



# University of Leicester

## Archaeological Services

**An archaeological excavation at  
The Fernie Hunt Kennels,  
Nether Green, Great Bowden,  
Leicestershire  
(SP 735 883)**

Leon Hunt



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Nether Green, Great Bowden,  
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(SP 735 883)**

**Leon Hunt**

**for:**

**The Trustees of the Fernie Hunt**

**Planning Application Number 11/00491/FUL**

Approved by:

Signed: ...



**Date:** .....23.01.2012.....

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## **An archaeological excavation at The Fernie Hunt Kennels, Nether Green, Great Bowden, Leicestershire (SP 735 883)**

Leon Hunt

### **Summary**

*An archaeological excavation was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at the Fernie Hunt Kennels, Nether Green, Great Bowden, Leicestershire (SP 735 883). The work was commissioned by the Trustees of the Fernie Hunt in advance of the construction of new buildings on the site.*

*The work followed on from an evaluation by trial trenching carried out by ULAS in July 2011, when a number of archaeological features dated to the Late Anglo-Saxon to Early High Medieval period (c. 850-1250) were discovered.*

*Part of the development had been undertaken prior to the archaeological work and had to be stopped. An area had been stripped of upper soils already and the new building partially constructed.*

*The archaeological work involved the stripping of another area in advance of development, which would be the main area of excavation along with the excavation of a number of small evaluation trenches to evaluate the impact from the construction of a new access road and a proposed horse exercise area. Various services trenches and the trenches for the foundations inside the partially finished building were also be subject to watching brief.*

*The spoil heaps were swept by metal detector and searched for non-metallic finds by The Great Bowden Heritage and Archaeology Group.*

*The trenches and service trenches were largely negative. The main excavation area revealed a number of intercutting ditches, gullies and pits. Nearly all features contained datable artefacts giving a series of phases and dates ranging from the Late Saxon period to the Late medieval period, with the largest assemblages dating from the Late Saxon to Early High medieval period; a similar range to dates and material to that of the previous evaluation.*

### **Introduction**

An archaeological excavation was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at the Fernie Hunt Kennels, Nether Green, Great Bowden, Leicestershire (NGR: SP 735 883). The work was commissioned by the Trustees of the Fernie Hunt in advance of the construction of new buildings on the site, including new stables and vehicle store and a new access track into the site from Nether Green.

The work followed on from an evaluation by trial trenching carried out by ULAS in July 2011, when a number of archaeological features dated to the Late Anglo-Saxon to Early High Medieval period (c. 850-1250) were discovered (Hunt 2011).

The fieldwork was intended to mitigate any damage to buried archaeological remains which will occur from the proposed construction of the new buildings. The construction had been started without mitigation and therefore the planning authority, Harborough District Council, on advice from the Senior Planning Archaeologist,

Leicestershire County Council, halted the development and requested an open area excavation within the footprint of the storage barn and a watching brief and some trial trenching on other groundworks and partially completed areas.

### Site Location, Geology and Topography

Great Bowden lies in the Harborough District of Leicestershire, around 1.5 miles north-east of the centre of Market Harborough.

Nether Green lies at the north-eastern edge of Great Bowden and the site, which covers 0.45 hectares, lies on the northern side of Nether Green, opposite Nether House and the Fernie Hunt stables (Figure 1).

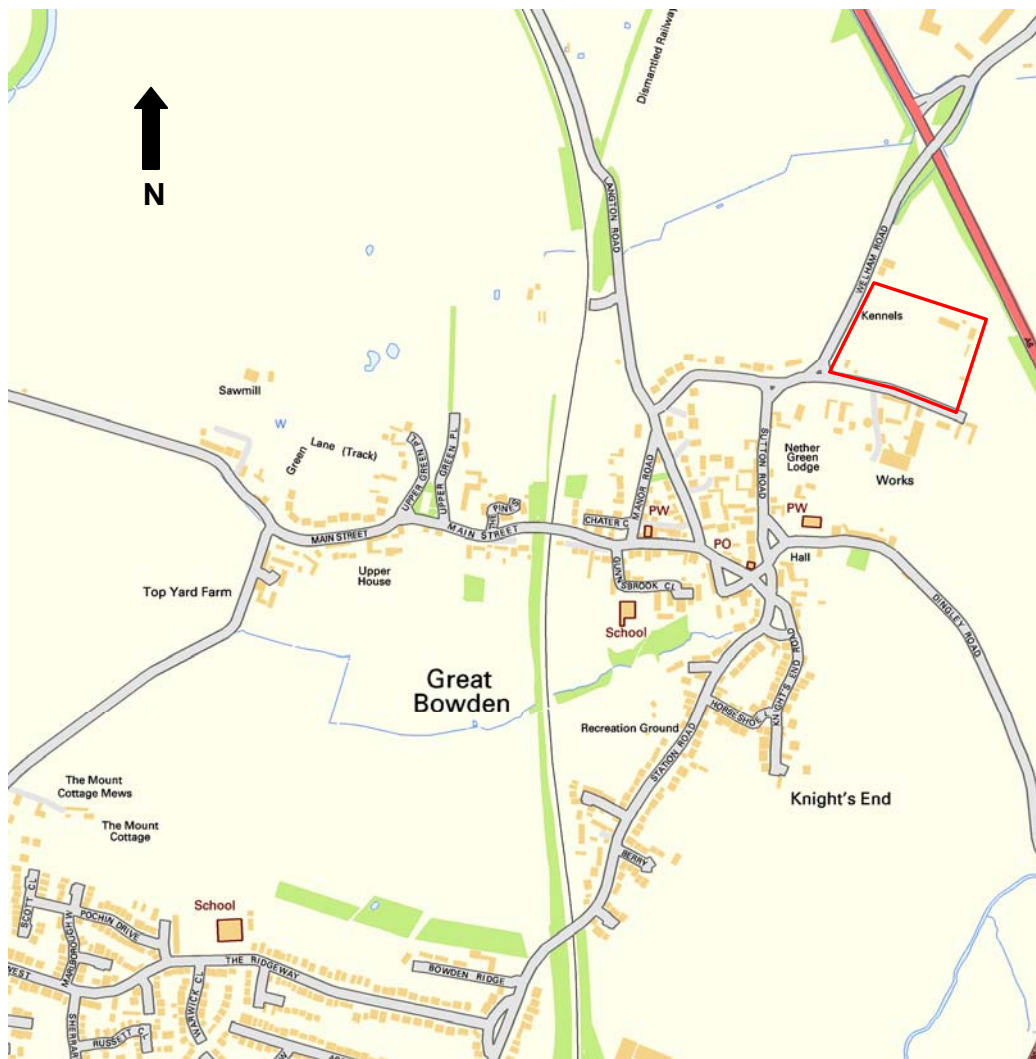


Figure 1: Location of Great Bowden  
Scale Approximately 1: 2500. Contains Ordnance Survey Data

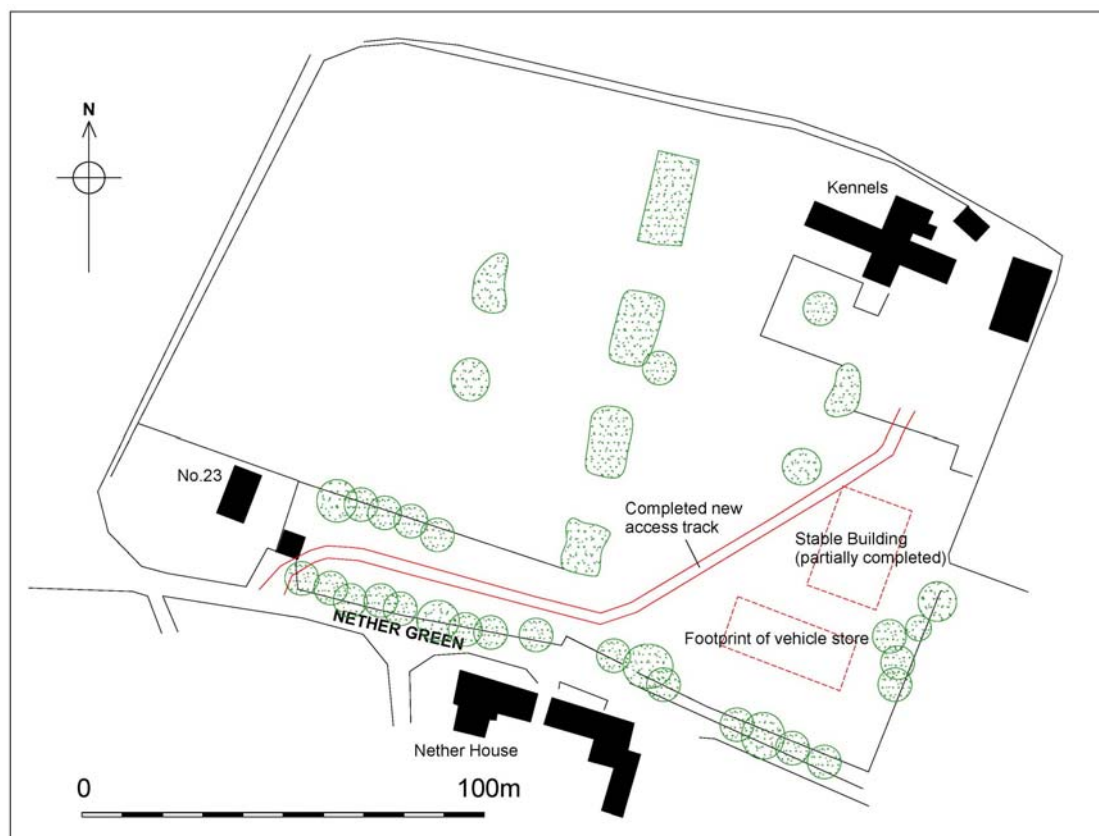


Figure 2: Plan of proposed and partially completed development

The site is broadly rectangular and orientated west-north-west to east-south-east. It is surrounded by hedgerows to the east, west and north. The southern edge, along the line of the road is bordered by a metal fence and a number of large mature lime trees, which carry tree preservation orders (TPOs).

The new development lies at the eastern and south-eastern edge of the site, with the new access road passing through a gap at the south-western corner of the site to the east and then north towards the kennel buildings, which lie close to the north-east corner (Figure 2).

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of England and Wales, Sheet 170 (Market Harborough) indicates that the underlying geology consists of Middle Lias clays, overlain by Glacial Till. The site lies at a height of around 77m aOD. The site appeared largely flat.

### Archaeological Background

The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland indicates that the site lies just outside the medieval core of the village (HER Ref No: MLE9021). There are few known prehistoric and Roman sites in the close vicinity of the site. Great Bowden has its origins in the medieval period and archaeological finds from this period far surpass any other period of antiquity in their abundance.

The village has shrunk in size since the medieval period and the earthworks of demolished buildings from the medieval period can be found on the outskirts of the village to the east and north of the present-day village core. To the south lie the earthworks at Knight's End (MLE1953) and along Dingley Road, east of the Church

(MLE1955). Further earthworks lie to the south-west of the site north of The Royal Oak (MLE1950). There are also several findspots for medieval pottery within the village core, including several sherds from The Paddock and Nether Green (MLE6752).

The archaeological evaluation carried out by ULAS (Hunt 2011) consisted of seven trenches placed within the proposed development areas around the site. However, a sewer pipe was in the process of being excavated prior to the archaeological work being undertaken and this presented some constraints to the positioning of the trenches. During the work the proposed development was changed and so one trench was excavated outside the proposed development area (Figure 3).

All the trenches contained archaeological deposits of some kind. Two of the trenches (Trenches 1 and 3) contained modern features, which may have originated during earlier periods; a furrow and a pond respectively. Another trench (Trench 7) contained a Victorian well and some disturbed areas of rubble and appeared to be situated close to where early maps show a cottage once stood.

All the other trenches contained ditches and pits, most of which could be dated to the Late Anglo-Saxon to Early High Medieval period, a period covered around 850 to 1250. A few features contained later medieval material, although many of these contained earlier material also, suggesting continuity into the later period. Most of the features in Trench 5, which now lay outside the development area, were not fully excavated. However, a large amount of surface finds from this trench also indicated Late Anglo-Saxon-medieval activity.

The type of archaeological evidence from the evaluation is indicative of agricultural activity in the area during the Late Anglo-Saxon to Early High Medieval period. However, the amount of pottery collected of fine fabrics, along with artefacts such as a copper alloy ring found within a ditch fill in Trench 4, suggested a settlement somewhere in the close vicinity.

### **Archaeological Objectives**

The main objectives of the archaeological work will be:

- To identify the presence/absence of any earlier building phases or archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.
- Any groundworks currently open should be inspected by the archaeological contractor, cleaned up if necessary, and any visible archaeological remains should be investigated and recorded prior to backfilling.

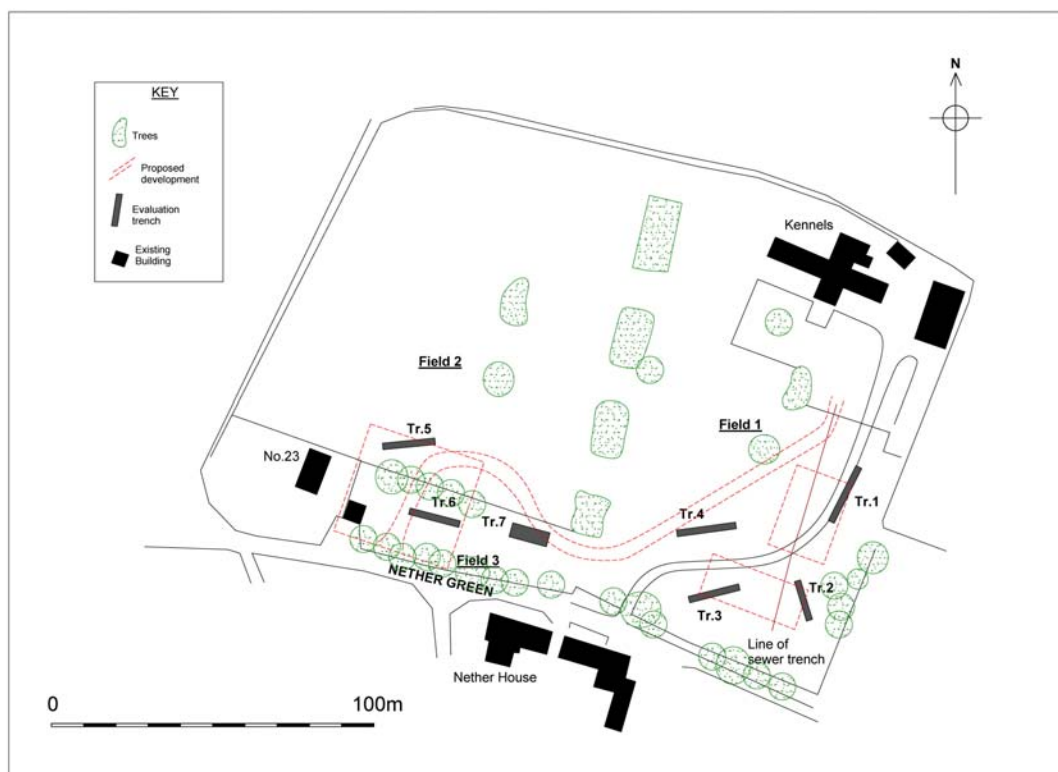


Figure 3: Plan of evaluation trenches. Proposed development later amended

## Methodology

The excavations were to comprise:

- A full archaeological excavation undertaken of the entire area covered by the proposed new buildings, concrete surfaces and any associated drainage and services
- Two trenches were to be excavated at the very edge of the new haul road to ascertain the extent of the impact of the new road on archaeological remains.
- A further trench to be excavated to the north of the new stables building where a new horse trainer is to be constructed.
- If archaeological remains are found to have been impacted by the haul road then further excavation to investigate and record those remains along the entire length of the haul road is likely to be required.
- Metal detector survey and walk-over of the spoil bunds created from the soil removed from the site during unmitigated works, to retrieve archaeological artefacts disturbed by unmitigated works. Provision should be made for community involvement in this aspect of the project (in line with recommendations for outreach and community involvement in PPS5). This work may require the moving/spreading of the bunds to facilitate identification of artefacts.
- Full archaeological excavation should be undertaken in advance of any further ground disturbance (including topsoil stripping, services, drainage, tree removal, foundation works, landscaping etc.)

- No further groundworks associated with the development should be undertaken until the archaeological excavations have been completed to appropriate standards.

The main area to be covered by the excavation was a broadly rectangular area covering the footprint of the new storage barn close at the southern end of the site (approximately 32m x 12m in size). This had been partially stripped and had been stoned up, but this was removed and the area stripped by tracked excavator, under constant archaeological supervision, to archaeological layers or the natural substratum whichever the higher. A new sewer pipe and the remains of the previous old sewer pipe lay across the area from north to south. This split the open area trench (A) into two, with a 3.9m wide baulk between the main (western) area and a smaller (eastern) area.

Two small exploratory trenches (B & C), measuring 1.8m wide and 5.5m and 7m long respectively were placed close to the new access road and an 8.6m by 3.2m trench (D) was placed to the north of the new stable building.

Other service and foundation trenches placed across the site, including those placed within the partially finished stable building were subject to watching brief and inspected (Figure 4).

Cuts are indicated by square brackets (e.g [41]) and fills round brackets (e.g (42)). The dating for the medieval period used in this report is adapted from The Medieval Society guidelines ([www.maney.co.uk/journals/med](http://www.maney.co.uk/journals/med)) as follows: Later Anglo-Saxon 850-100; Early High Medieval: 1100-1250; Late High Medieval: 1066-1380; Late Medieval: 1380-1550.

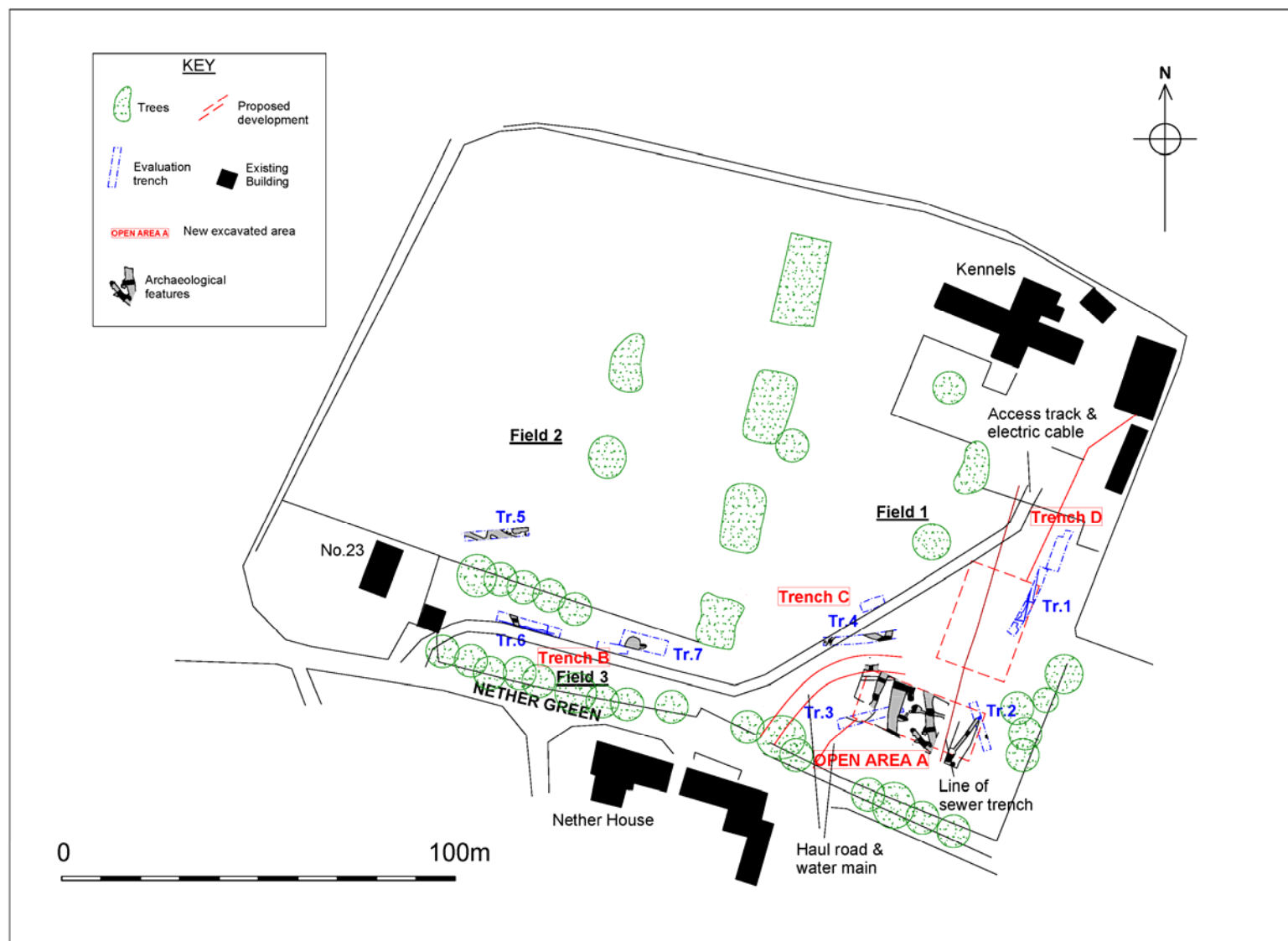


Figure 4: Plan of proposed works and archaeological excavations

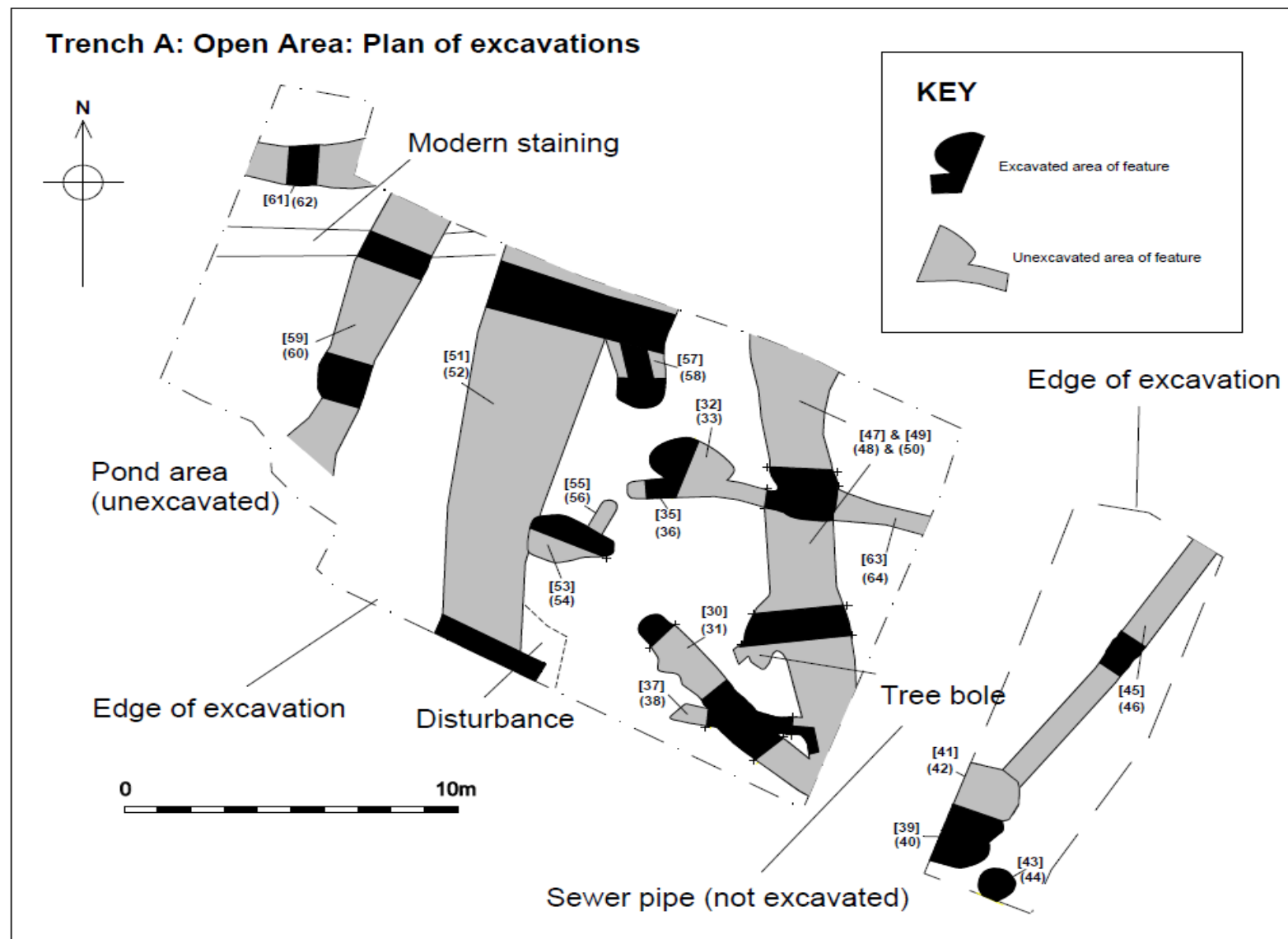


Figure 5: Plan of archaeological features in Trench A (open area excavation)

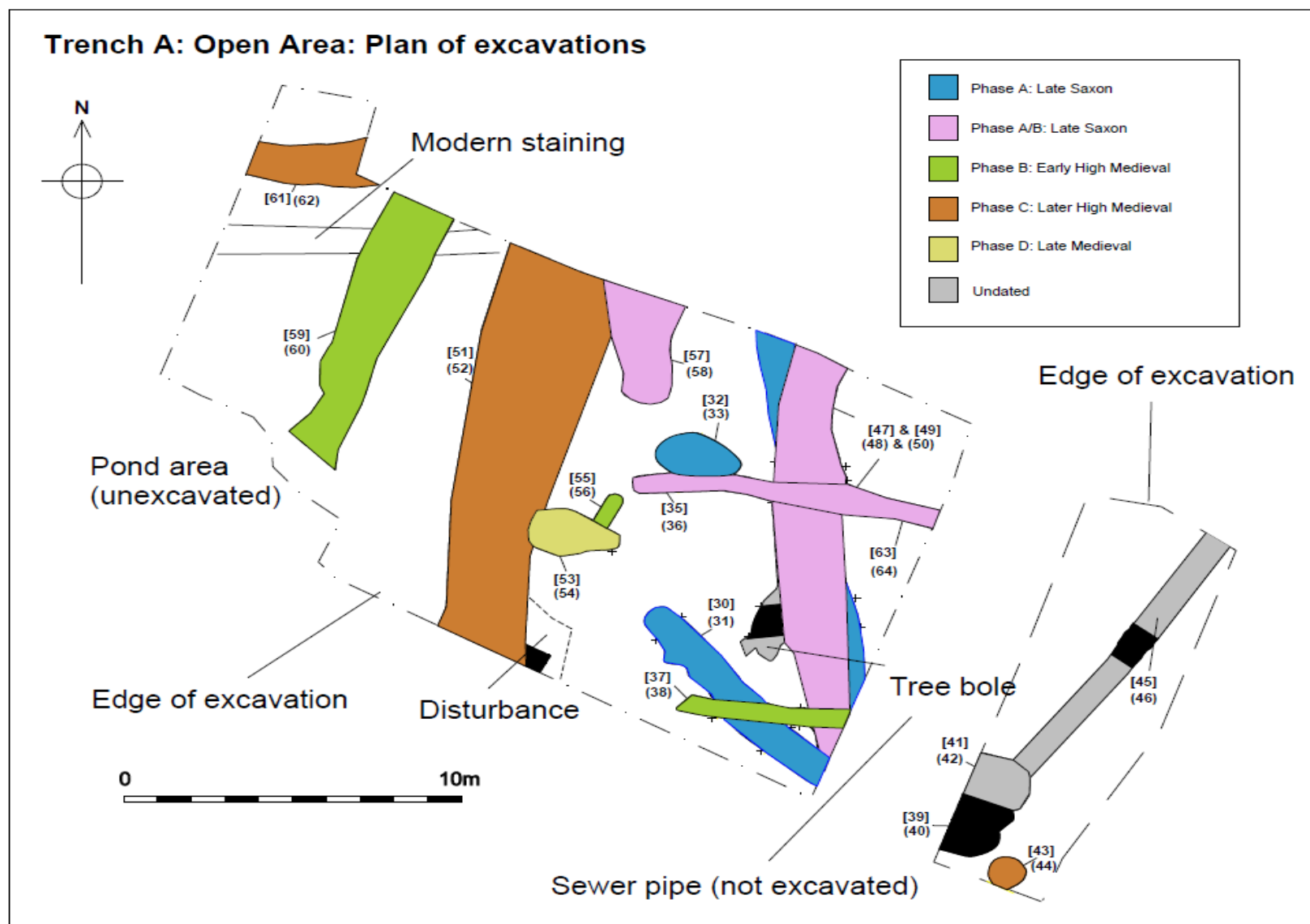


Figure 6: Phase plan for Trench A

## Results

### *Trench A (open area)*

The open area excavation was stripped with a large tracked excavator until archaeological deposits or the natural yellow or grey clay substrata was visible (Plate 1). The site had been partially stripped of around 0.25m of topsoil prior to the excavation and then stoned up. The tracked excavator reduced the upper soils by another 0.5m, showing a further 0.35m of topsoil overlying 0.15m of brownish yellow subsoil (Plate 2).



Plate 1: Work in progress on Trench A, looking north-west

Sections of former evaluation trenches 2 and 3 were encountered during the stripping and excavations around the south-western corner of Area A revealed the pond, which was uncovered during the evaluation. Therefore, this area was avoided, and an extra section added to the trench at the north-west corner to follow a linear feature in that area.

Contexts numbers are shown in brackets in the text, with cut numbers indicated by square brackets [1] and fill numbers by round brackets (2). The context numbering system carries on from the number sequence used in the evaluation.

A general plan of Trench A and a phase plan of the area are illustrated in Figures 5 & 6 respectively.

### *Phase A: Late Saxon (9th-10th Century):*

Figures 7 & 8

Feature [47] was a linear feature running broadly north to south across the trench, close to the eastern edge. It emerged from close to the south-east corner and continued for the full length of the trench for 8m, disappearing into the northern baulk. It was between 0.9m and 1.1m wide and between 0.2m and 0.24m deep. It was shallow sided

but later appears to have been recut as a deeper ditch [49] with steeper sides, which ran more north to south starting close to the southern end of [47] (this area is obscured by a small tree bole) and crossing the line of [47] further north (Figures 8a & 8b). The fill of [47] was a greyish yellow silty-clay (48), whereas the fill of [49] was a dark yellowish grey silty-clay (50), with very dark patches visible close to the southern end and to the north close to the junction with gully [35] (Plate 3). The fill (48) contained 15 sherds of Late Saxon pottery, such as Coarse Stamford Ware and Lincoln/St. Neots Type. One sherd of St. Neots ware pottery was retrieved from within the fill (50) and one sherd of Roman pottery which is likely to be residual.



Plate 2: Trench A fully stripped, looking south-east

Feature [30] was a ditch feature that was orientated north-west to south-east, running from the south-east corner of the open area trench, close to where [47] disappeared under the baulk, to a butt-end at the north-western end. The visible length was 7.7m and the ditch was 0.95m wide. It had fairly shallow sides to a fairly flattish base at between 0.13m-0.15m depth (Figures 8c & 8d). The fill (31) was a mottled grey and yellowish brown silty-clay with very few small angular stones and one sherd of St. Neots type pottery.

Around 2m west of linear [47] was a pit [32]. This was sub-oval in shape 2.5m long and up to 1.4m wide. It was also oriented east to west and the sides were mainly steep and the base relatively flat at 0.65m depth (Figure 8e: Plate 4). It contained two distinct fills. The lower fill (33) was around 0.2m thick and consisted of a mixed yellowish brown to brownish grey clay or silty-clay with few stones and around 5% iron pan and 1% charcoal. The upper fill (34) was a dark brownish grey silty-clay with 2% charcoal and 1% large rounded pebbles. Five sherds of St. Neots type pottery, animal bone and five pieces of fired clay were retrieved from this fill.

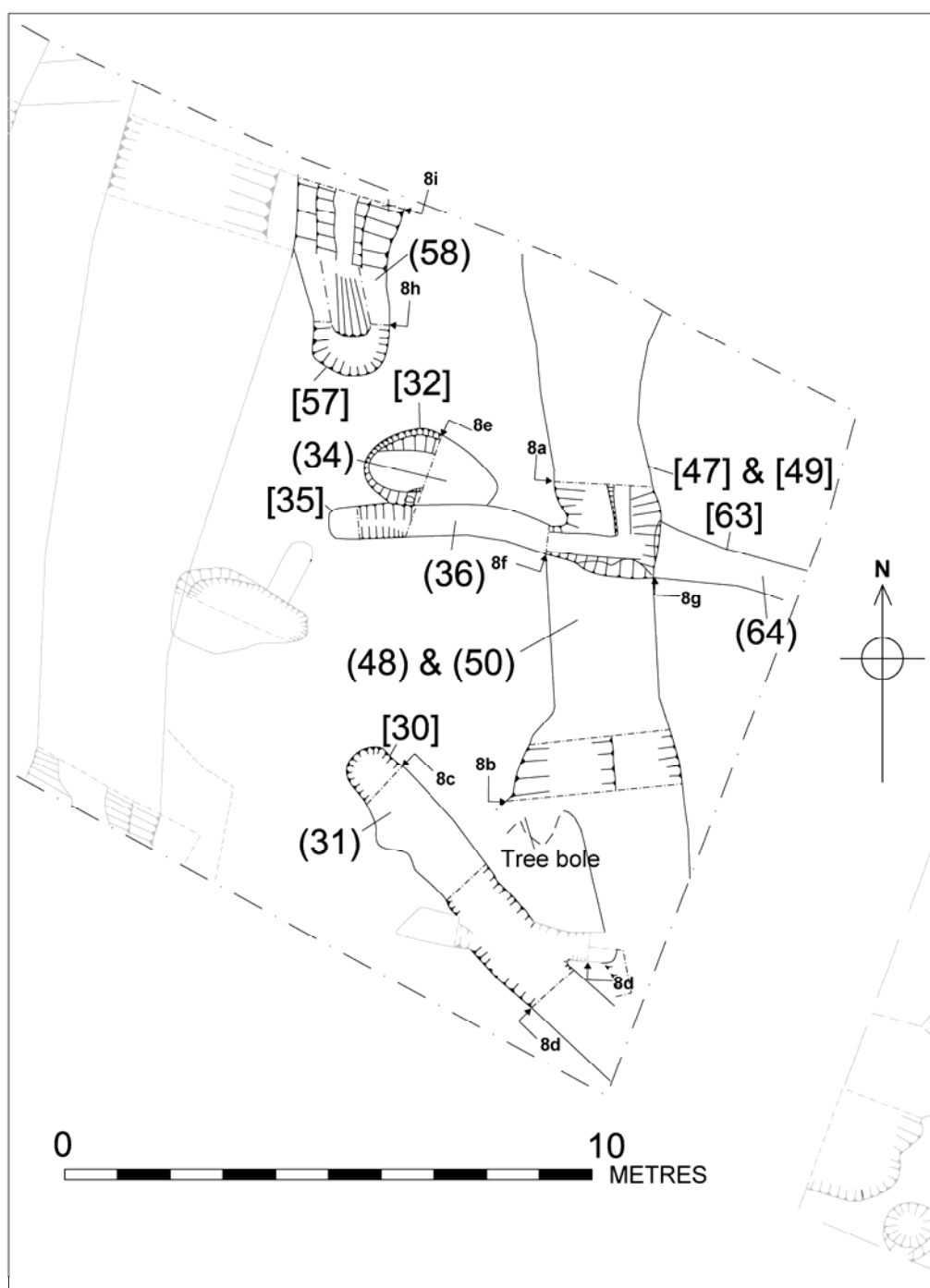


Figure 7: Plan of Phase A & A/B features (Late Saxon)

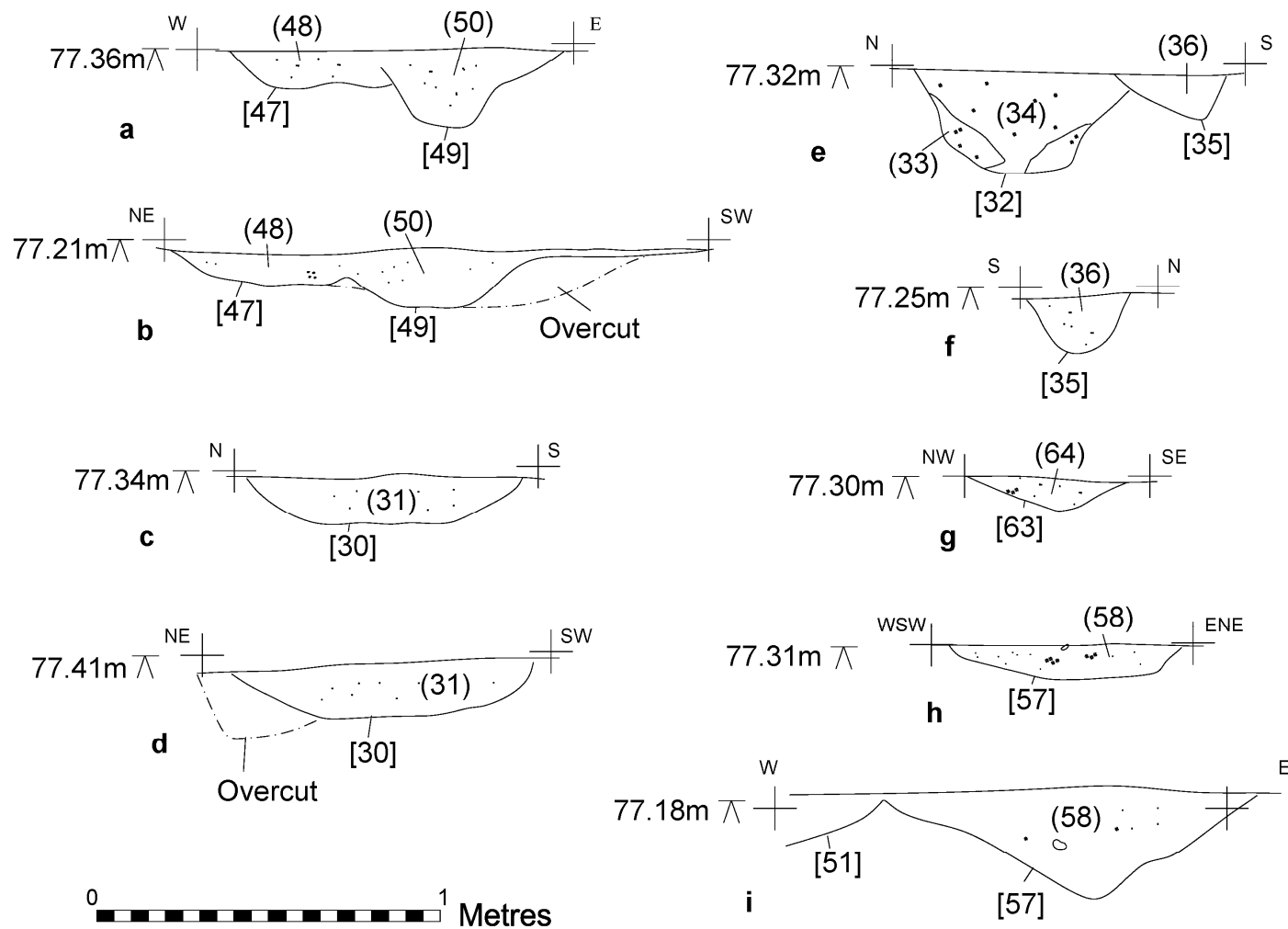


Figure 8: Sections for Phase A & A/B



Plate 3: South facing section of features [47] and [49], cut by feature [35]/[63], looking north



Plate 4: West facing sections of pit [32] and ditch [35], looking east

*Phase A/B: Late Saxon (11th century):*  
Figures 7 & 8

The pit [32] was cut along its southern edge by a gully [35], which ran for around 4.5m from the west, past [32] turning slightly to the south-east and apparently ending in ditch type features [47]/[49]. Feature [35] was 0.7m wide and around 0.28m-0.34m deep (Figures 8e & 8f: Plate 4). The fill (36) was a dark greyish brown silty-clay with yellowish brown mottles and around 1% charcoal and very few sub-angular stones. Pottery and bone were both recovered from the fill. The pottery consisted of St. Neots ware and Lincoln ware plus coarse and fine Stamford ware. The latest material, the fine Stamford ware is dated to between 1050 –1200. The eastern part of the feature was designated cut [63] and fill (64) but they are essentially the same as [35] and (36) (Figure 8g).

At the northern edge of the trench was [57], which appeared to be a linear feature, mostly obscured by the northern baulk of the open area and partially by later feature [51]. The section that was visible was 3.6m long and between 1.4m-1.8m wide (Figures 8h & 8i). It appeared to be broadly orientated north-west to south-east and the sides were shallow on the south-western side and steep to the north-east, with a slight break in the slope towards the base, which was concave. The feature butt-ended 3.6m from the baulk, with the end steeply leading up from a base at 0.6m depth to around 0.19m deep at the butt-end.

The fill (58) was a mid to dark yellowish grey silty-clay with very few small rounded stones and some charcoal flecks, six pieces of fired clay and eight sherds of fine Stamford ware or St. Neots ware pottery.

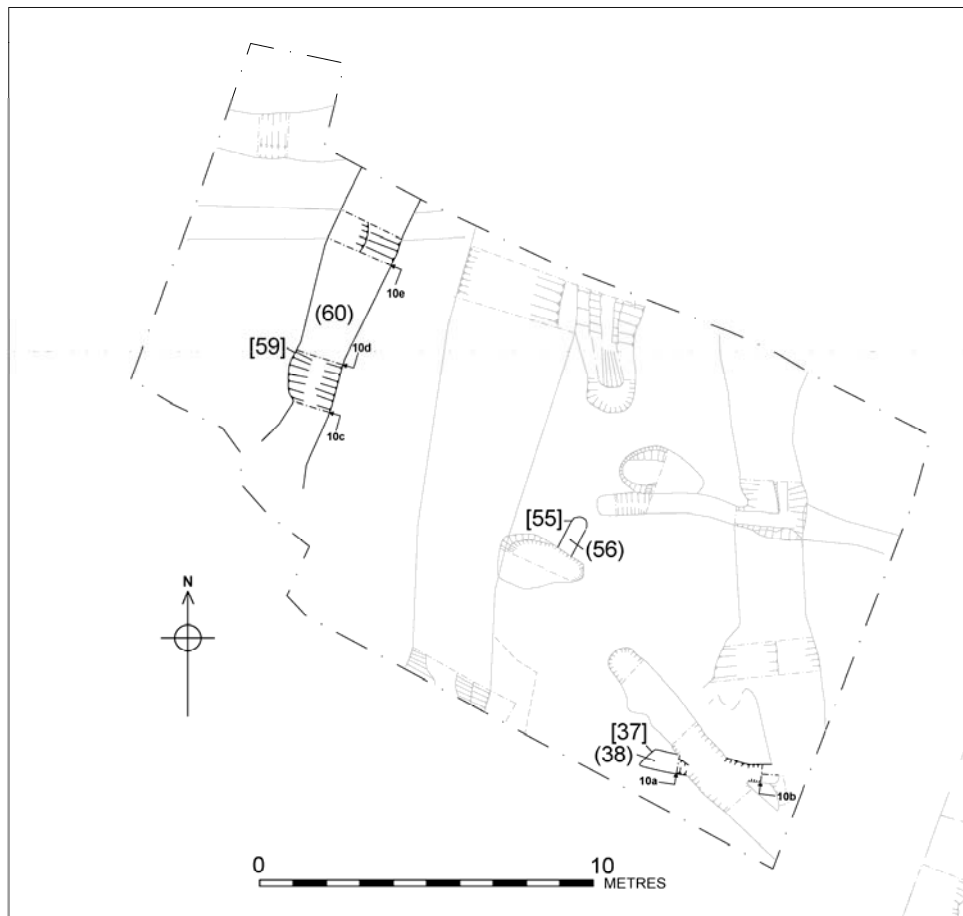


Figure 9: Plan of Phase B features

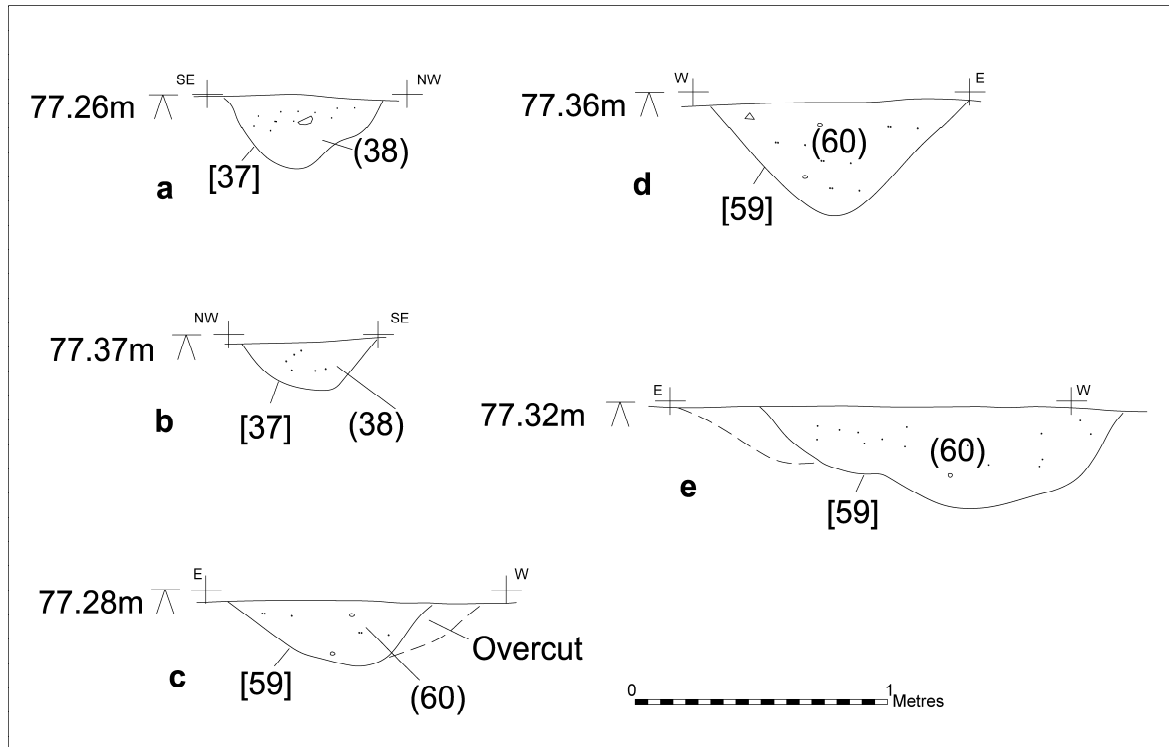


Figure 10: Sections of Phase B features

*Phase B: Early High Medieval (11th-13th century)*

Figures 9 & 10

A gully [37] runs broadly east to west from the eastern baulk to a butt-end, cutting [30] and also [47]/[49]. The gully's visible length was 4.5m and it was 0.5m wide with 45 degree sides and a curved base at a depth of between 0.17m-0.28m (Figure 10a & 10b). The fill (38) was a mottled mid grey and yellowish brown silty-clay with very few small stones and single sherds of Oolitic ware, Stanion Lyvedon ware and Coarse Shelly ware pottery, giving a date of late 12th to 13th century.

Close to the end of gully [35] was a small gully [55], of 0.56m length. This is around 0.4m wide with steep sides and a u-shaped base at 0.37m depth. This appears to butt-end to the north and is cut by a later pit [53] to the south, where it could be seen in the south facing edge of [53] (section not illustrated). The fill is a yellowish grey silty-clay (56) with no coarse components but Oolitic ware and Stanion Lyvedon A ware pottery.

At the western end of the trench was feature [59], which was a ditch running broadly north to south across the western part of the open area trench, on a similar alignment to, slightly later feature [51], which lies a few metres to the east. The feature ran for around 9m across the trench, disappearing into the northern baulk of the trench. The southern end of the feature was quite faint and had been obscured slightly by the pond, the edge of which lay in the south-western corner of the trench. The ditch was 1m-1.3m wide and varied between 0.25m and 0.45m in depth, becoming shallower out towards the pond area (Figures 10c, 10d and 10e). The sides of the ditch varied but were mostly quite steep with a concave base. The fill (60) was a yellowish grey to mid-grey silty clay with very few medium pebbles and contained Lyvedon/Stanian ware A, Coarse Shelly ware, and Fine Stamford ware pottery. Close to the northern end lay a narrow feature, which emerged from the western baulk of the trench and

appeared to cut across feature [59]. This followed the line of the old access track and was tested with a machine cut across its width close to the edge with feature [59]. This showed it to be some kind of staining, possibly contamination of the soils by oil. The staining could be seen high up in the western baulk under the old trackway.

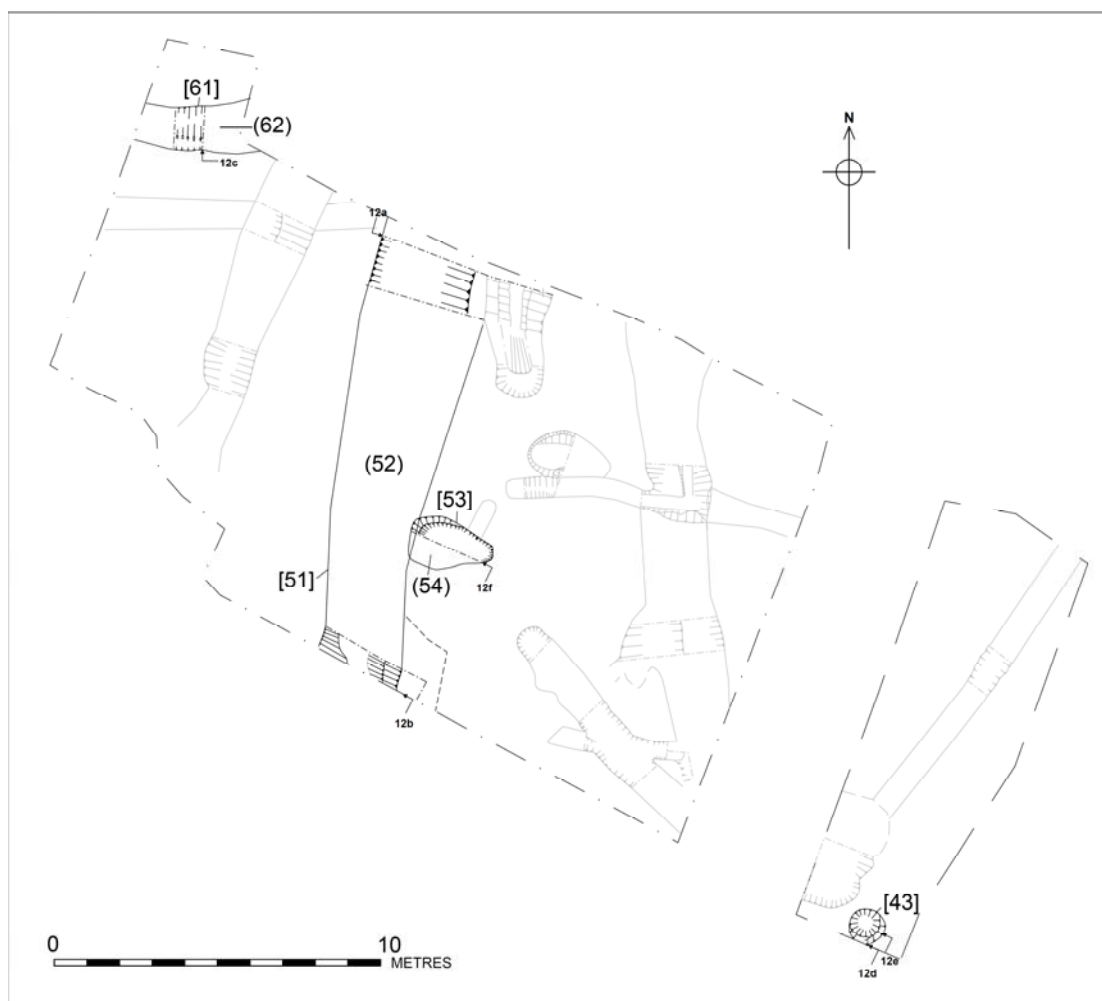


Figure 11: Plan of Phase C and D features



Plate 5: South facing section of feature [51] against baulk, looking north

*Phase C: Later High Medieval (13th-14th century)*

Figures 11 & 12

The largest feature on the site was feature [51], which was a large ditch cut, running the entire width of the open area (around 14m). It ran north to south and was around 2.6m wide. The western side was fairly steep whereas the eastern was shallower. It was between 0.9m-1m deep and had a curved and slightly uneven base (Figures 12a & 12b: Plate 5). The fill (52) was a yellowish grey silty clay with a few medium sized stones and a large amount of pottery, including 49 sherds of Lyveden/Stanion A ware pottery and 41 sherds of Oolitic ware pottery along with nine sherds of Lyveden/Stanion B ware pottery. The eastern side of the southern end was difficult to define as a disturbed area, possibly a silty depression lay to the edge of the feature.

To the north-west of ditch [59] was another ditch feature [61]. This was observed as running just under the baulk during machining and so the trench was extended slightly to the north to follow it. The feature was orientated east to west and had a visible length of 3.26m and was 1.4m wide. The sides of the feature were steep on the northern side and the southern side had a stepped edge so that a smaller gully, which did not appear to be a recut ran along the southern edge. The base was concave and lay at 0.58m depth (Figure 12c). The fill (62) was a mottled mid grey and yellowish grey silty-clay with very few medium ironstone pieces and six sherds of Lyveden/Stanion A ware and B ware pottery.

Close to the southern corner of the eastern part of the open area trench was a sub-circular pit [43], which measured 0.87m in diameter with smooth shallow sides, steepening near the base, which lay at 0.37m depth (Figure 12d & 12e). The fill (44) was a yellowish grey silty-clay with very few small stones and a single sherd of Lyveden Stanion B ware pottery.

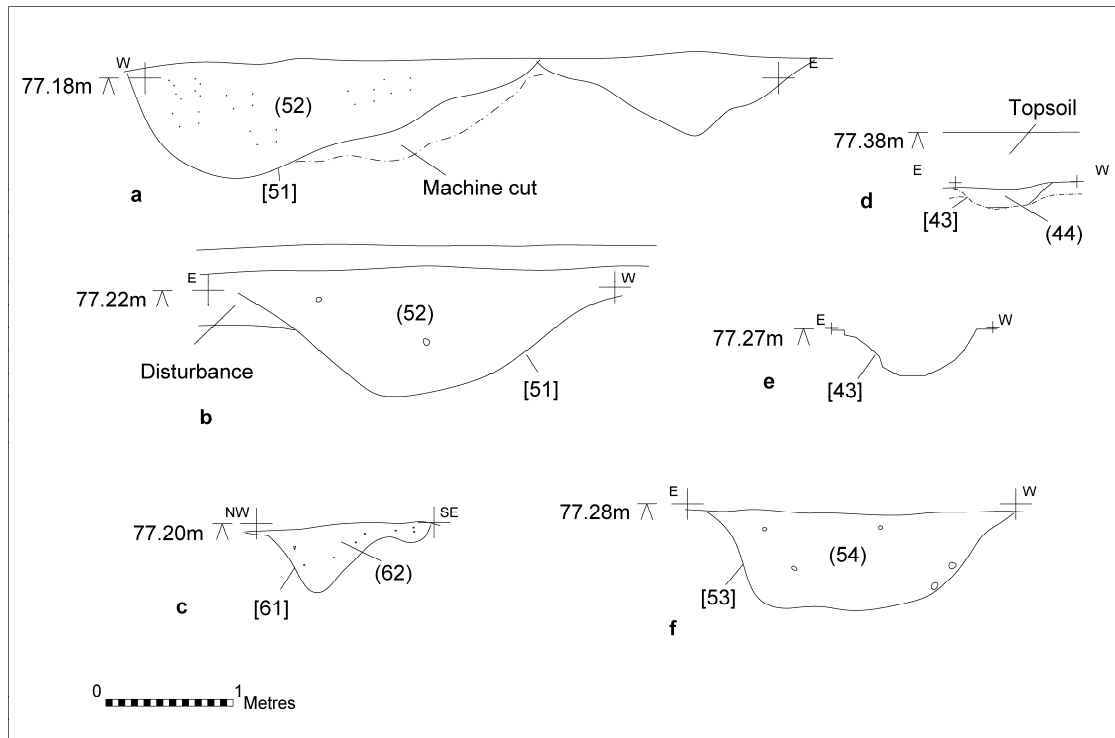


Figure 12: Sections of Phase C and D features

*Phase D: Late medieval (14th-16th century)*

Figures 11 & 12

At the eastern edge of feature [51] and slightly cutting into it was a large sub-oval pit [53], oriented east to west. This was around 2.6m long and between 0.65m-1.7m wide. It had fairly steep sides and a flat base at around 0.75m depth (Figure 12f). The fill (54) was a compacted greyish yellow silty-clay with one or two heat affected stones and a few medium pebbles. The fill contained a number of pottery sherd of different wares, but the latest were two sherds of Lyveden/Stanion D ware, dating from around 1400 onwards.

*Undated features*

Figures 13 & 14

A possible pit or the butt-end of a linear feature, partially obscured by the sewer pipe baulk on its western side, lay close to the south-western corner of the eastern side of the open area trench. The feature [39] had an apparent length of 1.56m length and a 1.2m width. The sides were of a 45 degree slope and the base was flat at a depth of 0.29m (Figure 14a). It appears to have been cut, or possibly disturbed by a feature [41] that lay to the direct north (Figure 14b). Both the fills of these features, (40) and (42) respectively, were identical, consisting of a greyish yellow silty-clay with very few stones and pieces of fired clay that could not be dated. To the north-east of these features was shallow linear feature [45] (Figure 12c), which ran from the north-eastern edge of the eastern trench area towards features [39] and [41] where it appeared to peter out, with feature [41], which appeared to be a tree-bole or other bioturbic disturbance occluding the relationship between [39] and [45]. The fill of the linear (46) was a greyish yellow silty-clay with very few pieces of ironstone and pottery.

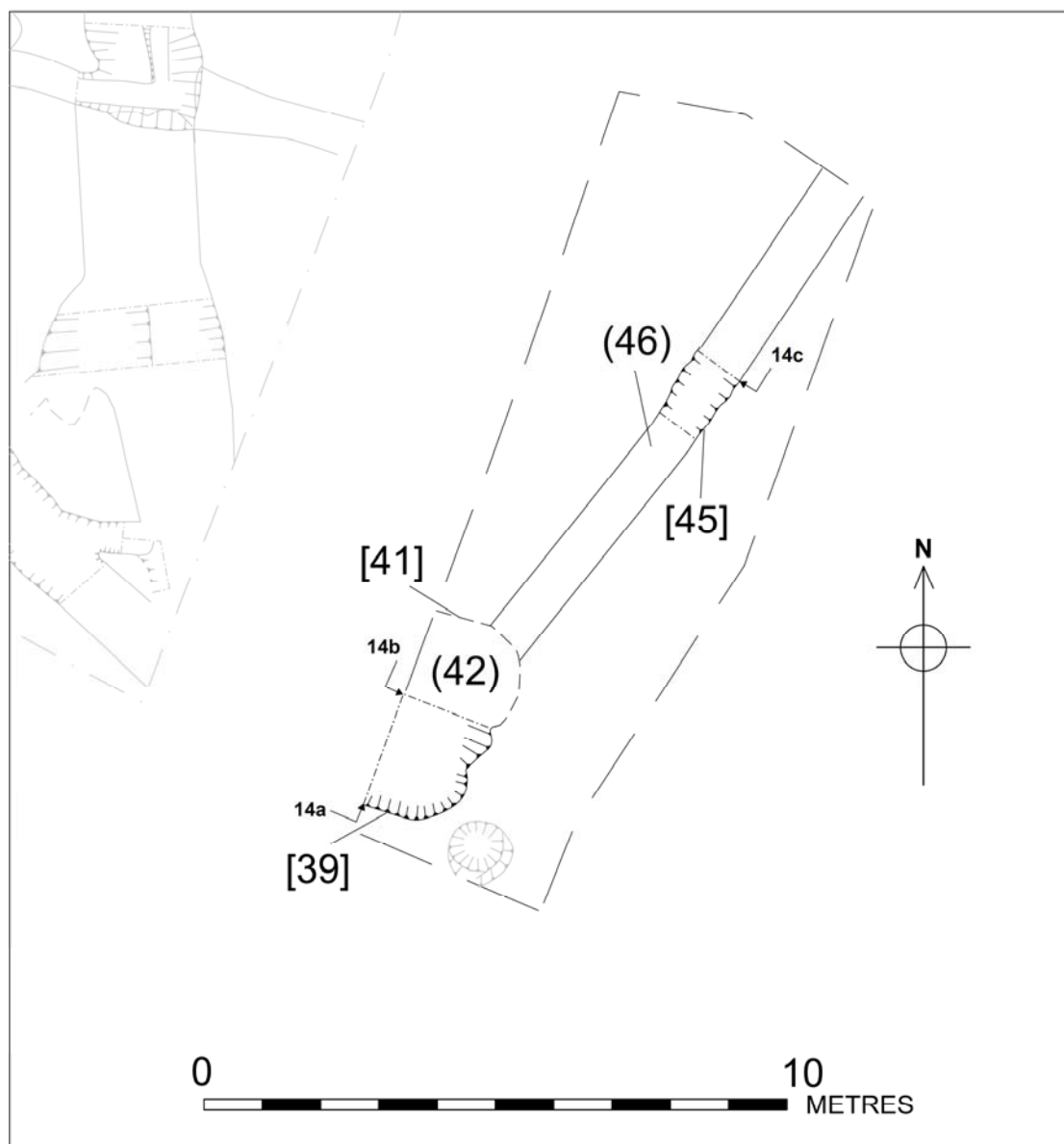


Figure 13: Plan of undated features

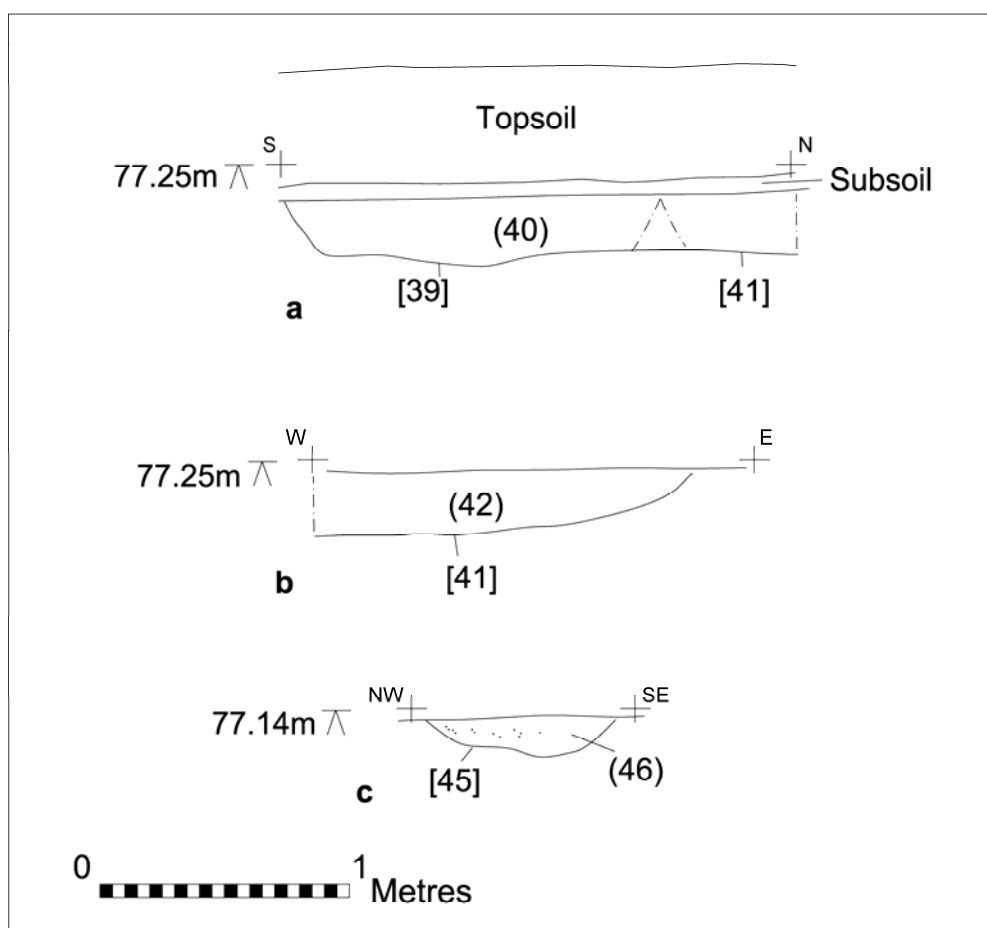


Figure 14: Sections of undated features



Plate 6: Work in progress on Trench B, looking west



Plate 7: North-west facing section of Trench C, looking south-east

### ***Trenches B & C***

Trenches B and C were placed close to the edge of the new access track and excavated down to just below the depth of the new road metalling (Plate 6). In both trenches it could be shown that the metalling was not deep enough to have disturbed archaeological deposits. Trench B was 0.3m deep; Trench C was 0.35m deep (Plate 7).

### ***Trench D***

Trench D was excavated to the north of the new stable building in an area where a new horse training area was proposed.

<b>Interval (m)</b>	<b>0 (S)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8 (N)</b>
<b>Ground (OD)</b>	76.99m	-	76.99m	-	77.92m
<b>Topsoil depth</b>	0.17m	0.18m	0.26m	0.24m	0.19m
<b>Subsoil depth</b>	0.74m	0.73m	0.70m	0.76m	0.60m
<b>Top of Natural</b>	0.91m	0.91m	0.96m	0.90m	0.79m
<b>Base of Trench</b>	1.25m	1.25m	1.15m	1.10m	1m

The trench did not contain any archaeological features. The sequence of deposits in the trench is similar to Trench 1 of the previous evaluation, which lay just to the south of Trench D (Plate 8).



Plate 8: Trench D, post excavation, looking south

### ***Soil Bunds and metal detecting***

The topsoil and subsoil bunds associated with the new stables development and the open area (Trench A) were walked over and metal detected by volunteers from the Great Bowden Heritage and Archaeology Group.

A number of metal finds were recovered from the spoil heaps. These were almost exclusively modern and varied from 20th century coins to parts of agricultural machinery pieces of chain and horse shoes. The most interesting artefact was a rumbler bell, of a type worn by cattle in the post-medieval period.

The spoil heaps were as follows:

Spoil heap A: Topsoil from new stables building

Spoil heap B: Topsoil from Open Area A

Spoil heap C: Subsoil from Open Area A

Spoil heap D: Subsoil from new stables building

Spoil heap E: Spoil from new trackway

Spoil heap F: Soil from area between stables and area A

Several sherds of pottery dating from the same range as those recovered from the features within Trench A were recovered. These were naturally all unstratified and are listed in the Appendix I: The Post Roman pottery.

### ***Watching Brief***

The trenches for the foundations of the interior part of the new stables building were observed for archaeological deposits during their excavation. The trenches were around 1.6m wide and 1m deep. As the area had been stripped prior to the archaeological attendance and excavation the trenches consisted of around 0.3m of

mill waste directly overlying the sub-stratum of yellowish brown clay. No archaeological features were observed (Plate 9).

A trench leading from the water main to the south of the site, to the edge of Area A was subject to watching brief during its excavation by mini-digger.

The trench was 0.3m wide and 0.6m deep and the visible sequence consisted of 0.35-0.40m of topsoil over 0.15-0.20m of yellowish brown subsoil over the yellowish brown natural clay. At the northern end of the trench it passed through the pond area that was seen in the evaluation, and made-up ground and modern debris were encountered. No archaeological remains could be identified (Plate 10).



Plate 9: Foundation trenches within stables building, looking south-east



Plate 10: Work in progress on water main trench, looking north



Plate 11: Work in progress on electric cable trench, looking south

A further watching brief was carried out on 12th September 2011 during the excavation of further access tracks and a trench for an electric cable (Plate 11).

The electric cable trench was excavated from the building in the north-east corner of the site southwards to the new stable building. The trench was 0.5m wide and 0.6m

deep. Initially it passed through hardcore and debris and then through topsoil as it proceeded south. The topsoil was 0.2m deep straight on top of yellowish brown silty-clay.

Close to the new building the trench ran through an area of grey/blue spongy clay under the topsoil. This may have been a similar kind of contaminated ground seen in the north-western part of Trench A.

The removal of topsoil to create a new access track from the gate at the southern edge of the field and also an area between the new stables and the old small kennels was also observed. Up to 0.3m of topsoil was removed in the northern area exposing existing hardcore. In the southern area, 0.4m of topsoil was removed. This was not deep enough to expose the subsoil. No archaeological features were observed during the watching brief (Plate 12).



Plate 12: New access track from entranceway, looking north-east

## Conclusion

The excavations and watching brief undertaken during and in advance of the new development at the Fernie Hunt Kennel site revealed a number of ditches, pits and gullies dating from the Late Saxon to Late medieval period, with the largest assemblages dating from the Late Saxon to High Medieval period (c. 850- 1300).

These dates are of a very similar range to those revealed by the previous evaluation. The evidence from the evaluation trenches and trench D of these excavations point to the archaeological remains being largely concentrated in the southern part of the site and towards the east (as revealed by features in Trenches 6 & 7 of the evaluation). The potential for the remains to continue northwards is not known, but as ridge and furrow earthworks are located in this area it is possible that the kennel site represents the outlying edge of these remains.

The range of dating evidence and what relationships could be ascertained from the excavation of the intersecting ditches and gullies points to four main phases, dating

between the Late Saxon period (Phase A & A/B) through the Early High Medieval period (Phase B) to the Later High Medieval (Phase C), with one feature, pit [53] as containing material that dated from the Late Medieval period (Phase D).

The Late Saxon period (850-1050) is characterised on the site by the group of broadly north-west to south-east oriented ditches (features [47] & [49] and the east to west oriented gullies that appear to cut them (features [30] and [35]).

The earliest feature is most likely ditch [47] and pit [32]. At a later date, feature [47] appears to have been recut on a slightly different alignment to become feature [49]. Feature [57], which lies on a similar alignment to [49], appears to be of a similar date and may have been excavated at around the same time.

The smaller gullies [30] and [35]/[63] appear to cut across [49] and [35] appears to cut the edge of [32]. These may have been added at the same time as [47] was recut as [49] and may have been used to drain the area into the larger ditches, or into pit [32], which appears to have held water at sometime, judging by the silty fill (33) at the base of the pit. Gully [35]/[63] does not appear to continue into the eastern part of Trench A, suggesting this feature is not of great length.

Although undated, the size and alignment of the features in the eastern side of Trench A ([39], [41] and [45]) suggest that they may be of similar date to [30] and may be extensions thereof.

The Early High Medieval period (c. 1100-1200) is characterised by gully [37], also on a east to west alignment and also apparently a short linear feature, which appears to cut the earlier larger features [47]/[49] and [30]. Of a similar period is medium sized ditch [59] and also [55], which appears to drain into later pit [53] but may have just as easily have been truncated by it.

The most substantial feature on the site is a large ditch [51], which seems to be of a similar date to [61] and appears to lie perpendicular to it. Feature [43] also contained artefacts of a similar date, but as this features largely lies in isolation at the very edge of the excavated area it is difficult to offer a relationship between it and the larger ditch systems to the west. There was a pit [4] close by within Trench 2 of the evaluation, but this appeared to have a Late Saxon date.

The latest material appears in pit [53]. This is likely to date from A.D 1400-1500 and may be indicative of the site continuing in use into the late medieval period. A few sherds of late medieval date were retrieved from features [9], (25) and (28) during the previous evaluation.

The fills of all the features on the site are very silty and are very sterile. They are also homogenous with some variation, such as the lower fill (33) of pit [32], which is darker and slightly more humic than upper fill (34). Although some features may have been excavated after others had been at least partially filled (such as pit [53] apparently cutting the edge of ditch [51]) the general homogenous nature of the fills may suggest that the site fell out of use at around the same time, possibly sometime towards the end of the medieval period. The post-medieval and modern material is exclusively from the spoil heaps and not from the features themselves.

The palaeobotanical evidence is quite poor (see Appendix II) and may suggest human activity related to food consumption but it is also possible that the grain represents intrusive or residual material as there was a lot of contamination by modern material.

Evidence of boundary ditches relating to pre-Conquest plots was retrieved from a similar archaeological work, carried out by Northampton Archaeology along Sutton Road, around 400m south-west of the Fernie Hunt site. A series of medium and large boundary ditches, including ditches apparently draining into large pits were found on the site, with phasing around 10th-11th centuries extending into the high medieval period (13th -14th centuries) when the boundaries were re-arranged (Brown 2010). This site appears to have been related to a pattern of occupation associated to the nearby The Green, with the site at the Fernie Hunt kennels associated with Nether Green, with the two sites representing separate small settlements nucleated around the separate greens.

These small scale excavations have given a tantalising glimpse of the very earliest origins of the Anglo-Saxon and early medieval settlement of Great Bowden and future work in the area can only serve to illuminate this further. The remains suggest rear of plot activity over several centuries and the associated structures may have been to the south fronting Nether Green. The evidence contributes to a growing corpus of data relating to medieval village core development in the East Midlands (Lewis 2006; Thomas 2009).

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## Archive

The paper archive for the evaluation and the excavation will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A86.2011 and consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound copy of evaluation report (No. 2011-099)
- 1 Unbound copy of this report (No 2011-136)
- 11 Trench recording sheets
- 1 Watching brief recording sheet
- 2 sheets context list
- 49 context sheets
- 1 Drawing sheet index
- 1 Drawing record sheet
- 14 sheets of permatrace
- 5 digital photos record sheets
- 10 contacts sheets of digital photos
- 2 CDs digital photos
- 11 contact sheets B & W photos
- 7 set B & W negatives
- 7 sheets miscellaneous material including paper plans, notes etc
- 1 CD Architect's drawings

The finds however will be retained by the landowners, The Trustees for the Fernie Hunt.

The report will be listed on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York. Available at: <http://oasis.ac.uk/> (see Appendix III).

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## **Appendix I: The Finds**

### ***The Flint***      *Lynden Cooper*

The earliest material recovered from the site was an unstratified Neolithic or Early Bronze Age re-touched flake with a worn edge, and a waste/shatter fragment of unknown date. The latter was unstratified in context (A).

### ***Post Roman Pottery***      *Deborah Sawday*

The pottery, 203 sherds, weighing 3029 grams, and a vessel rim equivalent of 1.8, (by adding together the circumference of the surviving rim sherds, where one vessel equals 1.00) was catalogued with reference to the guidelines set out by the Medieval Pottery Research group, (MPRG 1998;MPRG 2001) and the ULAS fabric series (Sawday 1989; Davies and Sawday 1999). Seventeen fragments of ceramic building material, a clay tobacco pipe stem, industrial residue and miscellaneous finds in glass, metal and stone were also recorded. The results are shown below (Tables 1 and 2).

The inclusions in many of the calcareous sherds had degraded making positive identification in some cases uncertain. These sherds have been identified as Lincoln or Saint Neots type Shelly ware,

### ***The Stratigraphic Record***

The stratified pottery has been divided into ceramic phases based on the range of pottery fabrics and vessel forms present.

#### **Late Saxon Ceramic Phase A**

Assemblage: 21 sherds, 91g, EVEs 0.03, ASW (Average sherd weight) 4.3 g

Exclusively late Saxon material, six sherds, weighing 33 grams in Saint Neots type, fabric SN and Lincoln /Saint Neots type shelly ware, fabric LI/SN occurred in the ditch [30] and the pit [32]. The linear feature [47] produced similarly early pottery, 15 sherds weighing 58 grams in fabric LI/SN and the early coarse Stamford ware, ST3. This material could date from as early as the late 9th or 10th centuries.

Most of the late assemblage was made up of body sherds, many with external sooting, suggesting that these were domestic vessels used for cooking. The only identifiable vessel was a small bowl, Kilmurry form 12 or form 13, (Kilmurry 1980, fig.60) in ST3 in [47].

#### **Late Saxon Ceramic Phase A/B**

Assemblage: 19 sherds, 151g, EVEs 0.17, ASW 7.94g

Nine of the sherds in this small assemblage occurred in the linear feature [35] which cut the late Anglo Saxon pit [32] noted above. The latest material, a fragment of fine Stamford ware, ST2, is dated *c.*1050 to *c.*1200.

Two more sherds of ST2 and six in SN also occurred in the possible butt end of a ditch [57]. A residual sherd of Roman pottery and a fragment of SN were the only finds in the linear feature [49] which may cut the late Anglo Saxon linear feature [47].

Again undiagnostic body sherds made up the bulk of this small assemblage, the only identifiable vessels being an inturned bowl rim in LI/SN - possibly a later SN, type T1(2) (Blinkhorn 2001, 263, fig.10.2.9.), and another bowl in SN (Audouy & Chapman 2007, fig.6.4.46). A fragment of ST2 with applied clay decoration and a light green lead glaze is probably a table ware.

### Early High Medieval Ceramic Phase B

Assemblage: 16 sherds, 102g, EVEs 0.135, ASW 6.375g

A date from the 12th into the 13th century is suggested for the gully [37] which produced single sherds, weighing 23 grams in total, in three fabrics, Coarse Shelly ware, CS, Stanion Lyveden A ware, LY4, both dating from c.1100/1150 and South Lincolnshire or North Northamptonshire Oolitic ware, OL, possibly dating from the 11th or 12th centuries. This feature is thought to cut the late Saxon ditch [30] noted above. A sherd of LY4, and another in OL, and very fine Stamford ware, fabric ST1, dating from c.1100, were recovered from the small gully [55]. The ditch [59] produced a similar range of material in ST2, CS, LY4 and Potters Marston, fabric PM, the latter also dating from the 12th century.

One identifiable vessel, an upright jar rim with notched decoration on the rim top, in OL, is generally thought to be of South Lincolnshire origin, dating from the 11th or 12th centuries (Young 2005, 123 ), or possibly an early medieval precursor of Stanion Lyveden wares, (Audouy & Chapman 2007, 161, fig.6.7.64), (Northants CTS fabric 209), c.1100-1300. Also present was a jar rim in LY4, (Blinkhorn 2001, fig.10.20.137). Several externally sooted sherds from unidentifiable vessels were also noted.

### Later High Medieval Ceramic Phase C

Assemblage: 112 sherds, 1713g, EVEs 1.335, ASW 15.2g

The large ditch [51] produced the largest pottery assemblage on the site. Only two sherds of late Anglo Saxon pottery were present together with a sherd of 12th century pottery in an unclassified Oxidised Sandy ware, fabric OS. The remainder of this group was predominantly in LY4, which accounted for 49 sherds, 720 grams with an EVE of 0.415, together with 41 sherds, 615 grams and an EVE of 0.75 in OL. Nine sherds, 240 grams in Stanion Lyveden B ware, LY1, dating from c.1225-c.1400 were also present. Another sherd of LY1 was the only find in [43]. Four more sherds of LY1 and two in LY4 were the only finds in the ditch [61]. All three features appear to have been back filled during the later 13th or 14th centuries.

Most of the LY1 was glazed including a rod handle and decorated body sherds, one with a grid stamp, and all are probably from jugs. Other identifiable vessels included two rims in an unclassified Oxidised Sandy ware: one externally thickened from a jar, and an inturned bowl. Jar rims in CS and LY4 together with an inturned bowl similar to vessels in the same fabrics at Raunds, were also recorded, (Blinkhorn 2001, fig.10.7.58, fig.10.20.132 and 135 and fig.22.150).

Fragments of a range of jars in the Oolitic ware, OL, include one with a squared rim and internal and external thumbing, another with an everted straight edged rim and two more with everted, right angled rims, were also present. None of these vessels could be paralleled with the illustrated Oolitic wares from Raunds (Blinkhorn 2001), which may suggest a Lincolnshire origin for these wares.

#### Late medieval Ceramic Phase D

Assemblage: 10 sherds, 94g, EVEs 0.00, ASW 9.4g

The latest stratified material was found in the large pit [53]; two green glazed sherds of hard fired and probably wheel thrown Lyveden D ware, fabric LY6, dating from c.1400-c.1500. A small number of Anglo Saxon and medieval sherds also occurred in this context.

Only two identifiable vessels were present. One, an upright jar rim in the Oolitic are, OL, is in a form similar to the Saxo-Norman Cotswold type, (Blinkhorn 2001, fig.10.5.37), though it seems, as noted above, more likely that this vessel would have a South Lincolnshire origin. The second is part of the glazed strap handle of a jug in fabric LY1, with double thumbing at the base. Two joining hard fired and green glazed sherds in LY6 made up the latest stratified pottery on the site.

#### Unstratified

A few sherds of post-medieval and modern pottery occurred in the spoil heaps, contexts (A) and (C), although the latter also contained predominantly medieval material. Single sherds of medieval pottery were also found in (A) and in (D) and (F).

#### *Conclusions*

Most of the stratified pottery assemblages are very small but offer evidence of occupation or activity throughout the late Saxon and Saxo Norman periods with a peak from the 12th to the later 13 or 14th centuries and a subsequent decline thereafter.

This is supported by the fact that little if any of the unstratified pottery was early post medieval in date. The relative dearth of pottery dating from the later medieval period onwards may simply be a reflection of a shift in the focus of activity in this part of the village during the later Middle Ages.

The range of fabrics is typical of the region, and the vessel types are also characteristically domestic in nature.

Table 1: The pottery by fabric, sherd numbers and weight (grams).

Fabric	Common Name	Sherds	Weight	EVEs	% Sherds
<b>Roman</b>					
CC	Colour Coat	1	55		

<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>55</b>		<b>0.4</b>
<b>Late Saxon/Saxo Norman Ceramic Phase A, A/B</b>					
ST3	Coarse Stamford ware	5	20	0.03	
ST2	Fine Stamford ware	10	51	0.025	
LI/SN	LI/SN – Lincoln/Saint Neots type	17	72	0.1	
SN	SN – Saint Neots type	14	90	0.07	
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>46</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>0.225</b>	<b>22.6</b>
<b>Early/High Medieval Ceramic Phase B/C</b>					
ST1	Very Fine Stamford ware	3	31		
PM	Potters Marston	1	2		
OS	Oxidised Sandy	2	11	0.095	
OS2	Oxidised Sandy ware 2	1	6		
OL	Oolitic ware	45	664	0.835	
CS	Coarse Shelly ware	9	75	0.18	
LY1	Lyveden/Stanton B ware	20	507		
LY4	Lyveden/Stanton A ware	60	802	0.465	
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>141</b>	<b>2098</b>	<b>1.575</b>	<b>69.4</b>
<b>Late Medieval Ceramic Phase D</b>					
LY6	Lyveden/Stanton D ware	2	10		
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>		
<b>Post Medieval/Modern</b>					
EA1	Earthenware 1	1	8		
EA2	Earthenware 2	2	36		
EA8	Cream ware	4	76		
EA10	White Earthenware/China	1	1		
EA	Earthenware	5	512		
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>633</b>		<b>6.4</b>
<b>Site Total</b>		<b>203</b>	<b>3029</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>98.8</b>

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Table 2: The medieval and later pottery by fabric, sherd numbers and weight (grams) and the miscellaneous finds by context.

Context	Fabric/Ware	No	Gr	Rim diam. mm	EVEs %	Comments
POTTERY						
31 [30] Ditch	SN – Saint Neots type	1	18			Reduced black body, dense inclusions,? coil built, sooted & abraded externally. Probably early (T1 – Northants CTS), c.900-1100,
34 [32] Big pit	SN	5	15			Dense temper, grey/black body.
36 [35] Narrow linear	LI/SN	2	21	c.160	0.10	Joining sherds, inturned bowl rim, sooted externally below rim, buff surfaces, dense temper, possibly later SN, type T1(2) (Blinkhorn 2001, 263, fig.10.2.9.)
36 [35]	LI/SN	2	7			Abraded, basal angle & body fragments, buff surfaces, grey core.
36 [35]	SN	1	2			Orange buff surfaces T1(2)
36 [35]	LI/SN	1	10			– wheel thrown body
36 [35]	ST2 – Fine Stamford ware	3	10			White or pink bodied, two with orange lead glaze, the other externally sooted.
36 [35]	ST3 – Coarse Stamford ware	1	2			Buff surfaces, grey core.
38 [37] Gully	OL – Oolitic ware	1	13	c.210	0.085	Upright jar rim with notched decoration on the rim top, possibly an early medieval precursor of Stanion Lyveden wares (Audouy & Chapman 2007, 161, fig.6.7.64), or more likely perhaps of South Lincs origin? (Northants CTS fabric 209), Buff fabric, grey surfaces, c.1100-1300.
38 [37]	CS	1	1			Buff body, burnt post dep.
38 [37]	LY4 – Stanion/Lyveden A ware	1	9			Convex basal angle, thick walled pink/orange fabric.
44 [43] Pit	LY1 - Stanion/Lyveden B ware	1	12			Basal angle, convex, traces of glaze exterior wall, abraded.
48 [47] Linear	ST3 – Coarse Stamford ware	3	10	170	.030	Join, small bowl, Kilmurry form 12 and form 13, (Kilmurry 1980, fig.60).
48 [47]	ST3	1	8			Lower body, sooted ext, abraded.
48 [47]	LI/SN – Lincoln/Saint	11	40			Body - degraded calcareous

	Neots type					inclusions.
50 [49] Linear	CC – Colour Coat	1	55			Lower wall of vessel - Roman
50 [49]	SN	1	4			Body, buff surface, grey core, byrazoa evident. Abraded.
52 [51] Ditch	LI/SN	1	2			Soapy feel, abraded/leached fabric – possibly SN
52 [51]	ST2	1	2			Body – patchy yellow glaze.
52 [51]	CS	2	14	170	0.075	Join, slightly everted externally thickened jar rim, similar at Raunds, (Blinkhorn 2001, 10.7.58).
52 [51]	LY4	1	37	180	0.05	Upright externally collared jar rim, (Blinkhorn 2001, 10.20.135). Surfaces weak red internally, light reddish brown externally, light grey core, pale buff margins.
52 [51]	LY4	1	6	170	0.075	Jar rim fragment, similar at Raunds, (Blinkhorn 2001, 10.20.135). Estimated rim diameter..
52 [51]	LY4	1	20	400	0.045	Inturned bowl rim with external thumbing, reddish brown interior, sooted ext. Similar at Raunds, (Blinkhorn 2001, 10.22.150).
52 [51]	LY4	24	330			Misc. base/body sherds predominantly sooted and or burnt.
52 [51]	LY4	6	113	340	0.06	Bowl with externally rolled rim, sooted ext., pale buff fabric
52 [51]	LY4	14	144			Misc. base body sherds all sooted and or burnt, possibly one vessel.
52 [51]	LY4	2	70	210	0.185	Jar rim, pinched/thumbed internally & externally (Blinkhorn 2001, 10.20.132)
52 [51]	LY1– Stanion Lyveden B ware	3	23			Traces of white slip, rouletting and glaze on ext. Min one vessel.
52 [51]	LY1	3	11			Applied white strips and a grid stamped pad, min one vessel.
52 [51]	LY1	3	206			Two convex base & a body sherds, possibly all one vessel
52 [51]	OL	22	346	200	0.44	Internally & externally thumbbed everted squared jar rim & body, some joins, sooted lower body externally & base. Oxidised orange surfaces, grey core, (not //at Raunds)
52 [51]	OL	1	72	210	0.15	Joins, everted straight edged jar rim, thumbbed rim top, sooted lower body ext. Oxidised orange surfaces, grey core, (not //at Raunds)
52 [51]	OL	1	17	180	0.085	Everted, right angled jar rim, sooted/burnt ext. Pale buff surfaces, grey core.

52 [51]	OL	1	11	200	0.075	Everted, right angled jar rim, sooted/burnt ext. Pale buff surfaces, grey core
52 [51]	OL	9	83			Misc. base/body sherds, gen sooted lower body/base externally. Bases convex. Oxidised pale buff/orange surfaces, grey core.
52 [51]	OL	7	86			Lower body & convex base of jar, sooted ext, some trimming at exterior basal angle. Oxidised, pale buff/pale orange surfaces.
52 [51]	OS - Oxidised Sandy ware	1	5	210	0.05	Externally thickened jar rim
52 [51]	OS	1	6	220	0.045	Inturned bowl rim fragment
54 [53] Big pit	ST2	1	3			Thin lead glaze
54 [53]	CS	1	3			Abraded, red buff body
54 [53]	OL	1	10			Reduced grey/black fabric, large ooliths. Upright jar rim, form similar to Saxo-Norman Cotswold type, (Blinkhorn 2001, fig.10.5.37) , though it seems more likely that this vessel would have a South Lincs. origin. Rim diam. 190mm, EVE 0.075
54 [53]	LY4	1	1			
54 [53]	LY1	1	17			Abraded strap handle fragment, double thumbed at base.,
54 [53]	LY1	2	44			Two body sherds, one green glazed
54 [53]	LY6 – Stanion Lyveden D ware	2	10			Join, hard fired, few ooliths, green glaze, possibly wheel thrown, c.1400+.
54 [53]	OS2 – Oxidised Sandy ware 2	1	6			Body
56 [55] Gully	ST1 – Very Fine Stamford ware	2	3			Body
56 [55]	OL	1	19			Convex basal angle, handmade, abraded, grey core, buff surfaces, large white ooliths
56 [55]	LY4	1	9	160	0.05	Jar rim , estimated diameter, (Blinkhorn 2001, fig.10.20.137)
58 [57] (?end of ditch [51])	SN	6	43	240	0.07	Bowl rim, (Audouy & Chapman 2007, fig.6.4.46), some joins. Buff surfaces, grey core.
58 [57]	ST2	2	7			One with a fragment of applied clay decoration under a light green lead glaze.
60 [59] Ditch	ST2	1	3			burnt
60 [59]	CS	2	13			Both ext sooted
60 [59]	LY4	5	30			One ext sooted. Some abrasion.
60 [59]	PM – Potters Marston	1	2			
62 [61] Ditch	LY1	3	52			Jug – joining sherds from rod handle, green glazed

62 [61]	LY1	1	18			
62 [61]	LY4	1	21			Convex base, sooted externally.
62 [61]	LY4	1	6			
(A) spoil heap	ST2	1	6			Sooted externally
(A)	EA1	1	8			Thick purple glaze externally, early post medieval.
(A)	EA2	2	36			Basal angle – flat, knife trimmed externally & body, both black glazed internally.
(A)	EA8 - Cream ware	3	68			Yellow glazed including a simple bowl rim.
(A)	EA10 – Fine White Earthenware/China	1	1			Cup rim
(A)	EA - Earthenware	3	59			Two flower pot rims, one with rouletted decoration, plus a body sherd.
(A)	EA	1	447			Complete lead glazed cylindrical bottle (save for chip at base & rim).
(C) spoil heap	OL	1	7			
(C)	CS	1	8	180	0.05	Everted externally thickened jar rim, abraded (Blinkhorn 2001, fig.10.7.60).
(C)	CS	1	11			
(C)	LY4	1	6			Sooted ext.
(C)	LY1	3	124			Base & body, one large fragment green glazed internally, min. 3 pots.
(C)	EA8	1	8			Yellow glazed
(C)	EA	1	6			Flower pot.
(D) spoil heap	ST2	1	20	140	0.025	Jar rim or spouted pitcher, form 8, (Kilmurry 1980) pale green lead glaze, abraded, c.1050-1200.
(F)	CS	1	25	380	0.055	Bowl, upright, externally thickened rim, c.1100-1400.
U/S	ST1	1	28			Basal angle trimmed & pale green glaze externally.
CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL						
34 [32]	Fired clay/daub	5	17			
40 [39]	Fired clay/daub?	1	4			Very micaceous.
42 [41]	Fired clay/daub?	1	4			Very micaceous.
58 [57]		6	55			Fired clay/daub
(C)	EA - Earthenware	1	41			Part of a drain pipe?
(C)	EA	1	6			Modern tile/brick
(D)	EA	1	11			Tile/brick
(F)	EA	1	20			Modern tile/brick
CLAY PIPE						
(C)	China clay	1				Tobacco pipe stem
INDUSTRIAL RESIDUE						
51 [52]	?Slag	1				
(C)	Lead	1				
(C)	Coke?	1				
(D)	Lead/Slag	1				?scrap lead band adhering to residue.

MISC. METAL					
(A)	Metal Strip	1			Composite - modern
(A)	Coin	1			1905 Edward VII penny, worn
(A)	Coins	3			Misc one farthing & one modern - Elizabeth II - coin, one unidentified. & ?farthing
(A)	Copper Alloy	1			Fitting from an unknown object with foliate design.
(A)	Iron	3			Nails - modern
(A)	Iron	4			Misc. iron scraps
U/S	Copper Alloy	1			Modern - ?curtain ring
U/S	Copper Alloy	1			Late post medieval – rumbler bell (worn by cattle).
STONE					
36 [35]	Flint	1			natural
(A)	Flint				Waste – shatter (L. Cooper, pers. comm.)
(D)	Stone	1			Cut/polished edge – modern.
U/S	Stone	1			Whetstone – modern.
U/S	Flint	1			Re-touched flake with worn edge, Neolithic/Early Bronze Age (L. Cooper, pers. comm.)
GLASS					
U/S	Bottle base	1			Fragment of a blown wine bottle base with kick-up, late 17th – 18th C.

Site/ Parish: Fernie Hunt Kennels,  
Nether Green Great Bowden, Leics.  
Accession No.: XA86 2011  
Document Ref: great bowden6.docx  
Material: pottery  
Site Type: rear of properties in village core

Submitter: L. Hunt  
Identifier: D. Sawday  
Date of Identification: 26.9.2011  
Method of Recovery: excavation  
Job Number: 12-505

## **Appendix II: The archaeobotanical evidence**      *Anita Radini*

### ***Introduction***

An archaeological excavation was carried out by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services at Great Bowden, Leicestershire. A series of features dating from the Saxon and Medieval periods were found and soil samples were taken for the recovery of plant and animal remains, which may provide evidence of activity on the site in the past. Nine samples were processed at ULAS and were analysed for archaeobotanical evidence, in the hope to shed some light on the type food production and consumption in the Saxon and Medieval periods on site.

### ***Materials and Methods***

Nine contexts from pit and linear features had potential to produce remains. Nine soil samples were 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. The samples contained a high proportion of clay and required soaking in water to disperse the sediment, the flotation procedure was therefore very time consuming.

The flots were scanned in their entirety using a stereoscope with magnifications ranging from x7 to x45. 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). The abundance (+ = scarce <10; ++ = moderate 10-50; +++ = frequent >50) of each archaeobotanical type (such as charcoal or roots) was estimated on the basis of the minimum number of characteristic plant parts. Cereal grains were counted to the exact number of items recovered.

### ***Results***

The volume of soil processed and results are presented in Table 3.

All samples contained a large amount of modern biological contaminants consisting of modern roots and rootlets, modern leaf fragments and some earthworm egg capsules. These remains were noted but not removed from the flots. These remains suggest high degree of soil disturbance.

Sample 14, dating the Saxon period, and sample 19 dating the Medieval period contained small charcoal fragments and charred plant remains belonging to wheat (*Triticum* spp.), possibly bread wheat (*T. aestivum/durum*), which is the most common type of wheat in Saxon and Medieval Leicestershire. Few charred grains of barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L.) were recovered in moderate quantity in sample 12, which dated the Medieval period. Few cereal grains, were also found in sample 18, dating the Medieval period, but could not be identified due to the poor state of preservation.

All the samples contained at least a few flecks of charcoal but no larger fragments of charcoal were recovered to allow identification.

**Table 3**

Sample	Context	Feature	V	Charcoal flecks	Charred Seeds	Mod Roots	Other
8	36	Gully, Saxon	9	x		xxx	earthworm egg capsules x
9	31	Ditch, Saxon	8	x		xxx	
11	42	Pit, Medieval	9	x		xxx	modern leaf fragments x
12	44	Pit, Medieval	8	x	6x barley	xxx	
14	48	Large feature, Saxon	9	x	10x wheat	xxx	
15	54	Pit, Medieval	8	x		xxx	earthworm egg capsules x
16	56	Linear feature, Saxon	9	x		xxx	earthworm egg capsules x
18	60	Linear feature, Medieval	8	x	4x Cereal?	xxx	Few modern leaf fragments
19	62	Linear feature, Medieval	8	x	3x Wheat	xxx	earth worm egg capsules x

V=volume in litres; Mod Roots=modern root/rootlets

### ***Discussion and Conclusions***

Overall the archaeobotanical assemblage was very poor.

The few remains of charred cereal grain present and the charcoal flecks suggest human activity related to food consumption but it is also possible that the grain represent intrusive or residual material. No comparisons are possible between phases and areas of site due to the paucity of the archaeobotanical evidence.

It is possible that these features had some waste from domestic or other activities concerning cereals. Therefore the results may contribute to any future consideration of the distribution of plant remains in the area.

Due to the very small amount of remains recovered no further information can be gained from the samples and no further work is required.

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Cappers, R.T.J., Bekker, R.M. and Jans, J.E.A. 2006. *Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands.* Groningen Archaeological Studies 4. Eelde: Barkhuis Publishing.

Stace, C. 1991 *New Flora of the British Isles.* Cambridge University Press.

### Appendix III: OASIS Information

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Fernie Hunt Kennels excavation, Great Bowden</b>
Project Type	Excavation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Leon Hunt
Previous/Future work	Yes/Yes
Current Land Use	Pasture
Development Type	New stables, housing, access
Reason for Investigation	PPS 5
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	SP 735 883
Start/end dates of field work	12 <sup>th</sup> -31 <sup>st</sup> August 2011
Archive Recipient	LMARS
Height min/max	77m aOD
Study Area	0.42ha
Finds	Pottery, bone

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