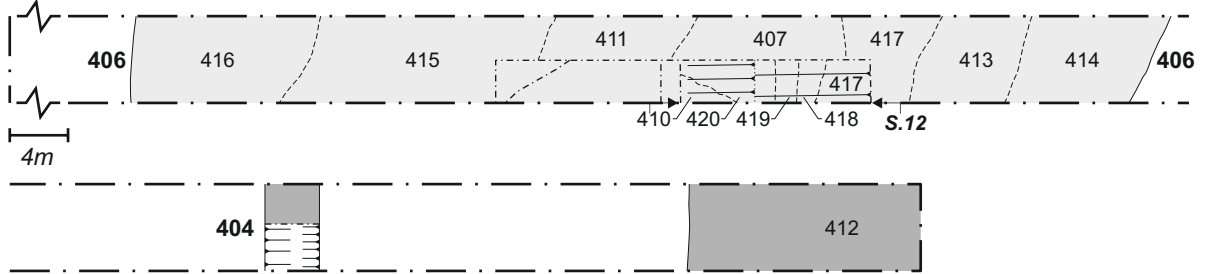
Shallow ditch [404] was aligned north-west by south-east at the base of a sharp 1m drop in the ground surface 25m from the south-west end of Trench 4. It was 0.95m wide by 0.2m deep, with a rounded, V-shaped profile. Two undiagnostic iron nails were recovered from the charcoal-rich fill (405) as well as two fragments of Roman roof tile. It was overlain by a thick spread of post-medieval material containing glass, brick and tile and clay tobacco-pipe (not kept) (Fig 11), indicating a post-medieval or earlier date for its use.

Ditch [215] was aligned south-west to north-east and to the immediate north-west of possible structure [218]. It was 0.55m wide by 0.1m deep and had a shallow,

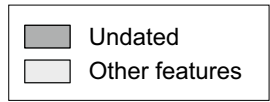
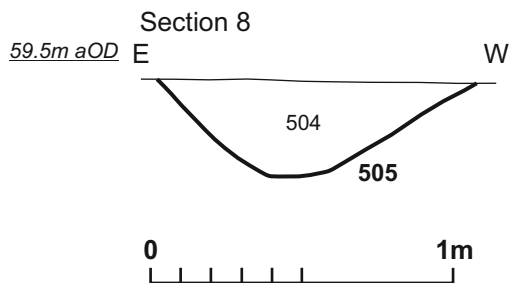
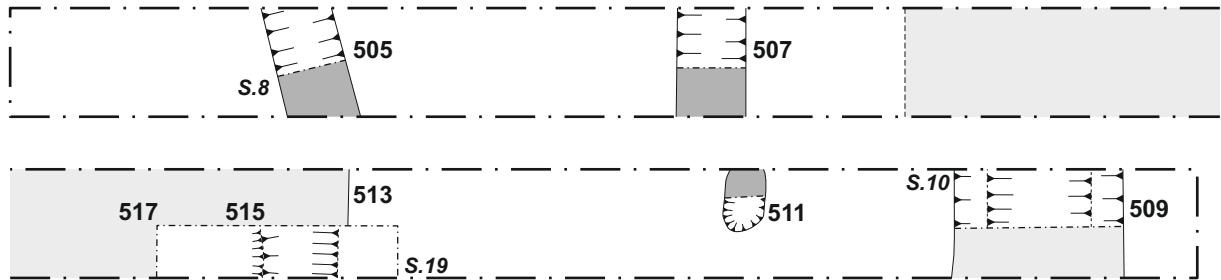
Trench 2



Trench 4



Trench 5



V-shaped profile with a flat base. A broken fragment of Roman roof tile was recovered from the fill (214), but is unlikely to indicate the date of the feature.

Ditches [505] and [507] were aligned approximately south-west to north-east and located towards the north-west end of Trench 5. They both had round-based, V-shaped profiles and were no more than 1.4m wide by 0.43m deep. Ditch [505] corresponded with a linear anomaly on the geophysical survey.

Pit [207] at the south-east end of the Trench 2 was sub-circular in plan, 0.7m in diameter by 0.14m deep with a shallow, rounded profile.

Pit [223], 15m from the north-west end of Trench 2, was barely visible in plan at the side of the trench and was not excavated.

Pit [511] was located 3m to the north-west of early medieval ditch [509] and was sub-rectangular in plan. It extended just beyond the edge of the trench. It was 0.72m long by 0.3m deep with an asymmetrical U-shaped profile.

Layer (412) at the north-east end of Trench 4, filled in a natural drop in the ground surface towards the river. It consisted of subsoil-like material with occasional limestone inclusions. It was unclear whether this was a deliberate deposit or an accumulation of material eroded through hillwash (colluvium) or agricultural use.

6 THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Medieval and post-medieval pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 118 sherds with a total weight of 2,050g. It was all medieval or later. It was recorded using the conventions of the Northamptonshire County Ceramic Type-Series (CTS), as follows:

- F319: Lyveden/Stanion 'A' Ware, AD1150-1400. 8 sherds, 44g
- F320: Lyveden/Stanion 'B' Ware, AD1225-1400. 2 sherds, 28g
- F324: Brill/Boarstall Ware, early 13th-16th centuries. 1 sherd, 4g
- F329: Potterspury Ware, AD1250 – 1600. 7 sherds, 83g
- F330: Shelly Coarseware, AD1100-1400. 8 sherds, 93g
- F365: Late Medieval Reduced Ware, AD1400 - 1500. 2 sherds, 32g
- F401: Late Medieval Oxidized Ware, AD1450 – 1550. 11 sherds, 329g
- F403: Midland Purple Ware, AD1450-1600. 19 sherds, 224g
- F409: Staffordshire Slipwares, AD1680-1750. 2 sherds, 10g
- F411: Midland Blackware, 1550-1700. 2 sherds, 8g
- F412: Chinese Export Porcelain, mid-18th – 19th centuries. 1 sherd, 6g
- F413: Manganese Glazed Ware, AD1680-1750. 9 sherds, 46g
- F420: Westerwald/Cologne Stoneware, 17th – 18th centuries. 1 sherd, 4g
- F421: Frechen/Cologne Stoneware, AD1550-1750. 3 sherds, 34g
- F426: Iron-Glazed Coarsewares, c late 17th – 18th centuries. 41 sherds, 1,112g
- F1000: Misc 19th and 20th century Wares. 1 sherd, 1g

The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region (eg. Blinkhorn 2010). The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a terminus post quem.

The range of fabric types indicate that there was more or less unbroken activity at the site from the 12th century to the near-present, although two of the earliest contexts, 204 and 604, both contain just a single sherd of pottery, and in each case, it is very abraded, and thus likely to be residual. Other than these, the assemblage is in good condition, and appears reliably stratified.

The range of vessel types is typical of sites in the region. The medieval assemblage consists mainly of jars and glazed jugs, with large bowls dominating the late medieval and post-medieval groups, along with a few sherds of pottery associated with drinking. It all appears entirely of a domestic nature.

Table 1: The medieval and post-medieval pottery (weight in g)

Fill/Cut	F330		F319		F320		F324		F329		F365		F401		F403		F411		F421		F420		F409		F413		F412		F426		F1000		Date	
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt		
102/s	1	11	-	-	1	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	43	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	17	-	-	L17thC
106/108	2	31	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12thC	
Tr2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	U/S	
204/205	1	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12thC	
208/210	1	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	285	-	-	L17thC	
211/213	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	1	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M13thC	
217/218	1	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M13thC	
221/222	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M12thC	
301/t	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	-	-	5	67	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	2	18	1	6	4	420	-	-	M18thC	
303/304	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	31	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M15thC	
305/306	-	-	2	6	-	-	-	-	4	60	-	-	-	-	7	72	-	-	1	4	-	-	1	7	2	9	-	-	25	324	-	-	L17thC	
307/309	-	-	4	29	-	-	-	-	1	9	-	-	-	-	1	10	1	7	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	59	-	-	L17thC		
402	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	27	1	42	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M15thC	
407/406	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	7	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	L16thC	
409/406	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	206	-	-	-	-	1	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M16thC	
508/509	1	7	-	-	1	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13thC	
512/513	-	-	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M12thC	
514/515	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	32	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M15thC	
604605	1	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12thC	
702/s	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	1	19thC	
703/sf	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	19	-	-	1	5	-	-	L17thC	
Total	8	93	8	44	2	28	1	4	7	83	2	32	11	329	19	224	2	8	3	34	1	4	2	10	9	46	1	6	41	1112	1	1		

Key

t = topsoil; s = subsoil; sf = surface

6.2 Ceramic building material by Pat Chapman

There are nine roof tile sherds, weighing 857g. Five of these tile sherds appear to be of Roman date by fabric, the other three sherds are medieval in date (Table 2).

Table 2: Quantification of ceramic roof tile

Fill/cut type	No	Wt (g)	Description
214 / 215 ditch	1	42	Roman, sandy, joining sherds,
301 topsoil	4	515	2 Roman body sherds, shelly ware
		194	2 medieval ridge, 1 green-glazed, Lyveden/Stanion
307 / 309 pit	1	26	Medieval
405 / 404 ditch	2	52	Roman, shelly ware
514 / 515 ditch	1	28	Roman, sandy
Totals	9	857	

Roman roof tile

Two bodysherds, 15mm thick, from topsoil (301) and two from fill (405) of ditch [404], are made in a shelly ware fabric with much of the shell leached out. The sherds from the topsoil are quite soft, the other two are harder, but have no complete dimensions. A bodysherd from fill (514) of ditch [515] was 25mm thick and made with orange sandy clay with a brown surface and white to grey core. Joining sherds from fill (214) of ditch [215], at least 25mm thick and made in sandy clay with an orange-brown surface and a wide black core, could also be of Roman date.

Medieval roof tile

Two ridge tile sherds from topsoil (301), probably from the same tile, are 15mm thick and made with hard fine orange-brown sandy clay with a grey core, the larger sherd is green-glazed towards the apex. This fabric is typical of Lyveden/Stanion ware of 14th to 16th century date. A sherd made with a similar fabric including large white inclusions, 10mm wide, of chalk or other calcareous material, comes from fill (307) of pit [309].

Discussion

Work along the proposed Isham bypass by Northamptonshire Archaeology in the past has produced finds of Roman date (eg Shaw and Holmes 1996 and NA 2004), so it is not altogether surprising to find tile of Roman date. Pottery and tile manufactured in shelly ware fabrics are common to the medieval period also, but these tile sherds are soft and therefore very similar to some Roman shelly ware fabrics.

6.3 Animal bone by Rebecca Gordon

Introduction

A total of 1.97kg of animal bone was assessed using an 'all fragments' methods- therefore identification to element and taxon was attempted providing there were diagnostic features. Bones that could not be identified were recorded as large and medium mammal or bird. Bones were identified with the aid of the MOLA Northampton reference collection. Epiphyseal fusion data was recorded as well as the subsequent wear of mandibular teeth. Wear stages were recorded for teeth using Grant (1982) for sheep and were converted into age categories using Hambleton (1999). Gnawing and butchery was recorded on all identifiable bones and bone preservation was recorded using Harland *et al* (2003).

The assemblage

Bone preservation was in 'good' condition with very little surface abrasion. Butchery evidence was only observed on three specimens. Chop marks were recorded on two cattle scapulae and chop/saw marks were noted on one cattle femur. Carnivore gnawing identified on two specimens suggests that the bones were not buried

immediately after disposal. Most of the species represented typical domestic food waste. Cattle (*Bos taurus*) and sheep/goat (*Ovis/Capra*) were the most common food animal, followed by pig (*Sus scrofa*). Chicken (*Gallus gallus*) was the only poultry species identified. One out of three chicken fragments came from a juvenile bird, which most likely derived from a chick. Interestingly, a hare (*Lepus europaeus*) humerus was recorded from pit fill (305). Hare was a hunted animal that is usually associated with high-status consumption (Sykes 2010). Non-food animals included horse (*Equus* sp.). Ageing data could only be recorded on a limited number of specimens. One sheep mandible was aged between 2-3 years and epiphyseal fusion data showed that two out of ten specimens were skeletally immature.

Table 3: Number of hand-collected specimens from Isham by context

Fill/cut	Cattle	Sheep/ goat	Pig	Equid	Hare	Chick -en	L. Mam	M. Mam	Large bird	Total
204/205	-	-	-	-	-	-	27	-	-	27
208/210	1	1	-	-	-	-	6	1	-	9
211/213	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	4
301/top	1	1	-	-	-	1	5	-	-	8
303/304	1	-	1	1	-	-	3	-	-	6
305/306	3	-	1	1	1	1	6	1	-	14
307/309	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
402/sub	3	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	-	8
405/404	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	3
407/406	4	4	3	-	-	-	7	6	-	24
409/406	2	1	1	2	-	-	1	-	-	7
514/515	-	3	1	-	-	-	6	1	-	11
703/sur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
Total	15	13	8	5	1	3	66	13	1	125

Key: top=topsoil; sub=subsoil; sur=surface. L.Mam=large mammal; M.Mam=medium mammal

Conclusion

The animal bone assemblage is represented mainly by domestic refuse. The presence of domestic and wild species suggests dietary diversity. The condition of the assemblage and the nature of the animal bone demonstrate potential for future analysis should further work take place.

6.4 Glass by Claire Finn

Glass fragments were recovered from six contexts; four of which came from Trench 3, and two from Trench 4. The glass represented domestic waste material in the form of bottle, vessel and window glass.

Table 4: Quantification of glass

Fill / cut / type	Form	Wt (g)	Fragments	Min. vessel count	Date
301/ - / topsoil	Bottle	52.5	5	1	19th century
	Flat	3.9	1	-	17th century?
305/304/ditch	Bottle	63.1	7	2	17th-18th centuries
	Flat	2.0	6	-	17th-18th centuries?
	Vessel	4.4	3	2	Late 16th-early 17th century
307/309/pit	Bottle	7.9	2	2	19th century
407/406/pit	Bottle	9.3	2	1	-
	Flat	0.9	1	-	-
409/406/pit	Flat	5.4	2	-	17th century
Total	-	149.4	29	5	-

Bottle glass was recovered from four contexts. The topsoil of Trench 3 contained five sherds from a 19th-century cylindrical wine bottle of olive green glass. It was straight-sided with a rounded heel.

Fill (305) of ditch [304] contained six sherds from bottles probably from the 18th century. The bottle which was best represented with five fragments, was of thick, mid olive green hand-blown glass, and had a thick folded base, trapping an air bubble, with a low kick-up.

Two sherds from probable 19th-century bottles were found in fill (307) of pit [309]. Two small pieces of highly degraded bottle glass from fill (407) of pit [406] could not be dated.

Flat glass, usually associated with window glazing, was found in contexts 301, (305) fill of ditch [304], (407) and (409) fills of pit [406]. The flat glass was all post-medieval in date, and ranged in thickness from 1.5mm to 2.4mm, suggesting date ranges from the 17th-19th centuries.

Fill (305) of pit [304] produced three interesting pieces of vessel glass. These were fragments from two 'waffle-patterned' beakers, of a type produced in the late 16th and early 17th-centuries in Germany and the Low Countries.

6.5 Clay tobacco pipe by Tora Hylton

Five clay tobacco-pipe stem fragments were recovered from pit fills (307) and (407) and layer (703) in Trenches 3, 4 and 7.

The stem fragments measure up to 54mm in length and display minimal signs of abrasion and wear. Changes in manufacturing technique and the use of finer wire to make the bore ensured that there was a regular reduction in bore diameter between c1620 and 1800. The size of the bore is measured in 64's of an inch and the measurements of the stem fragments from pit fill (307) and pit fill (407) suggest that they date to the early 18th century (8/64's), while the stem fragment from layer (703) measures 6/64's of an inch, suggesting a slightly later date.

6.6 Other finds by Tora Hylton

Ten finds were recovered from eight deposits in Trenches 2, 3, 4 and 7. With the exception of a fragment of lead window came and a cast copper alloy disc, the assemblage is dominated by iron nails (x 8).

A short length of H-sectioned window lead (came) 25mm long was recovered from ditch [306]. The interior surface of the came is reeded, a feature created during hand milling, a process which reduced the amount of metal required (Egan *et al* 1986, 303). Transverse grooves were cut into the surface of the wheels of the vice, to ensure the lead was gripped during the milling process and this in turn created the reeding. Window leads were used to hold small individual panes of glass (window lights) in place. A 17th -19th century date for this small fragment is suggested. A cast circular copper alloy plate was recovered from the fill of pit [406]. The disc is flat-sectioned and it is decorated with the corroded remains of a floral motif. It is difficult to determine what the object may have been used for, but it is post-medieval in date.

Four nails are complete and they range in recorded length from 30-83mm. Typologically they are difficult to identify with any certainty, since some of the nail heads are obscured by corrosion deposits, but in general they all appear to represent structural nails. The nails were recovered from medieval and post-medieval features and a single intrusive modern wire nail was recovered from Layer 219. In addition, one nail was recovered from topsoil deposits overlying Trench 3.

Finds Catalogue

Iron Objects

Nail, iron. Complete. Wire nail with small flat circular head with circular-sectioned shank. Length: 65mm. Trench 2, Layer 219

Nail, iron. Incomplete, terminal of shank missing. Shaped of head obscured by corrosion deposits, tapered rectangular sectioned shank. L (incomplete): 71mm. Trench 3, Topsoil 301

Nail, iron. Complete. Head obscured by corrosion deposits, square-sectioned shank tapered to a point. Terminal clenched. Length: 60mm. Trench 3, Fill 305 of Ditch 306

Nail, iron. Complete. Head obscured by corrosion products, square-sectioned shank tapered to point. L: 83mm. Trench 3, Fill 405 of Ditch 404

Nail, iron. Incomplete, shank only, tapered with square cross-section. L (incomplete): 50mm. Trench 3, Fill 405 of Ditch 304

?Nail/tang, iron. Incomplete object, one terminal missing. Tapered with rectangular cross-section and rounded terminal. L: 45mm. Trench 4, Fill 407 of Pit 406

Nail, iron. Complete, but no distinctive head, rectangular cross-section and tapered to a point. L: 30mm. Trench 7, cobbled surface 703

Nail, iron. Incomplete, terminal of shank missing. Tapered square-sectioned shank with small triangular head. L (incomplete): 42mm. Trench 7, cobbled surface

Lead objects

Window came, lead. Short fragment of H-sectioned window lead, reeding on inside surface. L: 25mm. Trench 3, Fill 305 of Ditch 306

Copper alloy objects

Decorated disc, copper alloy. Cast circular plate with the corroded remains of a floral motif on one side and a recessed groove close to the edge. Underside plain. Diameter: 38mm. Trench 4, Fill 409 of Pit 406

6.7 Plant macrofossil and other remains by Val Fryer

Samples for the retrieval of the plant macrofossil assemblages were taken and four were submitted for assessment, one from ditch [205] (sample 1), one from ditch [509] (sample 2) and two from pit [406] (samples 3 and 4).

The samples were bulk floated by MOLA Northampton and the flots were collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed in Table 5. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (2010). All plant remains were charred. Modern roots, seeds and arthropod remains were also recorded.

Results

Cereal grains/chaff and seeds of common weeds are present at a low to moderate density within all but sample 3. Preservation is generally good, although some cereals and seeds are puffed and distorted, probably as a result of combustion at extremely high temperatures.

Oat (*Avena* sp.), barley (*Hordeum* sp.) and wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains are recorded, with wheat being predominant. Of the wheat grains, most are of an elongated 'drop' form typical of spelt (*T. spelta*), although a number of more rounded hexaploid/tetraploid type grains of probable bread wheat (*T. aestivum/compactum*) or rivet wheat (*T. turgidum*) type are also recorded. Glumed wheat chaff (including spelt glume bases) is abundant within the assemblage from sample 1, and sample 2 includes a single rivet wheat rachis node. Occasional bread wheat type nodes are also recorded. Oat grains are moderately common within the assemblage from ditch [205], but in the absence of diagnostic floret bases it is impossible to ascertain

whether these are from wild or cultivated varieties. Barley grains are generally scarce, occurring within only two of the assemblages studied. The only non-cereal crop plant remain is a single cotyledon fragment of a large pulse (Fabaceae) of probable pea/bean type.

Seeds of common segetal weeds are moderately abundant within the ditch assemblages and are also present within sample 4 from pit [406]. Taxa noted include corn cockle (*Agrostemma githago*), stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*), brome (*Bromus* sp.), small legumes (Fabaceae), black bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*), medick/clover/trefoil (*Medicago/Trifolium/Lotus* sp.), grasses (Poaceae), dock (*Rumex* sp.) and scentless mayweed (*Tripleurospermum inodorum*). A single possible sedge (*Carex* sp.) nutlet is noted within the assemblage from ditch [205]. Charcoal/charred wood fragments are present throughout, being particularly abundant within the assemblage from sample 3. Other plant macrofossils occur less frequently, but do include pieces of charred root/stem, culm nodes and indeterminate inflorescence fragments.

A limited range of other materials is also recorded. Small pieces of coal (coal 'dust') are present throughout, being particularly abundant within the two pit assemblages. The latter also include fragments of eggshell, fish bone and marine mollusc shell (all possibly domestic in origin) and sample 3 contains a number of soft, burnt, red/brown mineral concretions. These are somewhat puzzling, as they superficially resemble natural earth pigments and certainly do create a mark when applied to paper. However, it is thought most likely that they are accidental by-products of the extremely high temperatures of combustion which were employed in and around pit [406] during the Post-medieval period.

Table 5: The charred plant macrofossils and other remains

Sample No.	1	2	3	4
Context No.	204	508	408	407
Feature No.	205	509	406	406
Feature type	Ditch	Ditch	Pit	Pit
Cereals and other potential crop plants				
<i>Avena</i> sp. (grains)	xx	x	-	-
(floret frags.)	x	-	-	-
(awn frags.)	xx	-	-	-
<i>Hordeum</i> sp. (grains)	-	x	-	x
<i>Triticum</i> sp. (grains)	xxxx	xx	-	x
(glume bases)	xxxx	x	-	-
(spikelet bases)	xx	-	-	-
(rachis internodes)	xx	x	-	-
<i>T. spelta</i> L. (glume bases)	xxxx	x	-	-
(spikelet frags.)	x	-	-	-
<i>T. aestivum/compactum</i> type (rachis nodes)	x	x	-	-
<i>T. turgidum</i> type (rachis node)	-	x	-	-
Cereal indet. (grains)	xx	xx	-	x
(detached sprouts)	x	-	-	-
Large Fabaceae indet.	-	-	-	x
Herbs				
<i>Agrostemma githago</i> L.	x	-	-	-
<i>Anthemis cotula</i> L.	x	xxx	-	-

Asteraceae indet.	x	-	-	-
<i>Bromus</i> sp.	x	xcf	-	-
Caryophyllaceae indet.	-	x	-	-
<i>Chenopodium album</i> L.	-	x	-	-
Chenopodiaceae indet.	x	-	-	-
<i>Cirsium</i> sp.	x	-	-	-
Fabaceae indet.	x	xx	-	xcf
<i>Fallopia convolvulus</i> (L.)A.Love	x	-	-	-
<i>Galium aparine</i> L.	-	xcffg	-	-
<i>Hyoscyamus niger</i> L.	xcf	-	-	-
<i>Lapsana communis</i> L.	x	-	-	-
<i>Medicago/Trifolium/Lotus</i> sp.	x	-	-	x
Small Poaceae indet.	xx	x	-	x
<i>Rumex</i> sp.	xxx	x	-	x
<i>Solanum</i> sp.	x	-	-	-
<i>Tripleurospermum inodorum</i> (L.)Schultz-Bip	xx	x	-	-
<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp.	-	x	-	-
Wetland plants				
<i>Carex</i> sp.	xcf	-	-	-
Other plant macrofossils				
Charcoal <2mm	xx	xxx	xxxx	xxxx
Charcoal >2mm	x	xx	xx	xx
Charcoal >5mm	x	x	x	x
Charred root/stem	x	x	-	x
Indet. culm nodes	x	-	-	-
Indet. inflorescence frags.	xx	x	-	-
Indet. seeds	x	x	-	x
Other remains				
Black porous 'cokey' material	x	x	-	-
Black tarry material	-	x	-	x
Bone	-	-	xcfb	-
Burnt/fired clay	-	x	-	-
Burnt stone	-	-	x	-
Eggshell	-	-	x	-
Fish bone	-	-	x	x
Marine mollusc shell	-	-	x	x
Mineral concretions	-	-	x	-
Small coal frags.	X	x	xxxx	xxxx
Small mammal/amphibian bone	-	-	-	x
Sample volume (litres)	40	40	40	40
Volume of flot (litres)	<0.1	<0.1	c2.6	<0.1
% flot sorted	100%	100%	<10%	100%

Key to Table

x = 1 – 10 specimens xx = 11 – 50 specimens xxx = 51 – 100 specimens xxxx = 100+ specimens

cf = compare fg = fragment b = burnt

Discussion

Although the pottery from the site suggests that all the sampled features are likely to be of medieval or post-medieval date (Mo Muldowney *pers comm*), the plant macrofossil assemblage from ditch [205] is typical of a deposit of later prehistoric or Roman cereal processing waste. At the end of the Roman period, the production of spelt went into decline, with evidence suggesting that by the Early Saxon period, it was no longer a cereal of choice and was largely occurring as a volunteer weed amongst other crops. An assemblage of the type recorded at Isham represents far more than an occurrence of an occasional weed and does, therefore, appear to be entirely anachronistic. However, small quantities of Roman tile were found in another nearby ditch, and a possible Iron Age – Romano-British farmstead is recorded about 500m to the north of the current site. It is, therefore, possible that ditch [205] is a relic of this earlier occupation, with medieval pottery (one sherd weighing 10g) being intrusive within the fill. This would appear more plausible than the possibility of the plant remains being residual as the assemblage has few (if any) later contaminants and does appear 'complete'. In addition, the condition of the material is generally good, possibly suggesting that it has suffered very little post-depositional disturbance. This dilemma remains to be resolved.

In contrast, the assemblage from ditch [509] is more typical of medieval agricultural detritus, although it is noted that it does contain a single spelt wheat glume base, possibly indicating that some residual material is present on the site. Rivet wheat glume bases are rarely seen within assemblages pre-dating the medieval period, and the abundance of small legumes is generally thought to be indicative of the use of a rotational cropping regime as a means of improving soils impoverished by over production and poor land management.

The two pit assemblages would appear to be largely 'industrial' in nature, although sample 3 also includes a small amount of what appears to be domestic detritus. It is tentatively suggested that the cereals and seeds within sample 4 may be derived from plant materials used as tinder or kindling.

Conclusions and recommendations for further work

In summary, although plant macrofossils are relatively common within some of the Isham assemblages, apparent discrepancies in dating are currently making any interpretation of the features somewhat challenging. The material from ditch [205] is almost certainly derived from a small deposit of cereal processing waste, but the composition of the assemblage is strongly suggestive of a Roman and not medieval date. Processing waste is again present within the fill of ditch [509], with the abundance of stinking mayweed seeds suggesting that some cereals were being grown on the clay soils to the south of Isham. As the assemblage is somewhat limited, it is suggested that the material may be derived from scattered refuse, some or all of which was accidentally incorporated within the ditch fill. However, in this instance, the material is almost certainly contemporary with the feature from which the sample was taken. The paucity of material within pit assemblages makes accurate interpretation impossible; although it would appear that the process/processes involved did rely heavily on the high temperature combustion of quantities of wood. Identification of the charcoal from sample 3 may provide data about both the process and the exploitation of local resources for fuel.

Although the assemblage from sample 1 does contain a sufficient density of material for quantification, the current issues of dating somewhat preclude the possibility of further analysis. Therefore, no further work is recommended at this stage. However, a summary of this assessment should be included within any publication of data from the site.

7 THE EARTHWORK SURVEY by James Ladocha

7.1 Methodology

The survey followed the guidance laid out in the Historic England document *Understanding the Archaeology of Landscapes: a guide to good recording practice* (HE 2015b).

The survey was undertaken using a Leica System Viva Global Positioning System (GPS) operating using SMARTNET realtime corrections to a 3D accuracy of +/- 0.1m to Ordnance Survey National Grid. The survey comprised the general topographic survey of the development area as well as survey of the earthworks. Survey points across the proposed development area were recorded with a GPS and the top and bottoms of slopes were identified and recorded along with sufficient data to generate an image of the natural topography. With regards the extant ridge and furrow on the site the peaks of the ridges and the bases of the furrows were surveyed. The measured survey was supplemented by digital photography.

Survey data was processed using MapInfo and the results overlain on Ordnance Survey base mapping. Both a terrain and angle of slope model (Fig 18) have been produced using ArcGIS. The results are also illustrated using interpretive hachure plans at 1:1,250 scale (Fig 19). Profiles of upstanding earthwork features have been produced derived from the GPS point (x, y, z) data (Figs 15 and 17).

7.2 General comments and condition

In general the earthworks are poorly defined and are for the most part quite ephemeral, particularly when taking into account the pronounced natural slope down to the old course of the River Ise from west to east (a drop of approximately 10m across the survey area) (Fig 18). As a result the majority of earthworks are not readily apparent within the digital photographs taken on site. The western boundary of the site was too overgrown to carry out an earthwork survey.

The earthworks can be grouped into five possible interpretative groups; terraces, subdivision banks, hollow-way/field boundary, ridge and furrow, and later intrusions (Fig 19).

7.3 Terraces

There are three parallel earthworks (Terraces 1, 2 and 3) which have been interpreted as possible terraces. These are aligned north-west to south-east and Terrace 2 is roughly equidistant from Terraces 1 and 3, with a spacing of approximately 30m (Fig 19).

Terrace 1 is the most pronounced earthwork on the site; it is 87.5m long, 4.0-8.0m wide and c0.7-1.0m high (Fig 13). Its south-eastern boundary is defined by hollow-way/field boundary 1 and extends to the site boundary with Mill Lane in the north-west. The slope of Terrace 1 is most pronounced in the south-east with it widening and becoming more gradual in the north-west.

Terrace 2 in the central part of the survey area, is 48m long, 4.0-8.0m wide and c0.6m high. Its south-eastern boundary is defined by hollow-way/field boundary 1 and its north-western boundary is very diffuse and masked by the natural slope.

Terrace 3 on the western extent of the surveyable area, is 30m long, 2.0-4.0m wide and c0.25-0.5m high. Like Terrace 2 it is bound by hollow-way/field boundary 1 to the south-east and peters-out to the north-west.



Terrace 1, looking west Fig 13

7.4 Sub-division banks

Between Terraces 2 and 3 there are three diffuse banks (Banks 1, 2 and 3) and a possible ditch (Ditch 1) which may represent sub-divisions of the land between the two terraces. The banks are perpendicular to the terraces and are approximately 12-13m apart (Fig 19).

Bank 1 is approximately 14m long, 5.5m wide and 0.1m high. It is roughly equidistant between Terraces 2 and 3 and has a slight dog-leg.

Bank 2 is 18m long, c7.0m wide and c0.1m high. It extends from the base of Terrace 3 and appears to terminate 12.6m short of Terrace 2.

Bank 3 is 16.2m long, 8.5m wide and is only c0.05m high on its north-western slope. This feature may not actually represent a discrete bank but may be a slight banking of material on the north-western edge of hollow-way/field boundary 1. Bank 3 may be L-shaped but is obscured by overgrowth.

Ditch 1 is parallel and adjacent to Terrace 2. It is 3.2-4.0m wide and up to 0.2m deep. It is c15.5m long but is very diffuse and may have originally projected out from Hollow-way/field boundary 1.

7.5 Hollow-way/field boundary

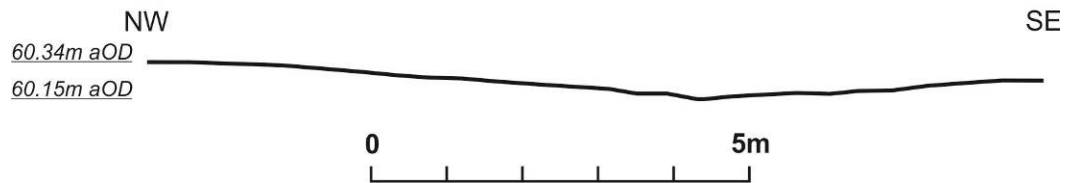
Hollow-way/field boundary 1 is aligned south-west to north-east across the site, its south-western boundary is obscured by overgrowth and it peters-out in the north-east where the land levels out in the old river valley. Its accessible length was approximately 75m but it most likely continues further to the south-west up to the field boundary. It varies in width from approximately 8.4m in the south-west to 4.0m in the north-east, and is c0.10m deep with a wide U-shaped profile (Figs 14 & 15).

Hollow-way/field boundary 1 corresponds to a feature interpreted as a hollow-way forming the original continuation of South Street leading to the River Ise, in the 1979 RCHME survey (RCHME 1979). The RCHME survey was carried out using aerial photographs and as a result highlighted the features north of this hollow-way as house platforms for the SMV of Isham. The current survey found no evidence for house platforms and as such is uncertain whether this feature is a hollow-way or may be a field boundary marking the change in use from agricultural in the south, represented by ridge and furrow, to a more settlement based land use to the north.



Hollow-way/field boundary 1, looking south-west Fig 14

Profile 1



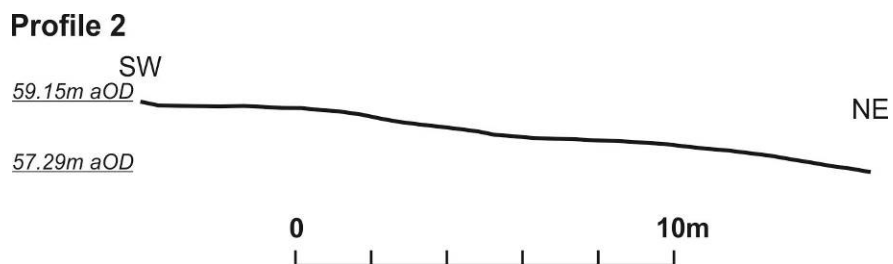
Hollow-way/field boundary 1 profile, scale 1:100 Fig 15

7.6 Ridge and furrow

To the south of hollow-way/field boundary 1 an area of ridge and furrow was surveyed. Ten ridges and furrows were identified aligned north-west to south-east, with a spacing of approximately 10m and a height (base of furrow to top of ridge) of c0.40m (Figs 16 and 17). The ridge and furrow became more diffuse as it headed south-east out of the survey area.



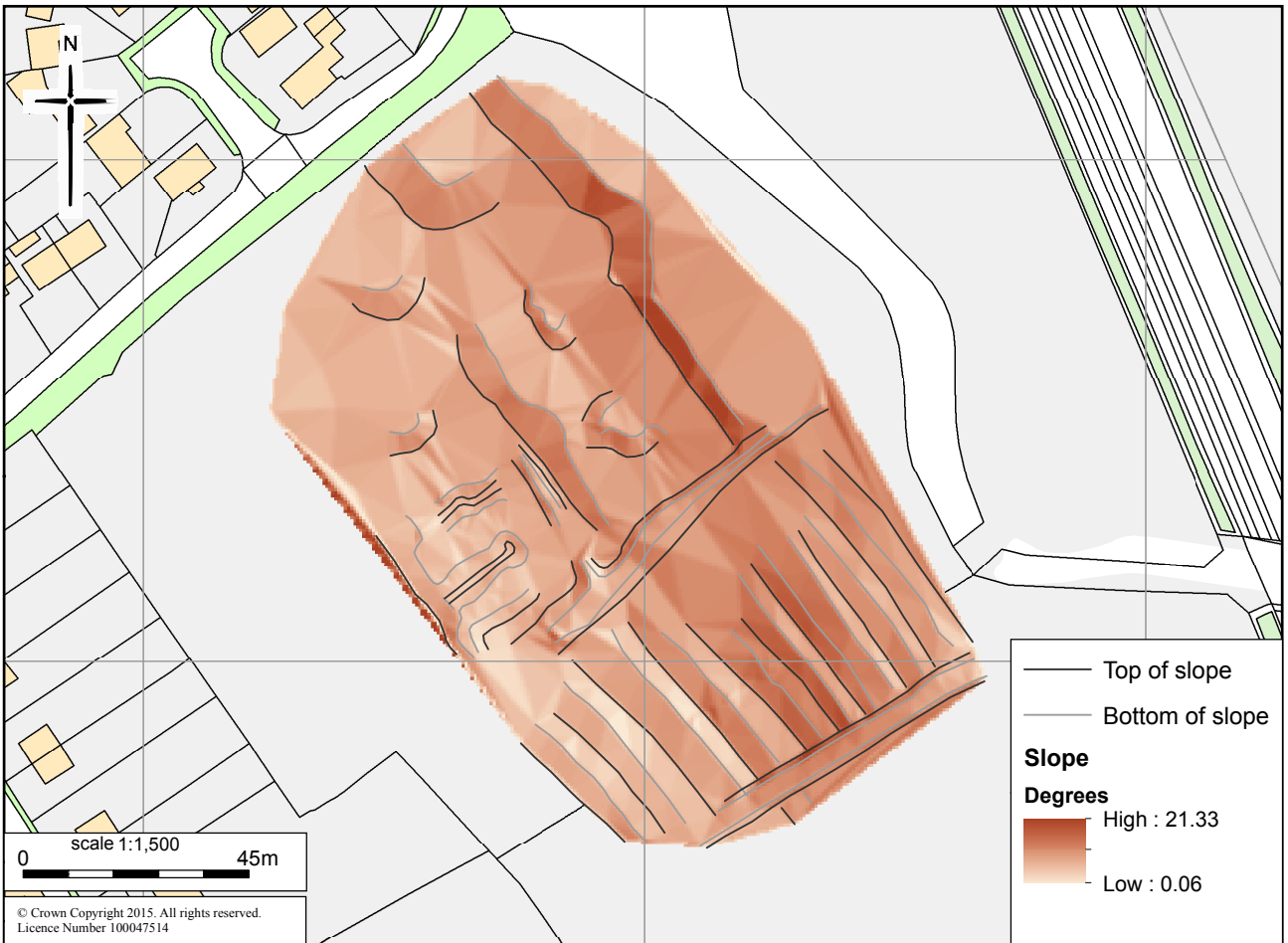
Ridge and furrow, looking north-west Fig 16



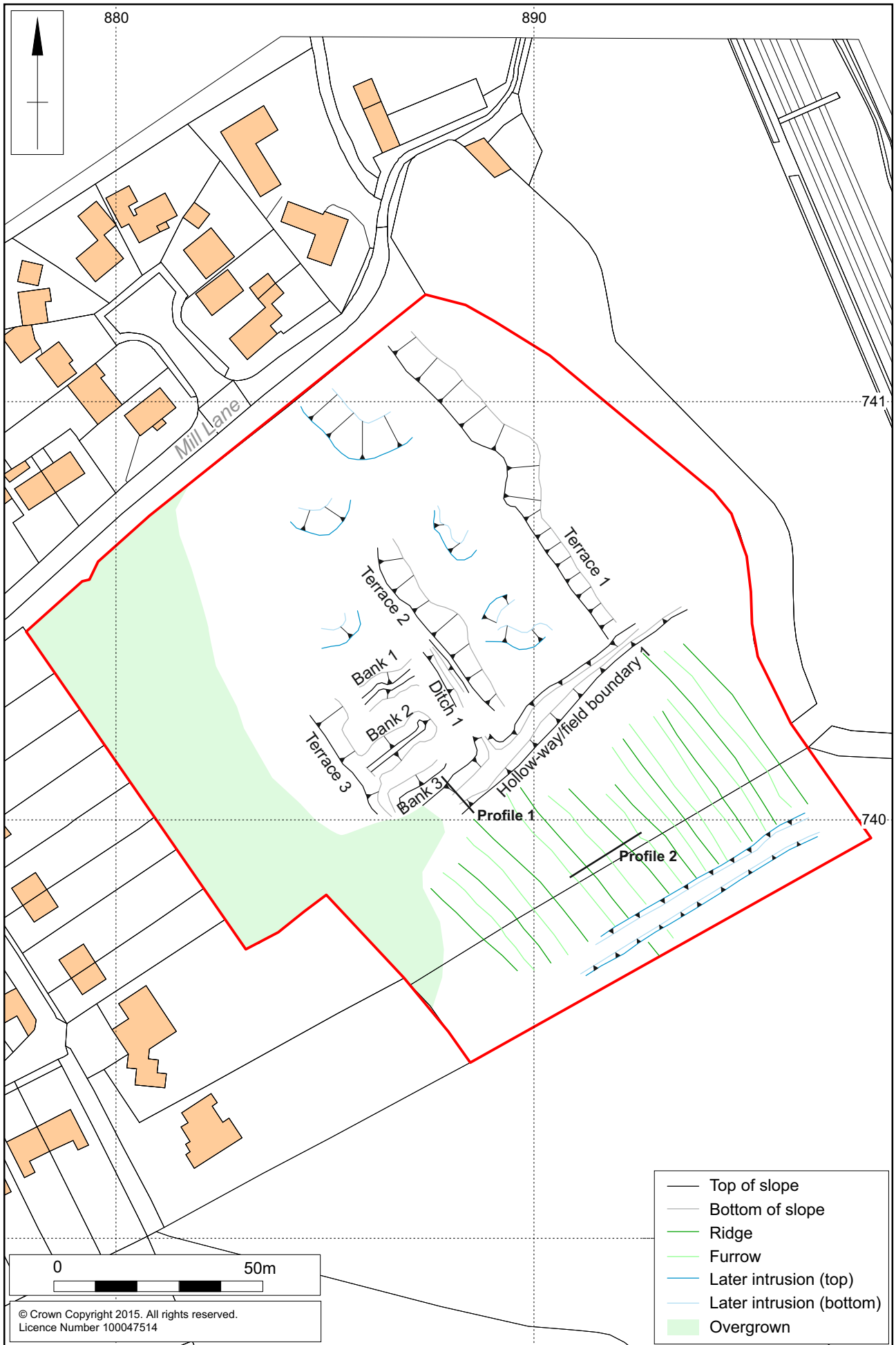
Ridge and furrow profile, scale 1:200 Fig 17

7.7 Later intrusion

Later intrusive features comprise four sub-rounded and one L-shaped hollow located in the northern half of the site, and a linear feature at the south-eastern boundary of the survey (Fig 19). The hollows are of uncertain origin and may represent large pits or possibly quarrying. The linear feature is a depression from the installation of a service pipe (two man-hole covers are present) that also appears to be used as a trackway.



Earthwork survey results showing topography (top) and slope (bottom) Fig 18



Scale 1: 1,250

Earthwork survey hachure plan Fig 19

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 Evaluation

Archaeological remains identified on the site consisted of ditches and pits, a stone-lined drain and cobbled surfaces, and surface traces (earthworks) of ridge and furrow cultivation strips. The dateable material recovered from these features indicates that the majority of activity was taking place in the medieval and post-medieval and modern period, although there are indicators of earlier activity.

The features were spatially distributed across the site by period, with the early medieval features located on the south and west side of the site and the post-medieval features concentrated in the north-east corner, although some other later features were identified across the whole site. Only one possible earlier feature, a Roman ditch, was identified near the north-west edge of the site.

The alignment of the Roman ditch was comparable with that of Mill Lane and some of the later ditches, although this may just reflect the topography. It has respected the fall of the land from south-west to north-east towards the River Ise. This is probably related to an Iron Age and Roman period settlement of that date, located approximately 20m to the south-west, south of South Street. During building work there, two curving parallel ditches were identified, one of which was excavated. This contained Samian and other Roman pottery, building materials, including tiles and tesserae, and animal bones. Sherds of pre-Roman date and several flint 'tools' were found in pipe trenches (British History Online (BHO) 2014).

Medieval

The medieval features comprised ditches, and a pit or ditch. All were located in the south and west part of the site, indicating that the village had spread to this point by the 13th century. The low level of artefacts recovered and generally pale soils indicate that this may well have been confined to fields or enclosures used for non-settlement type activity. This might include 'dirty' or 'smelly' trades, such as smithing, tanning, leatherworking, etc. or they may simply have kept livestock on this steeply sloping ground. The small, curving feature identified in Trench 2, may have been a small structure related to agricultural or industrial activity. The small size and shape certainly precludes a domestic use. One of the key features of this period was the long-lived boundary ditch in Trench 5 that continued to be used through to the present day and is visible on the ground as a linear hollow. It was recorded in the RCHME survey as an eastward continuation of South Street and interpreted as a hollow-way, however this has proved to be an erroneous interpretation.

Late medieval to post-medieval

Analysis of the pottery assemblage has shown that the level of occupation and use of the site was constant throughout the medieval period, from at least the 12th-century and continued into the post-medieval period (the 17th-century) when use of the area expanded. Features of the later date were found across all trenches, except Trench 6. There were a series of boundary ditches, in two instances replacing an early medieval version, including the major boundary ditch in Trench 5 and Trench 2, as well as pits and surfaces. With a single exception all the other ditches and pits of this period were located in Trenches 7, 3 and 4 and may indicate the location of a late to post-medieval plot leading south-eastwards off Mill Lane. Within the plot there were also three cobbled surfaces and a stone drain. The plot is likely to have extended as far back as the large boundary ditch in Trench 5; it contained contemporary and later material and recent aerial photographic surveys show the boundary in use until very recently.

Two large pits provide evidence for possible post-medieval industrial activity in this backyard plot. The larger of these, although not fully excavated, contained abundant weed seeds, suggesting the land around and nearby was not tended, and small burnt concretions indicative of burning at high temperatures. Possible uses include an industrial feature backfilled with waste products and other detritus, or a quarry pit backfilled with, amongst other things, waste products of high temperature firing being carried out nearby. The edge-of-village location and proximity to a watercourse, make this land ideal for an industrial purpose. The other smaller pit had an as yet unknown function.

It is also unknown at this stage what association the pits, stone-lined drain and the cobbled surface had. They appear to have been in use throughout the same period but whether contemporaneously is unknown. The composition of both the cobbled surfaces indicates an external use and they may have been associated with a structure fronting onto Mill Lane, with the drain in Trench 2 leading waste water off the cobbles in Trench 7. There is a gap of approximately 10m between the surface in Trench 7 and the Lane, enough space for a building.

Post-medieval

Artefacts of 18th-century and 19th-century date were recovered from the final (observed) ditch of the large boundary, overlying the cobbled surface in Trench 7 from the upper fills of the large pits and from the subsoil and topsoil indicate when the area had ceased to be used. The pits were being backfilled and there was a certain amount of levelling taking place. This may also include the in-filling of a terrace observed at the north-east end of Trench 4 and raising of the ground surface at the south-west end of Trench 1 where large silty and stoney deposits were deposited. This had the effect of smoothing out the uneven ground, perhaps making it more manageable for pasture and an absence of ridge and furrow on the north side of the large ditch boundary supports this. The ditch might therefore also denote different ownership between the two land parcels.

It is now clear that the 20th-century earthwork survey, which identified:

“a series of embanked and scarped closes which extend S.E. to meet another shallow and somewhat indistinct hollow-way which continues the line of South Street (SP 888740). Slight depressions at the N.W. ends of these closes may be former house-sites fronting Middle Street and it is possible that other buildings once existed at the other end, fronting the hollow-way” (BHO 2014),

does not correspond with the existing remains present on site. The RCHME had identified hollow-ways and house platforms belonging to a ‘shrunken’ village; however the evaluation has shown that the slight earthworks indicate the location of former medieval fields and paddocks and later backyard, possible industrial activity, as well as some landscaping and terracing. The ‘depressions’ correspond well with the large pits and perhaps more clearly define the plot lying south of Mill Lane. The linear earthwork (hollow-way) extending from South Street is actually a large and long-lived field boundary that also marked the extent of the settlement because ridge and furrow extends up to, but not beyond, its south side, thus also indicating the open-field system that surrounds the village.

Earthwork survey

The archaeological earthwork survey of the surviving remains at Mill Lane, Isham recorded features that are likely to be on the periphery of the medieval village as well as later intrusion. The features represent the final use of the site after clearance of any structures. The principal and clearest features (Terraces 1, 2 and 3, and the Hollow-way/field boundary) are visible on the RCHME survey. However, the RCHME

survey also highlighted a number of house platforms which were not apparent in the current survey. The features on the RCMHE survey were recorded from aerial photographs as opposed to ground survey. Had it been the latter then it may have been interpreted slightly differently.

The earthwork survey can be divided in to two distinct areas; ridge and furrow in the south indicating the open-field system that surrounded the village, and possible settlement periphery to the north. This northern area appears to have been landscaped and terraced, with some possible sub-division, but there is no evidence of house platforms. These two areas are divided by a linear depression which may be a hollow-way representing the continuation of South Street or simply a field boundary marking the edge of the open-field system and start of the village.

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APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, N end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
1	30m x 1.6m NE-SW			0.37-0.60
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
101	Topsoil	Loose mid-dark brown-grey silty loam, occasional small stones	0.15-0.9m deep	-
102	Subsoil	Medium mid-brown-grey silty clay, moderate limestone inclusions	0.22-0.41m deep	-
103	Natural	Medium-firm mid orange sandy clay, ironstone inclusions	-	-
104	Fill of 105	Mid-dark grey-brown silty sandy clay, occasional ironstone inclusions	0.45m wide, 0.20m deep	-
105	Ditch	Cut of U-shaped ditch	0.45m wide, 0.20m deep	-
106	Fill of 108	Medium mid-dark brown-grey silty sandy clay, small ironstone inclusions, occasional charcoal flecks	0.50m deep	-
107	Fill of 108	Medium dark grey silty clay, small ironstone inclusions, occasional charcoal flecks	0.25m deep	-
108	Ditch	Cut of large flat-based ditch/pit	0.75m deep	-
109	Fill of 110	Firm mid brown-grey sandy clay, small ironstone inclusions	0.29m deep	-
110	Ditch	Cut of flat-based ditch	0.29m deep	-



Trench 1, general view, looking south-west

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, N end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
2	30m x 1.6m NW-SE			0.50m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
201	Topsoil	Dark brown sandy clay	0.30m deep	-
202	Subsoil	Mid to dark brown sandy clay, with limestone and organic inclusions	0.17m deep	-
203	Natural	Yellow-orange clay with blue silty clay patches	-	-
204	Fill of ditch 205	Mid to dark grey-brown silty sandy clay, with organic, ironstone and charcoal inclusions	0.95m wide, 0.52m deep	Pottery, animal bone, Sample 4
205	Ditch	Broad-based ditch	0.95m wide, 0.52m deep	-
206	Fill of pit 207	Firm mid orange-brown sandy silty clay, small stone inclusions	0.80m long, 0.70m wide, 0.14m deep	-
207	Pit	Circular shallow pit	0.80m long, 0.70m wide, 0.14m deep	-
208	Fill of ditch 210	Mid orange-brown sandy silty clay, frequent ironstone, moderate charcoal and limestone	1.75m wide, 0.42m deep	Pottery, animal bone
209	Fill of ditch 210	Firm mid orange-brown silty sandy clay, frequent ironstone	1.53m wide, 0.22m deep	-
210	Ditch	Broad-based ditch	1.75m wide, 0.63m deep	-
211	Fill of ditch 213	Firm mid-dark orange-brown sandy silty clay, frequent ironstone	1.10m wide, 0.37m deep	Pottery, animal bone
212	Fill of ditch 213	Firm mid orange-brown sandy silty clay, very frequent ironstone	0.54m deep	-
213	Ditch	Broad-based ditch	0.69m deep	-
214	Fill of ditch 215	Firm, light grey-brown sandy silty clay, frequent small ironstones	0.55m wide, 0.05m deep	Pottery
215	Ditch	Flat-based shallow ditch	0.55m wide, 0.05m deep	-
216	Fill of ditch 213	Firm mid orange-brown silty sandy clay, frequent ironstones	0.14m deep	-
217	Fill of feature 218	Firm mid orange-brown sandy silty clay, containing moderate and large limestones randomly placed.	1.10m wide, 0.34m deep	Pottery
218	Wall/drain	Broad-based construction cut for possible wall or stone drain	1.10m wide, 0.34m deep	-
219	Layer	Mid orange-brown sandy silty clay	1.60m wide	Pottery
220	VOID			
221	Fill of wall 222	Firm mid orange-brown sandy silty clay, containing moderate and large limestones randomly placed.	0.45m wide	Pottery
222	Wall	Broad-based construction cut for possible wall or stone drain	0.45m wide	-



Trench 2, general view, looking north-west

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, E end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
3	40m x 1.6m NE-SW			0.20-0.26m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
301	Topsoil	Loose mid-dark grey silty loam, small stones	0.20m-0.26m	-
302	Natural	Medium, mid-brown orange sandy clay, moderate ironstone and limestone	-	-
303	Fill of ditch 304	Firm light brown-grey sandy clay, charcoal flecks, small limestones	0.60m wide, 0.13m deep	Animal bone, glass, pottery
304	Ditch	Flat-based ditch	0.60m wide, 0.13m deep	
305	Fill of possible ditch 306	Compact mid-light grey-brown sandy clay, small to large ironstones	-	Pottery, glass, animal bone
306	Possible ditch	Irregular flat-based feature, possibly a ditch	-	-
307	Fill of pit 309	Compact dark grey silty-clay, moderate limestone, frequent charcoal	1.70m wide, 0.20m deep	Pottery, glass, animal bone
308	Fill of pit 309	Firm mid brown-grey silty sandy clay, moderate limestone, some charcoal	2.75m wide	-
309	Pit	Possible elliptical pit	2.75m wide	-
310	Layer	Stone surface, large to medium limestone cobbles laid in rows	-	-
311	Layer	Medium mid-brown sandy silt, some small stones in a spread	-	-
312	Fill of 313	Orange-brown sandy silt	0.17m wide, 0.12m deep	-
313	Structure	Stone-lined and capped drain	0.45m wide, 0.21m deep	-



Trench 3, general view, looking north-east

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, N end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
4	40m x 1.6m NE-SW			0.30-0.56
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
401	Topsoil	Loose mid-dark grey silty loam, small stones	0.20m-0.26m deep	-
402	Subsoil	Firm, mid brown-grey silt, occasional small limestones	0.30m deep	-
403	Natural	Medium, mid-brown orange sandy clay, moderate ironstone and limestone	-	-
404	Ditch	Shallow U-shaped ditch	0.95m wide	-
405	Fill of ditch 404	Mid brown-grey silty sandy clay, medium-large ironstones, frequent chalk and charcoal flecks	0.95m wide	-
406	Pit	Very large, probably multiple pit cuts	c18m wide	-
407	Fill of pit 406	Firm mid-brown-orange silty clay, occasional small ironstones and limestones, with concentration of large stones	0.40m thick	-
408	Fill of pit 406	Dark grey clay silt with limestone and ironstone pieces, abundant charcoal and mussel shell	0.18m thick	Sample 4
409	Fill of pit 406	Dark grey clay silt, rare charcoal, occasional small limestone cobbles	0.15m thick	-
410	Fill of pit 406	Discrete lines of burnt material, mid orange-red, crushed ironstone	0.04m thick	-
411	Fill of pit 406	Mid-orange clay silt, common limestone and ironstone, occasional chalk and charcoal	0.20m thick	-
412	Fill of pit 406	Mid-orange brown clay with common ironstone and limestone, probably natural infilling of terrace down to the river	-	-
413	Fill of pit 406	Light orange-grey clay, rare blue clay, ironstone	-	-
414	Fill of pit 406	Light orange-grey clay silt, rare blue clay, frequent medium to large ironstones	-	-
415	Fill of pit 406	Dark grey-orange silty clay with patches of blue clay. Common iron/limestone	-	-
416	Fill of pit 406	Dark grey-orange clay silt, occasional limestone	-	-
417	Fill of pit 406	Mid grey silty clay with large limestone fragments and common ironstone, common charcoal and chalk flecks.	-	-
418	Fill of pit 406	Mid grey silt, common ironstone, common chalk flecks and rare charcoal.	-	-

419	Fill of pit 406	Mid grey-orange silty clay with occasional charcoal and iron/limestone	-	-
420	Fill of pit 406	Mid grey silt, common ironstone, common chalk flecks and rare charcoal.	-	-



Trench 4, general view, looking south-west

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, W end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
5	50m x 1.8m NW-SE			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
501	Topsoil	Loose, mid-dark grey silty loam, occasional small stones		-
502	Subsoil	Medium mid-grey-brown sandy clay		-
503	Natural	Medium mid-brown-orange sandy clay, with ironstone		-
504	Fill of 505	Firm mid brown-grey silty sandy clay, occasional ironstone	1.06m wide, 0.31m deep	-
505	Ditch	Straight-sided ditch with curved base, possible drainage ditch	1.06m wide, 0.31m deep	-
506	Fill of 507	Firm mid grey-brown silty sandy clay, occasional ironstone	1.27m wide, 0.43m deep	-
507	Ditch	U-shaped ditch with curved base, possible drainage ditch	1.27m wide, 0.43m deep	-
508	Fill of 509	Compact light brown-grey clay flecked with charcoal, occasional limestone	3.0m wide, 1.14m deep	Sample 2, Pottery
509	Ditch	Flat-based ditch with convex curving sides	3.0m wide, 1.14m deep	-
510	Fill of 511	Firm light brown-orange clay, flecked with charcoal, occasional limestone	0.72m wide, 0.30m deep	-
511	Pit	Pit with uneven sides and irregular base	0.72m wide, 0.30m deep	-
512	Fill of 513	Light orange-brown clay silt, occasional patches of blue clay, rare iron/limestone pebbles	0.80m wide, 0.80m deep	Pottery
513	Ditch	Steep-sided, flat-based ditch, probable boundary ditch	0.80m wide, 0.80m deep	-
514	Fill of 515	Firm mid-cark grey-brown silty clay, occasional ironstone, rare chalk flecks	1.52m wide, 0.88m deep	Pottery, animal bone
515	Ditch	Straight-sided ditch, probable boundary ditch	1.52m wide, 0.88m deep	-
516	Fill of 517	Compact mid-pale brown-grey sandy silty clay, small-moderate iron/limestones	0.90m wide, 0.50m deep	-
517	Ditch	U-shaped, steep-sided ditch, probable boundary ditch	0.90m wide, 0.50m deep	-



Trench 5, general view, looking south

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, N end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
6	50m x 1.8m NE-SW			0.37-0.56m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
601	Topsoil	Loose mid-dark grey silty loam, with occasional small stones	0.12-0.22m thick	-
602	Subsoil	Medium mid grey-brown sandy silt	0.15-0.44m thick	-
603	Natural	Firm mid brown-orange sandy clay with ironstone inclusions	-	-
604	Fill of ditch 605	Medium light to mid-grey sandy silt, occasional ironstone	0.74m wide, 0.15m deep	Pottery
605	Ditch	Terminal end of U-shaped ditch with curved sides	0.74m wide, 0.15m deep	



Trench 6, general view, looking south

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, E end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
7	8.8m x 1.6m NE-SW			Unknown
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
701	Topsoil	Modern turfline, mid-grey-brown silt	0.15-0.17m thick	-
702	Subsoil	Mid-orange grey silt, probably an old topsoil	0.02-0.10m thick	Pottery, glass, animal bone
703	Surface	Laid limestone cobbles to form yard surface, edged with large perpendicular stones. Rare ironstone cobbles.	0.10m thick	Pottery, nails
704	Layer	Bedding layer for 703. Small-medium angular pebbles, not laid, in a mid grey silt matrix. Rare ironstone cobbles.	0.05m thick	-
705	Layer	Flat limestone cobbles laid to form a rough surface in a mid grey silt matrix. Rare ironstone cobbles.	-	-



Trench 7, general view, looking south-east



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