

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit

Report No. 203

March 1992

Freeman's Farm, Felton, Avon

The Phase 1 Archaeological Evaluation

by
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1 Scope and aims of report

1.1 This Phase 1 report on the archaeology of Freeman's Farm outlines the results of desk-top assessment and walk-over survey, and sets the aims and suggests a programme for Phase 2.

1.2 The preliminary evaluation has involved:

- i) examination of the Avon County Council Sites and Monuments Record
- ii) examination of the aerial photographic coverage held by Avon County Council. This comprises three sets of county-wide stereoscopic pictures taken in 1976, 1982 and 1991.
- iii) a check on other aerial photographic coverage. ACC have a catalogue of the main sources known to the National Monuments Record of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), complete up to 1986. The RAF 1946 run, held at the Local History Library, Taunton, has also been examined.
- iv) cartographic evaluation - limited to the tithe apportionment maps (1840) held at the Somerset Record Office, Taunton.
- v) a brief field survey (1.5 person days) including artefact collection, sketch planning and preliminary mapping of distribution patterns.

1.3 In general the area has been poorly served both by antiquarian interest and by the archaeologists of today. There are few records of field collections of flints, and air photographic coverage by

archaeologists is patchy, perhaps, paradoxically, because of the proximity of Bristol airport.

2 Results (See Figures 1-2, and Tables 1 and 2)

2.1 The SMR records show the following sites: two possible barrows identified in 1925 in Field 13 (ASMR 623, 3168) (SITE 27); the findspot of a Bronze Age adze in Field 14 (ASMR 622) (SITE 29); and the parish boundary (ASMR 7459) (SITE 33). Further details about the barrows can be added; they were recorded in 1925 by E Tratman and both were 25 feet in diameter and 18 inches high. When Tratman revisited the site in 1950 he recorded them as completely ploughed out. An Ordnance Survey Archaeology Division visit in 1965 relocated their remains and suggested that they were dispersed field clearance mounds rather than barrows.

2.2 Air photograph study has led to the identification of twelve potential sites showing as soilmarks, seven from the RAF 1946 coverage and five from the ACC 1991 coverage: a large circular mark in Field 1 (SITE 3); a smaller circular mark in Field 6 (SITE 13); a polygonal mark in Field 8 (SITE 16); linear marks in Field 9 (SITE 19); various marks in Field 16 (Site 30); a circular mark (SITE 33) and linear marks (SITE 32) in Field 5; various marks in Field 4 (SITE 28); linear marks in Field 12 (SITE 34); and various oval and linear marks in Fields 13, 14, and 15 (SITES 35-37). Old field boundaries also show on a number of APs.

On the ground SITE 3 coincides with an area of spread stone, and SITE 30 with a slight linear depression. This latter may have some association with nearby quarries. There is no sign of the remaining AP marks on the ground, although in two cases (SITES 28 and 33) the AP marks correspond or overlap with spreads of flint artefacts (SITES 10 and 12 respectively).

2.3 Cartographic work has involved the Tithe map records for Banwell and Barrow Gurney parishes. The modern fields have combined six of the fields present in 1840. The north end of Field 13 is called Well Paddock. The

west part of Field 9 is called Ruddy Ground, and the south part of Field 12 is Grippy Ground. The meaning of the latter two presumably relates to quarrying. The remaining field names are not of significance.

2.4 Field survey has given the best picture of the archaeology of the area. Of the 16 fields concerned, eight were under young corn and could be examined with ease, one (Field 4) had a part-lifted crop of turnips and was less satisfactory for examination, and two had been recently ploughed and were not walkable.

Periods Represented

Neolithic/Bronze Age

Flint scatters comprised both tools (knives and scrapers) and flakes. In addition, arrowheads of various types, including leaf-shaped, have been collected by the farmer in the past, and have been seen. In a brief survey like this only an impression of concentrations can be gained, but it is clear that one lies in Field 4 and particularly at its east end (SITE 10), and another at the south ends of Fields 1 and 2 (SITES 4 and 5).

Bronze Age

Round barrows from the Bronze Age are possible in upland areas such as this, and there are known barrows in the area. Scatters of rock on the surface of the fields are present in most fields. They may represent either the remains of round barrows, prehistoric clearance mounds, or places where the plough has caught on the underlying rock. In Field 12 (pasture) a slight knoll may be natural or perhaps the remains of a round barrow (SITE 24).

Romano-British

Romano-British pottery was found at the east end of Field 6 (SITE 14). The material comprised fairly abraded greyware and black burnished ware sherds,

with no more finely-datable pieces within the Roman period. Further sherds were found in Fields 2 and 3.

Medieval and post-medieval

A ruined building is located off Tinker's Lane in the south-west corner of Field 3 (SITE 8). The walls stand to 1.5m high in places. This building post-dates 1840 since it is not shown on the Tithe map. A second building may be located near standing farm buildings in the north-east corner of Field 1 (SITE 1). This again would be post-1840. A number of quarries and ponds was found (SITES 2, 6, 7, 9, 11, 17, 18, 22 and 26), and there are earthwork banks in Field 10 (SITE 20).

3 Implications of the proposed quarry layout

3.1 Before proceeding to Phase 2 it will be necessary to establish the degree of archaeological damage involved by the contouring figured on RMC Drawing P1/1470/2.

3.2 Fields 13, 14, 15, and 16 will be affected only by the access road. This means that the Tratman barrows, SITE 27, will not be involved. The access road will require archaeological monitoring during construction, but the presently proposed route (RMC drawing P1/1470/2) does avoid significant archaeological sites identified during the Phase 1 assessment, including the Bronze Age adze findspot (SITE 29).

3.3 The following will be buried beneath the contour mounds: 1) Field 6 including the suggested Romano-British site, SITE 14, and the AP soilmark, SITE 13; ii) the soilmark and possible building in Field 1, SITES 1 and 3; and iii) the ruined building in Field 3, SITE 8.

3.4 Discussion will be necessary on the degree of attention required for the areas of archaeological significance that can be identified at this stage. However, some work on SITE 14 in Field 6, and on SITE 8 in Field 3, is suggested for Phase 2 since the quarry edge runs very close to both

sites. The sites in Fields 13-16 and the north end of Field 1 are not considered further.

4 Recommendations for Phase 2

4.1 Phase 2 involves field walking and geophysical survey to further refine site definitions, followed by trial trenching to assess the character of the sites and survival.

4.2 Detailed field walking would entail artefact collection and plotting within a programme aimed at producing an objective picture of density patterns.

4.3 Geophysical work would need to cover: a) areas of flint scatters SITES 4, 5, 10, 12, and possibly 15; b) the area in Field 6 with Romano-British pottery, SITE 14; c) the AP marks, SITES 16, 28 and 33, the latter two of which correspond spatially with the flint scatters SITES 10 and 12.

4.4 Trial trenching will need to focus on sites defined by geophysical survey and field walking.

5 Outline of Phase 2 programme (Figure 3)

5.1 A field walking programme which would be initially non-intensive and cover all the arable fields - including Field 7 not examined in Phase 1 - and then, subject to results, focus principally on Fields 3, 4, and 5, and the south end of Field 2. This will need to be undertaken either immediately or in the autumn.

5.2 Geophysical survey of 0.3ha total, in areas marked on Figure 3 and summarised in Table 2.

5.3 Trial trenching will be undertaken as required. An assessment of the survival of the possible Romano-British site in Field 6 (SITE 14) and of the building in Field 3 (SITE 8) can be identified at this stage.

6 Overview

6.1 This assessment allows a general overview to be made of the type of archaeology anticipated at Freeman's Farm.

6.2 This has to be seen within the limitations and opportunities offered by ploughed-down sites. Artefacts are scattered by the plough but generally remain in concentrations near their source. The surviving archaeology could be represented by features such as pits, ditches and burials, although the survival of stratified material is possible.

6.3 The flint scatters may represent, flint-knapping sites, temporary camps, settlement sites or chance losses. For the Neolithic settlement sites are unlikely, but Bronze Age settlement sites may well be found in an upland area such as this.

6.4 Round barrows from the Bronze Age are possible. These might be associated with settlements. The main surviving elements would be the primary burial and the barrow's quarry ditches. Upland parish boundaries are often related to barrows, and it is interesting to see a change in alignment at the junction of Fields 3 and 4, coinciding with flint scatters.

6.5 The adze found in Field 14 (SITE 29) possibly represents a deliberate deposit made in the Bronze Age. The adze may form part of a group of material, and the remainder of the hoard may still lie where it was placed. The significance of Bronze Age hoards is poorly understood, but they are generally thought to have a ritual significance. Although the quarry proposals are not a threat to any suggested hoard, the finding of the object is an indication of the potential Bronze Age archaeology of the area.

6.6 The Roman pottery in Field 6 may indicate a farmstead (SITE 14). Air photographs show what may be the site of an Iron Age/Romano-British farmstead just to the north-east of Freeman's Farm (SMR 5201). A similar site, Row of Ashes Farm, Butcombe, has been excavated nearby. The

indications on the ground are that any Roman site is located to the east of the pottery finds, perhaps in Field 10, or in Freeman's Wood.

7 Summary

7.1 Field-walking, mapwork, AP study, and SMR data analysis have resulted in the identification of 37 potential sites.

7.2 The most significant sites are probably those marked by scatters of flint, by Romano-British pottery, and by a ruined post-medieval building.

7.3 Geophysical survey and field walking programmes are outlined, to be followed by trial trenching as required.

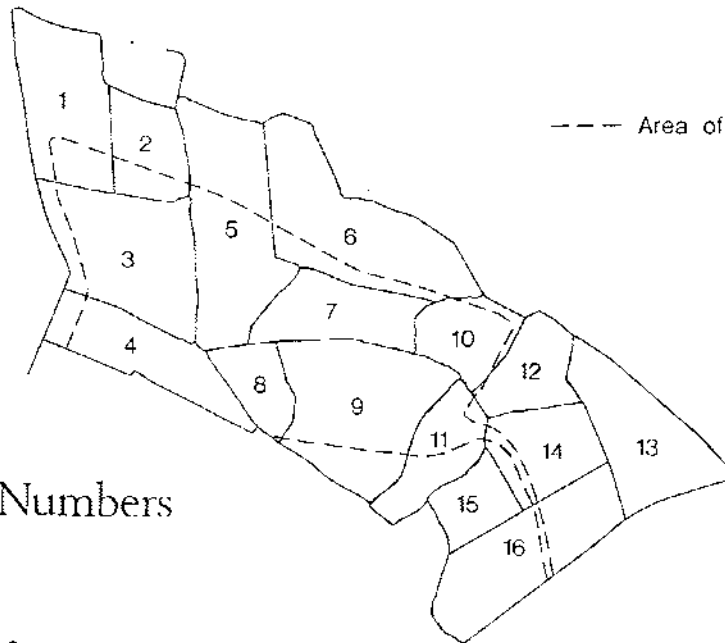
Table 1: field numbers, land use, and initial field-walking results

field	current land use	artefact collection possible	results
1	arable	yes	flint (blade, scraper); possible building north-east corner
2	arable	yes	flint (scraper, point); RB pottery
3	arable	yes	flint; ruined building south-west corner; RB pottery
4	arable	yes	flint tools (scrapers, arrowheads, points)
5	arable	part only	flint tools (scraper)
6	arable	yes	flint; RB pottery
7	arable	no	
8	arable	yes	flint (scraper)
9	arable	yes	flint; medieval pottery
10	pasture	no	relict banks
11	pasture	no	relict banks and hollows
12	pasture	no	
13	arable	no	
14	pasture	no	
15	pasture	no	
16	arable	yes	flint

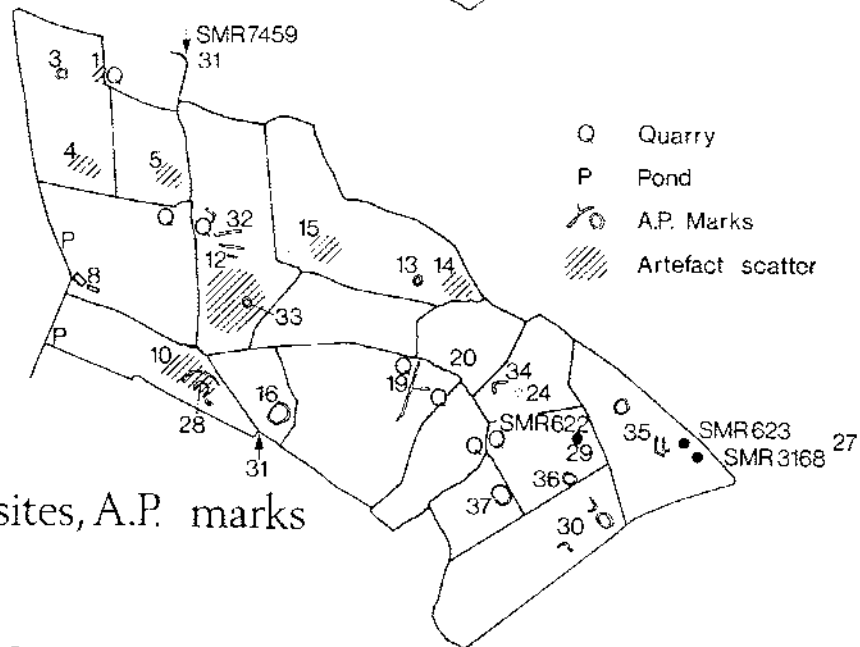
note: a) post-medieval pottery and artefacts present in every arable field;
b) medieval pottery abraded

Table 2: sites identified, description and further work suggested (F = fieldwalking; G = geophysical survey; T = trial trenching)

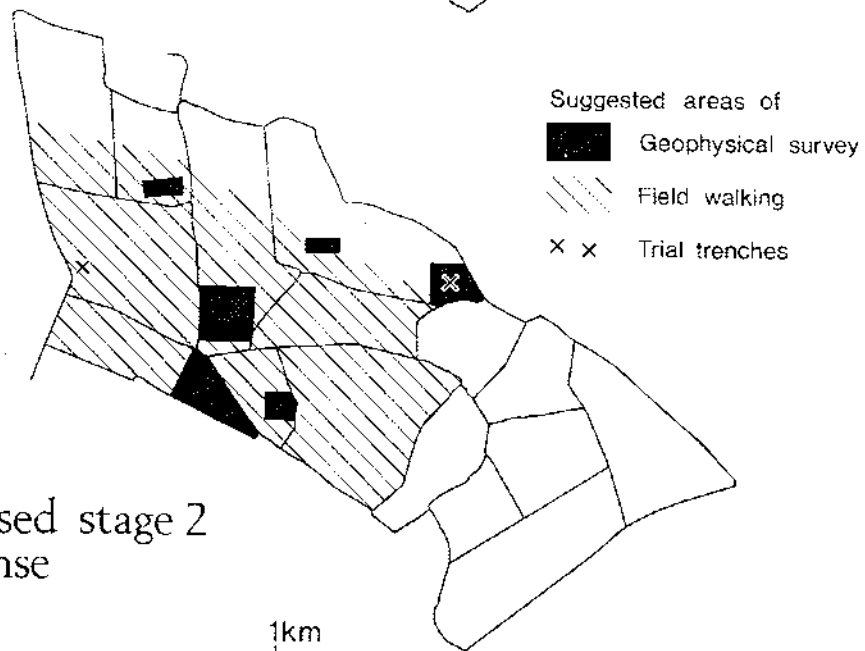
Site	location (field number)	type	recommended action
1	1	post-medieval structure	
2	1	post-medieval quarry	
3	1	AP mark	
4	1	stoney area with flint finds	F
5	2	flint artefacts	F; G
6	3	post-medieval quarry	
7	3	post-medieval pond	
8	3	post-medieval ruined buildings	T
9	4	post-medieval pond	
10	4	flint artefacts	F; G
11	5	post-medieval quarry	
12	5	flint finds	F
13	6	AP mark	F
14	6	Romano-British pottery scatter	F; G; T
15	6	stoney area with flint finds	F; G
16	8	AP mark	F; G
17	9	post-medieval quarry	
18	9	post-medieval quarry	
19	9	AP marks	
20	10	earthwork banks and ditches	
21	11	earthwork bank and hollow	
22	11	post-medieval quarry	
23	11	slight mound	
24	12	mound	?G
25	12	scatter of dressed stones, laid stone surface	
26	14	post-medieval quarry	
27	13	SMR sites: Tratman's barrows or OSAD clearance mounds	
28	4	AP marks	F; G
29	14	SMR site: Bronze Age adze findspot	
30	16	AP marks	
31		SMR site: parish boundary	
32	5	AP marks	F
33	5	AP mark	F; G
34	12	AP mark	
35	13	AP marks	
36	14	AP mark	
37	15	AP mark	



1 Field Numbers



2 New sites, A.P. marks



3 Proposed stage 2 response

0 1km