University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

An Archaeological Evaluation For a Proposed Cadeby Quarry Extension, on Land to the South of Bosworth Road, Kirkby Mallory, Leicestershire.

NGR: SK 4377 0922

Gavin Speed

ULAS Report No 2011-086

An Archaeological Evaluation For a Proposed Cadeby Quarry Extension, on Land to the South of Bosworth Road, Kirkby Mallory, Peckleton, Leicestershire. (SK 4377 0922)

Gavin Speed

For: Tarmac Ltd

Approved by:

Signed Date: 07/06/2011

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An Archaeological Evaluation for a Proposed Cadeby Quarry Extension, on Land to the South of Bosworth Road, Kirkby Mallory, Peckleton, Leicestershire.

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land to the south of Bosworth Road, Kirkby Mallory, Peckleton, Leicestershire (SK 4377 0922). The work was undertaken as part of an archaeological impact assessment in advance of an extension to Cadeby Quarry.

The evaluation revealed archaeological settlement evidence consisting of an enclosure of Iron Age (c. 700 BC – AD 43) or Roman (AD 43-410) date, within which is evidence for a building and a cremation; close by a pit of early to mid-Anglo-Saxon date (c. AD 410-650) was located.

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Services Section, accession no. XA.69.2011.

1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by ULAS for Tarmac Ltd in May 2011 on land to the south of Bosworth Road, Kirkby Mallory, Leicestershire (SK 4377 0922). This was undertaken in advance of a proposed extension to Cadeby Quarry.

An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for the area had identified that the development site lies in an area rich in archaeological remains of prehistoric and Roman date (Speed 2009, 1). While a fieldwalking survey was largely negative (Coward 2010, 1), a subsequent geophysical survey located areas of archaeological potential including possible prehistoric enclosures (Austrums and Biggs 2010, 8). An archaeological evaluation of the site by trial trenching was requested by Leicestershire County Council Historic and Natural Environment Team, as archaeological advisors to the planning authority. The work was required in order to assess the nature, extent, date and significance of any archaeological deposits which might be present in order to determine the potential impact upon them from future development proposals.

This report presents the results of the trial trenching, with an assessment of the potential impact on buried archaeological remains from groundworks associated with future development.

2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

The site consists of two arable fields that lay on a broad flat summit of a hill covering an area of *c.*21 ha. The larger northernmost field lies immediately to the south of Bosworth Road at *c.*125m OD. The remaining area lies directly to the south and comprises the northern half of a field that lies to the north of New Park Farm on Stapleton Lane, and slopes down from north to south from *c.*127 to 118m OD. The development area lies within the parish of Peckleton.

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 155 indicates that the underlying geology was likely to consist of glacial-fluvial Pleistocene sand and gravel, with Mercia Mudstone in the immediate surrounding fields.

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

Historical Background *(from Speed 2010, 9-11)*

The earliest reference to Kirkby Mallory is in the Domesday Book also within the hundred of Guthlaxton. It is recorded as Cherchebi. It notes that Hugh of Grandmesnil owns 2 ½ plough shares of land, 2 villages and 2 freemen have 1 ½ ploughs. The value prior to the survey was 12d, which by the time of the survey it had decreased to 10s. It is also recorded that Serlo holds 5d of land from Hugh. He has land for ½ a plough, 1 smallholder with woodland ½ a league long and 3 furlongs wide. The value was 2s, and by the time of the survey had increased slightly to 3s.

'Kirkby' is a common village name in the Midlands and North of England meaning 'village with a church'. 'Mallory' refers to the name of the local landowner, and 12th century references include 'Malory' or Mallorre. The church of All Saints dates to the early 13th century. In the 14th century ownership of land went to William of Clown, Abbot at Leicester Abbey. Following the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1540s ownership of land in the village passed to Thomas Harvey, and is recorded as having 25 families living there. In the 17th century a Rectory was built. Land around the village was enclosed in 1771, totalling 780 acres. By 1801 Kirkby Mallory had a population of 243, with around 50 houses. The main occupation of the inhabitants of the time was possibly framework knitting. The population level changed little throughout the 19th century. Up until the 1920s land around the village was owned by the Kirkby Hall Estate, in this decade the land was split up and sold off to individuals. The village has a motor racing circuit (500m south-west of the site). 'Mallory Park' was part of a 200 acre estate owned by the Noel family; in the 1940s it was a pony trotting track, while in the 1950s it became a motorcycle scrambling venue, and later a motor racing circuit.

The earliest surviving map for the area is a 1785 map of Mallory lordship. This shows the development area to have been divided into many more fields than there are in later Ordnance Survey maps. The development area was owned by the Mallory family, with the fields to the north of Bosworth Road owned by Lea and Clareson. The 1886 first edition Ordnance Survey map for the area shows the fields have been remodelled and reduced in number since 1785, and these are largely the same today.

Archaeological Background

An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment carried out in 2009 identified that there are no known sites recorded on the Historic Environment Record within the application area (Speed 2009, 18). However, the site lies within an area rich in archaeological remains, particularly of prehistoric and Roman date (*ibid*, 3). In March 2010 a fieldwalking survey was conducted but proved largely negative, although two worked lithics (a flake and scraper), were found close together (Coward 2010, 3). In June 2010 a geophysical survey identified areas of

archaeological potential including two sets of possible ditched enclosures, ditches, and pits (Austrums and Biggs 2010, 3).

4. Aims and Objectives

The principal aims of the archaeological evaluation were:

- To identify possible areas of archaeological potential liable to be threatened by the proposed development.
- To establish the location, extent, date, and significance of any archaeological deposits located.
- To define the quality and state of preservation of these deposits.
- To assess the local, regional and national importance of any deposits.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

The objective was to gain an indication of the nature, extent, date and significance of any archaeological deposits which may be present in order that an informed planning decision can be taken.

5. Methodology

Prior to any machining of trial trenches, general photographs of the site areas were taken. The trenches were excavated using a 360 mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket. The topsoil and overlying layers were removed under full archaeological supervision until either the top of archaeological deposits or the natural undisturbed substratum was reached. Trenches were examined for archaeological deposits or finds by hand cleaning. The trenches were tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and then were backfilled and leveled at the end of the evaluation.

The work followed the approved design specification (ULAS 2010) and adhered to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (2008).

6. Results

Thirty trenches were excavated, all were 30 metres in length and 2 metres wide, and were spread across the development site (Figure 3). Some trenches were located to target geophysical anomalies, while others were to test apparently blank areas and the extent of any archaeological remains. Archaeological evidence was revealed in six trenches (1, 2, 13, 14, 15, 17), as detailed below. In the remaining trenches no archaeological finds or features were identified and the remaining geophysical anomalies could be correlated with geological changes in the substratum. The topsoil, consisting of grey-brown sandy-clay with occasional small rounded pebbles, was generally *c*.0.25m in depth. Below this was a brown clay subsoil observed in some trenches, ranging in thickness from 0.05m to 0.2m. Descriptions of all archaeological evidence and trench depths are provided in Appendix II.

Trench 1

Trench 1 (Figure 4) was located in the far north-west corner of the northern field, in order to target a linear geophysical anomaly aligned north-south. This was confirmed as a ditch [2] located in the centre of the trench. Ditch [2] ran across the width of the trench (2m), and measured 1.9m wide and 0.57m deep. It had gradually sloping sides with a relatively flat base and contained a loosely compacted light grey/brown silt-sand (1), within which were some small sub-rounded stones, but with no finds.

Trench 2

Trench 2 (Figure 5) was located in the north-west area of the northern field, 163m south of Trench 1. The trench was located in order to target a linear geophysical anomaly aligned east-west. This was confirmed as a ditch [4] located towards the north-end of the trench. Ditch [4] ran across the width of the trench (2m), and measured 0.72m wide and 0.28m deep. It had concave sides with a slightly curving base and contained a single deposit of a loosely compacted mid-brown silt-sand (3) with a small quantity of small and large sub-rounded pebbles but no finds.

Trench 13

Trench 13 (Figure 6) was located in the south-east corner of the northern field, in order to target a linear geophysical anomaly aligned north-east to south-west. This was confirmed as a linear ditch [6] located in the centre of the trench (
Figure 7). Ditch [6] ran across the width of the trench (2m) and measured 1.69m wide and 0.46m deep. It had gradually sloping sides and a narrow concave base. It contained a single deposit of a loosely compacted mid-orange brown silt-sand (5), within which were a small number of small to large sub-rounded pebbles but no finds.

Trench 14

Trench 14 was located in the south-east corner of the northern field, 12m east of trench 13. It was located in order to target geophysical anomalies which were confirmed as a ditch [21], two post-holes ([16] and [18]), a pit containing a cremation burial [11], and a further ditch [25] (Figures 8-13).

Towards the east-end ditch [21] was aligned north-north-west to south-south-east across the width of the trench (2m), and measured 1.55-1.98m wide by 0.64m deep. The east-edge was concave and the west-edge was more gradually sloping to a narrow concave base. It contained a single deposit of a loosely compacted yellow brown sand-silt (20) with no finds. It is likely to be the east-side of an oval ditched enclosure interpreted from the geophysical survey, and ditch [14] in Trench 15 to the south is likely to be the same ditch.

A probable ditch [25] was located at the west-end, aligned north-north-west to south-south-east, on a similar alignment to ditch [21]. It ran across the width of the trench (2m), and measured 2m wide by 0.89m deep. The east-edge was steep-sided and straight, whereas the west-edge was varied and wavy. The base was irregular, and the ditch profile altered significantly either side of the 1m excavated section (compare S.14.1 and S.14.2 on Figure 9). It contained a friable-loosely compacted mid-grey green silt-sand (24), but with no finds. The

irregular shape may indicate that there is more than one ditch, or that it had been recut. This was not apparent from the geophysical survey.

A pit containing a cremation [11] lay 2.5m to the east (Figures 12-13). This was sub-circular / oval, and measured 1.06m by 0.78m and 0.42m deep. It had steep (almost vertical) sides and a fairly flat base. It contained two fills, the primary deposit consisting of a loosely compacted very dark grey silt-sand (12). This was 0.13m thick and contained around 20% small to medium charcoal pieces (oak and hazel) and staining. A few small seeds and burnt stems of grasses were also recovered from this. Around 5% of the deposit consisted of burnt human bone. The fragments consisted of a finger bone, skull, leg bone, and further small uncharacterised fragments. They are probably the remains of an adult (ID by Jen Browning). The secondary fill consisted of a loosely compacted mid-grey brown silt-sand (10). This was 0.29m thick and contained just 1% of crushed burnt bone fragments, along with a small number of small to medium rounded pebbles. No further finds were recovered from either deposit.

Between pit [11] and ditch [21] lay two post-holes: [16] and [18]. Post-hole [16] was sub-circular and measured 0.43m diameter and 0.2m deep. It was steep-sided with a primary fill consisting of a loosely compacted mid- to light brown silt-sand (19), but contained no finds. The secondary fill was friable and consisted of a dark brown grey silt-sand (15), again with no finds. Several tubers (onion couch grass) were recovered from the soil sample. Post-hole [18] located 5m to the east, was sub-circular, measuring 0.38 by 0.32m and 0.3m deep, with steep sides and a concave base. It contained a single deposit of a loosely compacted mid- to dark grey-brown silt-sand (17), and contained a few small pieces of charcoal but with no finds.

Trench 15

Trench 15 (Figure 14) was located in the south-east corner of the northern field, 32m south of trench 14. It was located in order to target two geophysical anomalies which were confirmed as two ditches: [8] and [14].

Ditch [8] was aligned north-west to south-east and measured 3.32m+ long, 0.95m wide, and 0.33m deep. It had concave sides with a flat base and contained a single deposit of a loosely compacted yellow brown silt-sand (7), which contained a single sherd of very abraded pottery, most likely of Roman date. It is likely to be a ditch that connects to an oval enclosure identified from the geophysical survey.

Ditch [14], measuring 2m wide and 0.5m deep, was aligned north-south and ran across the width of the trench (2m) (Figure 15). It had concave sides and a flat base. It contained a single deposit of a loosely compacted yellow brown silt-sand (13), and contained a few small pieces of charcoal, but with no finds. It is likely to be the east-side of an oval ditched enclosure identified on the geophysical survey, and ditch [21] in Trench 14 to the north is likely to be the same ditch.

Trench 17

Trench 17 (Figure 16) was located in the south-east corner of the northern field. It was located in order to target a geophysical anomaly which was confirmed as geological. , However, within the trench an oval pit was located [22] measuring 0.96m by 0.81m and 0.32m deep. It had fairly steep sides and a curving base and contained a loosely compacted yellow brown sand-silt (9) within which were a few small rounded stones and an abundance of charcoal flecks. The fill contained a group of 12 annular, 'doughnut'-shaped loom weights of Anglo-Saxon date. These appear to have been dumped into the mostly backfilled pit, as all were located in the upper 0-15cm (Figure 17). Below the loom weights the soil was much cleaner, without evidence for charcoal. A low number of charred grains of wheat, barley, and weed seeds and a single abraded sherd of fine Roman grey ware pottery were also recovered from this pit.

7. Discussion

The evaluation revealed significant archaeological evidence dating to the Iron Age (700 BC – AD 43) or Roman (AD 43-410) periods, and early to mid Anglo-Saxon period (AD 410-650). Most of the archaeological evidence is located in the south-east corner of the north field of the development site.

The evaluation has confirmed the geophysical survey results that show an oval ditched enclosure in the south-east corner of the north field of the development site. The enclosure ditch was excavated in Trench 13 ([6]), Trench 14 ([21]), and Trench 15 ([14]). It was fairly substantial, being generally 2m wide and 0.5m deep. No finds were recovered from the excavated sections. The enclosure has an additional ditch on the south-east corner, which was identified in Trench 15 ([8]). This was half the size of the enclosure ditch (1m wide and 0.3m deep). A single sherd of pottery from this consisted of a very abraded sherd of Roman pottery. This may date the enclosure to the Roman period, or this may post-date the occupation of the settlement, being introduced into the ditch when it was filled at a later date. Within the northern part of the enclosure two post-holes were located 5m apart and could be evidence for a structure (such as a roundhouse). Adjacent to this was a cremation pit containing the remains of a (probable adult) human. Soil samples from the cremation and the upper fill of the adjacent post-hole contained grass stems and tubers, grasses like these were often used to start fires for a pyre. The ditch at the west-end of the trench ([25]) may be evidence for an internal sub-enclosure, or some other internal feature.

Iron Age and Roman enclosure settlements are a common feature of this period, and were used as both animal enclosures and occupation sites (such as farmsteads). Most recently excavations at Cadeby Quarry (2km to the north-west) revealed evidence for a very late Iron Age (early 1st century AD) enclosed settlement with possible rectangular buildings (Speed 2010, and forthcoming). The presence of a cremation within the area of the enclosure – if contemporary – is not a common occurrence within Iron Age or Roman enclosures.

Evidence for early to mid Anglo-Saxon activity was revealed in Trench 17. A single pit [22] contained several complete loom weights, a (residual) Roman pottery sherd, and wheat and barley grains (indicating evidence for food consumption and disposal on site). Activity of this date is not a common occurrence, and the pit indicates the possibility of an early to mid-Anglo-Saxon settlement. Loom weights are evidence for weaving and are often found in structures (Sunken Featured Buildings) or pits (Tipper 2004, 165). The appearance of Anglo-

Saxon activity close to Kirkby Mallory is particularly significant because there were previously no known sites from the Anglo-Saxon period within the vicinity of the development site recorded in the Historic Environment Record (Speed 2009, 22). While the village of Kirkby Mallory was an established settlement at the time of the Domesday Book in 1086 (see above), the evidence located here hints at much earlier origins. Of further note, the development site lies just *c*.250m north of a Roman road that ran from Leicester (*Ratae Corieltauvorum*) to Mancetter (*Manduessedum*), this may have still been an active route during the Anglo-Saxon period, indeed long stretches of the road are still in use to this day.

Further undated activity in the form of ditches were located in the north-west area of the northern field (Trenches 1 and 2). These likely represent evidence for field boundaries of an uncertain date.

8. Conclusion

The evaluation revealed archaeological settlement evidence consisting of an enclosure settlement of Iron Age (700 BC – AD 43) or Roman (AD 43-410) date, within which is evidence for a building and a cremation. Close by a pit of early to mid-Anglo-Saxon date (AD 410-650) was located. Most of the archaeological evidence is located in the south-east corner of the northern field of the development site. The Iron Age or Roman evidence consists of an oval ditched enclosure with evidence for a structure and a cremation. Settlements of this type are a common feature of this period, although the few excavated in the region do show considerable variation that defy generalisation (Willis 2006, 101). The Anglo-Saxon period is poorly understood in general terms across the region (especially the early and mid-Saxon period); therefore the evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity indicating a potential settlement is particularly significant (Vince 2006, 161).

9. Archive

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services Section, accession number XA.69.2011.

The archive contains:

- 30 trench recording sheets
- 1 context summary record
- 25 context sheets
- 2 photographic recording sheets
- Sample records sheet
- Drawing Index sheet
- Drawing Index sheet (detail)
- CD containing digital photographs and report
- Survey data
- Unbound copy of this report
- Thumbnail print of digital photographs
- 33mm black and white contact sheet and negatives
- A box of finds

The report is listed on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York, under ID: universi1-102503. Available at: http://oasis.ac.uk/

ID	OASIS entry summary
Project Name	Cadeby Quarry Extension, Bosworth Road, Kirkby Mallory
Summary	University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land to the south of Bosworth Road, Kirkby Mallory, Leicestershire (SK 4377 0922). The work was undertaken as part of an archaeological impact assessment in advance of a proposed development. The evaluation revealed archaeological settlement evidence consisting of an enclosure settlement of Iron Age (700 BC – AD 43) or Roman (AD 43-410) date, within which is evidence for a building and a cremation; close by a pit of early to mid Anglo-Saxon date (AD 410-650) was located. The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services Section, accession no. XA.69.2011.
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Gavin Speed
Previous/Future work	Previous: DBA, fieldwalking, geophysics / Future: likely
Current Land Use	Field
Development Type	Quarry
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	Condition
Site Co ordinates	SK 4377 0922
Start/end dates of field work	04/05/2011-13/05/2011
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services
Study Area	21ha
Associated project reference codes	Museum accession ID: XA.69.2011 OASIS form ID: universi1-102503

10. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* and *Rutland Record* in due course. The report has been added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.

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12. Acknowledgements

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08/06/2011

Appendix I: Figures

Figure 1: Site location within the UK and Leicestershire

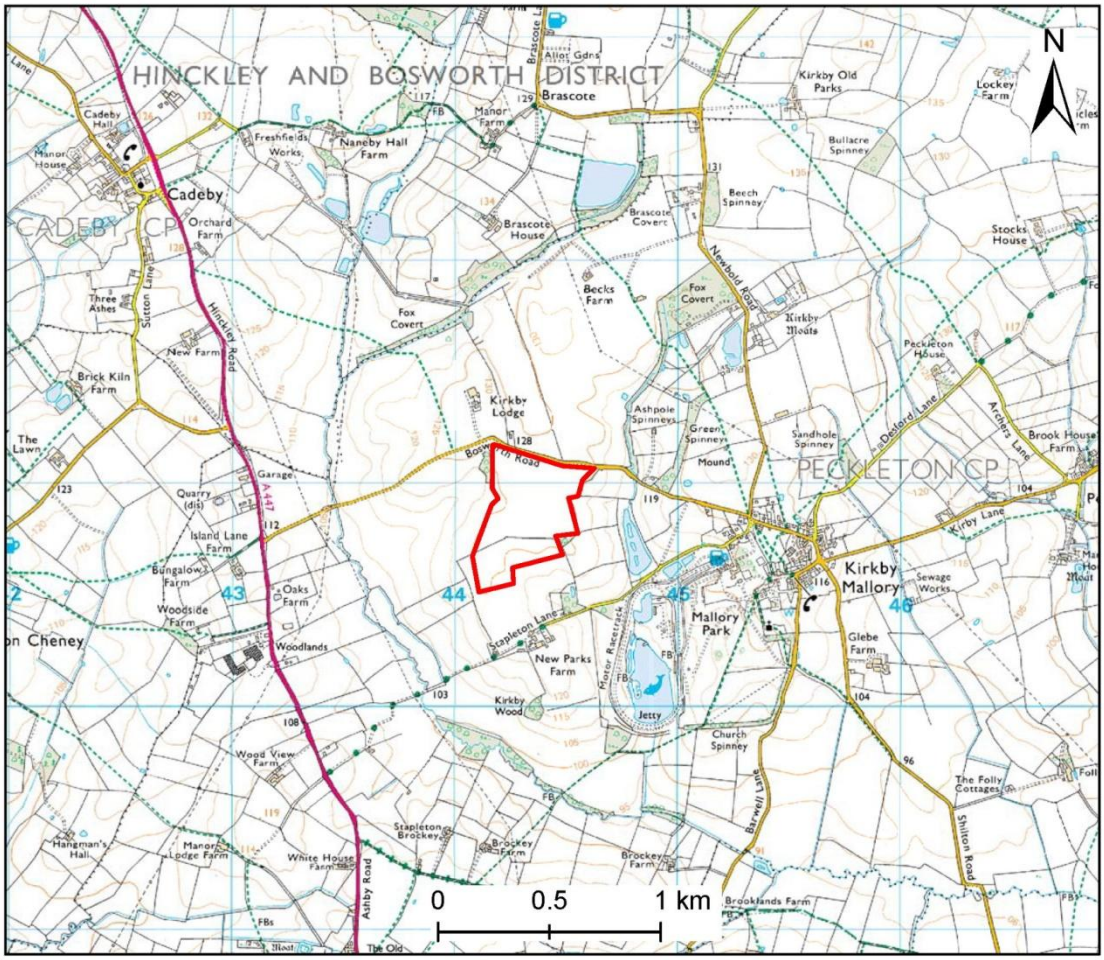

Figure 2: Site location

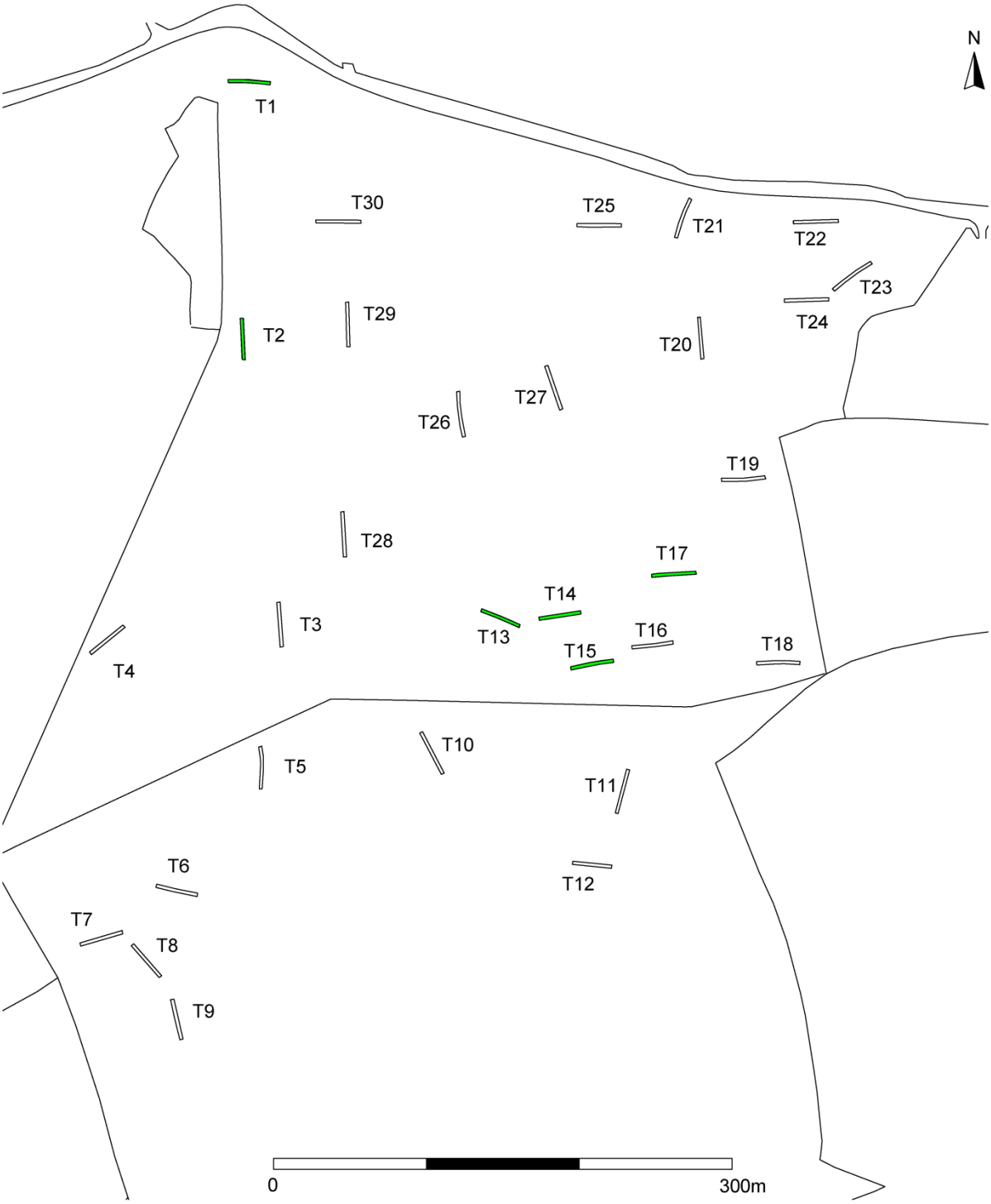

Figure 3: Trench plan (trenches with archaeology shaded)

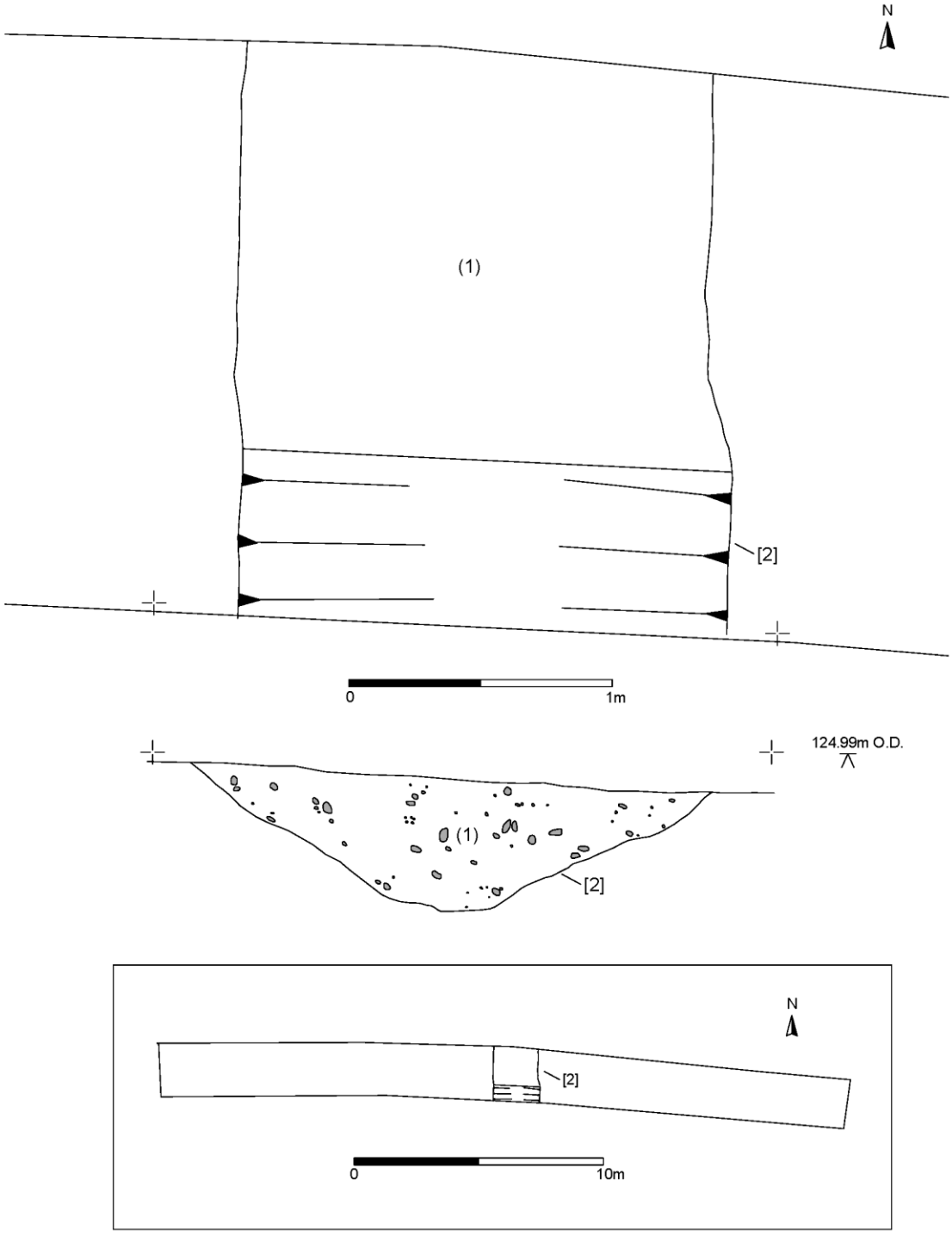

Figure 4: Plan and section of ditch [1], Trench 1

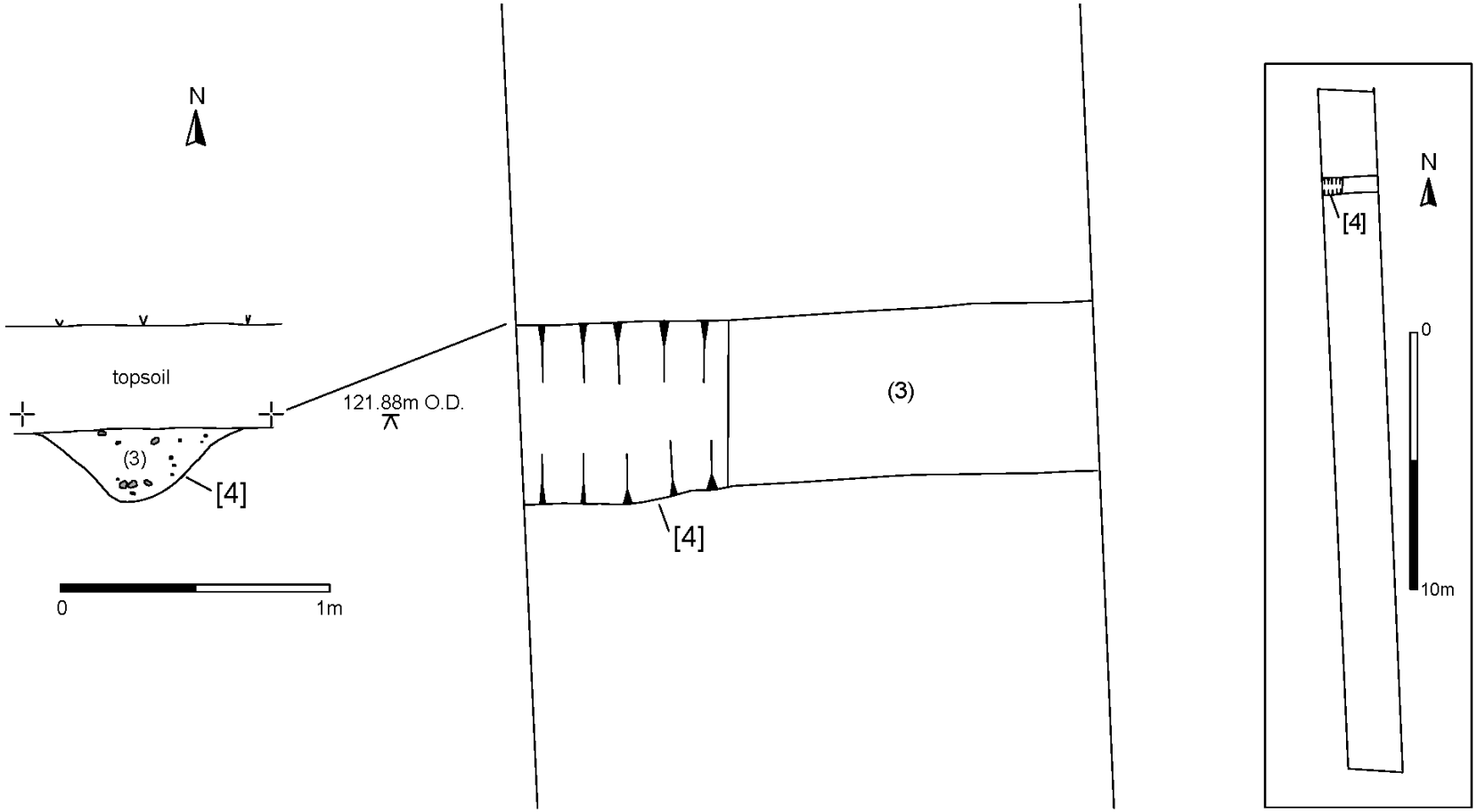

Figure 5: Plan and section of ditch [4], Trench 2.

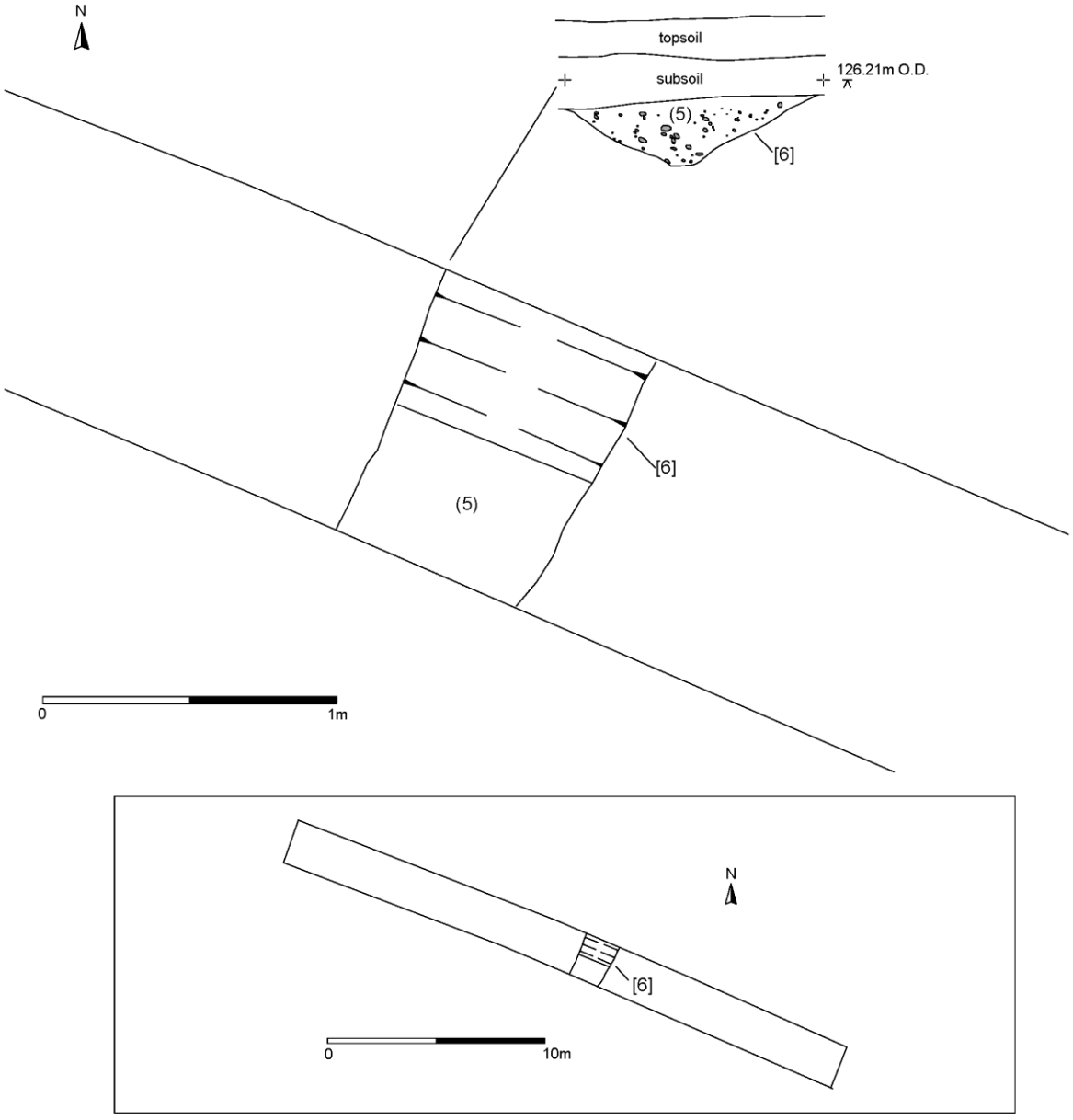

Figure 6: Plan and section of ditch [6], Trench 13.

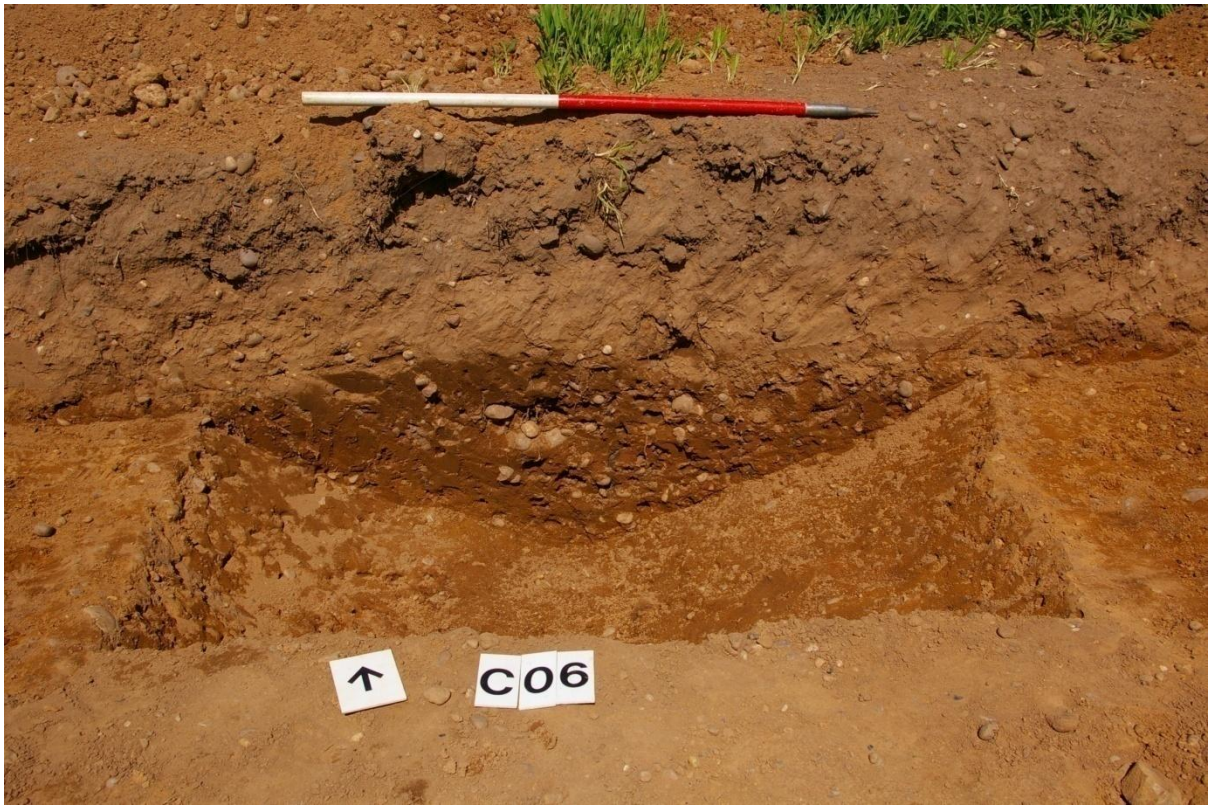

Figure 7: View of ditch [6], 1m scale

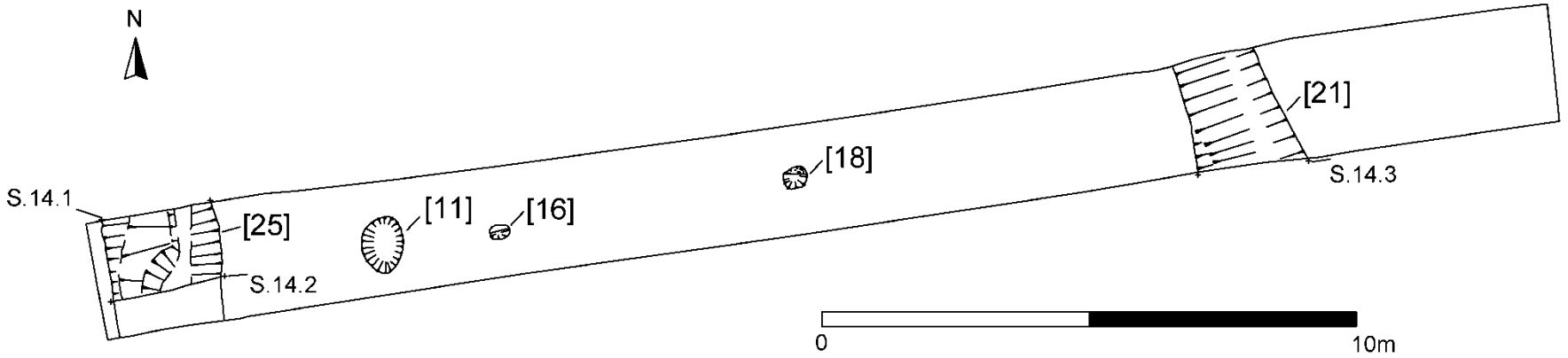

Figure 8: Plan of Trench 14

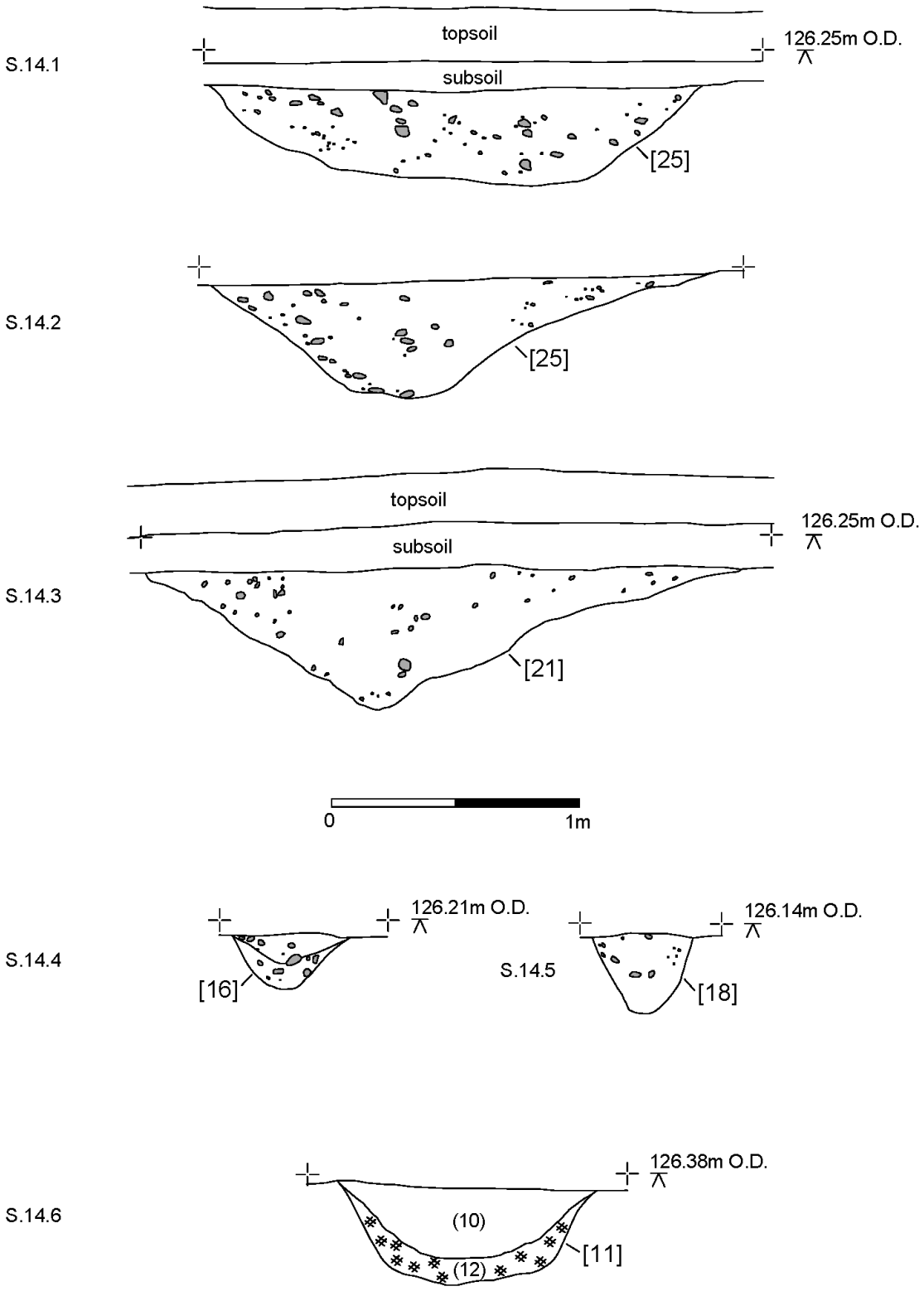

Figure 9: Sections of features from Trench 14

Figure 10: View of Trench 14, looking north-east

Figure 11: View of ditch [21], Trench 14

Figure 12: View of cremation pit [11] under excavation

Figure 13: View of cremation pit [11], fully excavated

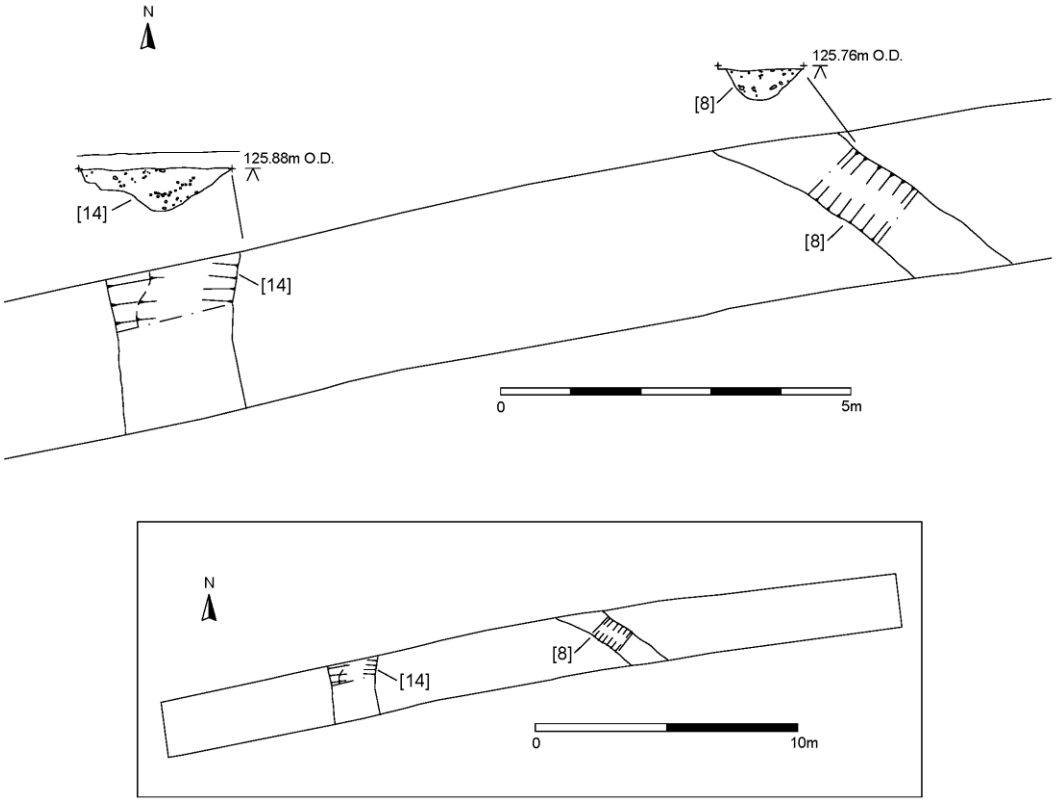

Figure 14: Plan and sections of features within Trench 15

Figure 15: View of ditch [14] in Trench 15

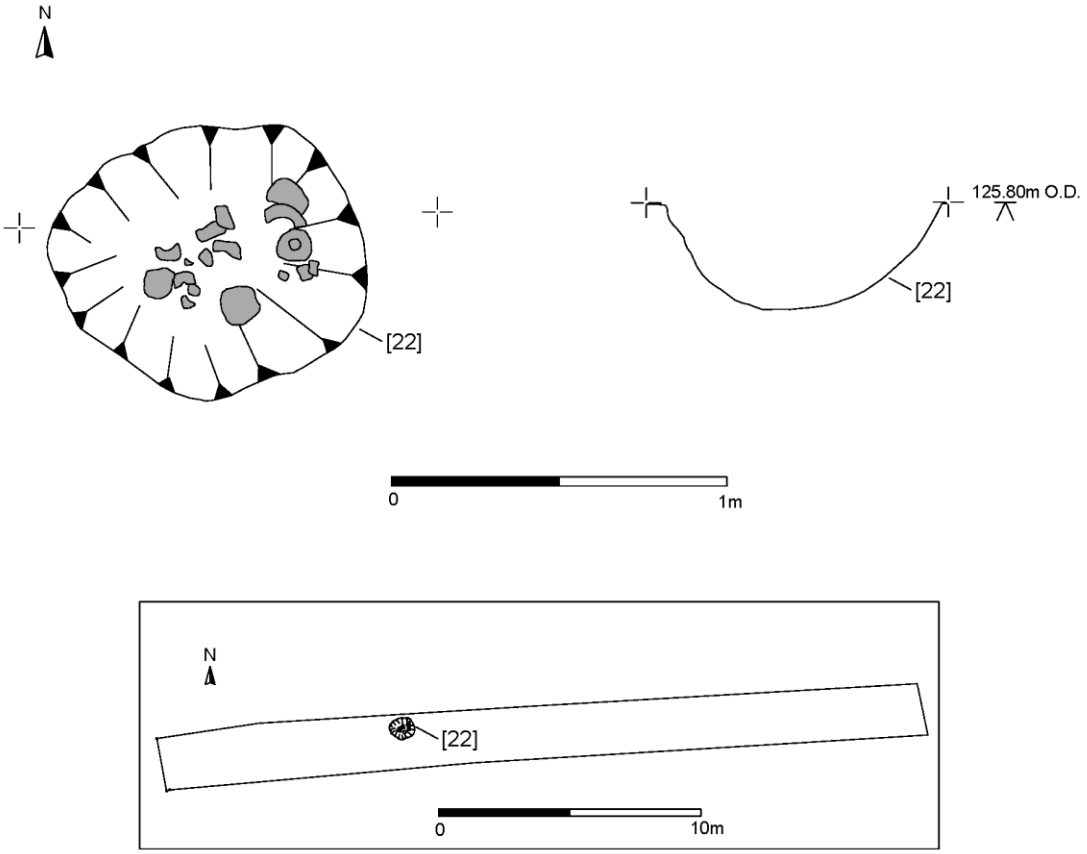

Figure 16: Plan and section of pit [22], Trench 17

Figure 17: View of pit [22] showing loom weights *in situ*

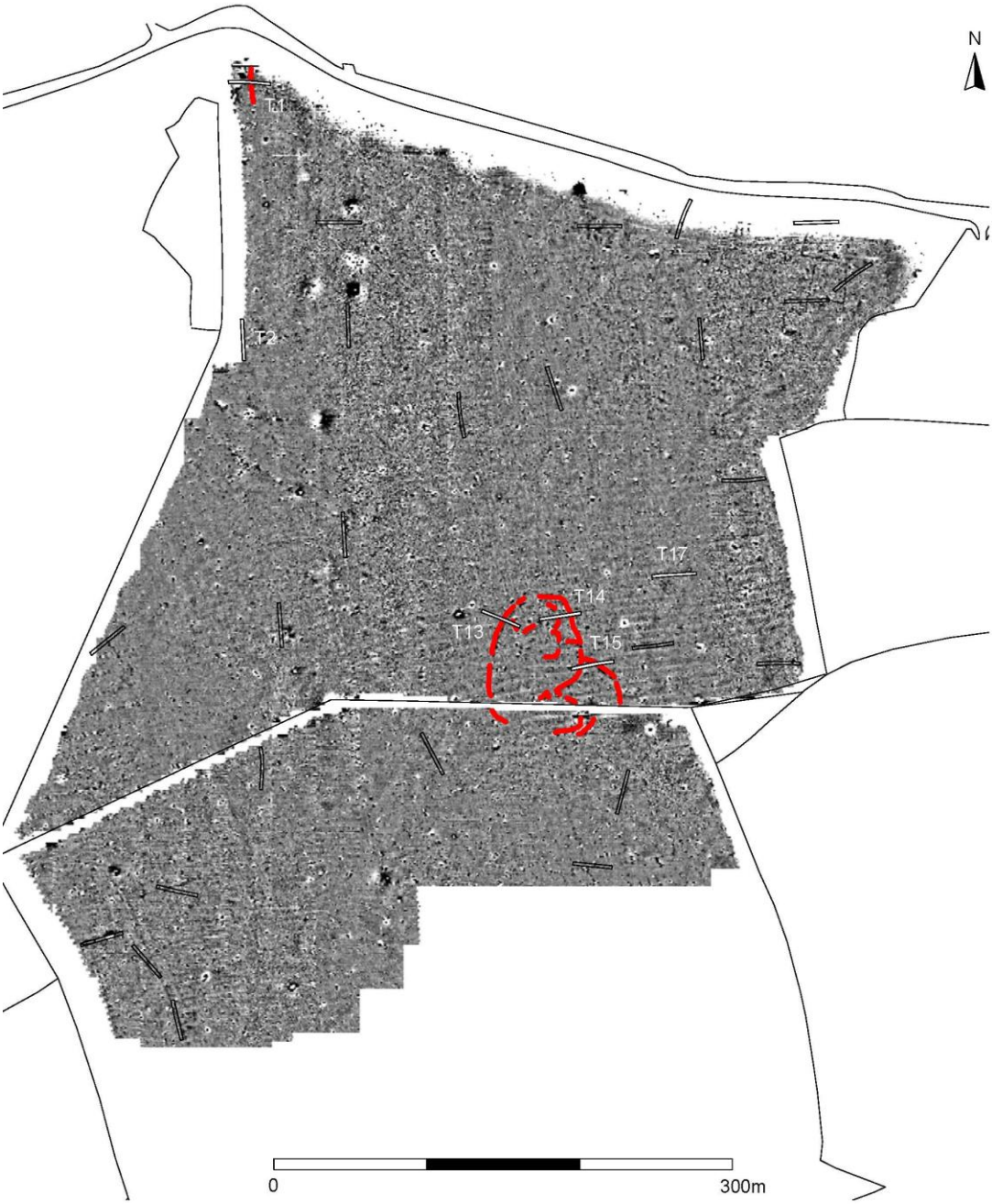

Figure 18: Trenches with confirmed geophysical anomalies highlighted

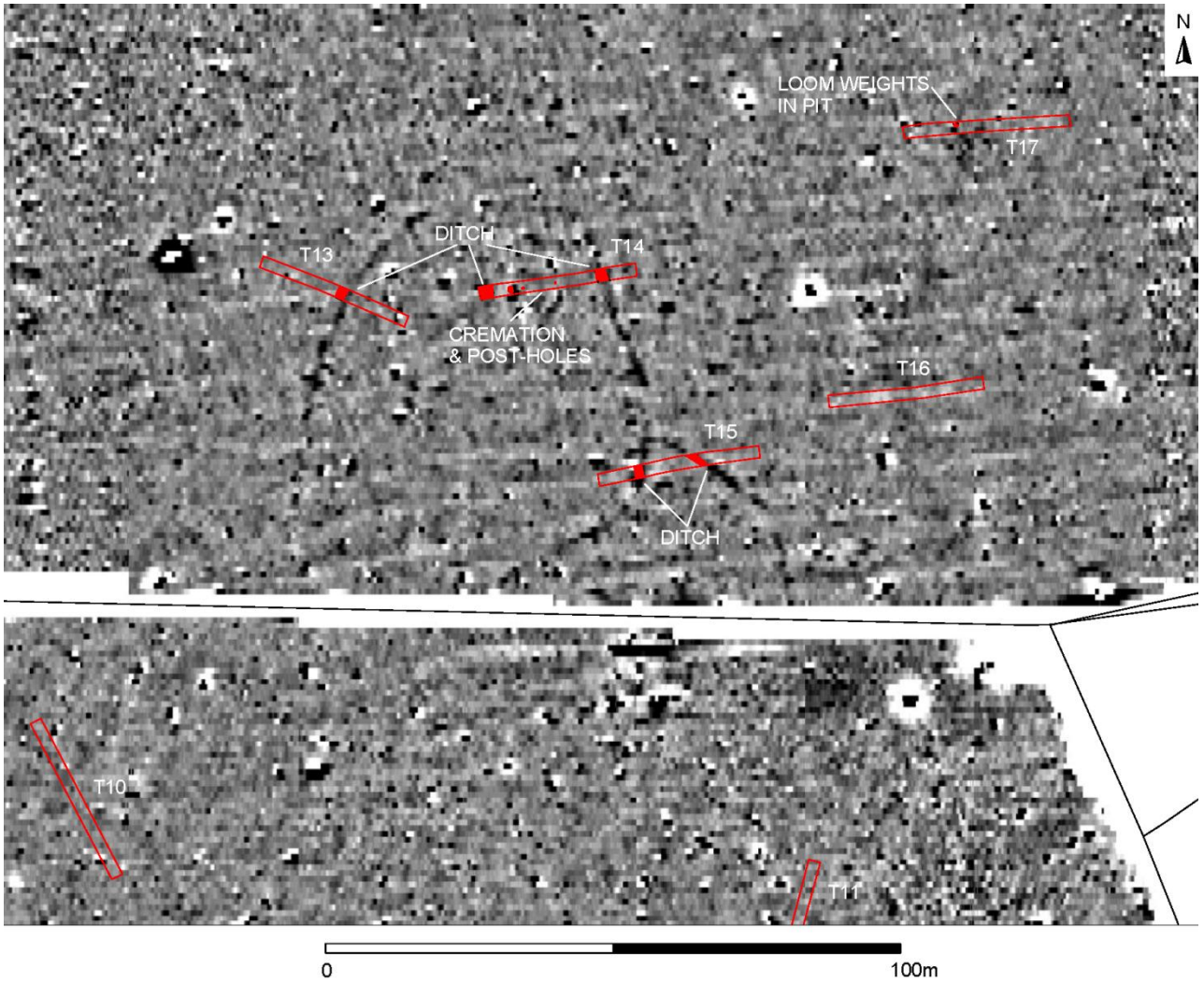

Figure 19: Detail of enclosure with geophysical survey

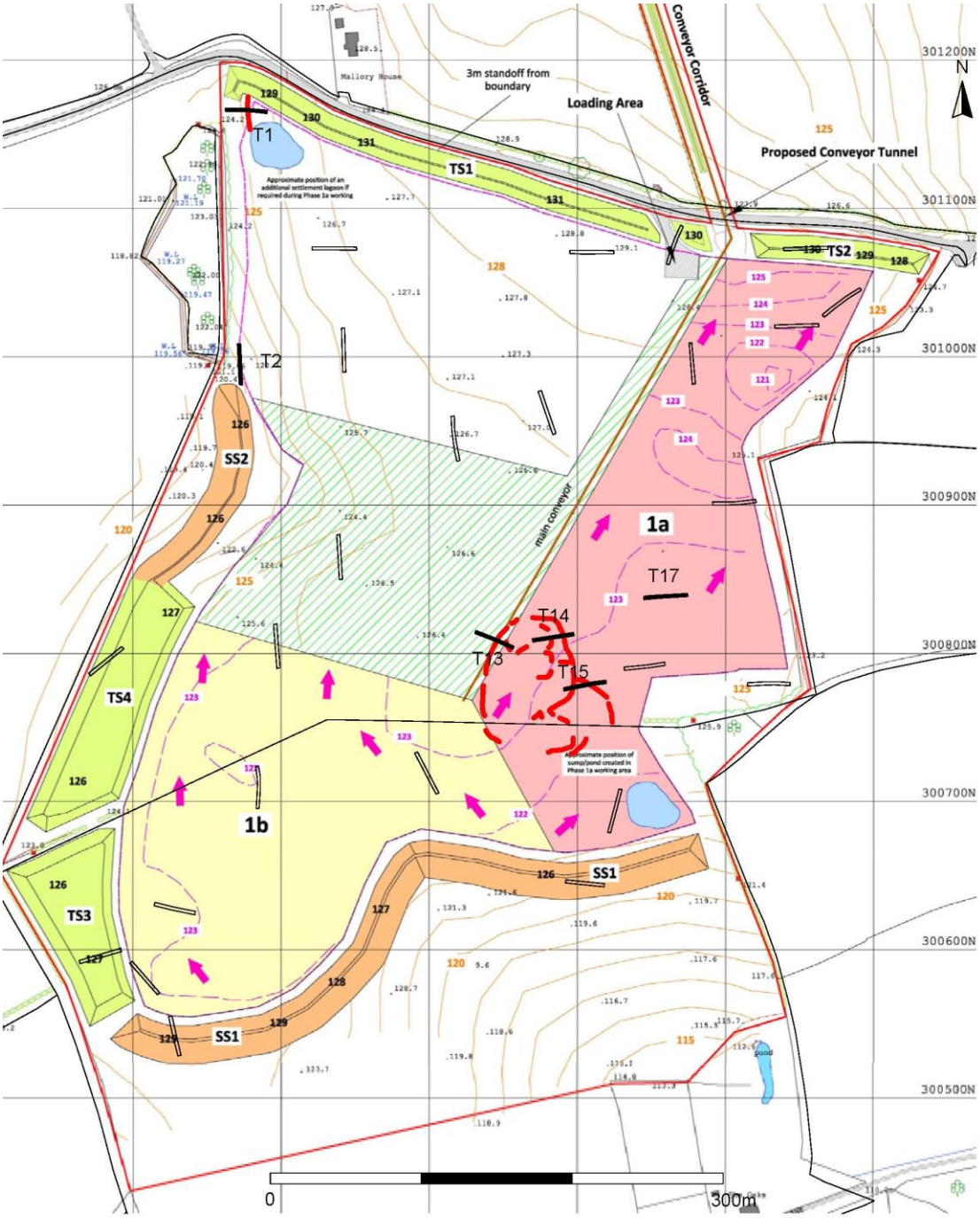

Figure 20: Proposed development plan with archaeological features highlighted

.

Appendix II: Trench Details

TRENCH	ORIENTATION	LENGTH (m)	WIDTH (m)	CONTEXTS	DESCRIPTION	TOPSOIL DEPTH	SUBSOIL DEPTH	LEVEL OF ARCHAEOLOGY (metres above. O.D)
1	E-W	30	2	[1], (2)	N-S ditch, undated	0.20	0.18	124.85
2	E-W	30	2	(3), [4]	E-W ditch, undated	0.2	0.25	121.83
3	N-S	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.25	-	-
4	NE-SW	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.3	0.15	-
5	N-S	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.28	-	-
6	E-W	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.25	-	-
7	NE-SW	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.25	-	-
8	NW-SE	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.27	-	-
9	N-S	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.24	-	-
10	NW-SE	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.26	0.1	-
11	NE-SW	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.24	-	-
12	E-W	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.23	0.16	-
13	NW-SE	30	2	(5), [6]	NW-SE ditch, part of enclosure seen on geophysical survey.	0.25	0.18	126.10
14	E-W	30	2	(10), (11), [12], (15), [16], (17), [18], (20), [21], (24), [25]	NE-SW ditch [21], part of enclosure seen on geophysical survey; two post-holes [16], [18]; cremation pit [11]; N-S ditch [25].	0.2	0.08	126.12
15	E-W	30	2	(7), [8], (13), [14]	A narrow NW-SE ditch [8], and a wider N-S ditch [14] (same as [21]). Both also part of enclosure seen on geophysical survey.	0.2	0.13	125.88
16	E-W	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.28	0.2	-
17	E-W	30	2	(9), [22]	Pit containing loom weights [22]	0.25	0.25	-
18	E-W	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.35	0.12	-
19	E-W	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.24	-	-
20	N-S	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.24	-	-
21	NE-SW	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.28	-	
22	E-W	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.22	0.10	-
23	NE-SW	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.22	0.05	-
24	E-W	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.23	-	-
25	E-W	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.24	-	-
26	N-S	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.25	-	-
27	NW-SE	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.22	-	-
28	N-S	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.24	-	-
29	N-S	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.23	-	-
30	E-W	30	2	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.23	-	-

Appendix III: The Finds and Environmental Plant Remains

The Finds *Nick Cooper*

Pottery from ditch (7) [8]
A single, very abraded, body sherd (1g) was recovered in shell-tempered fabric (Roman fabric CG1, Pollard 1994, 110-114). Given the site location in the west of the county, the sherd is most likely to be of Roman date, probably from a storage jar, rather than Iron Age. Given its abraded nature, the sherd is likely to be residual in this context.

The ceramic finds from Pit (9) [22]
A single, abraded body sherd of fine Roman grey ware (1g) (Roman fabric GW3, Pollard 1994, 110-114) was recovered and, given the occurrence of the diagnostic Anglo-Saxon loom weights from this context, is therefore residual.

The most significant material from the deposit is a collection of annular, 'doughnut'-shaped loom weights which clearly form a single group and presumably all hung from a warp-weighted loom of the kind used during the Early and Middle Anglo-Saxon period (Leahy 2003, 66 and figs.33 and 36). One complete, but fragmentary, example measures 100mm diameter, with a central perforation of 40mm and a ring thickness of 30mm (weight 250g). The fragmentary remains of at least 12 complete weights (total weight 3.3kg) of variable, but broadly similar, dimensions were recovered. All the weights were produced in a poorly-prepared, fine sandy clay with angular pebble impurities and voids produced by the burning out of organic filler such as straw during a minimal bonfire firing which produced an oxidised orange through to reduced black external surface and a consistently dark grey core produced by the lack of combustion of carbonaceous content of the clay.

Loom weights of this kind are common finds from the floors of Early Anglo-Saxon sunken featured buildings at sites such as West Stow, Suffolk, which has led to their interpretation as weaving sheds, although the numbers of weights found (often less than ten) is insufficient for a single loom, as experiments suggest that at least 28 weights are required to tension the warp for every metre width of cloth produced (Leahy 2003, 68).

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The Plant Remains By Anita Radini

Introduction

A site evaluation was carried out by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services at Kirkby Mallory. An Iron Age enclosure and an Anglo-Saxon feature were located. Soil samples were taken for the recovery of archaeobiological evidence from several features and samples between ten and forty litres were processed. As one sample was associated with a cremation, charcoal was briefly scanned and the largest pieces were identified to investigate the fuel used for the pyre. All the samples were analysed for archaeobotanical evidence in the hope to gain information on the nature of the occupation on site. Volume of soil processed and results are presented in table 1.

Materials and Methods

Five contexts were target at ULAS to be processed as shown in Table 1.

The soil from the cremation deposit, sample **3** (12), was wet sieved in a York tank using a 0.5mm mesh with flotation into a 0.3mm mesh sieve. The flotation fractions (flots) were air dried and then packed carefully in self-seal polythene bags.

All the flots were examined and sorted using a low power stereo-microscope and any plant remains were removed to glass specimen tubes. Morphological criteria were used for the identification of plant species, based on modern reference material and seed identification manuals (e.g. Berggren 1981; Anderberg 1994; Cappers *et al*. 2006). Plant names follow Stace (1997).

Results

All samples had a variable amount of gravel and some large stones. Moreover all samples had a large amount of small root fragments, suggesting a degree of soil disturbance.

Overall the archaeobotanical assemblage was very poor. Charred cereal grains belonging to wheat (*Triticum* spp.) and barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L.) were recovered in very low numbers in sample 7 (09), along with a few unidentified seeds, possibly associated with barley and wheat. The level of preservation did not allow the identification of wheat and weeds to species level. Few small seeds and burnt stems of grasses (Poaceae) were recovered from sample 3 (12). Moreover several tubers, belonging to onion couch grass (*Arrenatherum elatius* ssp. *Bulbosus* (wylld.) Hyl.), were recovered from sample 4 (15), as these remains are commonly found in prehistoric cremation contexts it is possible that the deposit from which sample 4 (15) came was associated to the cremation.

All samples had at least a few flecks of charcoal. The only sample very rich in charcoal was sample 3 (12) charcoal identified as wood of oak (*Quercus* sp.) and hazel (*Corylus avellana* L.).

Context	Sample	Feature type and content	Volume L
13	**2**	Ditch fill, modern roots, charcoal	18
12	**3**	Cremation, charcoal from oak and hazel and several charred grass stems	17
15	**4**	Pit fill/post hole, possibly associated to cremation. Several tubers of onion couch grass	8
17	**5**	Pit fill, small fragments of charcoal and modern roots, very small flot	8
09	**7**	Pit fill, Saxon, barley and wheat grains, few seeds of weeds (unidentified)	30

Table 1: Soil sample details

Discussion and Conclusions

The samples associated with the cremation, sample **3** (12) and **4** (15) contained charred fragments of grass stems and sample 4 tubers of onion couch grass which may suggest they were possibly used as tinder for starting fires, as suggested by Murphy (2002) or were growing on the site of the pyre, this was also found in samples from other sites (Radini and Monckton 2010). The few occasional charred grains found in sample **7** (9) could be the result of food consumption and disposal on site, or the result of soil shifting on site in ancient times.

Despite the assemblage being very poor, soil conditions can vary largely across site and it is important that in any future excavation an appropriate sampling strategy is adopted.

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