

Report No. 1016

**An Archaeological Evaluation at Land Adjacent to
Rushford Church, Brettenham,
Norfolk**

40919 BRT



West end of St. Johns Church,
Rushford, looking south-west
from trackway.

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NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

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Rushford Church, Brettenham, Norfolk**

NHER 40919 BRT

Gareth J. Davies

December 2004

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Local Authority No. 100019340

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Location: Land Adjacent to Rushford Church, Brettenham
District: Breckland
Grid Ref: TL 9243 8130
HER No.: 40919 BRT
Date of fieldwork: 4th to 5th November 2004

Summary

An archaeological evaluation carried out at land adjacent to Rushford Church, Brettenham, recorded the presence of settlement related features, probably dating to some of the earliest phases of the nucleated settlement.

Towards the northern extent of the site, a north to south aligned probable Late Saxon field or plot boundary ditch was flanked at its western extent by at least three undated postholes, one of which was cut by a later pit. The ditch and postholes ran at right angles to an existing track implying, at the latest, a medieval date for this feature. Residual Middle Saxon pottery was also retrieved within this feature.

The ditch, pit and post-holes were sealed by a buried subsoil layer that contained animal bone and medieval pottery, some of which dated to later in the medieval period. It is suggested that the pattern of land use at the northern extent of the site changed at some point during the medieval period, from a settlement and/or agricultural plot to an area reserved for refuse deposition. It is possible that the change in land use could be a result of the foundation and subsequent occupation of Rushford College in the 1340s.

At the western extent of the site, trial trenching immediately east of the churchyard recovered no evidence for burials. Therefore if any Late Saxon or early medieval burial activity did take place, it did not extend east of the existing churchyard boundary.

1.0 Introduction

(Fig. 1)

The site was in an area of proposed redevelopment and occupied a walled area immediately east of St. Johns Church, Rushford, Brettenham. The site covered an area measuring c. 50m by 60m (3000 sq. m).

The work was commissioned by Andrew P.R. Love (architect) and funded by Mr. Richard Baker (client).

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Method Statement prepared by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU Ref: WAB/1796/1/06/04) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: 18/06/02/ARJH).

The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 — Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

2.0 Geology and Topography

Rushford is now part of the civil parish of Brettenham (the benefices were united in 1851), and lies within the Breckland region, about 5km east of Thetford (Underdown 2002, 2). The superficial geology of the Breckland around Thetford is characterised by Pleistocene deposits of Chalk-sand drift, with sands and gravels on both the river terraces and 'uplands' (Mudd 2002, 1). In addition, Holocene deposits of blown sand and peat are to be found on the terraces and valley bottoms (Corbett 1973).

The dry and acidic soils of the Breckland impose agricultural limitations on the region, with about fifty percent of the region unsuitable for agriculture (Corbett 1973). The present hamlet of Rushford is located on the terrace sands and gravels, overlain by meadow soils indicative of fringing wet areas that are particularly unsuitable for early agriculture, but it is also reasonably close to the more productive chalk-sand slope soils further north (Crowson 1997, 9).

The site is positioned on land lying on the north bank of the River Little Ouse. The site overlies a brownish-yellow medium sand with occasional small gravel and carrstone inclusions at its western extent, and a white to mid-grey fine sand with occasional small gravel and moderate concreted carrstone inclusions at its north-eastern extent.

The land was flat and lay at an elevation of approximately 17m OD. At the time of the evaluation, the site was a moderately well drained grassed garden, with an existing prefabricated structure located to the centre-west of the plot. The western side of the site abuts to the churchyard of St. Johns, whilst the eastern side of the site borders a minor road which crosses the Little Ouse at this point, linking the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk (Underdown 2002, 2).

The combined depth of topsoil and subsoil ranged from between 0.65m at the west of the site to 1.00m in the north-east, suggesting that at some point the eastern extent of the site had been made up with soil to produce a flat garden surface.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

(Fig. 1)

The initial growth of settlement in the Rushford area may have been influenced by its close proximity to a fordable crossing point of the River Little Ouse. The present name of *Rushford* only came back into use during the 17th century, as before this the name *Rushworth* had been used for some time (Underdown 2002, 2). This perhaps implies only sporadic exploitation of this fording route, a notion supported by the absence of any prehistoric finds within a 0.5km radius of the site (Underdown 2002, 2). It may be the case that the poor quality of the soils in the immediate vicinity of Rushford inhibited early settlement of the area. Occupation and activity may have been more concentrated on the well-drained soils of the high ground (35-40m OD) to the north, as evidenced by the discovery of Bronze

Age and Neolithic material on the slopes beneath the Seven Hills barrow group, Brettenham (Crowson 1997).

The earliest archaeological material located in the Rushford area was recovered from c. 400m to the west of the site, and dates to the Roman period. The material consists of surface finds of pottery sherds and a coin of Constantius II (337-361 AD), found in 1934 and 1992 respectively. An undated find made c. 200m north of the site in the 1910s or 1920s of a grey pot containing hundreds of small silver coins might also have dated to the Roman period.

Romano-British archaeology is well represented in south-west Norfolk and north-west Suffolk, including the Breckland area (Davies and Gregory 1991, 79, fig. 7). The current corpus of finds, however, suggest that the Rushford area was utilised only in the latter part of the Roman period. It is possible that the Rushford area was peripheral until the later Roman period as the nearest major routeway, the military Peddars Way (Gurney 1994, 34) was located nearly 3 km to the east.

Following the Roman period, there was apparently little exploitation of the Rushford area for some time. It is more likely that any Early Saxon settlement would have surrounded the Brettenham area at least a kilometre to the north. The evidence for this is based on the assumption that names ending in 'ham' are thought to date to very early in the Saxon period, often coinciding with areas of settlement on high ground near river valleys (Penn 1993, 36) in this case the River Thet. More tangible evidence, in the form of a predominantly Late Roman and Early Saxon settlement, has been excavated at Melton Meadows c. 5km to the west of Rushford (Mudd 2002).

Rushford is mentioned in Domesday Book (1086), and as lands were held here before 1066, it can reasonably be assumed that there was a Late Saxon settlement. Nothing is known archaeologically about this settlement, but recent excavations northwest of Rushford at Snarehill, Brettenham have demonstrated that Late Saxon activity might be expected to concentrate around the churches in the area (Whitmore 2002; forthcoming).

From the medieval period onwards, the settlement of Rushford is much more visible due to a combination of standing building, documentary, cartographic and surface find evidence (Underdown 2002). At the end of the 13th century there were 400-500 occupants in Rushworth and its hamlet of Shadwell. In 1338 the manor of Rushworth was conveyed to Edward Gonville and he obtained the necessary licenses to found a college. Gonville drew up statutes to regulate the lives of the priests who would live there, and in 1342 the college was founded. Gonville had also by this time come into possession of a moated manor house (Underdown 2002, 2-3).

The parish church of St. John was also founded in 1342 as the collegiate church. The surviving nave and tower date to this time, with a porch probably dating to the 15th century. Recent work has largely confirmed these dates (Hobbs 2004). At the dissolution the transept and the chancel of the church were demolished. The church and college buildings were left ruinous for forty years probably being utilised intermittently as a source of building material. The church was re-roofed and altered late in the 16th century, and worship resumed in 1587 (Underdown 2002, 3). The church tower was designed to be defended (Hutcheson 2002, 2).

Medieval and early post-medieval activity extends beyond the college precinct as evidenced by the discovery in 1977 of a copper alloy ring bearing a Tudor rose seal of probable 16th-century date. This was found c. 100m to the east of the site. A north-east to south-west aligned trackway of unknown date ploughed up in 1907 c. 200m to the north of the site may also date to this period.

The recent demolition of a barn immediately to the east of the church provided an opportunity to study the building. It was dated by structural survey to c. 1500 and documentary evidence refers to a tithe barn in existence in 1602 which may be this structure (Underdown 2002, 5). Clearly some of the college buildings continued to be used into the post-medieval period although, from the evidence available, the general picture is of a decline in the status of Rushford following the dissolution.

A bridge over the Little Ouse just east of the College is of mid 19th-century date, and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

4.0 Methodology

(Fig. 2)

The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence or absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

The Brief required that the area to be built on must be sampled with no fewer than two trial trenches measuring 4m x 4m (Hutcheson 2002, 3). In the light of changes to the proposed footprint of the redevelopment, the two trenches were positioned in consultation with Andy Hutcheson, Senior Archaeologist (NLA), who monitored the work on behalf of the planning authority. Machine excavation was carried out with a wheeled mini-excavator using a toothless ditching bucket (1m wide) under constant archaeological supervision.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds, other than those which were obviously modern, were retained for inspection.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NAU *pro forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

A level was transferred from an Ordnance Survey benchmark of 18.26m on the northwest corner of St. Johns Church. Although a non-permanent peg was used as a temporary benchmark on site, a level (17.03m OD) was taken on a trackway immediately north of the site entrance.

Due to the lack of suitable deposits, no environmental samples were taken.

Site conditions were good, although bright sunlight occasionally made site photography difficult. Access was readily provided by the client and their tenants.

5.0 Results

(Appendix 1)

Both trenches contained archaeological features constituting two ditches, three (possibly four) post-holes and a pit. Artefacts dating between the Middle to Late Saxon and medieval periods were recovered from one of the ditches, whilst a quantity of medieval pottery was also recovered from a buried subsoil layer.

Context numbers between [01] and [26] were assigned to features and deposits within the trenches as work progressed (Appendix 1). Numbers were assigned to topsoil, subsoil and natural deposits within each trench in order to improve the observed distribution of unstratified finds, including metal-detected finds.

Trench 1

(Figs 2, 3, 4 and 5; Plate 2)

Trench 1 (4m x 4m) was located 3m east of the churchyard wall (Fig. 2) and machine excavated to a maximum depth of 16.31m OD (c. 0.65m in depth). The aim of this intervention was to see if burials extended into the western extent of the site.

The earliest deposit encountered was a brownish-yellow medium natural sand with occasional small gravel and carrstone inclusions ([25]). In two discrete areas the natural sand had been intruded into from above by heavy tree rooting (Fig. 3).

The natural sand was truncated by a curvilinear ditch cut ([03]), aligned on a broadly north-south orientation. Ditch [03] was a maximum of 0.32m deep and 0.7m wide, with a U-shaped profile, a steep break of slope at its top and a gradual break of slope at its base. The feature contained two fills. The primary fill was a naturally formed light brown silty sand with frequent small gravel inclusions ([04]), whilst the secondary fill was a grey silty sand with frequent small gravel inclusions ([05]). Ditch [03] continued to run (both to the north and south) beyond the limits of Trench 1. No dating evidence was recovered from this feature and the function of ditch [03] remains uncertain, however, the proximity of the similarly aligned churchyard wall means that a relationship between the two features cannot be ruled out.

Ditch fill [05] was overlain by dark greyish brown sandy silt subsoil ([02]) with a maximum of 0.42m in depth. The subsoil contained frequent small gravel inclusions, occasional degraded carrstone, and was heavily rooted. The upper 0.1m was generally more humic, with the base of the deposit quite demineralised. Medieval pottery was recovered from this deposit. The depth of this deposit suggests that a number of medieval and post-medieval accumulations, some of them a direct result of the cultivation of garden soils, were present in this apparently homogenous layer, but that the soil horizons had been rendered invisible due to the active nature of the deposit.

The subsoil ([02]) was overlain by a dark grey sandy silt topsoil ([01]) between 0.23m and 0.4m in depth (Fig. 4). This was a friable garden soil with heavy root disturbance. Fragments of post-medieval tile and pottery were recovered from this deposit.

No burials or burial related material were encountered during the excavation of Trench 1.

Trench 2

(Figs 2, 6, 7 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13; Plates 3 and 4)

Trench 2 (4m x 4m) was located 3m south of the northern limit of the site (Fig. 2). The aim of this intervention was to see if any archaeology fronted onto the east to west metalled track immediately north of the site. The trench was machine excavated to a maximum depth of 15.76m OD (c.1.00 m in depth).

The earliest deposit encountered was a white to mid-grey fine natural sand with occasional small gravel and moderate concreted carrstone inclusions ([26]).

The natural sand was directly truncated by four (or possibly five) cut features.

At the western extent of the trench a broad but relatively shallow north to south aligned ditch cut ([10]) was observed (Fig. 6). This feature was interpreted as a field (or plot) boundary ditch. The dimensions of the ditch could not be fully revealed as it extended beyond the northern and southern limits of Trench 2, however, it was at least 1.5m wide with a maximum of 0.4m depth. The feature contained four fills ([11], [12], [13] and [14]). The primary fill ([11]) was a naturally formed friable fine orange-red sand with occasional carrstone inclusions, 0.17m in depth. This fill was redeposited from the natural sand and gravel that ditch [10] had been cut through. Two secondary fills were observed. Fill [12], 0.1m in depth, was a friable white and grey sand containing frequent inclusions of small gravel infilling the eastern side of the cut, whilst fill [13], 0.12m in depth, was a compact yellowish-brown sand containing moderate inclusions of degraded carrstone. The tertiary upper fill ([14]) was a slowly formed dark grey silty sand, and contained three unglazed pottery sherds of Middle Saxon, Late Saxon and early medieval date and butchered animal bone, including pig.

Ditch fill [14] was overlain by a band of dark grey sandy silt subsoil [09], a maximum of 0.1m in depth and extending c.1m east of the western extent of Trench 2 (Fig. 13). This deposit was not dissimilar from overlying layers, but contained frequent inclusions of degraded carrstone, and seemed to only overlay the area of the ditch, possibly infilling it. Medieval pottery was also recovered from this deposit. It is possible that deposit [09] is a medieval subsoil fill of cut [10], with the cut itself having been rendered invisible due to the active nature of the deposit.

Deposit [09] was overlain by a layer of mid grey sandy silt containing frequent inclusions of degraded carrstone ([08]). This deposit, relatively rich in animal bone and medieval pottery (including glazed sherds), was 0.15m in depth. This deposit had an invisible horizon with the overlying subsoil layer ([07]), and was more readily identifiable by the large quantity of pottery contained within it. This deposit is interpreted as an area of medieval garden/plot soil where surface refuse was periodically dumped. The presence of a single residual fragment of post-medieval roof tile again demonstrates the frequency of disturbances to the subsoil deposits in Trench 2.

Deposit [08] was overlain by a dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil ([07]) with a maximum of 0.5m in depth. The subsoil contained moderate inclusions of degraded carrstone. The upper 0.2m was generally more humic, with the base of the deposit quite demineralised. Medieval pottery and post-medieval tile were recovered from this deposit. The depth of the subsoil suggested that a number of medieval and post-medieval accumulations, some of them a direct result of the cultivation of garden soils, were present in this apparently homogenous layer, but that the soil horizons had been rendered invisible due to the active nature of the deposit.

The subsoil ([07]) was overlain by a dark grey friable garden soil topsoil ([06]), 0.4m deep. Fragments of post-medieval tile and pottery were recovered from this deposit.

Approximately 0.9m west of ditch cut [10], a row of three (or possibly four) post-holes were observed running in a north to south line roughly parallel to the ditch (Fig. 6). Post-hole cut [15], located 0.5m south of the northern limit of Trench 2, was 0.4m in diameter, 0.25m deep and had steeply sloping sides and a shallow U-shaped base (Fig. 8). The fill ([16]) was a dark grey sandy silt containing a thin lens of light grey sand (0.03m in depth). The sand lens may represent a collapse of the sides of the cut due to the deliberate removal of the post.

Immediately to the south of post-hole [15], a possible post-hole ([17]) was recorded, it had a diameter of 0.4m and was 0.12m deep, but only the upper 0.06m contained a mid grey sandy silt fill ([18]), the lower portion of the 'fill' consisted of a disturbed light grey redeposited natural sand (Fig. 9). South of possible post-hole cut [17], post-hole cut [19] was recorded, it was 0.4m in diameter, 0.15m in depth, had vertical sides and a flat base. The fill was a mid grey silty sand ([20]) with occasional inclusions of small gravel (Fig. 10).

Extending into the southern baulk of Trench 2, post-hole [23] was partially observed (Fig. 6). It was 0.5m in diameter and c. 0.2m deep with a U-shaped base (Fig. 12). The light grey-white silty sand fill ([24]) of the post-hole was truncated by the cut of a pit ([21]). Pit cut [21] also extended under the baulk but was at least 0.4m wide, 0.15m deep and contained a mid grey silty sand fill ([22]).

Post-holes [15], [19] and [23] are interpreted as a boundary fenceline. No dating evidence was recovered from any of these features, but post-hole cuts [15], [19] and [23] respect the alignment of ditch cut [10] (or *vice versa*). The intercutting features (posthole [23] and pit [21]) suggest that Trench 2 has located a relatively dense area of activity.

6.0 The Finds

Introduction

The finds and environmental material from the site is presented in tabular form with basic quantitative information in Appendix 2: Finds by Context.

In addition to this summary, more detailed information on specific finds and environmental categories is included in separate reports below. Supporting tables for these contributions are included in Appendices 2 to 7.

Particular objects or small finds are listed in Appendix 2: Finds by Context, and are catalogued in more detail in Appendix 6: Small Finds.

6.1 The Pottery

(Appendix 3)

The Roman pottery

A single Sandy grey ware sherd, weighing 0.022kg, of unsourced but probably local production, was recovered from the subsoil in Trench 1 ([02]). It is a medium mouthed jar with a rolled rim, short neck and would probably have had a globular body. It has been burnt after it was broken (probably middened) and is also severely abraded. This form of jar was common throughout the Roman period (late 1st to 4th centuries) and is similar to material previously recorded in the area (HER 17269 BRT).

The Post-Roman pottery

A total of twenty-four fragments, weighing 0.396kg, of post-Roman pottery were recovered. The majority of the pottery is medieval in date, but small quantities of Middle Saxon and post-medieval pottery were also recovered.

Methodology

The ceramics were quantified by recording the number of sherds present in each context, the estimated number of vessels represented and the weight of each fabric. Other characteristics such as form, condition and decoration were noted, and an overall date range for the pottery in each context was established. Recommendations for illustration were also made. The pottery was recorded on *pro forma* sheets by context using letter codes based on fabric and form. The codes used are based mainly on those identified in *Eighteen centuries of pottery from Norwich* (Jennings 1981), and supplemented by additional ones used by the Suffolk Unit (S Anderson, unpublished fabric list).

Middle Saxon

Three fragments of Middle Saxon pottery were identified, weighing 0.069kg. Two sherds of Sandy Ipswich-type ware were found in the lower subsoil ([8]) in Trench 2, associated with pottery which is medieval in date. A further sherd of Gritty Ipswich-type ware was found in ditch fill [14] with a fragment of Late Saxon date and a sherd of an early medieval bowl.

Late Saxon

A single fragment of a Lincoln Saxo-Norman shelly ware cooking vessel or jar was identified in the ditch fill [14], dating to the 10th-11th century. It was, however, associated with a fragment of early medieval pottery.

Medieval

Eighteen fragments of medieval pottery, weighing 0.285kg, were recovered. Two sherds of Medieval coarseware were identified in the topsoil ([2]) of Trench 1. A fragment of Sandy coarseware was present, provisionally identified as Yarmouth-type ware dating to the 11th or 12th century, together with a fragment of the base of a sooted cooking vessel in a Medieval coarseware fabric. In addition part of the strap handle of a glazed medieval pitcher was found. It is made of a medium sandy fabric which is oxidised externally. The handle is covered with a thin green and orange lead glaze. The sherd bears a considerable similarity to Yarmouth-type glazed ware, dating between the 13th and 15th century. These glazed wares have been found on sites in Norwich and Great Yarmouth, but their origin has still to be established (Anderson in Shelley forthcoming).

Further fragments of a medieval date were present in the lower subsoil ([8]) in Trench 2. In addition to the earlier wares, several sherds of medieval coarseware were identified, and some sandy wares which may be slightly earlier in date. Three fragments of a highly decorated Grimston ware jug were found, dating to either the 13th or 14th century. The vessel is covered with an olive lead glaze and is decorated with applied petal shaped zones, which are partially infilled with iron oxide dark red colouration.

Three further moderately abraded fragments of medieval coarseware were recovered from ([9]) Trench 2. One sherd from the thumbled base of a medieval jug was identified.

Two fragments of Late Saxon and medieval date were found in ditch [10], (fill [14]). In addition to the fragment Lincoln Saxo-Norman shelly ware of Late Saxon date, a sherd of a Medieval coarseware bowl with simple rim was present. The vessel is similar in form and fabric to a bowl with a plain rim in an early medieval type fabric, recovered from the medieval settlement at Grenstein (Dallas 1980, 156).

Post-medieval

Two fragments of post-medieval date, weighing 0.021kg, were recovered from topsoil in Trench 1 ([01]). The pottery comprises a fragment of Glazed red earthenware bowl made in a fine fabric, together with a sherd of Dutch-type redware, dating between the 16th and 18th century.

Conclusions

This small assemblage is widely ranging in date. The residual Middle Saxon sherds may indicate evidence of nearby settlement in this part of the Little Ouse river valley. It is worthy of note that a single fragment of Ipswich ware was also recovered from the excavation of the cemetery at Snarehill Brettenham (Whitmore forthcoming).

6.2 The Faunal Remains

(Appendix 4)

Summary

A total of 1.061kg of faunal remains were recovered, this includes the butchered remains of the main domestic food species.

Methodology

All of the bone was briefly scanned primarily to determine range of species and elements present and the amount of material that could produce measurable, ageable and countable data. The scan and assessment were carried out following a modified version of guidelines by English Heritage (Davis 1992). A note was also made of butchering and any indications of skinning, hornworking and other modifications. When possible a record was made of ages and any other relevant information, such as pathologies. Counts and weights were noted for each context examined. No measurements were taken at this stage. All information was recorded on the faunal remains recording sheets. A table giving a summary of the information is included with this report.

Results and conclusions

Bone was recovered from six contexts during excavations at this site. The most frequent species identified in this assemblage was cattle, which was found in four contexts. The cattle remains are from adult and juvenile animals and all of the bones had been heavily butchered. Sheep were found in contexts [02] and [09], all of which had been butchered. Pig elements from juvenile animals which had been butchered were also identified in two contexts ([09] and [14]). Many fragments of bone were only identifiable as 'mammal', but thought to be the butchered fragments from cattle, sheep and pig.

A single juvenile rabbit humerus was recorded ([01]) which may have been from a wild rabbit caught for food. One chicken/pheasant tibiotarsus was noted ([02]). Chickens would have been kept for a supply of eggs prior to their being culled for meat.

All of the bone was in quite good condition, although encrusted with sediment in some contexts, particularly [14]. The assemblage is also quite fragmentary due to the high level of butchering.

The elements are the result of primary and secondary butchering and food waste, with a higher number of the main meat bearing bones. It is probable that this is domestic waste from animals processed and consumed on site.

6.3 Ceramic Building Material

(Appendix 5)

The site produced thirteen pieces, weighing 3.148kg, of post-medieval ceramic building material recovered from topsoil ([01], [06]) and subsoil ([02]) deposits.

The assemblage consists of three fragments of brick and ten pieces of plain roof tile in medium to dark orange sandy fabrics with medium to large inclusions of

grog, ferrous and flint. Dating for the material ranges probably from the 17th to 19th centuries.

6.4 Small Finds

(Appendix 6)

Summary

A total of six small finds were recovered on site from five contexts. One from Trench 1 and five from Trench 2. This is a very small assemblage. The material dates from the medieval through to the post-medieval period, although perhaps it should be noted that the fragmentary nature of the lava quernstone make them difficult to date diagnostically of style. Lava quernstones have a long currency and are recovered from the Roman period, Late Saxon Period and medieval periods (King 1986, 95).

Methodology

The material was small found in accordance with NAU procedures and a catalogue of the material contained in the archive. A complete list of the small finds is given below (Appendix 6). Unfortunately the metalwork has not been x-rayed and this has made the identification of one of the items (SF 2, see below), tentative.

Trench 1

Only one find was recovered here. It is an annular ring (SF6), these simple copper alloy rings are probably suspension rings, although some may be simple buckle frames. They are recovered from both late-medieval and post-medieval contexts.

Trench 2

Three lava quern stone small finds were recovered all from Trench 2, from contexts dated to the medieval period. One from a 11th- to 14th-century context ([9]) is a splinter only (SF4) - none of the worked surfaces survive. The remaining two (SF5 and 3) have part of the flat grinding surface and rough opposed surfaces surviving. They were recovered from contexts [14] (11th to 14th century) and [8] (late 12th to 14th century). As with all other assemblages in Norfolk, from similarly dated contexts, the querns at Brettenham are made from grey vesicular lava, probably of Rhenish origin. A variety of grinding purposes are possible, not only for the production of flour, but also grinding of malt for the brewing industry (Buckley forthcoming).

Part of a possible key (SF2) with a hollow stem and a circular, or perhaps pear-shaped, bow was recovered ([8]). The iron keys with similarly-shaped bows from the Norwich Survey excavations are principally from medieval contexts (Margeson 1993, 159, fig. 118 nos. 1268-1273).

Finally, a coin of William III was recovered from topsoil ([06]).

7.0 Conclusions

No evidence for prehistoric activity was located within the survey area, reinforcing the notion that the poor quality of the soils on the north bank of the River Little Ouse may have inhibited early settlement of the area (see Section 3 above).

No archaeological features dating to the Roman period were located within the survey area. A single sherd of a Roman grey ware jar (dating between the late 1st to 4th centuries) was recovered from the subsoil within Trench 1. The highly abraded condition of the sherd, combined with its unstratified location, suggest that it had been disturbed from its original context, and perhaps incorporated into a ploughsoil assemblage in antiquity. The sherd is similar to pottery found c. 5km to the west of the study area, where the additional presence of coinage and sub-surface archaeological features led to the suggestion that the area was settled from the mid 3rd century onwards (Crowson 2000).

No archaeological features dating to the Early or Middle Saxon periods were located, but the recovery of three residual fragments of Middle Saxon Ipswich ware suggests some form of occupation reasonably close to the study area during this period. Nearby at Snarehill Brettenham (Whitmore forthcoming) a single fragment of Ipswich ware was also recovered. This sherd was found immediately adjacent to a Late Saxon church during the excavation of a nearby Late Saxon-early medieval cemetery. It has been suggested that rural Middle Saxon settlements, as represented by surface artefact scatters of Ipswich ware, sometimes cluster around later stone built churches (Wade-Martins 1980). In the cases of Rushford and Snarehill churches, Ipswich ware has been located during excavation. However, it would seem likely that a connection between later churches and finds of Ipswich ware, is also occurring here.

The relatively late (14th century) date of the stone built church at Rushford, might suggest the presence of an earlier structure in the immediate vicinity, as also hypothesised at Snarehill (Whitmore forthcoming). However, there is no documentation pertaining to any earlier structure at the time of the foundation of Rushford college in 1342 (Underdown 2002). In addition, no Middle or Late Saxon burials were located to the east of the existing churchyard (Trench 1). Nevertheless, at Snarehill the cemetery only extended c. 15m from the eastern wall of the church therefore it remains a possibility that an earlier church and churchyard are located further to the west of Trench 1.

The earliest firm evidence for settlement and occupation in the study area is located in Trench 2 and may date to the Late Saxon period. The north to south aligned field/plot boundary ditch represents a substantial boundary. The three undated post-holes, in apparent association with this boundary, imply efficient management of land and perhaps concentrated activity to the west of the post-holes. The pit in Trench 2, observed to be truncating a post-hole, suggests sustained activity in this area. The alignment of the boundary ditch and post-holes, at right angles to the east-west track north of the site, suggests that this routeway may have been a feature of the Late Saxon settlement. A boundary was possibly in place here by the 14th century although one does not appear on maps until the 19th century (Bennet's 1888 map of Rushford college (Underdown 2002, fig 2)).

The mixed pottery assemblage within the upper fill of the boundary ditch suggests that the infilling may have occurred as early as the 11th century. Moreover the

presence of residual Middle Saxon pottery hints at continuity in land use between the Middle Saxon and Late Saxon occupation. The quernstones recovered provide a glimpse of some of the food processing activities taking place. As does the presence of butchered animal bone, which indicates that the main domestic food species (including pig) were culled and consumed on site.

No features dating to the medieval period were located, but the quantity of artefacts recovered, especially those from Trench 2, indicate a presence dating to between the late 12th and 14th centuries. The buried subsoil layers sealing the probable Late Saxon features produced the largest quantity of pottery and butchered animal bone, suggesting that this area was utilised for rubbish dumping or middening during this period. The buried subsoil layers also contained Middle and Late Saxon pottery and quernstone. The presence of residual artefacts imply that the medieval land use regime, perhaps garden cultivation, disturbed earlier deposits. The observed change in land use from a Late Saxon settlement/agricultural plot to an area reserved for refuse dumping and possible cultivation in the medieval period is potentially significant. It is tempting to suggest that the catalyst for this observed change in land use was the foundation of Rushford college in 1342: the establishment of the church, college and precinct fundamentally changing, or even regulating, the activities that could take place within the survey area.

An undated ditch ([10]) located within Trench 1 (Fig 3) was sealed by a subsoil layer that could possibly be attributed to the medieval period. This feature may indicate some earlier ditching activity around the area of the current churchyard.

No features dating to the post-medieval or modern periods were located, and although post-medieval pottery, tile and brick were recovered from both trenches, the relative quantity of finds suggests a reduction in activity as time progressed. The depth of later subsoil and topsoil deposits located in both trenches do indicate, however, that a number of post-medieval and modern accumulations, some of them a direct result of the cultivation of garden soils, had occurred. These activities are also indicated by the presence of residual and intrusive artefacts in the subsoil and topsoil deposits of the study area.

A brick retrieved from the topsoil in Trench 2 was identical to others observed *in situ* within the fabric of the northern wall that encloses the survey area, dated to between the 17th and 19th centuries. The boundary wall is shown on Bennet's map of 1888 (Underdown 2002, fig. 2).

Recommendations for future work based on this report will be made by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology.

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Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Trench	Description	Period
01	1	Topsoil. Dark Grey sandy silt.	Modern
02	1	Subsoil. Dark Greyish Brown sandy silt.	Modern
03	1	Cut for ditch.	Undated
04	1	Fill of [03]. Light Brown silty sand.	Undated
05	1	Fill of [03]. Grey silty sand.	?Medieval/post-Medieval
06	2	Topsoil.	Modern
07	2	Subsoil.	?Medieval/post-medieval
08	2	Lower Subsoil.	Medieval
09	2	Lower Subsoil (ditch interface).	Medieval
10	2	Cut for ditch.	?Late Saxon
11	2	Fill of [10]. Orange-red sand.	?Late Saxon
12	2	Fill of [10]. White and grey sand.	?Late Saxon
13	2	Fill of [10]. Yellowish-brown sand.	?Late Saxon
14	2	Fill of [10]. Dark grey silty sand.	?Late Saxon
15	2	Cut for post-hole.	Undated
16	2	Fill of [15]. Dark grey silty sand.	Undated
17	2	Cut for possible post-hole.	Undated
18	2	Fill of [17]. Mid grey sandy silt.	Undated
19	2	Cut for post-hole.	Undated
20	2	Fill of [19]. Mid grey silty sand.	Undated
21	2	Cut for pit.	Undated
22	2	Fill of [21]. Mid grey silty sand.	Undated
23	2	Cut for post-hole.	Undated
24	2	Fill of [23]. Light grey-white silty sand.	Undated
25	1	Natural. Brownish-yellow sand.	-
26	2	Natural. White-mid-grey sand.	-

Appendix 2: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Period
01	Pottery	4	0.033	Medieval and post-medieval
01	Ceramic building material	11	3.060	Post-medieval
01	Copper alloy (including SF6)	3	-	-
01	Lead	6	-	-
01	Iron (nail)	1	-	-
01	Animal bone	-	0.001	-
02	Pottery	4	0.106	Medieval and post-medieval
02	Ceramic building material	2	0.088	Post-medieval
02	Animal bone	-	0.171	-
06	Copper alloy (SF1)	1	-	Post-medieval
06	Iron/copper alloy	1	-	-
07	Animal bone	-	0.316	-
08	Pottery	11	0.181	Saxon and medieval
08	Iron (SF2)	1	-	-
08	Lava (SF3)	15	-	-
08	Animal bone	-	0.171	-
09	pottery	3	0.032	Medieval
09	Lava (SF4)	1	-	-
09	Animal bone	-	0.268	-
14	Pottery	3	0.066	Saxon and medieval
14	Lava (SF5)	1	-	-
14	Animal bone	-	0.134	-

Appendix 3: Pottery

Context	Fabric	Form	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Date
1	Glazed red earthenware	Bowl	1	16	16th to 18th century
1	Dutch-type redware	Body	1	5	
1	Medieval coarseware	Body	1	6	
1	Medieval coarseware	Body	1	6	
2	Unprovenanced glazed ware	Jug	1	39	
2	Medieval coarseware	Body	1	24	
2	Yarmouth-type ware	Body	1	21	12th to 14th century
2	Sandy grey ware	Cp/jar	1	22	?Roman
8	Grimston-type ware	Jug	3	54	13th to 14th century
8	Medieval coarseware	Body	1	17	
8	Medieval coarseware	Body	1	9	
8	Medieval coarseware?	Body	1	8	
8	Thetford-type ware?	Body	1	21	
8	Medieval coarseware?	Body	1	17	
8	Medieval coarseware	Body	1	6	
8	Sandy Ipswich-type ware	Body	2	48	
9	Local medieval unglazed ware	Body	1	3	
9	Medieval coarseware	Body	1	18	
9	Medieval coarseware	Body	1	11	11th-14th C
14	Gritty Ipswich-type ware	Body	1	21	
14	Lincoln Saxo-Norman shelly ware	Cp/jar	1	21	
14	Medieval coarseware	Bowl	1	25	11th C or 11th-12th C

Appendix 4: Faunal Remains

Context	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Species	Species quantity	Comments
01	1	0.001	Rabbit	1	Humerus, juvenile
02	8	0.171	Cattle	2	Juvenile metatarsal and scapula, both chopped and cut
			Sheep	1	Humerus, juvenile, chopped and cut
			Chicken/pheasant	1	tibiotarsus
			Mammal	4	Butchered fragments
07	5	0.316	Cattle	1	Mandible fragment, adult
			Mammal	4	Butchered fragments
08	2	0.171	Cattle	2	Femur fragments, adult, chopped
09	12	0.268	Cattle	1	Molar
			Pig	2	Juvenile tibia and femur, both chopped and cut
			Sheep	1	Metacarpal, chopped/cut
			Mammal	8	Butchered ribs and pelvis
14	6	0.134	Pig	1	Radius, chopped
			Mammal	5	Butchered fragments, poor condition, encrusted with sediment

Appendix 5: Ceramic Building Material

Context	Form	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Period
06	Brick	3	2.736	17th to 19th century
01	Plain roof tile	8	0.324	17th to 19th century
02	Plain roof tile	2	0.088	17th to 19th century

Appendix 6: Small Finds

Small Find	Context	Quantity	Material	Object Name	Description	Date
1	06	1	Copper alloy	Coin	William III halfpenny	1695-1698
2	08	1	Iron	Artefact	Rod with hooped eye	
3	08	15	Lava	Quern	Fragments	
4	09	1	Lava	Quern	Fragment	
5	14	1	Lava	Quern	Fragment	
6	01	1	Copper alloy	Ring	Suspension; poorly cast	

Appendix 7: Catalogue of Other Metal Objects

Context	Quantity	Material	Object Name	Description	Date
01	2	Copper alloy	Buttons		
01	6	Lead	Waste	Fragments	
06	1	Iron/copper alloy	Strip	Iron strip encased in copper alloy sheet	

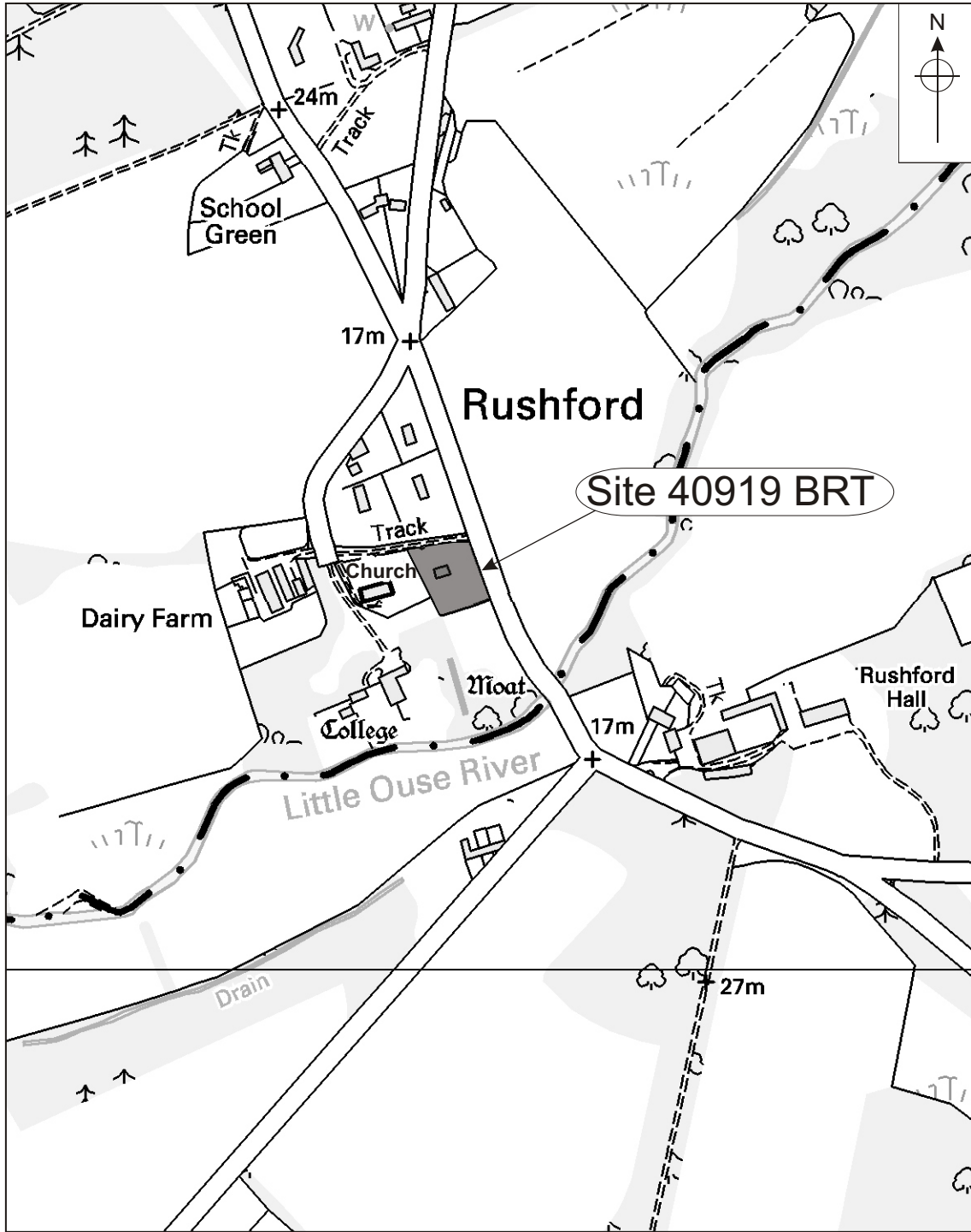


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

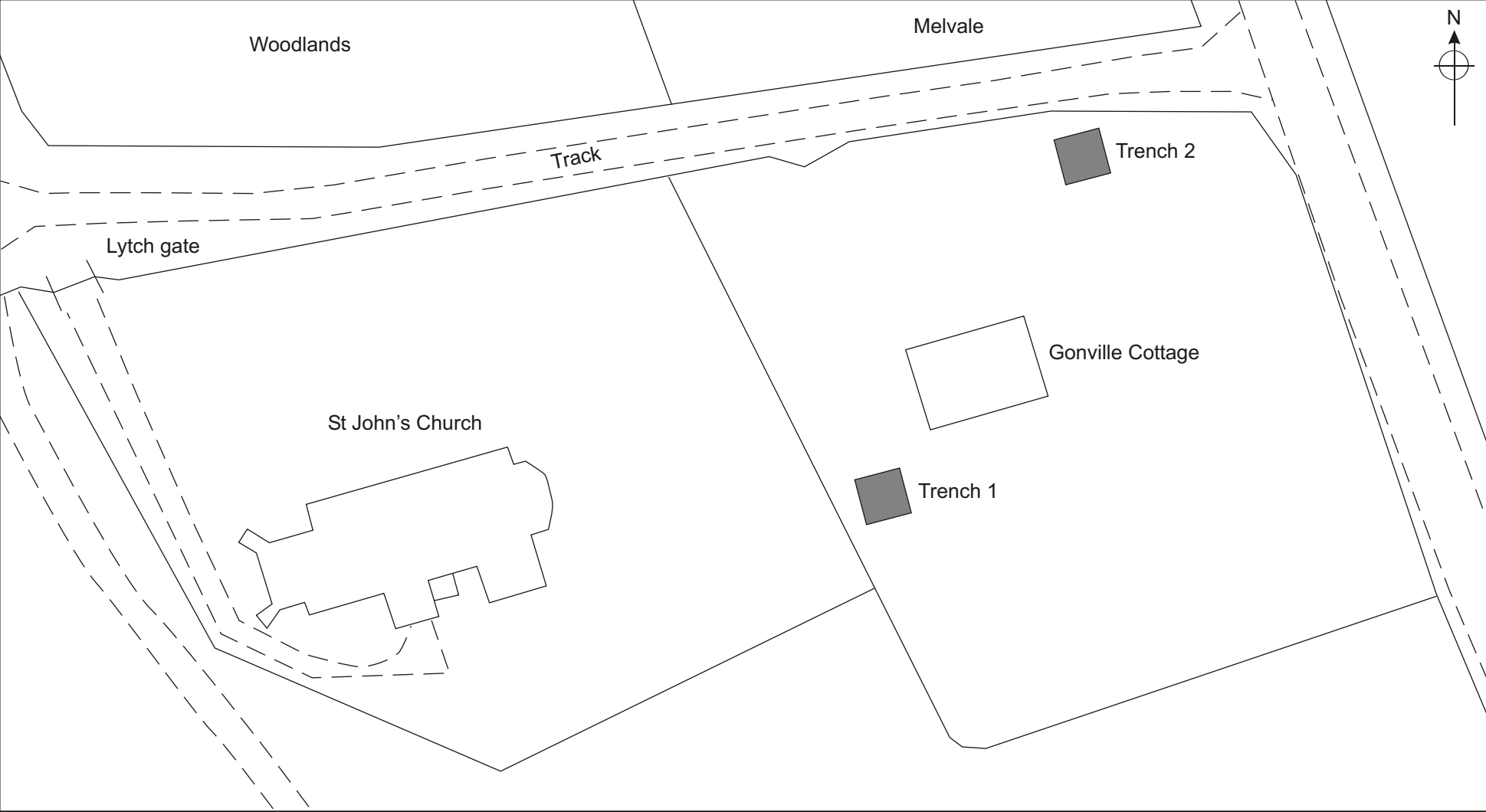


Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1: 500

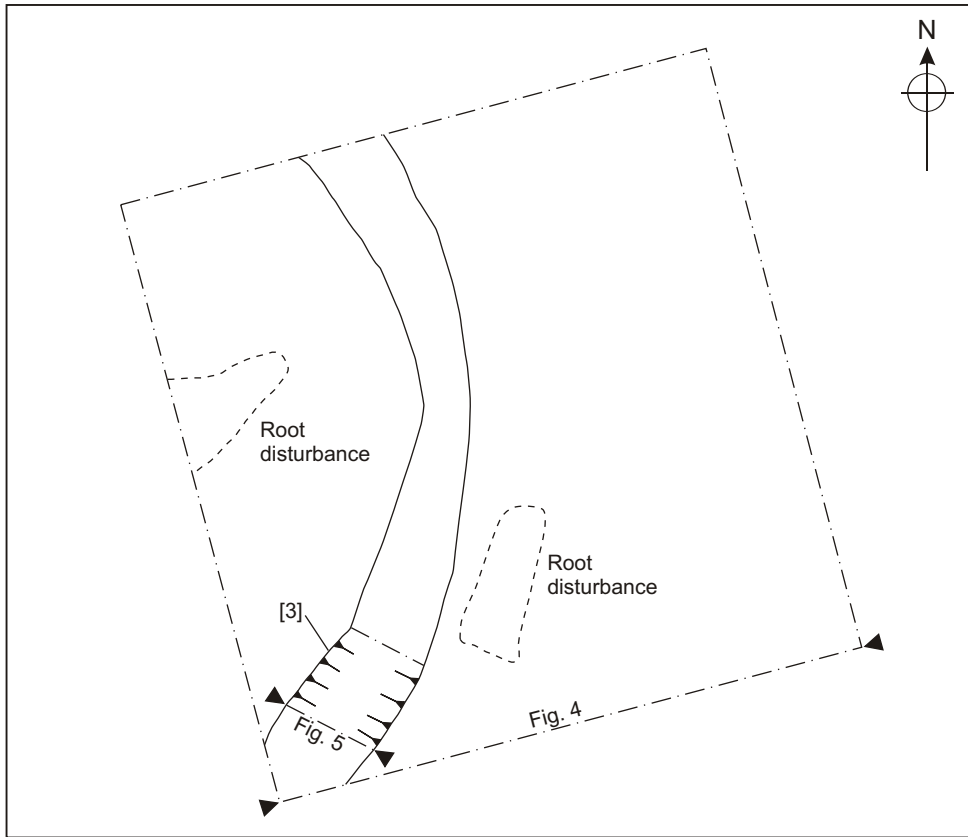


Figure 3. Trench 1, plan. Scale 1:50

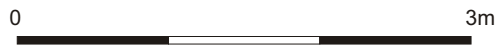
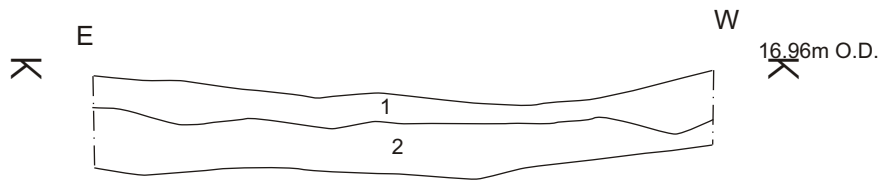


Figure 4. Trench 1, section. Scale 1:50

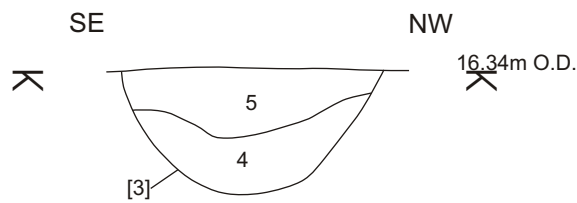


Figure 5. Trench 1, section of ditch [3]. Scale 1:20

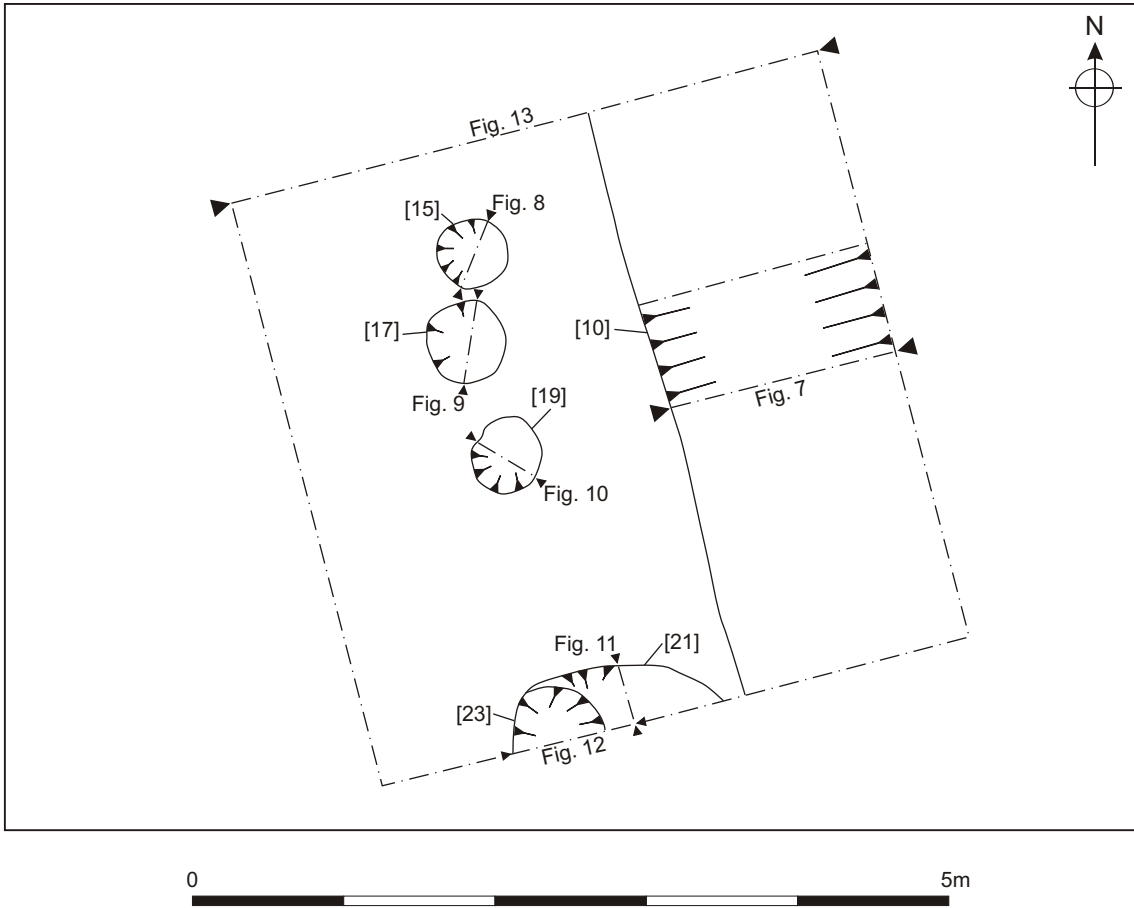


Figure 6. Trench 2, plan. Scale 1:50

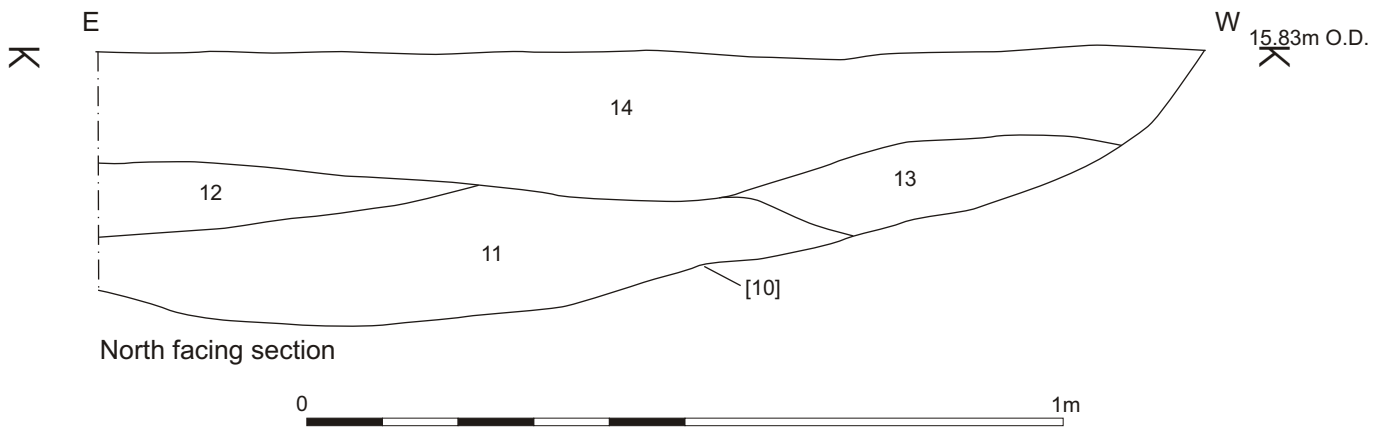


Figure 7. Trench 2, section of ditch [10]. Scale 1:10

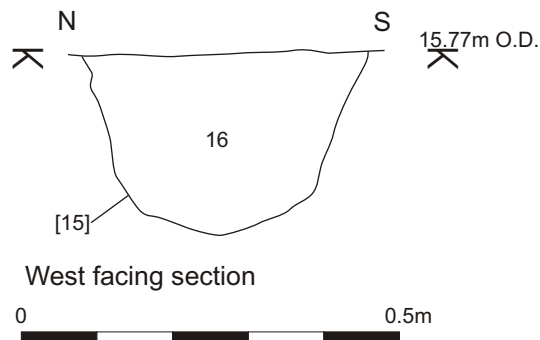


Figure 8. Trench 2, section of post-hole [15]. Scale 1:10

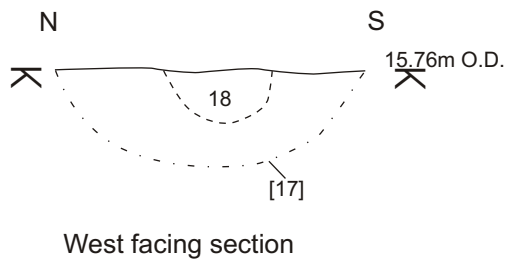


Figure 9. Trench 2, section of post-hole [17]. Scale 1:10

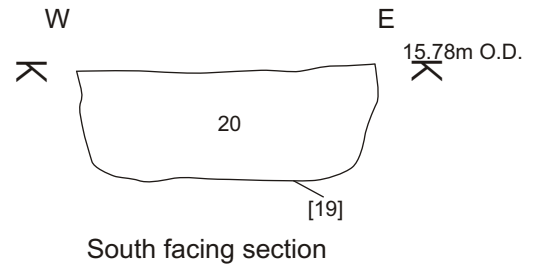


Figure 10. Trench 2, section of post-hole [19]. Scale 1:10

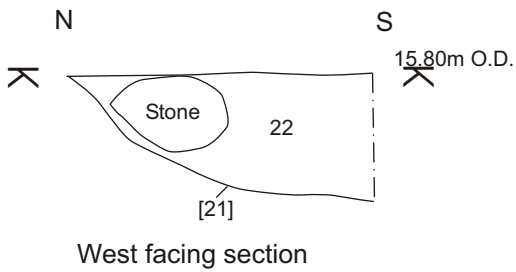


Figure 11. Trench 2, section of pit [21]. Scale 1:10

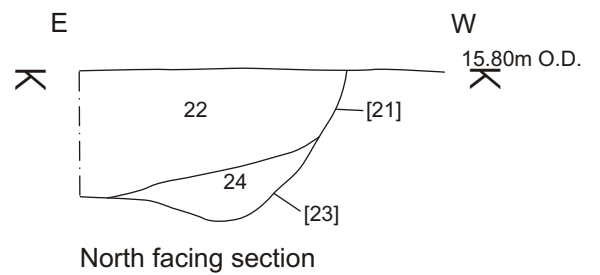


Figure 12. Trench 2, section of pit [21] and post-hole [23]. Scale 1:10

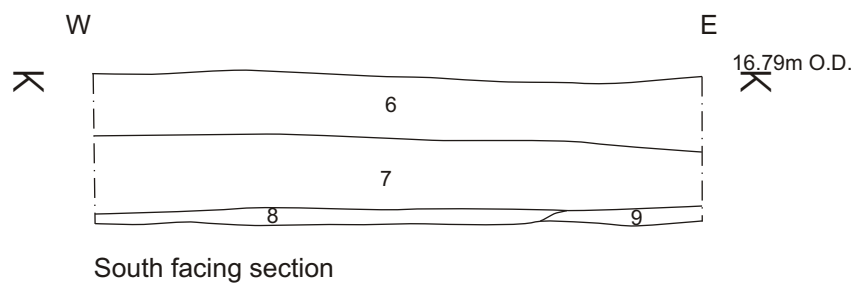


Figure 13. Trench 2, section. Scale 1:50



Plate 1. North facing facade of Rushford College.
Looking south from churchyard.



Plate 2. General view of Trench 1, post-excitation,
slot through pit [3]. Looking west.



Plate 3. General post-excavation view of Trench 2, showing postholes in the foreground (looking east).



Plate 4. Trench 2, detail of intercutting pit [21] and posthole [23] (looking east).