

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Report No. 765

Report on a Second Phase of Archaeological Evaluation at
land adjoining Swanton Morley Airfield
Beetley, Norfolk

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Location: Swanton Morley Airfield, Beetley, Norfolk
Grid Ref: TF 9950 1884
SMR No: 37159 HZE
Date of work: 25th September to 8th October 2002

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken of an area of land adjoining Swanton Morley airfield, Beetley Norfolk. The work was designed to establish the extents of an Early Anglo-Saxon cemetery discovered during an earlier evaluation phase of Trial Trenching and an area of probable Roman settlement revealed during the monitoring of topsoil stripping.

Eleven evaluation trenches were strategically placed in order to achieve these objectives. Trenches located in the vicinity of the cemetery uncovered three further cremations and a single inhumation furnished with a rich array of gravegoods. Analysis and illustration of the cremations and gravegoods from the inhumation are to be presented in a future report.

An Anglo-Saxon settlement site which is probably contemporary with the cemetery was also discovered. The settlement was represented by Sunken Featured Buildings, pits, and post-holes. Trenches located around the postulated area of Roman settlement further several ditches and a pit.

1.0 Introduction

Between the 25th September and 8th October 2002 an archaeological evaluation was carried out on land adjoining Swanton Morley Airfield, Beetley, Norfolk (Norfolk Sites and Monuments Record 37159 HZE, Fig.1). The work was undertaken by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit and funded by Barker Brothers Aggregates Limited. It forms a further phase of evaluation work which follows an initial evaluation carried out by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit in June 2002 (Trimble 2002) and a programme of work has been undertaken by Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust which involved the monitoring of topsoil stripping to the north and west of the development area (Wilkins and Wotherspoon 2002).

The main aim of the evaluation was to establish the extents of archaeological remains recorded during the preceding evaluation and topsoil stripping. It followed 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 future treatment of the archaeological remains. The remains include an Early Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery located to the south-east of the application area and evidence for a possible Roman settlement to the south-west of the site.

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: 16/09/02/ARJH), supplemented by a Method Statement prepared by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU Ref: MS/Eval/1450).

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

The site lies in central Norfolk (at TF 9950 1884) within the predominantly boulder clay-covered area of mid-Norfolk, close to the confluence of several small streams with the eastward-flowing River Wensum. The site is located on the western edge of a plateau overlooking the Blackwater Valley. The ground is relatively flat to the east and south of the site. To the north and west the ground gently slopes into the valley. The site comprises an area of 1.72 ha of arable land.

The site forms part of the Hungry Hills gravels, fragments of now-dissected trains of Middle Pleistocene outwash gravel, described by Straw (1973, 337-341). They consist of 'canon shot' cobbles with finer sub-angular flint gravels in an orange sand matrix from which erratics are virtually absent. They are marked by frequent and diverse periglacial formations.

The topsoil of the evaluation area is mapped as a stagnogleyic argillic brownearth, while the soils of the surrounding boulder clays are predominantly stagnogleys (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1973). The area was covered by an average of around 0.30m of generally homogenous ploughsoil, with the plough cutting into the natural sand and gravel beneath. An unploughed subsoil lying between the ploughsoil and natural survived in places.

The site occupies the western side of the former Swanton Morley Airfield which is now utilised as an army base (Fig.1). It is bounded to the east by the extant perimeter track of the grass airfield which now falls within the area of the army base and to the south by a tarmac dispersal area which forms a 'frying pan' type of hardstanding. To the west and east lie fields of arable land. The site had been until very recently under arable agriculture.

The highest part of the site lies at a height of 45.04m OD. The temporary benchmark is derived from a benchmark with a value of 45.34m located on the east facing wall of a brick built open rectangular military building situated alongside the perimeter track to the south-east of the evaluation area.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The area of the site and its surrounding environs has a wealth of archaeological sites and findspots dating from the Mesolithic period until the present.

3.1 Prehistoric

At Spong Hill which lies c.1Km to the west of the site, prehistoric occupation dating from the Mesolithic through to the Late Iron Age has been archaeologically investigated. Ring ditches are prevalent in the vicinity, including some possible examples on Swanton Morley airfield to the east of the site. Flints dating to the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods have been recovered from fields to the north, west and south of the site. Excavation of several pits to the south of the site produced Bronze Age flints and pottery and some slag, whilst several burnt mounds of the same period have been recorded in the valley floor to the west.

3.2 Roman

Roman activity in the area is represented by the Roman town of Billingford which lies to the north-east of the site and a Roman road which runs to the north. Roman coins have been found in fields to the north of the site. Roman enclosures and field boundaries as well as an early Roman kiln have been excavated on Spong Hill. Two phases of a Roman field system have been identified during the initial evaluation of the current site and subsequent monitoring of the topsoil strip. An earlier south-west to north-east field system may be Late Iron Age or Early Roman in date whilst a north to south field system appears to be Later Roman. Two pottery kilns, five pits and a post-hole of Roman date were also recorded to the south-west of the site.

3.3 Anglo-Saxon

A very large Anglo-Saxon cemetery has been excavated at Spong Hill which lies c. 1km from the site. Over 2300 cremations and 57 inhumations were excavated. Evidence for settlement was also present in the form of sunken featured buildings and post-built buildings. An Anglo-Saxon settlement has also been investigated at Billingford where evidence for iron smelting was also found. An Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery was identified on the current site during the initial evaluation. A total of six urned cremations were found, together with several undated ditches which may have enclosed the cemetery. A possible Saxon timber building was also identified. A pit dated to the Anglo-Saxon period was recorded to the west of the site during monitoring of the topsoil strip. The church at Worthing possibly dates to the Late Anglo-Saxon period and Saxo-Norman pottery has been recovered from the surrounding fields.

3.4 Medieval

Evidence for medieval activity in the area is represented by moated manorial sites at Beetley, Spong Hill, Hoe and Worthing.

3.5 Modern

By far the largest topographical impact on the site was the construction of Swanton Morley Airfield in 1940. Built as a grass airfield, much of this survives including the tarmac perimeter track and dispersal areas. Many of the fortifications including pillboxes, hydraulic gun emplacements and spigot mortar bases also survive as do a number of brick built structures which probably served as ammunition stores and observation posts.

4.0 Methodology

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

The Brief required that the scheme of work involve trial trenching of a 5% sample of the site's area which, when combined with the previous evaluation work, gives a total sampling fraction of 7%. Eleven trial trenches (Fig.2), each measuring 20m in length and 4m in width were excavated in positions considered most likely to achieve the aims of the evaluation.

Machine excavation was carried out with a 360° tracked excavator using a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision.

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

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using the Norfolk Archaeological Unit's *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.

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

5.0 Results

Of the eleven trenches excavated eight contained archaeological remains. A range of features and deposits were recorded across the evaluated area and included cremation urns, an inhumation burial, pits, ditches, post-holes and sunken featured buildings. The numbering of the trial trenches (21 – 31) followed those numbers allocated to the trial trenches of the first phase of evaluation (1 – 20) in order to avoid confusion.

Trenches 21 to 26 were strategically placed around Trial Trench 16 in order to establish the extents of the Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery and settlement evidence recorded in this earlier trench. The remainder (27 - 31) were strategically placed across the area stripped of topsoil where possible Roman settlement evidence and two Roman pottery kilns were recorded during archaeological monitoring of the topsoil strip.

The analysis and illustration of the all the cremations and the gravegoods which accompanied the inhumation are to be presented in a separate report.

5.1 Trench 21 (Fig. 3)

Trench 21 measured 4.50m in width and 20.00m in length. It was orientated east –to - west and positioned to the north of, and parallel with Trench 16. Two Early Anglo-Saxon urned cremations, an undated burnt area and a ditch of probable Roman date were recorded.

Urned cremations *2018 and 2022* were located at the west end of the trench and in close proximity to each other (Plate. 1). Plough damage had severely truncated the cremations with only the lower half of the urns surviving. Circular cuts for each urn were clearly visible. Cut *2016*, containing cremation *2018*, measured 0.40m in maximum diameter whilst cut *2020*, containing cremation *2022*, measured 0.35m in diameter. The cuts survived to a depth of 0.20m and were both filled by mid greyish brown sands *2017 and 2021*.

An area of possible scorched subsoil *2033* measuring 0.95m in length, 0.45m in width and with a depth of 0.15m was situated 3 metres to the north-west of the cremations (Fig.4). Mid brownish red

in colour, this anomaly may have been caused by a high temperature localised fire and could feasibly represent a pyre associated with the cremation rite.

Located to the south-east of the trench was a south-west to north-east orientated ditch 2030. It measured 1.40m in width, 0.48m in depth and was revealed for a length of 3.00m. A light brown sand 2031 comprised the fill (Fig.4). A ditch 31 forming a southward continuation of 2030 had been identified in Trench 16 (Trimble 2002). No datable artefacts were recovered from the ditch although stratigraphic and dating evidence recovered from other ditches lying on a similar orientation elsewhere on the site suggests a Roman or possibly an Early Anglo-Saxon.

5.2 Trench 22 (Fig. 5)

Trench 22 was located to the north of Trench 16 and to the west of Trench 21. Orientated in a north - to - south manner, Trench 22 measured 4.40m in width and 20.00m in length. A single ditch, a pit and a cluster of three post-holes were recorded.

Ditch 2010 was located in the southern half of the trench and orientated in a south-west to north-east alignment. It measured 0.85m in average width and 0.20m in depth (Fig.6). It was revealed for a distance of 8.20m. The ditch was filled by a single deposit of mid to dark brown silty sand 2011. No artefacts were recovered from the ditch although dating evidence recovered from other ditches lying on a similar orientation elsewhere on the site suggests a Roman or possibly an Early Anglo-Saxon date.

A pit 2002 was situated to the western side of the ditch. Ovoid in shape with the long axis orientated north – to – south, it measured 1.42m in length and 0.82m in maximum width, with a depth of 0.20m. In profile it had gently sloping sides with a slightly concave base (Fig.6). It was filled by a single deposit of light to mid brown silty sand 2003. No artefacts were recovered from the pit although it is likely to have been associated with the Early Anglo-Saxon settlement represented by sunken featured buildings recorded in nearby trenches.

Located to the north-west of the trench was a cluster of three post-holes 2004, 2006 and 2008. These formed a dog-leg arrangement. No dating evidence was recovered from the post-holes although their proximity to sunken featured buildings in nearby trenches suggests they were likely to have represented a post-built structure associated with the Anglo-Saxon settlement.

The southernmost post-hole 2004 was not fully revealed within the excavation area. In plan it appeared to be oval in shape. Extents of 0.70m north – to - south and 0.40m east - to - west were recorded. It measured 0.27m in depth and in profile displayed steep sides and a flat base (Fig.6). It was filled by a single deposit of dark brown sandy silt 2005.

To the north-east of 2004 was post-hole 2006. Ovoid in plan it measured 0.74m north to south and 0.52m in width with a depth of 0.18m. It had a bowl-shaped profile filled with a single deposit of dark brown silty sand 2007 (Fig.6).

North of 2006 was post-hole 2008 Sub-circular in plan it measured 0.55m in diameter with a depth of 0.14m. It had a shallow bowl-shaped profile and was filled by a single deposit of light to mid brown silty sand 2009 (Fig.6).

5.3 Trench 23 (Fig. 7)

Trench 23 was positioned to the west of Trench 16 and was orientated in a north – to – south manner. Features recorded include two sunken featured buildings, an arrangement of four post-holes, a sub-rectangular pit, two circular pits or post-holes and a ditch. The only reliably dated artefact retrieved from features in this trench was a single sherd of Early Anglo-Saxon pottery retrieved from sunken featured building 2056. With the exception of the ditch, which is probably Late Iron Age or Early Roman in date based on finds retrieved from ditches of a similar orientation elsewhere on the site, all other features are likely to be associated with the Anglo-Saxon settlement. However, the presence of the occasional sherd of possible Iron Age pottery hints at possible earlier settlement activity.

Sunken featured building 2056 was located towards the north-eastern corner of the trench and was only partially exposed within the evaluation area. The revealed extents represent the south-eastern quadrant of the sunken featured building which measured 2.20m east-to-west and 1.60m north-to-south. The sides were gradually sloped whilst the base was flat though slightly undulating (Fig.8). It

was filled by a single deposit of mid to dark brown silty sand 2057 from which a single sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery was recovered. A shallow steep-sided and flat bottomed depression 2062 measuring 0.08m in depth had been cut into the base of the sunken featured building. The function of the depression is uncertain though it could represent a post emplacement in the central area of the building. Its fill was comprised of a mid to dark brown silty sand 2063 from which two sherds of Early Anglo-Saxon or Iron Age pottery were recovered. It is possible that this cut represents an earlier – possibly Iron Age - feature truncated by the sunken featured building. Post-hole 2058 was located centrally in the western end of the building and on the edge of the cut for the hollow. Only partially revealed in plan, it appeared to be circular in shape. Conjecture indicates a diameter of 0.60m. It had a depth of 0.20m and was filled by a single deposit of mid brown silty sand 2059. A further post-hole 2060 occupied a position 1.00m from the western end of the sunken featured building. Although only partially exposed in plan and section conjecture suggests a circular shape with a diameter of c. 0.55m. It had a bowl-shaped concave profile (Fig.8) with a depth of 0.12m and was filled by a single deposit of dark brown silty sand 2061.

Featured 2052 lay just 0.90m to the east of sunken featured building 2056. The feature was only partially exposed within the excavation area although the revealed portion measuring 1.60m north-to-south and 1.00m east-to-west may represent the south-eastern corner of a sunken featured building. It had a maximum depth of 0.40m. In section the feature displayed a reversed 'S'-shaped profile, with the side having a very gentle slope from the top breaking to steep toward the base (Fig. 8). The primary fill was comprised of a mid ginger brown silty sand 2055 measuring 0.21m in depth whilst the upper fill 2053 was of a light to mid ginger brown silty sand. Two pieces of residual worked flint were recovered from 2053, one of which was datable to the Mesolithic or Early Neolithic period.

Within the central east area of the trench was an arrangement of 4 post-holes 2050, 2046, 2048 and 2044. Three of those (2050, 2046 and 2044) formed a north-to-south alignment whilst 2048 lay 1.00m to the east of the alignment. Taken together the post-holes may represent the south-western corner of a building.

Post-hole 2050 was the most northerly of the group. Oval in shape, it measured 0.40m in maximum diameter with a depth of 0.13m. The profile displayed a concave bowl shape (Fig.8) and it was filled by a single deposit of mid brown silty sand 2051.

Post-hole 2046 was located 2.00m south of post-hole 2050. Circularly shaped in plan, it had a diameter of 0.24m and a depth of 0.10m. The profile was bowl-shaped (Fig.8). It was filled by a single deposit of mid ginger brown silty sand 2047.

Situated just 0.20m south of post-hole 2046 was post-hole 2044. Ovoid shaped in plan, it had a maximum diameter of 0.32m. Bowl-shaped in section, it had a depth of 0.12m (Fig.8) and was filled by a single deposit of mid brown silty sand 2045

Post-hole 2048 lay c 1.20m due east of post-holes 2046 and 2044. It was circularly shaped in plan with a diameter of 0.30m. The section displayed a concave, bowl- shaped profile (Fig.8) measuring 0.14m in depth. It was filled by a single deposit of mid ginger brown silty sand 2049.

Within the central area of the trench was a sub-rectangular feature 2042 with a south-east to north-west orientation. In plan the cut exhibited a very regular shape which measured 1.80m in length and 0.85m in width. It had carefully rounded corners although in section the cut was irregular (Fig.8). The cut had relatively shallow north and south sides with a central depression measuring 0.72m in length, 0.50m in width and a maximum depth of 0.34m. It was filled by a single deposit of mid ginger brown silty sand 2043. This feature is very difficult to interpret although it is possible that it may have served as a large post-hole setting.

A circular post-hole or small pit 2040 was located 2.10m to the south-east of feature 2042. It measured 0.70m in diameter and 0.34m in depth with a deep bowl shaped profile (Fig.8). It was filled by a single deposit of mid ginger brown silty sand 2041.

Another circular post-hole or small pit 2038 was positioned 3.80m south-east of 2040. It had a diameter of 0.70m and a depth of 0.21m. The profile was bowl- shaped (Fig.8) and was filled by a mid brown silty sand 2039.

A south-west-to-north-east orientated ditch 2036 was recorded towards the south-east corner of the trench. Only a small area of the ditch fell within the evaluation trench. This part measured

0.60m in width and 1.90m in length. In profile, the ditch was shallow measuring just 0.16m in depth with a flat base and steep side (Fig.8). It was filled by a deposit of mid brown silty sand 2037.

5.4 Trench 24 (Fig. 9)

Trench 24 was situated to the south of Trench 16 and orientated in a east-to-west manner. Features and deposits recorded included a single ditch which probably dates to the Late Iron Age or Early Roman period, an Early Anglo-Saxon urned cremation and an Early Anglo-Saxon inhumation burial.

Ditch 2029 was located in the eastern half of the trench and was revealed for a distance of 11.00m. It measured up to 2.00m in width with a depth of 0.45m. It had gradually sloping sides with an irregular though flattish base (Fig.10) and was filled by a single fill of mid orange brown silty sand 2028 which included very occasional charcoal fragments. A ditch on the same alignment 41 was recorded in Trench 16 during the first phase of evaluation (Trimble 2002).

Truncating the southern edge of the ditch 2029 was an east-to-west orientated grave cut 2035. It measured 2.10m in length, 1.00m in width and 1.10m in depth. The sides were almost vertical whilst the base was slightly concave. The acidity of the subsoils ensured that no bone was preserved and unfortunately there was no evidence of a 'sand body'. However, a coffin stain comprised of a deposit of dark greyish orange humic material 2069 was situated to the base of the cut (Plate. 2). The rectangular shape of the coffin was clearly visible. The burial was furnished with an array of grave goods. Within the head and chest area was a rich collection of amber, glass, and ceramic beads (Plate. 3) whilst two brooches, one cruciform and one annular, was positioned in the area of the chest. An iron buckle was recovered from the waist area. Four further items of as yet unidentified metalwork were also recovered. Three of these were from the north central side of the grave (possibly the left hand) whilst one was located to the north east (possibly the left foot). From the distribution of grave goods, it would appear that the body was supine with the head positioned to the west.

A probably redeposited cremation burial 2026 had been placed within the western part of the backfilled grave. The urn consisted of fragmented pottery sherds concentrated in a small area. Burnt bone was contained within the area delimited by the pottery sherds. Although the cremation was positioned to the top of the grave cut, it is almost certain that it was placed into the grave during its backfilling. This hypothesis is based on the fact that pottery sherds and burnt bone were distributed over a relatively wide area and up to 0.20m below the main cluster of cremation material within the grave. It seems likely then that this cremation had been encountered during the digging of the grave and had been reinterred during its backfilling. This would explain the fragmented nature of the urn. However, a less prosaic interpretation cannot be ruled out and it is possible that the cremation formed part of the burial rite of the inhumation and was intentionally placed within the grave.

5.5 Trench 25 (Fig. 11)

Trench 25 was orientated in a north-to-south manner and positioned to the south of Trench 24. It contained a total of six features - four of which remain unexcavated. Two Anglo-Saxon sunken featured buildings were excavated. The unexcavated features may all represent further sunken featured buildings.

Sunken featured building 2064 was located towards the north-eastern corner of the trench. Although the feature was not fully exposed within the area of excavation enough was revealed to discern that it was rectangular in plan with rounded corners. The longer axis was orientated east-to-west. Dimensions of 2.10m east-to-west and 1.35m north-to-south were recorded. A quadrant was excavated into the south-western corner of the feature. In profile the cut had gently sloping sides at the west end and steep sides to the south (Fig.12). It had a depth of 0.45m and was filled by a single deposit of light to mid brown silty sand 2065. A post-hole was located to the south side of the cut at a distance of 0.40m from the west end. The post-hole measured 0.50m in maximum width and 0.35m in depth (Fig.12). It was filled by a deposit of dark brown silty sand 2067 which incorporated frequent quantities of charcoal flecks and fragments.

Sunken featured building 2087 was located in the southern side of the trench (Plate. 4). Sub-square in plan with rounded corners, it measured 2.10m in length east-to-west and 2.00m north-to-south. The northern and southern sides were gently or gradually sloped whilst the eastern and

western sides were steep (Fig 12). The base was flat. The feature was filled by a single deposit of mid brown silty sand 2088. A possible post-hole was located in the north-western corner though its irregular shape and section suggest that it is more likely to have been an animal burrow.

Situated in the north-east of the trench and 1.50m south of sunken featured building 2064 was an unexcavated feature 2089. It was not fully exposed within the evaluation trench although dimensions of 2.00m east to west and 1.70m north to south were revealed. The sub-rectangular shape and east-to-west orientation suggest that this feature represents a sunken featured building very similar in shape and dimensions to sunken featured building 2064.

Immediately south of 2089 was a further unexcavated feature 2090 which probably represented the western end of a sunken featured building. Its exposed dimensions measured 0.75m east-to-west and 1.70m north-to-south.

Two further unexcavated features at the south-eastern corner of the trench may also represent the western ends of sunken featured buildings protruding into the evaluation area. Feature 2091 measured 0.60m east-to-west and 1.40m north-to-south as revealed whilst 2092 measured 0.50 east-to-west and 0.90m north-to-south.

5.6 Trench 26 (Fig. 13)

Trench 26 was positioned to the west of Trench 25 and orientated south-west to north-east. A pit and a post-hole were recorded. No datable artefacts were recovered from either feature although they are likely to be associated with the Anglo-Saxon settlement represented by the sunken featured buildings recorded in nearby evaluation trenches.

Post-hole 2070 was located to the north-east of the trench. Oval-shaped in plan it measured 0.63m in length and 0.45m in width. In profile it had a steep side to the south and a gently sloping side to the north (Fig.14). The base sloped gradually with the lowest point to the south. It measured 0.21m in maximum depth. A probable post-pipe 2093 was discernible in section to the south side of the cut measuring 0.33m in width and comprised a light to mid orange brown sand. The surrounding fill 2071 was of a mid greyish brown sand.

Situated within the western half of the trench and towards its northern edge was pit 2072. This measured 1.30m in diameter. Its northern side continued beyond the limit of excavation. Its profile displayed very steep, almost vertical sides and a flat though irregular base (Fig.14). It was filled by a single deposit of mid brown sand 2073.

5.7 Trench 27 (Fig. 15)

A single ditch and a burnt flint scatter were recorded in Trench 27. The ditch probably dates to the Iron Age whilst the burnt flint scatter remains undated.

Ditch 2013 was located to the north of the trench and was orientated in a south-west to north-east alignment. It was revealed for a distance of 5.50m. The ditch had a width of 0.75m in the south widening to 1.45m in the north. It had a shallow concave profile (Fig.16) with depths varying from 0.16m in the south to 0.30m in the north. It was filled by a single deposit of mid orange brown sand 2014 from which three pieces of worked flint dating to the later prehistoric period and six sherds of Iron Age pottery were recovered.

Situated in the central area of the trench was a small burnt flint scatter 2015 which occupied an area measuring 1.50m east-to-west and 0.55m north-to-south. It survived only as a very thin and patchy spread of burnt flint in a matrix of pale pink and grey sand. The pink colour is a result of scorching. Ploughing had all but erased it and originally this was probably a shallow scrape for a roasting pit.

5.8 Trench 30 (Fig. 17)

Two ditches and a single small pit were recorded in Trench 30. The ditches were Roman, dating to the 1st or 2nd century AD. The pit remains undated.

The ditches were located to the southern end of the trench. Ditch 2074 was orientated south-east to north-west whilst 2076 was orientated perpendicularly to 2074. The two ditches were contemporary features which formed part of a rectilinear field system.

Ditch 2074 was exposed for a distance of 3.45m and measured 0.84m in width and 0.45m in depth. The ditch had steep sides and a narrow slightly concave base (Fig.18). It was filled by a single deposit of mid brown sand 2075 from which pottery sherds dating to the 1st or 2nd century AD were recovered.

Ditch 2076 was recorded for a distance of 1.40m before becoming invisible within a spread of subsoil to the east. It measured 1.00m in width and 0.20m in maximum depth. It had steep sides and a flat sloping base (Fig.18). It was filled by a single deposit of mid brown sand 2077 from which sherds of pottery dating to the 1st or 2nd century AD were recovered.

Pit 2078 was circular measured 0.90m in diameter. It was 0.30m in depth with a deep bowl-shaped profile (Fig.18). It was filled by a single deposit of mid brown sand 2079.

Two second century AD coins were recovered by metal detector from the spoil heap.

6.0 The Finds

6.1 Flint

A total of twelve pieces of struck flint were recovered during evaluation of the site. Three pieces of burnt flint weighing a total of 25g were also found and these have been discarded. The flint is summarised in Table 1 and listed by context in Appendix 4.

Type	Wt(g)	No.
Flake		9
Blade		2
Retouched flake		1
Burnt fragment	25	3

Table 1 Summary of flint

The flint consists mainly of unmodified flakes, most of a small size. Two blades are present, one of them [2053] is a neat parallel sided piece with an abraded platform showing that it was struck from a prepared core. It is probably of Mesolithic or Earlier Neolithic date but was found in the fill of a sunken-featured building of Saxon date and was therefore residual.

Three small squat flakes, which appear to have been struck from the same core and are quite sharp, were found in ditch fill [2014]. They are all of a similar dull grey coloured flint and two of them have the same white cortex. They are probably of later prehistoric date and their similarity and condition might suggest that the ditch infilled during that period.

A blade and three flakes were from unstratified contexts. They are noticeably more edge damaged than the rest of the flint, but one flake [2082] is retouched, probably on both edges.

The three pieces of burnt flint were recovered from the fill [2034] of an Early Saxon grave.

6.2 The Coins

1) Copper-alloy *dupondius* of Antoninus Pius (Context 2086, SF no. 22), 138-161. Obverse: ANTONINVS AVG PIVS... Radiate head right. Reverse: Legend illegible, standing female figure, left. Mint of Rome. *Roman Imperial Coinage* vol. III.

2) Silver *denarius* of ?Septimius Severus (Context 2086, SF no. 24), ?193-211. Obverse: Legend illegible, laureate head right. Reverse: Legend illegible, Victory standing left. Mint of Rome. *Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. IV.1.

The coins represent standard second century denominations. The *dupondius* has some wear as does the *denarius* and so it seems reasonable to assume that these are losses from not much later than the early third century. The corrosion on the obverse of the *denarius* does, however, make attribution uncertain. The lack of any later coins, struck in such abundance throughout the empire, would imply that the excavated part of the site does not go later in date than the first half of the third century.

6.3 Prehistoric Pottery

Excavations at Beetley produced nine sherds of prehistoric pottery weighing 17g. The sherds were all bodysherds and were mostly small and in poor condition. The lack of diagnostic forms prohibited close dating of the sherds however the mixture of flint and quartz-sand used as temper within the fabrics suggests that the pottery may be of Iron Age date.

Cntxt	Qty	Weight (g)	Description	Spotdate
2014	6	11	One large sherd of flint tempered fabric with brown core and orange surfaces, five dark-grey brown scraps of quartz-sand tempered fabric with smoothed surfaces,	Iron Age
2053	1	3	One heavily abraded quartz sand	undatable
2063	2	3	Two small dark brown quartz-sand tempered sherds.	undatable
Total	9	17		

Table 2 Prehistoric pottery

6.4 Roman pottery

6.4.1 Summary

A small amount of Romano-British coarse ware pottery was retrieved from four separate deposits during this phase of the archaeological intervention. All of the pottery was of a locally produced, but unsourced, sandy grey ware fabric with a misfired version also recorded. No vessel types were identified as only undiagnostic body sherds were found. Although this material is not closely datable, the grooved and burnished decoration suggests an early to mid Roman date between the mid 1st and mid/late 2nd centuries AD.

A similar ceramic assemblage was retrieved from Beetley (SMR 30089) in 1997, and therefore this material would seem to be typical of the location. This assemblage would not benefit from further analysis.

6.4.2 The Fabrics

6.4.2.1 Black surfaced red ware

This is a broad fabric group which includes any misfired local grey ware, with the end result of a red fabric and black surface.

6.4.2.2 Sandy grey ware

Description: Andrews 1985, 92.

6.4.3 The Forms

Only undiagnostic body sherds were recovered during this evaluation.

Context	Fabric	Forms	Quantity (sherd count)	Weight (g)	Comments
2075	Sandy grey ware	-	3	28	Burnished
2075	Sandy grey ware	-	3	4	
2077	Black surfaced red ware	-	3	10	Grooved & burnished
2077	Sandy grey ware	-	1	2	
2080	Sandy grey ware	-	1	28	Grooved
2081	Sandy grey ware	-	1	2	
Total			12	74	

Table 3 The Roman pottery

6.5 The Post-Roman pottery

6.5.1 Introduction

Two urned Anglo-Saxon cremation vessels 2018 and 2022 were recovered. The vessels were severely plough truncated and fragmented with only the lower halves surviving. The vessels were recorded, photographed and removed from the site. Full analysis and reporting on these cremations is to be carried out at a later date together with the six cremations recovered from the first phase of evaluation.

In addition to the cremations, a total of fifty one fragments of pottery were recovered from the evaluation. Forty-five of these were associated with the Saxon cremation cemetery and will be dealt with at a later date. The remaining six are summarised below.

6.5.2 Methodology

The ceramics were quantified by the number of sherds present in each context, the estimated number of vessels represented and the weight of each fabric. Other characteristics such as condition and decoration were noted, and an overall date range for the pottery in each context was established. The pottery was recorded on *proforma* sheets by context using letter codes based on fabric and form. The codes used are based mainly on those identified by Jennings (1981), and supplemented by additional ones for the Early Saxon period based on those used by the Suffolk Archaeological Unit (S Anderson, unpublished fabric list).

6.5.3 The pottery

Six fragments were identified from the evaluation which were not associated with the Saxon cremations.

A single small body sherd was recovered from 2057, the fill of a sunken featured building. The sherd was considerably abraded, but may have had a tooled external surface, with evidence of grooving. The fabric was sandy with some organic material, and is suitable for a vessel of Early Saxon date.

Two further fragments of pottery were found in 2075. Both fragments are hard to identify with certainty, given their provenance, which is the fill of a ditch which forms part of a much larger ditch system believed to date to the Late Iron Age or the Early Roman period. One sherd is from the base of a very thick-walled vessel. The fabric is very sandy and it has an oxidised external surface. The second sherd is thinner walled and sandy, with sparse flint inclusions. Both these have been provisionally catalogued as Early Saxon, although it is possible that they are earlier in date.

Three fragments were retrieved from the Trench 22 overburden 2081. A single body sherd of a medieval coarseware was identified as of 11th to 14th-century date, together with two joining sherds of a very abraded sandy fabric of indeterminate date.

6.5.4 Conclusions

The small quantity of pottery recovered from the trial trenches includes material which is Early Saxon in date. The assemblage is small and the condition of the body sherds is poor. It is consequently only possible to provide limited observations based on fabric and surface treatment. In some cases, the difficulty in distinguishing Iron Age material from Early Saxon pottery has prevented a firm identification.

Cntxt	Ceramic Period	Fabric	Form	Sherd No	ENV	Condition	Wgt (Gms)	Overall Date Range	Comments
2057	ES	ESO2	BODY	1	1	A	3	E Sax	Abraded groove
2075	ES?	ESCQ	BODY	1	1		8	E Sax?	Moderately thick-walled v sandy
2075	ES?	ESO2?	BASE	1	1	A	15	E Sax?	Chunky base sherd, thickwalled, oxid ext
2081	M	LMU-V	BODY	1	1	A	2	11th-14th C	Small coarseware body sherd
2081	PRE?	MISC	BODY	2	1		4		Coarse sandy, poss PREP?

Table 4 The Post-Roman Pottery

6.6 The Small Finds

6.6.1 Summary

Two copper alloy objects consisting of a wrist clasp fragment and a 'D'-shaped buckle were recovered by metal detector from within the area of an Early Saxon cemetery at Beetley. These artefacts date to between the late 5th and 7th centuries AD.

6.6.2 Catalogue

SF19 A copper alloy 'D' shaped **buckle** and iron pin. Early Saxon, late 5th-7th centuries AD.

SF21 A copper alloy **hook-plate** fragment from a wrist-clasp. Incomplete bronze bar with a cast lug. The bar constitutes two plain square sections decoratively divided by two groups of three raised moulded lines. Hines type B12 (Hines 1984, 77-79). Early Saxon, 6th century AD.

A wrist clasp as defined by Hines (1984 70) comprises two metal plates, one with a hook and another with a catch plate, which join together to secure two sides of a sleeve (performing the same function as a modern cuff link). It would be anticipated that a complete example would have had two moulded parts dividing three plain sections, two lugs by which the object could be sewn to a garment and an answering catchplate. A type common to East Anglia has a decorative tail in the middle of the back edge of the bar opposite the hook. Not enough of SF21 survives, however, to say whether it is of this type. A similar (although more highly decorated) example has been found at Morningthorpe in Norfolk (Green *et al* 1987, 233, fig 330).

7.0 Discussion

The discovery at Beetley of a small Early Anglo-Saxon cemetery and associated settlement is unparalleled in the county and has the potential to assist in further understanding the relationship between settlement and cemetery at this time. Current thinking regarding this relationship is outlined below as is the way in which, with further work on the remains, the site at Beetley may challenge current hypothesis.

Numerous Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries have been archaeologically investigated in Norfolk although only one – the very large cemetery at Spong Hill (Hills and Penn 1981) - has yielded any possible evidence for an associated settlement. At Beetley there is the possibility (as there is at Spong) that the cemetery and settlement were separated chronologically although this is unlikely due to the apparent spatial arrangement between the two. Although very close in distance neither encroaches upon the other and even pits appear to be absent in the area occupied by the cemetery.

The Anglo-Saxon cremation cemeteries that have so far been excavated in Norfolk have been much larger than that at Beetley and include those at Markshall, Caistor St Edmund and Spong Hill. The site at Spong lies just 1km from the site at Beetley on the opposite side of the valley. At Spong Hill over 2357 cremations and 58 inhumations were excavated. Current hypotheses regarding Early Anglo-Saxon burial practice have suggested that these large cemeteries functioned as centralised depositories serving dispersed communities over a wide area (Arnold 1981). Without full excavation the quantity of burials at Swanton Morley remains unknown although extrapolating from the quantity found, and the confines of the area that they occupy, a total of around 25 cremations and perhaps 3 or 4 inhumations might be expected. The close proximity between the small cemetery at Beetley and Spong Hill raises the question as to why people from this community were not buried at Spong Hill. There is the possibility that the cemeteries are not contemporary although this is unlikely. The artefacts from Beetley point to a date within the 6th century whilst Spong Hill received burials from the late 5th century through to the early 7th century. There is also the possibility that the Beetley community were members of a neighbouring territorial group which did not have access to the Spong cemetery. This in itself raises the question as to why they weren't interred in a centralised cemetery of their own.

It is certain from evidence elsewhere that cremation and inhumation were concurrent practices. It is not certain which social criteria were involved in choosing between rites although individual status and role within society were probably important in this matter. It has been suggested that there is a

relationship between the rite adopted and the distance between cemetery and settlement (Arnold 1988). Inhumation burials took place close to the settlement, cremation where the body needed to be taken to a centralised depository. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that cremation took place at the settlement. However, it would appear that both cremations and inhumations were buried close to the settlement at Beetley.

The settlement evidence at Beetley is typical of sites of this period in that they often contain a combination of post-built and Sunken Featured Buildings interspersed with numerous pits. As at Beetley they also commonly exhibit a paucity of artefacts which is often cited as evidence of impoverishment in the early post-Roman period. Without full area excavation, the size of the settlement remains unknown and from their distribution in the trial trenches the settlement may well spread further to the west and south.

A considerable number of sunken featured buildings have been recorded, both in this country and on the continent though as yet no satisfactory interpretation has been forthcoming regarding their above ground appearance or function. It is almost certain that the hollow was covered by a wooden planked floor though the purpose of the hollow beneath is open to question. It has been suggested that this was to allow the circulation of air around the planked floor and prevent the boards from rotting, which would be accelerated if they were placed directly onto the damp ground. It is possible that the space beneath the floor could have been used as storage space. It is now considered unlikely that Sunken Featured Buildings were permanently occupied dwellings but served as utility buildings for a variety of crafts. Judging by the high frequency of loomweights found in some excavated hollows, it would seem that weaving was one of the main activities carried out. Sunken Featured Buildings are generally found with post-holes situated at each end of the hollow. The posts would have supported the above ground structure. Several categories of building have been identified based on the number of post holes present within the hollow and their particular arrangement. Two, four and six post variations have been recorded.

The evidence for Roman activity at Beetley is also of considerable interest. Late Roman activity is represented by field systems, a possible area of occupation and pottery production recorded during the monitoring of topsoil stripping to the west of the site (Wilkins and Wotherspoon 2002). It is notable that Early Anglo-Saxon settlements and cemeteries regularly occur close to or within Roman sites though this relationship is not clearly understood. The current work and previous trial trenching (Trimble 2002) has revealed evidence for Early Roman ditches to the south of this area in Trench 13 (first phase of evaluation) and Trench 30 (second phase of evaluation) and an Iron Age ditch was recorded in Trench 27. The south-west to north-east orientated ditch system(s) recorded in the north, south and eastern areas of the site during both phases of evaluation are difficult to date owing to the paucity of finds. Ditch 2029 in Trench 24 is truncated by the Early Anglo-Saxon grave 2034 indicating a pre-Saxon date for the ditches in this area. Single sherds of Early Anglo-Saxon pottery were recovered from ditch 52 in Trench 1 and ditch 45 in Trench 19 during the first phase of trial trenching. However, it is likely that these sherds are intrusive in earlier features.

8.0 Conclusions

The aims of this evaluation, which were to identify the extent of the Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery and the area of postulated Roman settlement, have been achieved. It would appear that the cemetery does not continue northward beyond Trench 21, or southward beyond Trench 24. No evidence of the cemetery was recorded in trenches positioned to the west of trench 16. However, the remains of a probably contemporary Anglo-Saxon settlement were recorded in trenches positioned to the west and south of the cemetery. Together, the Anglo-Saxon remains form a rare example of an associated settlement and cemetery and have the potential to shed further light on the relationship between the two.

Several Roman ditches forming part of a wider field system were recorded in trial trenches located to the south-west of the site and in the vicinity of the Roman kilns and postulated settlement. However, no evidence of settlement or industrial activity was recorded during this current evaluation exercise suggesting that this activity was probably restricted to the area already stripped of topsoil.

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

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Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context No.	Category	Description/interpretation	Period
2000	Cut	Ditch Segment	Undated
2001	Deposit	Fill of ditch [2000]	Undated
2002	Cut	Pit	Undated
2003	Deposit	Fill of pit [2002]	Undated
2004	Cut	Post-hole	Undated
2005	Deposit	Fill of post-hole [2004]	Undated
2006	Cut	Post-hole	Undated
2007	Deposit	Fill of post-hole [2006]	Undated
2008	Cut	Post-hole	Undated
2009	Deposit	Fill of post-hole [2008]	Undated
2010	Cut	Ditch Segment	Undated
2011	Deposit	Fill of ditch [2010]	Undated
2012		Void	
2013	Cut	Ditch	Iron Age
2014	Deposit	Fill of ditch [2013]	Iron Age
2015	Deposit	Spread of bonfire debris	Undated
2016	Cut	Cut for cremation	Early Anglo-Saxon
2017	Deposit	Fill of cremation cut [2016]	Early Anglo-Saxon
2018	Ceramic	Cremation urn in cut [2016]	Early Anglo-Saxon
2019	Deposit	Fill in cremation urn [2018]	Early Anglo-Saxon
2020	Cut	Cut for cremation	Early Anglo-Saxon
2021	Deposit	Fill of cremation cut [2020]	Early Anglo-Saxon
2022	Ceramic	Cremation urn	Early Anglo-Saxon
2023	Deposit	Fill in cremation urn [2022]	Early Anglo-Saxon
2024		Void	
2025	Deposit	Soil in and around fragmentary cremation urn [2026]	Early Anglo-Saxon
2026	Ceramic	Cremation urn	Early Anglo-Saxon
2027		Void	
2028	Deposit	Fill of ditch [2029]	Undated
2029	Cut	Ditch	Undated
2030	Cut	Ditch	Probably Roman
2031	Deposit	Fill of ditch [2030]	Probably Roman
2032	Cut	Pit	Undated
2033	Deposit	Fill of pit	Undated
2034	Deposit	Fill of grave [2035]	Early Anglo-Saxon
2035	Cut	Grave	Early Anglo-Saxon
2036	Cut	Ditch	Undated
2037	Deposit	Fill of ditch [2036]	Undated
2038	Cut	Pit	Undated
2039	Deposit	Fill of pit [2038]	Undated
2040	Cut	Pit	Undated
2041	Deposit	Fill of pit [2040]	Undated
2042	Cut	Pit	Undated
2043	Deposit	Fill of pit [2042]	Undated
2044	Cut	Post-hole	Undated
2045	Deposit	Fill of post-hole [2044]	Undated
2046	Cut	Post-hole	Undated
2047	Deposit	Fill of post-hole [2046]	Undated
2048	Post-hole	Cut	Undated
2049	Deposit	Fill of post-hole [2048]	Undated

Context No.	Category	Description/interpretation	Period
2050	Cut	Post-hole	Undated
2051	Deposit	Fill of post-hole [2050]	Undated
2052	Cut	Sunken Featured Building	Early Anglo-Saxon
2053	Deposit	Fill of Sunken Featured Building [2052]	Early Anglo-Saxon
2054	Cut	Post-hole	Early Anglo-Saxon
2055	Deposit	Fill of post-hole [2054]	Early Anglo-Saxon
2056	Cut	Sunken Featured Building	Early Anglo-Saxon
2057	Deposit	Fill of Sunken Featured building [2056]	Early Anglo-Saxon
2058	Cut	Post-hole	Early Anglo-Saxon
2059	Deposit	Fill of post-hole [2058]	Early Anglo-Saxon
2060	Cut	Post-hole	Early Anglo-Saxon
2061	Deposit	Fill of post-hole [2060]	Early Anglo-Saxon
2062	Cut	Post-hole	Early Anglo-Saxon
2063	Deposit	Fill of post-hole [2062]	Early Anglo-Saxon
2064	Cut	Sunken Featured building	Early Anglo-Saxon
2065	Deposit	Fill of Sunken Featured Building [2064]	Early Anglo-Saxon
2066	Cut	Post-hole	Early Anglo-Saxon
2067	Deposit	Fill of post-hole [2066]	Early Anglo-Saxon
2068	Deposit	Primary fill of post-hole [2066]	Early Anglo-Saxon
2069	Deposit	Coffin/body stain in grave [2035]	Early Anglo-Saxon
2070	Cut	Pit	Undated
2071	Deposit	Fill of pit [2070]	Undated
2072	Cut	Pit	Undated
2073	Deposit	Fill of pit [2072]	Undated
2074	Cut	Ditch	Early Roman
2075	Deposit	Fill of ditch [2074]	Early Roman
2076	Cut	Ditch	Early Roman
2077	Deposit	Fill of ditch [2076]	Early Roman
2078	Cut	Pit	Undated
2079	Deposit	Fill of pit [2078]	Undated
2080		Unstratified finds from Trench 25 cleaning	N/A
2081		Unstratified finds from Trench 22 spoilheap	N/A
2082		Unstratified finds from Trench 27 spoilheap	N/A
2083		Unstratified finds from Trench 16 (1st phase eval) backfill	N/A
2084		Metal detector finds from Trench 21 spoilheap	N/A
2085		Metal detector finds from Trench 25 spoilheap	N/A
2086		Metal detector finds from Trench 30 spoilheap	N/A
2087	Cut	Sunken Featured Building	Early Anglo-Saxon
2088	Deposit	Fill of Sunken Featured Building	Early Anglo-Saxon
2089	Cut	Probable Sunken Featured Building (unexcavated)	?Early Anglo-Saxon
2090	Cut	Probable Sunken Featured Building (unexcavated)	?Early Anglo-Saxon
2091	Cut	Probable Sunken Featured Building (unexcavated)	?Early Anglo-Saxon
2092	Cut	Probable Sunken Featured Building (unexcavated)	?Early Anglo-Saxon
2093	Deposit	Post-pipe in post-hole [2070]	Undated

Appendix 2: Finds by context

Context No.	Material	Quantity	Weight (g)
2014	PREPOT	6	11
2014	FLINT	3	-
2034	FLINT	6	25
2053	PREPOT	1	3
2053	FLINT	2	-
2057	SPOT	1	3
2063	PREPOT	2	2
2075	RPOT	8	56
2077	RPOT	5	21
2080	RPOT	1	28
2081	RPOT	2	6
2081	FLINT	2	-
2082	FLINT	2	-
2084	SF's 19 & 20	2	-
2085	SF 21	1	-
2086	SF's 22 , 23 & 24	2	-

Key:

PREPOT	Prehistoric pottery
RPOT	Roman pottery
SPOT	Saxon pottery (Early-Middle)
FLINT	

Appendix 3: Small Finds Summary

Small find No.	Context No.	Qty	Period	Material	Description	Comments	X-Ray No.
19	2084	1	ASAX	Copper alloy/ Iron	Buckle	Small D shaped	
20	2084	1		Lead	Artefact	Crushed	N/A
21	2085	1	ASAX	Copper alloy	Hook-plate	Wrist clasp fragment	
22	2086	1	RB	Copper alloy	Coin		
23	2086	1	PMED/ MOD	Lead	Bale seal	English	N/A
24	U/S	1		Silver	Coin		

Appendix 4: Flint by context

Context	Type	No.	Wt(g)
2014	Flake	3	
2034	Burnt fragment	3	25
2034	Flake	3	
2053	Blade	1	
2053	Flake	1	
2081	Blade	1	
2081	Flake	1	
2082	Flake	1	
2082	Retouched flake	1	

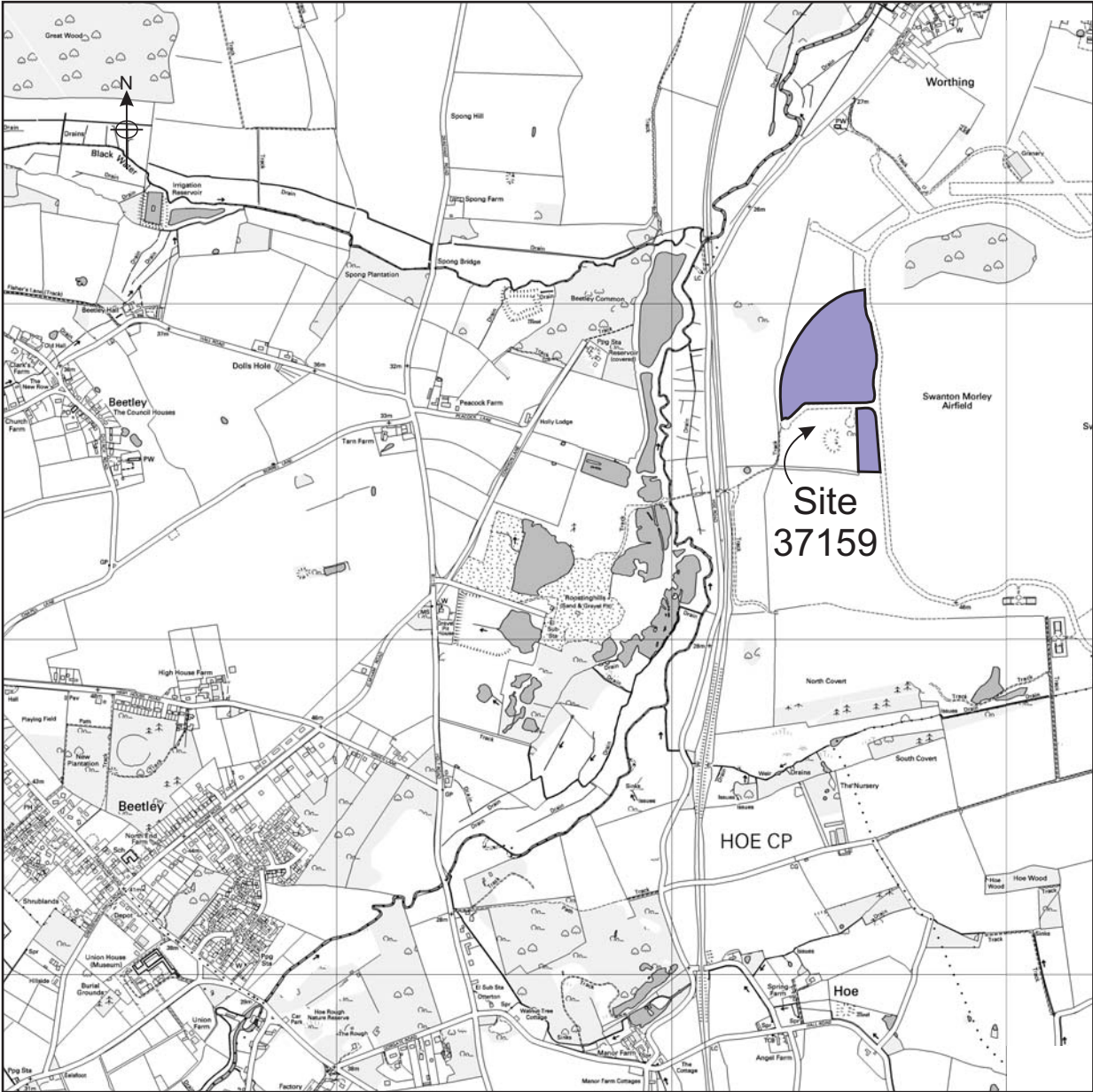


Fig. 1 Site location. Scale 1:20 000

ted without blue line

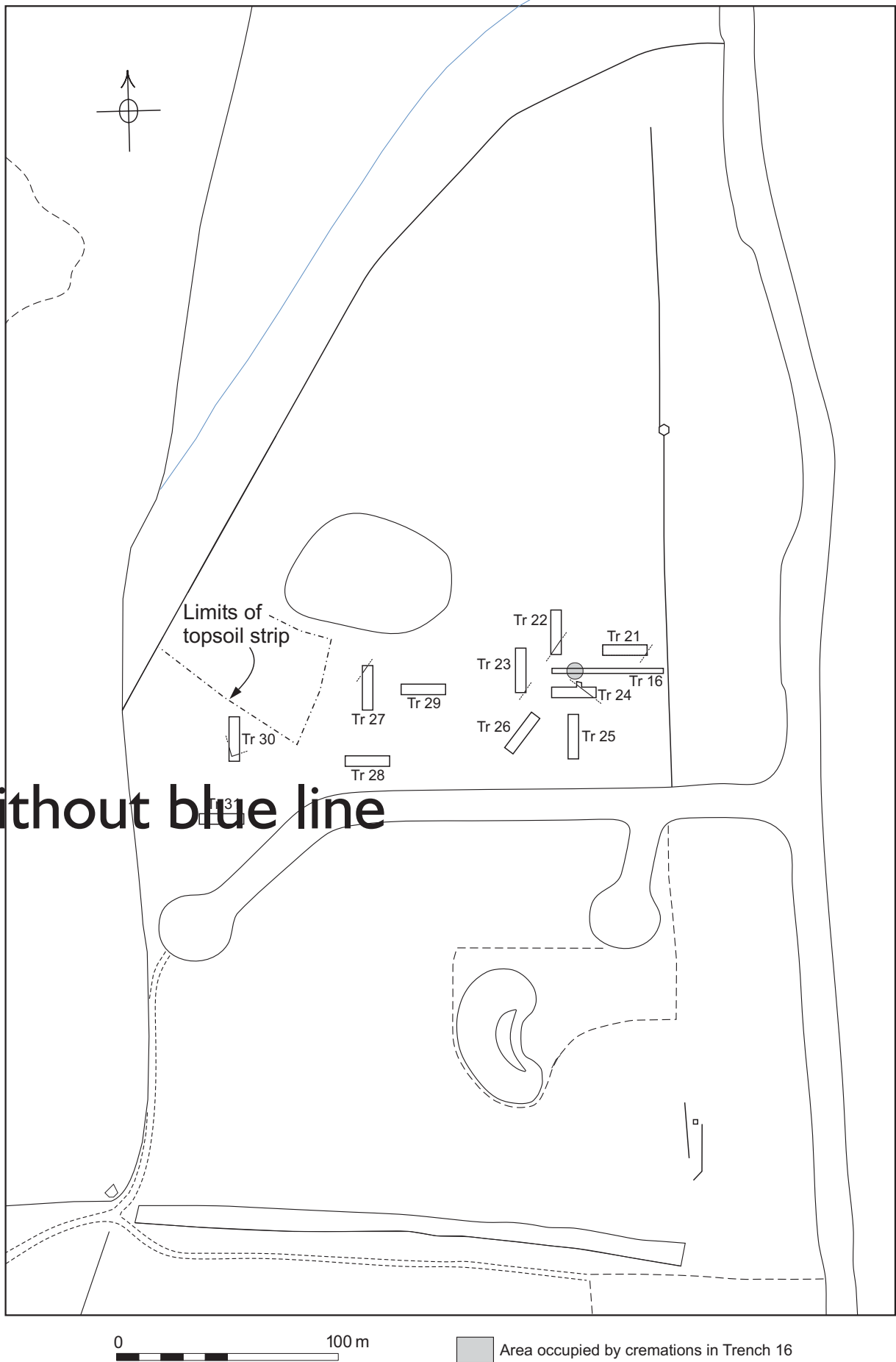


Fig. 2 Trial trench location and orientation of recorded ditches. Scale 1:2500

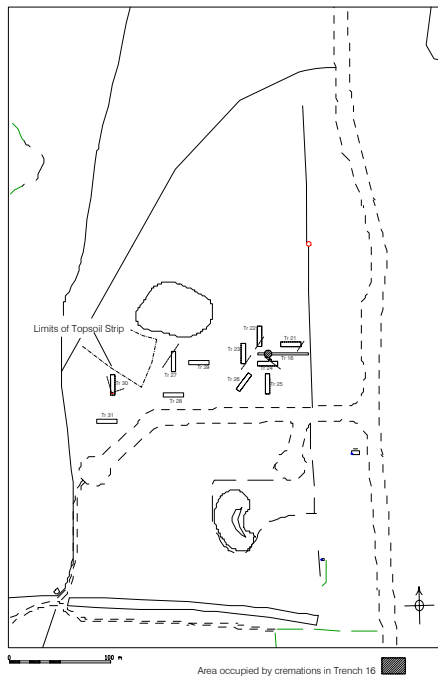


Fig.2. Trial Trench Location and Orientation of Recorded Ditches. Scale 1:3000.



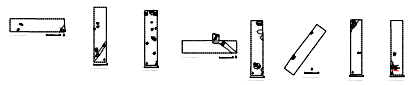










Plate 1 Early Anglo-Saxon cremation urns 2018 and 2022. Scale 1m



Plate 2 Grave cut 2035 showing coffin/body stain 2069. Scale 1m



Plate 3 *In situ* amber and glass beads in grave 2035



Plate 4 Early Anglo-Saxon Sunken Featured Building 2087. Scale 2m







