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Archaeological Services



**An Archaeological
Strip, Map
& Sample
excavation
between August
and October 2018
on land at Saredon
Hill Quarry,
Saredon,
Staffordshire**

(SJ 94690 07836)

James Patrick, Nathan
Flavell & Matthew
Beamish

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**An Archaeological Strip, Map and
Sample excavation between August and October 2018 on land at
Saredon Hill Quarry, Saredon, Staffordshire.
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for

NRS Aggregates Ltd

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CONTENTS

Summary	1
Introduction	1
Site Location, Geology and Topography	1
Archaeological Objectives	2
Historical & Archaeological Background	4
Methodology	5
Results	5
Plan A-	8
Plan B	11
Plan C	15
Plan D	27
Lithics	32
Iron Age and Roman pottery	32
Introduction	32
Analysis of the pottery by form and fabric	32
Results	33
Small Finds	34
Sf.1 (29)	34
Sf.2 (39)	35
Environmental Remains	36
Introduction	36
Methodology	36
Results	37
Iron Age and Roman features	37
Late Bronze Age pit and stake-holes	38
Discussion	41
Conclusion	42
Radiocarbon Dating	43
General Discussion	45
Undated	45
Late Bronze Age and Iron Age	46
Hill-forts	47
Romano-British	47
Post Medieval Field Boundaries	48
Conclusion	55
Acknowledgements	55
Bibliography	55
Archive	57
Publication	57
Appendix	57
OASIS	57

TABLES

Table 1: Quantified record of Iron Age and Roman pottery from the excavation (see table 2 for common fabric names).....	32
Table 2: Quantified summary of the assemblage by fabric	33
Table 3: 1: Record of the charred plant remains recovered from samples. NB: Spikelets have been counted twice in the ‘total number of items’ to account for the two glume bases present	40
Table 4: Calculations for the ratio of glume bases to wheat grains.....	41
Table 5: Radiocarbon determinations	44

FIGURES

Figure 1: Site Location.....	3
Figure 2: General location of areas stripped with archaeological supervision within Saredon Hill Quarry (May 2016 to October 2018).....	4
Figure 3: Soil stripping August 2018. Looking west.....	5
Figure 4: Excavation of ditch features in south-west of site, October 2018. Looking north.....	6
Figure 5: Excavated areas with key for detailed plans A to D.....	6
Figure 6: Plan A	7
Figure 7: Pit [15] looking east	8
Figure 8: Pit [15] section.....	8
Figure 9: Plan B	10
Figure 10: Pit [44].....	11
Figure 11: Pit [11] section.....	11
Figure 12: Post-hole [56]. Looking north	12
Figure 13: Post-holes 48, 50 and 56.....	12
Figure 14: Pit [54] half section excavated.	13
Figure 15: Pit [54].....	13
Figure 16: Plan C	14
Figure 17: Pit [87].....	15
Figure 18: Plan & section drawing of Pit [87].....	15
Figure 19: Pit with fire-cracked stone rich fill related pits showing [68], [66], & [64]. Looking north-west.....	16
Figure 20: Half sectioned pits [68], [66], & [64].....	17
Figure 21: Drawings of pits [62], & [68], [66], & [64]	17
Figure 22: Plans and sections of Pits [74] – [92].....	19
Figure 23: Pit [90].....	19
Figure 24: Post-hole [34]	20
Figure 25: Plans and sections of Post-holes [34] – [42]	21
Figure 26: Pits [74] – [92] in north and Post-holes [34] – [42]	22
Figure 27: Pre-excavation of quern stone on surface of post-hole [38].....	23
Figure 28: Photograph showing half- sectioned of deep Post-holes [147]& [149]	23
Figure 29: Photograph showing substantial post-hole [38]	24
Figure 30: Pit [156].....	25
Figure 31: Plan & section drawing of Pit [156].....	25
Figure 32: Plan D.....	26

Figure 33: Fully excavated pit [105] & stake-holes.....	28
Figure 34: Half section of pit [105]	28
Figure 35: Pit [105] plan & profiles.....	29
Figure 36: Post-holes (Plan D).....	29
Figure 37: Section through Enclosure Ditch [145] & [143]. Looking west	30
Figure 38: Enclosure Ditch drawings of plans & sections Phase 1 & 2	31
Figure 39: Two-strand cable armlet (Sf.1) from (29)	35
Figure 40: Lower stone of Roman rotary quern from (39)	36
Figure 41: The proportion of barley and emmer grain identified from late Bronze Age features.....	38
Figure 42: Percentage of grain, chaff and wild seeds from late Bronze Age features.....	39
Figure 43: the sheer quantity of grain recovered from sample 10 (107) [105].....	43
Figure 44: an example of a barley grain with the palea and lemma still attached.....	43
Figure 45: Calibrated and combined Radiocarbon determinations.....	44
Figure 46: View of steep drop along the South of settlement with the Wrekin Hill Fort approximately 20km west (right of the photograph)	47
Figure 47: Indications of possible structures. The rectilinear arrangement looks to be of Roman date, but as post-holes from Late Bronze Age and Iron Age may also be present, no clear building foot print can be established.....	49
Figure 48: Development area, excavation areas, and recorded ditches in relation to Tithe Map (1841).	50
Figure 49: Development area, excavation areas in relation to Tithe Map (1841) and Aerial Photo (1947) with interpreted cropmarks of substantial pit and linear features in the east of the development area.....	50
Figure 50: Excavation areas with ditch features of post medieval date and 1 st edition Ordnance Survey (1884). (Contours interpolated across modern quarry).	51
Figure 51: Quarry in relation to HER records, Tithe map (1841), and cropmarks from the 1947 photo. Contours across quarry area and motorway interpolated.....	52
Figure 52: Distribution of Saredon Hill in relation to Hillforts (red circles), and later prehistoric settlements (dark square), field systems (orange square), find spots of Bronze Age (yellow) and Iron Age (green) date , and notable sites with environmental material (light blue) in Staffordshire (after Pearson 2017 fig 2.1, and Wardle 2017, figs 8.4,8.5)	53
Figure 53: Saredon Hill in relation to key Romano-British sites in Staffordshire (after Esmonde Cleary 2011, Fig 4.1)	54

An Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample excavation (August-October 2018), on land at Saredon Hill Quarry, Saredon, Staffordshire (SJ 94690 07836)

James Patrick, Nathan Flavell & Matthew Beamish

Summary

Archaeological work was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) during ground-works in advance of aggregate extraction at Saredon Hill Quarry, Saredon, Staffordshire. The work was commissioned by NRS Aggregates Ltd and was required as a condition of the planning consent, issued by Staffordshire County Council for the continuation of aggregate extraction. There are no archaeological sites recorded by the Historic Environment Record for Staffordshire within the development area. Single findspots of later prehistoric and Roman artefacts are known from the vicinity while burnt mounds of probable Bronze Age date have been recorded at some distance to north and south of the quarry. Medieval period and undated earthworks have been recorded to the east.

An area of 2.7 hectares was stripped of soils in the summer and autumn of 2018 with work moving broadly south-east from existing extension areas. Dispersed pit and post-hole features were recorded with dating evidence from some indicating occupation in the later prehistoric and Romano-British periods. In the south-east of the area, the ditches of two enclosures of Romano-British date were discovered. Several pits contained fire-cracked stone with charcoal but no other dating material. One pit was associated with a bracelet of 4th century AD Romano-British date. In the south of the area the infill of a shallow pit was rich in charred grains was recorded and sampled. The grains which include emmer wheat and barley have been radiocarbon dated to the late Bronze Age: this deposit is of regional significance as large deposits of cereal grain from this period are rare.

The pits and post-hole features together with the enclosure ditches are evidence of the occupation of the hill in the later prehistoric and Romano-British periods although it is probable that much evidence has been lost to plough erosion.

The archive for the site will be deposited with Stoke-on-Trent Museum & Art Gallery with accession number 2016.LH.37.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by NRS Aggregates Ltd. to carry out further archaeological inspection (strip, map and sample excavation) during ground-works in Phases 2 & 3, prior to aggregate extraction at Saredon Hill Quarry, Saredon, Staffordshire (NGR SJ 9460 07836). This represented the fifth main phase of top-soil strip supervision since May 2016. The site was visited during August 2018, with further monitoring and survey in September and October 2018.

This archaeological work is in accordance with NPPF Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment of the 2018 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The work was required as a condition of the planning consent, issued by Staffordshire County Council for resumed aggregate extraction by NRS East of the existing quarry.

Site Location, Geology and Topography

Saredon Hill Quarry is situated in South Staffordshire and is located just north of the village of Little Saredon approximately five kilometres to the south-west of Cannock town centre. It is

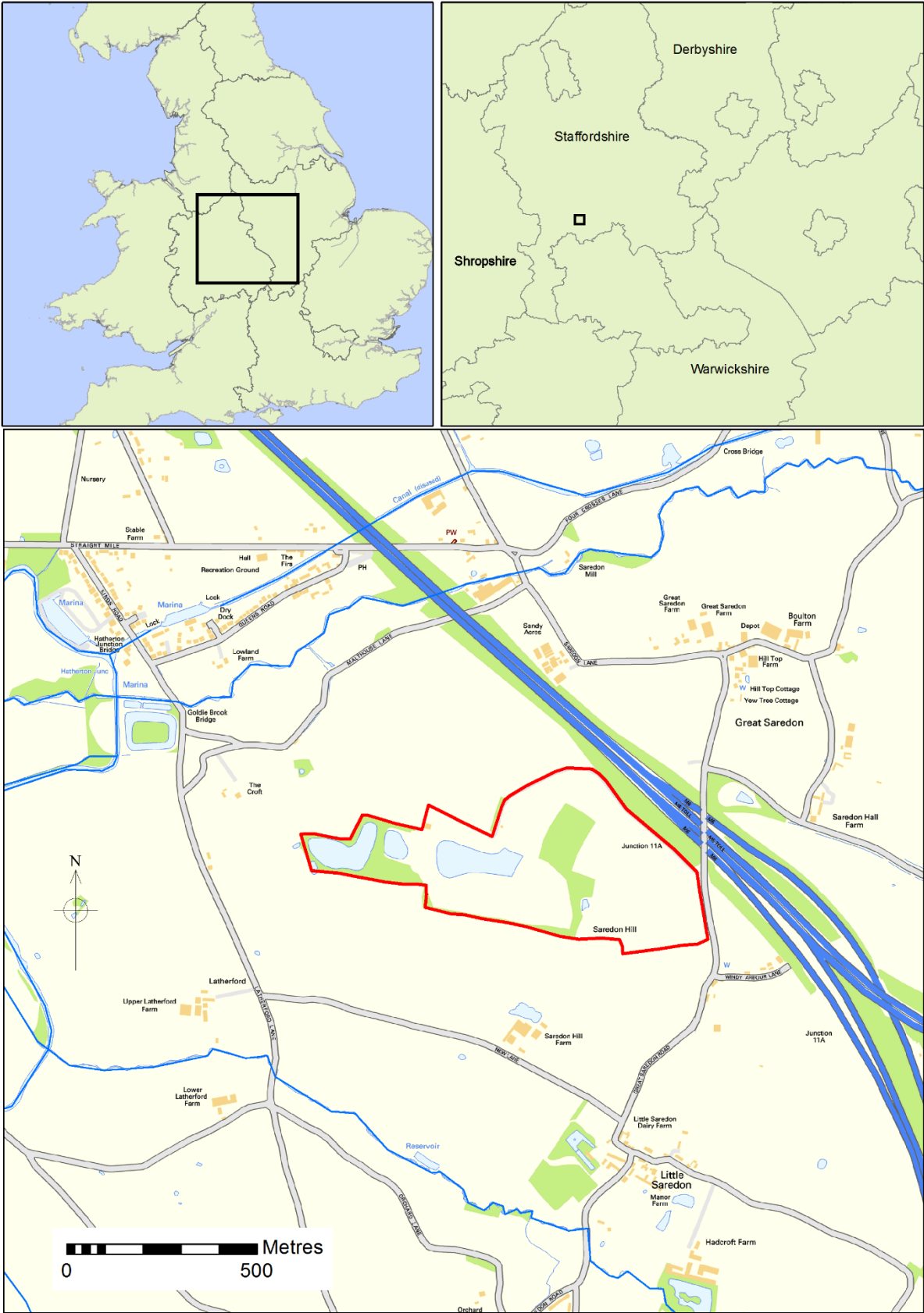
just to the West of junction 11 of the M6 Motorway and reached via the A460 between Cannock and Wolverhampton (Figure 1). The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, indicates that the underlying geology (sheet 153) is glacial Till over Wildmoor sandstone formations and Kidderminster formation. The site lies on a steep slope from 90m aOD at the foot of the slope to 154m aOD at the Ordnance Survey Triangulation point where the present top-strip has finished.

Archaeological Objectives

The main objective of the archaeological excavation was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any significant archaeology on the site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The aims of the strip plan and sample excavation were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any 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.



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Figure 1: Site Location

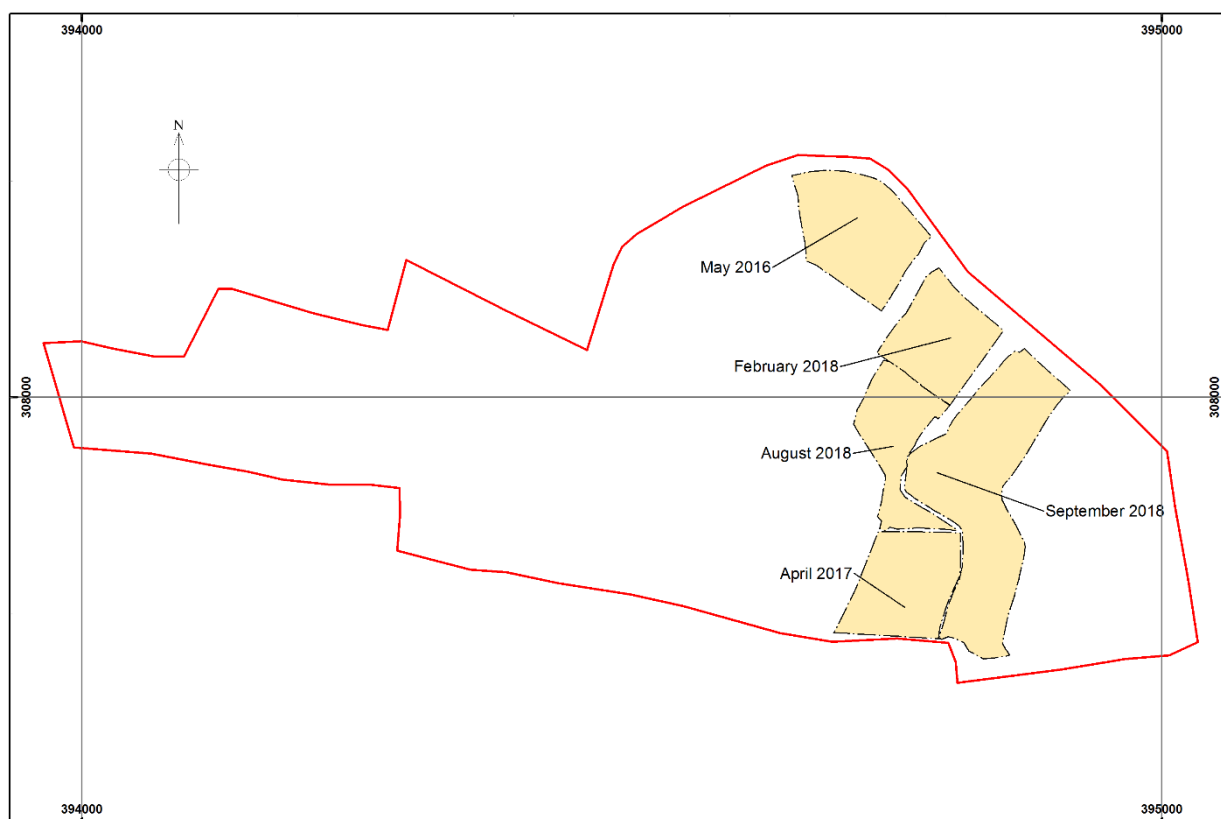


Figure 2: General location of areas stripped with archaeological supervision within Saredon Hill Quarry (May 2016 to October 2018)

Historical & Archaeological Background

The Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the application site does not contain any sites of archaeological interest. However prehistoric activity has been recorded within a 1km radius of the site including a socketed axe of Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age date (HER **60894**) 700m to the south-west, two burnt mounds which probably date from the Bronze Age 770 metres north-east and 840 metres south of the site (HER **01082** and **01075**). Burnt mounds are rarely directly associated with settlement and are often located in marginal areas; a lack of associated material culture has led to difficulties in interpretation (Beamish 2009, 147-159). A possible Bronze Age Barrow (funerary monument) has been recorded 780 metres east of the site (HER **01813**). Additional archaeological activity from later periods in the form of crop marks has been recorded from later periods including a curving bank (HER **05424**) and ditched enclosure (HER **04535**) within 70 metres south-east and 600m south-east of the site. Two areas of settlements (HER **05423** and **05425**) as yet undated possibly relating to the Iron Age or Roman periods are located 790m south-east and 940m south-east of the site. From the Anglo-Saxon period the HER refers to documentary and earthworks evidence for the settlements at Little and Great Saredon (HER **02559** & **02560**) within 700 metres of the proposed site boundary. The settlements of Great Saredon and Little Saredon are mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086. By 1167 these settlements along with the land in the proposed development site boundary were located within the Royal forest of Cannock. At Little Saredon, documentary evidence refers to a moated site during the 13th century with the proposed extraction lying within / near to fields with Medieval ridge and furrow around the site boundary. A tithe map from 1841 shows the result of enclosure around Saredon Hill (Figure 48). Later 19th century mapping shows that a gravel pit on the north-east corner of a newly established, with another quarry hole to the south (Figure 50).

Methodology

All work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (rev.2014) and adhered to their *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (rev. 2014).

A Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Work was produced by ULAS prior to the archaeological work being undertaken (Gonzalez Rodriguez 2016).

The scheme required the supervision of topsoil removal by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works with provision for archaeological recording where required.

Work progressed from north-east to south-west, with areas progressively released to the quarry following consultation with and inspection by Staffordshire's planning archaeologist.

Results

Natural substrata varied between mixed yellow-red stoney sand to red sandy gravel *c.*0.3m below ground level. No subsoil was recorded below a topsoil of a mid-brown sandy loam. A colluvial (plough-wash) layer was observed in the north-west of the site consisting of brown-red pebbly silty sand, *c.*0.2m thick (172) from which a single sherd of Central Gaulish Samian ware from a DR 18/31 dish, dating from the early to 2nd century was recovered (p33).

Areas stripped between August and October 2018 all contained post-medieval boundary ditches as recorded on the first edition Ordnance survey maps 1884 map. Sparsely distributed discrete pit and post-hole features became more concentrated in the south-east of the area. Parts of two ditched enclosures were recorded in the extreme south-east of the area. All features were relatively shallow, probably as a direct consequence of modern plough truncation.

The deposits are described from north to south, and as illustrated on four Plans (A,B,C and D, Figure 5).



Figure 3: Soil stripping August 2018. Looking west



Figure 4: Excavation of ditch features in south-west of site, October 2018. Looking north.

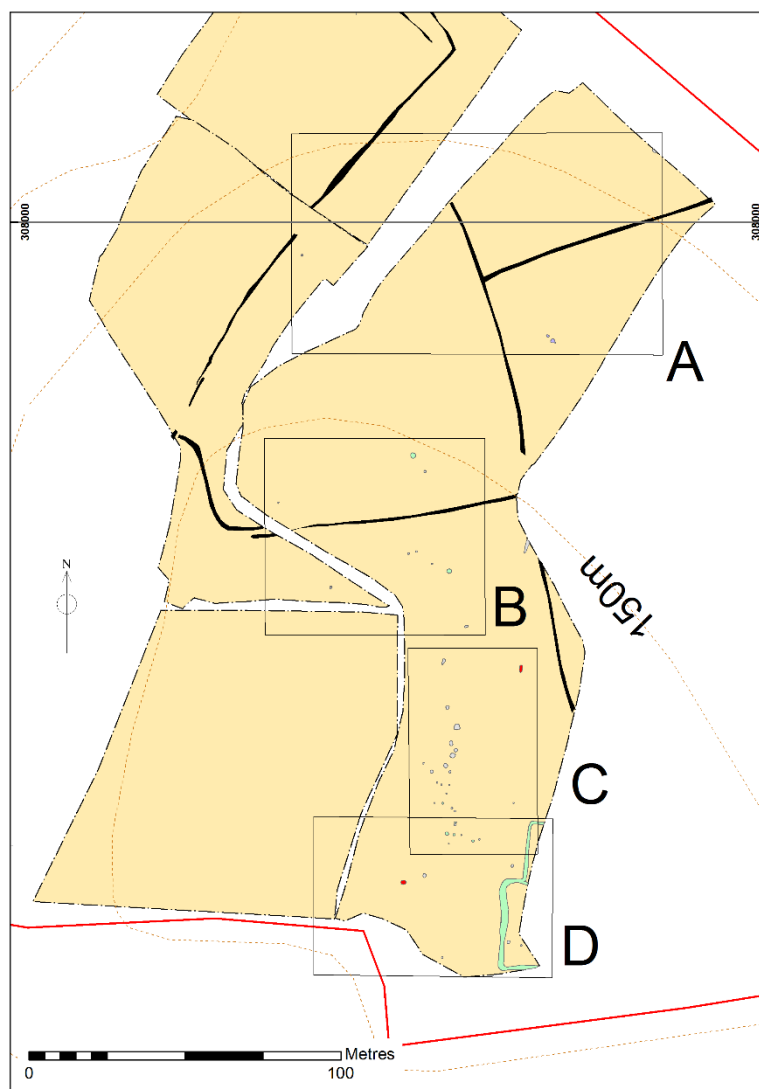


Figure 5: Excavated areas with key for detailed plans A to D.

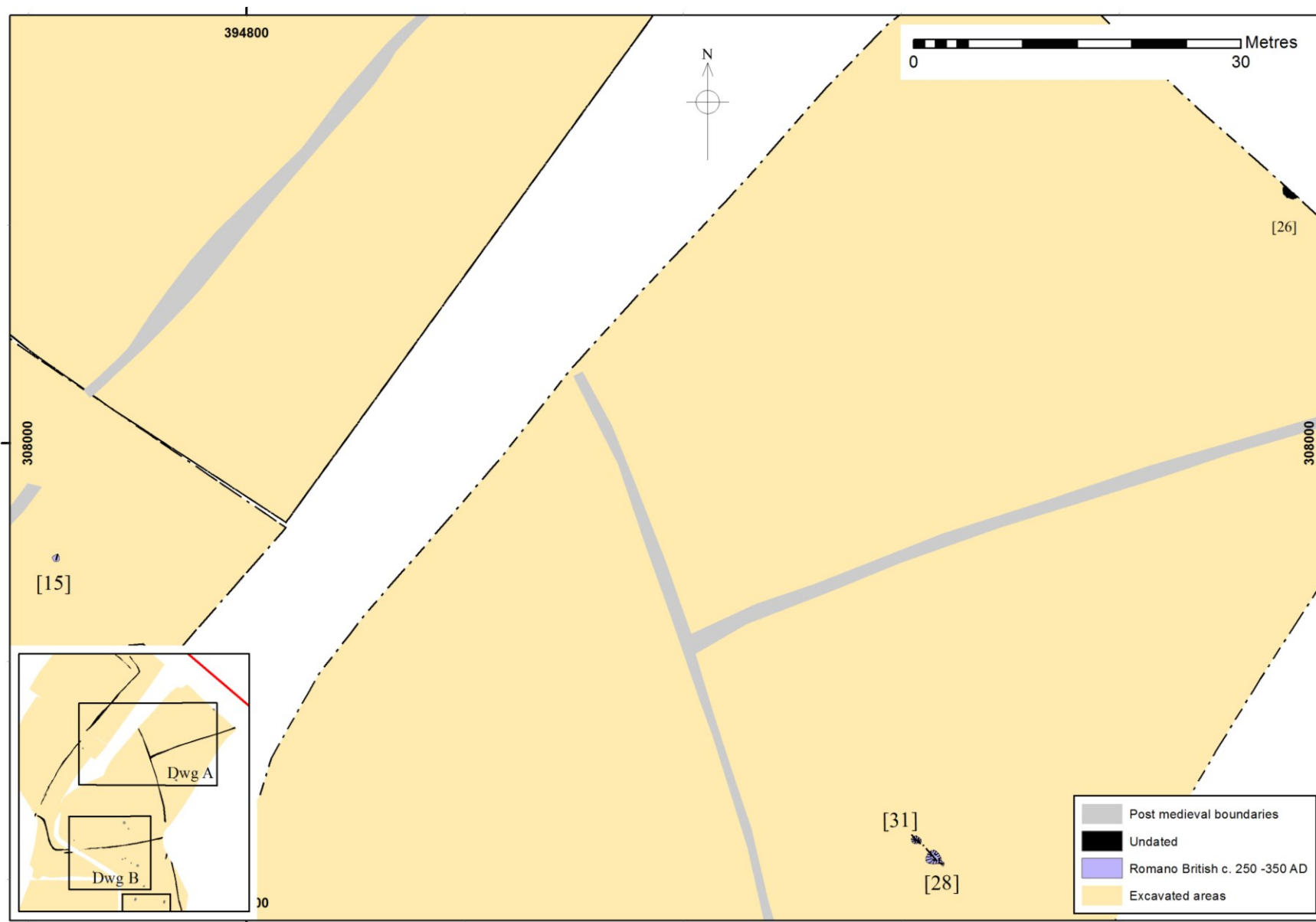


Figure 6: Plan A

Plan A-

Pit [26] in the north-east of the stripped area a pit was observed against the north-eastern excavation limit next to the bund and quarry access road. The pit was reasonably well-defined with a length of 1.60m north to south, but with an irregular profile. It had steep sides with a depth of 0.45m onto a sloping base. The stoney dark yellowish grey silty fill (30) overlay a light orangey brown sandy silt fill (27). This isolated feature may be a tree throw pit.

Pit [15] In the north-west of the area a single small pit [15] was recorded (Figure 7). It was circular in plan with a moderate concave profile, 0.7m diameter, 0.2m deep. It was filled by (14), mid-red-brown silty sand with frequent pebble inclusions, and contained a single sherd of 2nd-4th century Roman Oxidised ware (below p33).

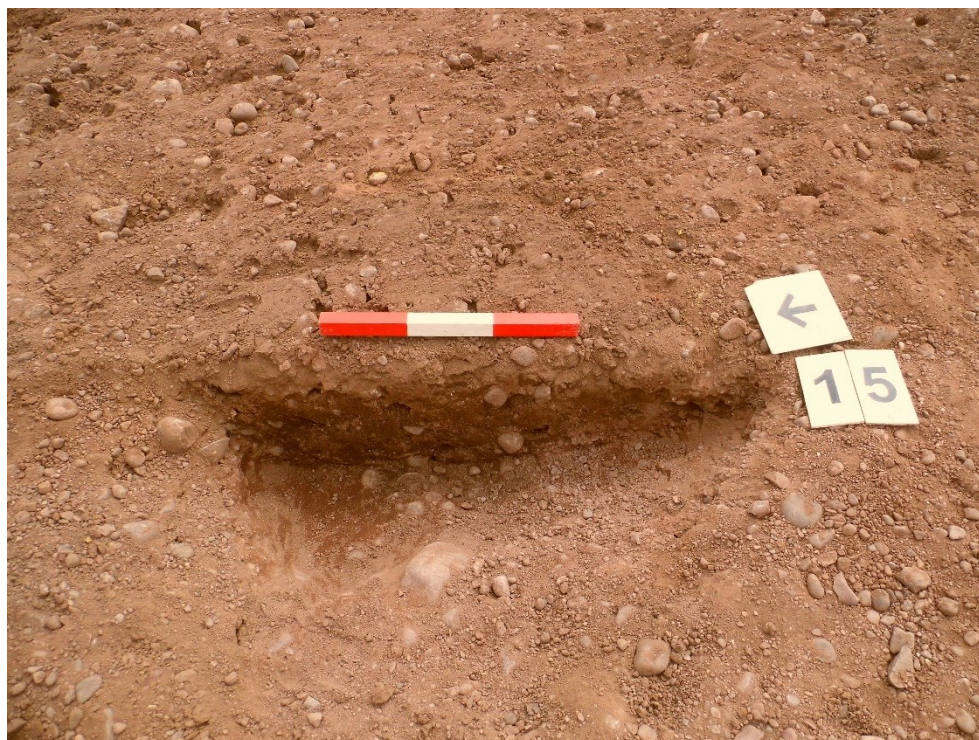


Figure 7: Pit [15] looking east

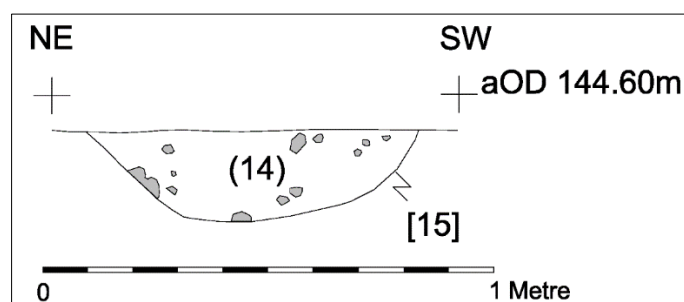


Figure 8: Pit [15] section

Approximately 70 metres to the south-west were two immediately adjacent features, [28] & [31].

Pit [31] was of a well-defined sub-circular shape with a diameter of 0.84m with shallow sides, and 0.16m deep onto a flat base and filled with a dark yellowish grey silt with charcoal flecks

and small rounded pebbles **(32)**. Sherds of mid-3rd to mid-4th century AD pottery were recovered.

Pit **[28]** was 1.80m diameter with an irregular shape. However the sides were fairly regular, generally concave and 0.30m deep. This pit was also filled with a similar dark yellowish grey silt with charcoal flecks and small rounded pebbles **(29)** from which sherds of mid-3rd to mid-4th century AD pottery were recovered. A copper alloy bracelet (p35), also of probable 4th century AD date was recovered from the fill of a plough scar cutting the deposit, the bracelet probably having been within the pit fill and disturbed by the plough.

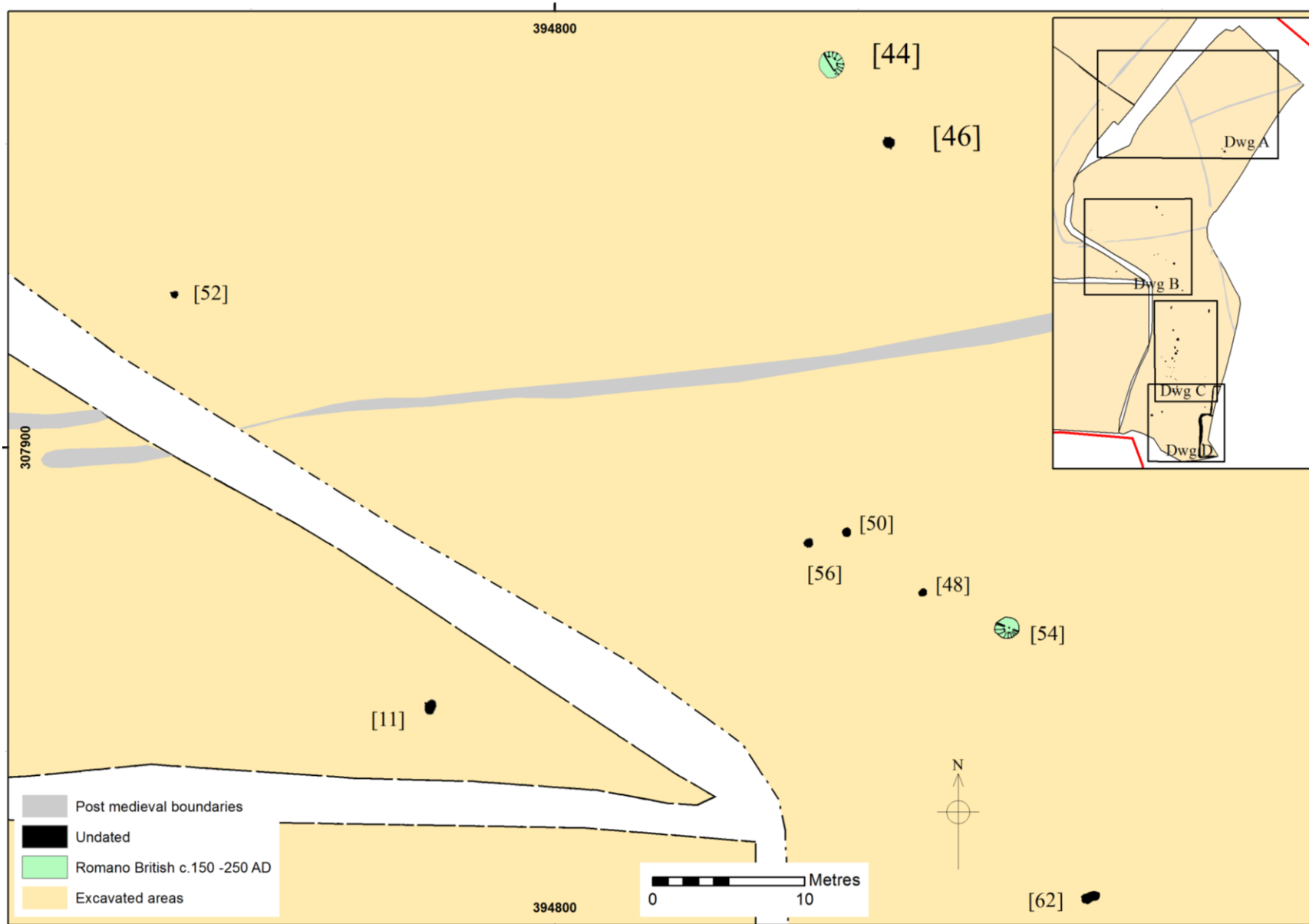


Figure 9: Plan B

Plan B

Pit [44] (45) was sub-circular 1.80m in diameter, with a concave profile that was 0.40m deep filled with a mid-to dark yellowish brown sandy silt deposits with frequent moderate sorted, small rounded stones. Fill (45) contained occasional charcoal flecks and contained mid-2nd to 3rd century Romano-British pottery (below p33).

Pit [46] (47) was 0.76m in diameter and sub-circular and 0.10m deep filled with mid- to dark yellowish brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles. No finds were recovered.

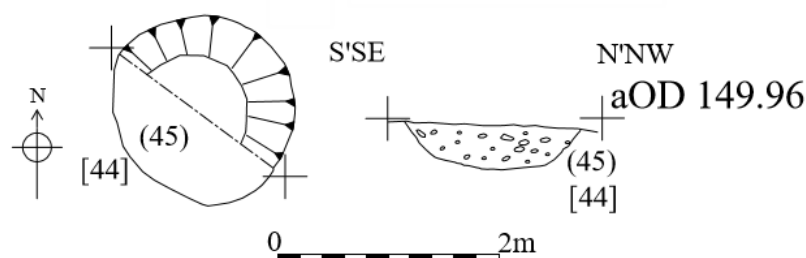


Figure 10: Pit [44]

Post-hole [52] was isolated on the western side of the stripped area. The feature was well-defined and sub-circular with a diameter of 0.48m together with a concave profile, moderate sides and a depth of 0.19m onto a concave base. The fill (53) consisted of a mid-orangey brown sandy silt with 5% small rounded pebbles with sparse charcoal flecks.

Pit [11] was located 30m to the south-west of [52]. It was sub-oval in plan with a moderate concave profile, 1x0.7m, 0.15m deep. It was filled by (10), red-grey sandy silt with frequent pebble inclusions.

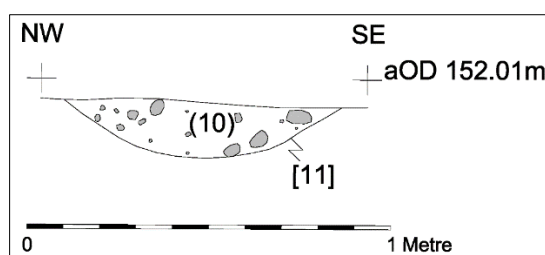


Figure 11: Pit [11] section

Post-holes [50] & [56] were 2m apart and reasonably well-defined. Both were circular, and of similar diameters of 0.60m and depths of 0.50 to 0.60m with similar upper fills of dark yellowish brown to dark grey sandy silts. Both had vertical sides to a flat base.

Post-hole [48] was located six metres to the south-west of [50]. The feature was 0.44m in diameter and 0.16m deep, with moderate sides to a concave base, and filled with a dark greyish brown sandy silt rich with charcoal (49) above a primary fill of a mid-reddish brown silt (58).

All three post-holes were characterised by charcoal flecks visible on the surface of the stripped features (respectively (49), (51), & (60)). Following the excavation of half-sections it was clear that these charcoal rich fills represent the remains of post pipes.

The three lower deposits (57), (58), and (59) varied from a light reddish brown to a light yellowish grey sandy silt with frequent gravel/ pebbles inclusions.



Figure 12: Post-hole [56]. Looking north

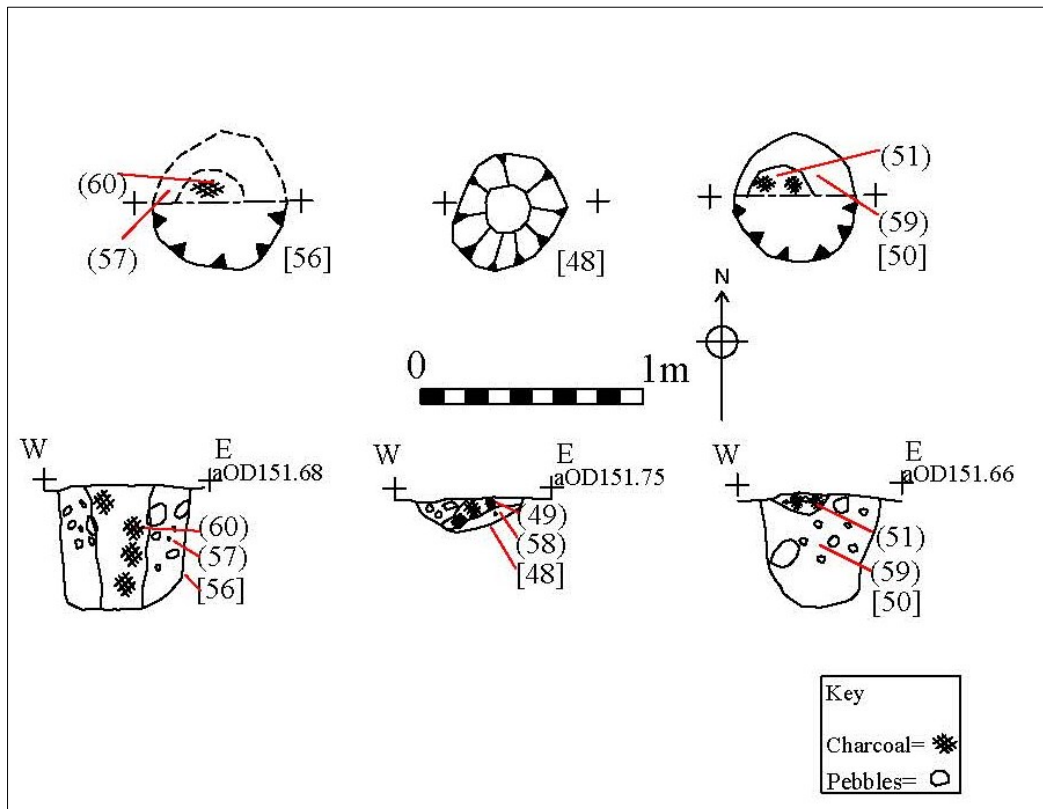


Figure 13: Post-holes 48, 50 and 56

Pit [54] (55) was sub-circular, well-defined and 1.60m in diameter and 0.26m deep (Figure 28). It was filled a mid- to dark yellowish brown sandy silt with frequent moderate sorted, small rounded stones (55) from which was recovered mid-2nd to 3rd century Romano-British pottery.



Figure 14: Pit [54] half section excavated.

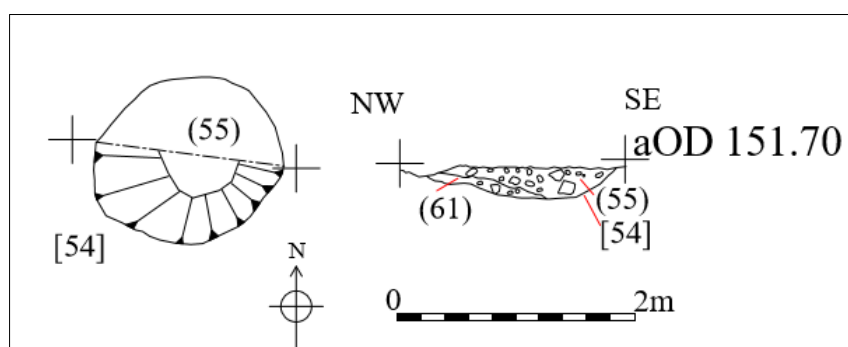


Figure 15: Pit [54]

Pit [62] had diameter of 1.15m and was located 18m south of [54]. The shape was irregular and heavily truncated with very shallow sides on the east, moderate sides elsewhere, with a depth of 0.18m onto an irregular base. It was well-defined due to the presence of some fire-cracked stone found on the surface of the pit. The single deposit (63) was of dark orangish

brown colour with a silt composition containing 10% small poorly sorted stones but otherwise quite sterile.

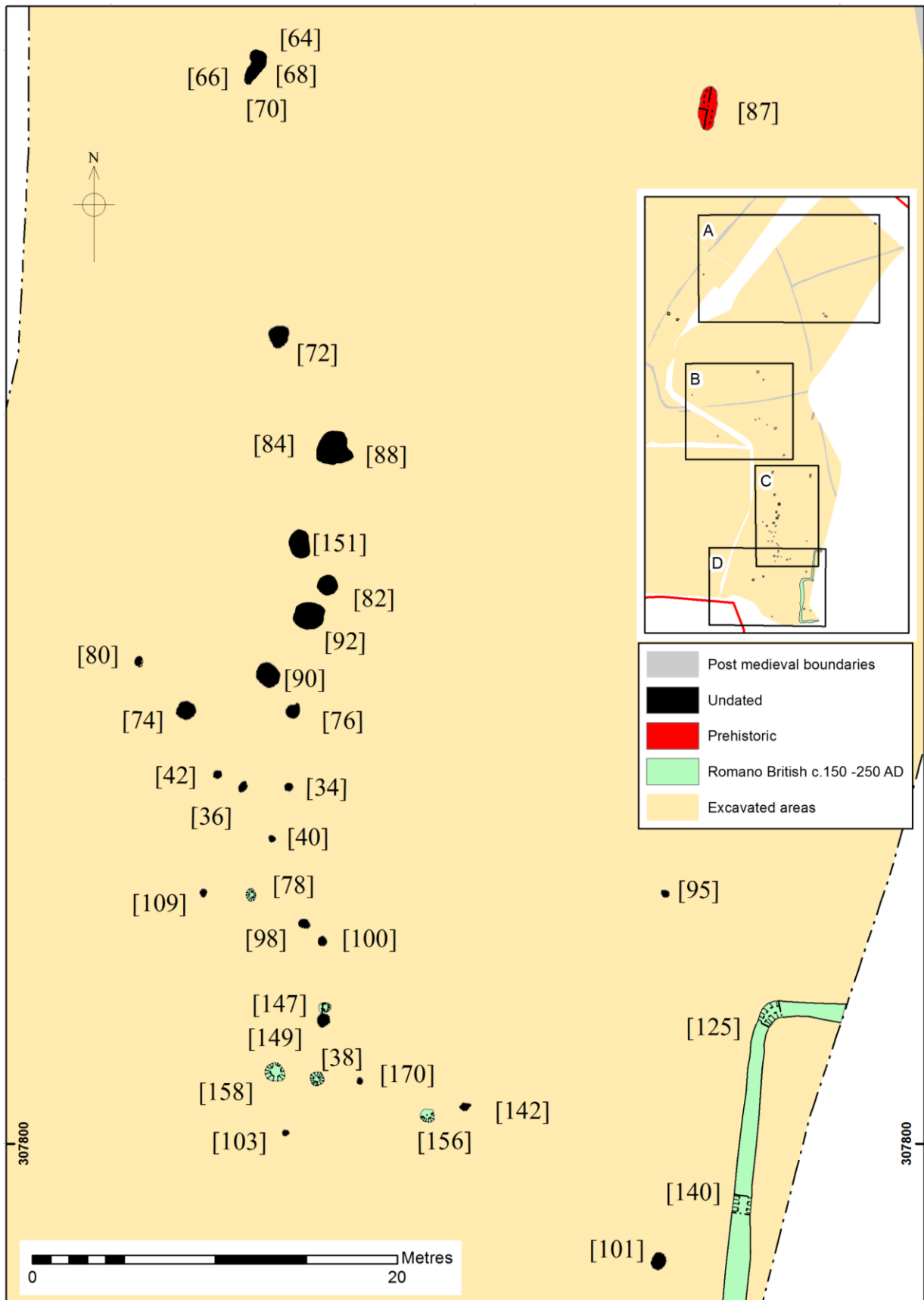


Figure 16: Plan C

Plan C

Pit [87] was 2.4m by 0.98m wide and 0.24m deep, sub-rectangular in shape, with steep sides to a flat base. A thin lens of charcoal was observed on the surface of the fill on the western side of the pit. However, during excavation it proved very in- substantial and was neither visible during excavation or in section. The single fill (86) contained abundant poorly sorted sub-rounded/ sub angular stone within a mid-greyish brown sandy silt but was sterile. A sherd of hand-made pottery of Iron Age date was recovered (p32).



Figure 17: Pit [87]

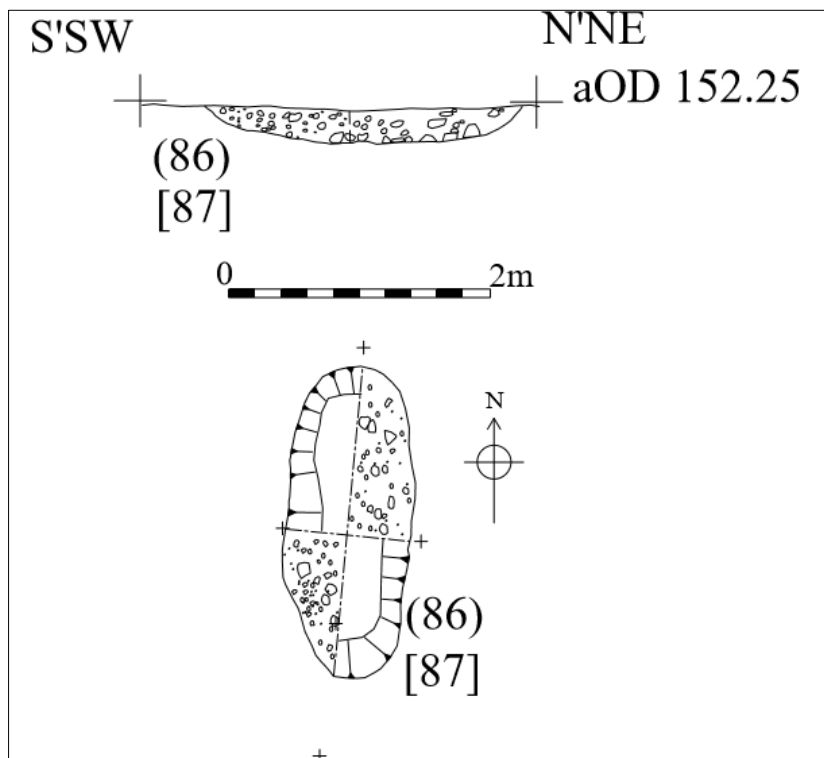


Figure 18: Plan & section drawing of Pit [87]

Pits [64], [66], [68] & [70] : an cluster of intercutting pits was revealed (Figure 22). The pits varied in size, shape and character. Pit [70] at the south-west end was the earliest, filled with a light orangey brown sandy silt, 0.56m wide and 0.12m deep. This deposit was not clearly archaeological and may have been natural. It was cut by cut [[68] which had a surviving width of 0.64m and depth of 0.18m with vertical sides and a sloping base. The single fill (69) was of a mid-pinkish grey colour containing inclusions of abundant fire-cracked stone, and common small rounded pebbles within a sandy silt matrix. Fill (69) was clearly cut by pit [66], which itself was cut by the latest feature in sequence, pit [64].

Pit [66] had a length of 0.76m east to west, sub-oval in shape, steep sides and a depth of 0.38m onto a concave base. The single fill (67) was of a light yellowish grey sandy silt containing abundant fire-cracked stones and rare charcoal flecks. This was cut by [64] representing the largest of the three pits which was sub-circular in shape 0.95m long east to west. It had steep sides with a depth of 0.32m onto a concave base. The deposit (65) also contained abundant fire-cracked stones with occasional charcoal flecks within a dark yellowish dark grey silt having sharp clarity with earlier fill (67). No finds were recovered.

The shallow deposit [70] located at the western end appeared to be a shallow natural feature



Figure 19: Pit with fire-cracked stone rich fill related pits showing [68], [66], & [64]. Looking north-west



Figure 20: Half sectioned pits [68], [66], & [64]

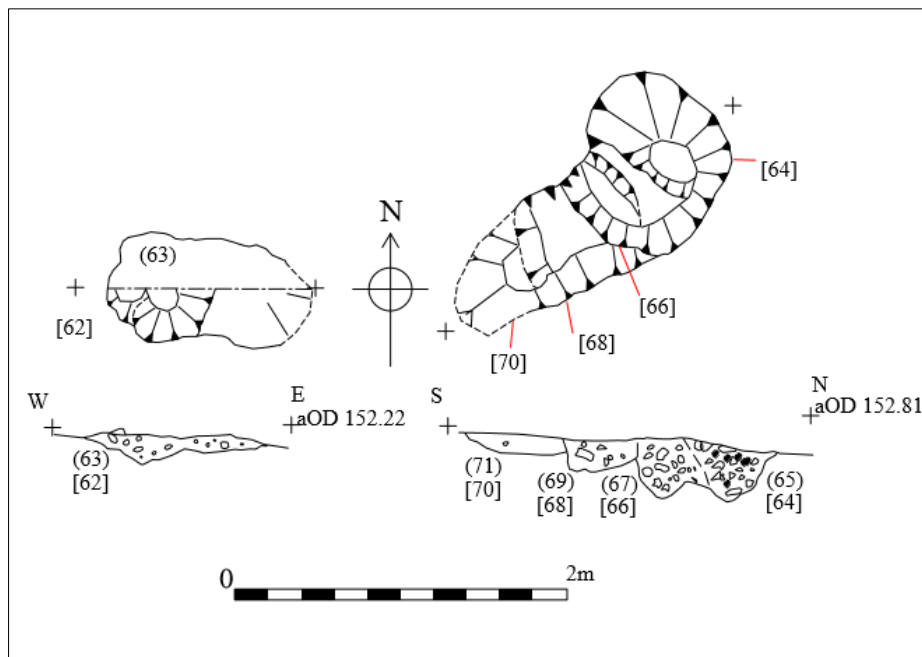


Figure 21: Drawings of pits [62], & [68], [66], & [64]

14m to the south further pits were recorded in a broad north-south arrangement which are described from north to south.

Pit 72 (73): A small pit [72] was located shortly before the break of slope down to the North. This had a diameter of 1.10m which was reasonably defined forming a sub-circular shape with an irregular profile. The sides were of moderate to steep gradient with a depth of 0.22m onto

an irregular base. The single deposit **(73)** consisted of a sterile mid-orangish brown sandy silt with occasional small rounded pebbles.

Pit **[84] (85)** had a diameter of 1.50m, sub- circular in shape with a diameter of 1.50m and steep sides. The feature was 0.70m deep which the deepest recorded pit in this phase of work. It was filled by a single deposit **(85)** a dark reddish brown fine sandy silt with rare moderately well sorted rounded small stones up to 0.10m. The excavated fill was sterile and contained with no dating evidence.

Pit **[88] (89)** lay to the immediate south-east of [84] and contained a similar fill. The relationship between the two pits was unclear.

Pit **[151] (152)(153)(155)** was located 4m south of pit [84]. The feature was poorly defined despite the mixed deposits of burnt red sand and charcoal which in plan appeared fairly homogenous. The pit was sub-oval in shape and 0.34m deep with an irregular base. The pit contained three fills with an upper fill **(152)** of a light yellowish brown sandy silt with frequent rounded pebbles above **(153)** a charcoal rich dark greyish black silt with occasional small pebbles. The primary fill **(155)** consisted of a light reddish brown sand which was probably deposited natural. No finds were recovered.

Pits **[74] – [92]** Five pits in close proximity to one another [82](83), [92] (93), [90](91), [76] (77) and [74](75), were all characterised by pale yellowish brown upper fills. All contained common to abundant amounts of poor to moderately well sorted small to large rounded stones.

The pits varied in diameter with **[74] & [82]** up to 1.10m across. Pits **[90] & [92]** were 1.50m in diameter with **[76]** the smallest at 0.76m across. All pits were reasonably defined sharing with moderate to steep sides to concave bases. The depths ranged from 0.20m in **[76]** to 0.36m in **[90]**. All had concave bases with exception to a sloping base in **[92]** which had a depth of 0.30m.

No dating evidence was recovered from any of the five pits.

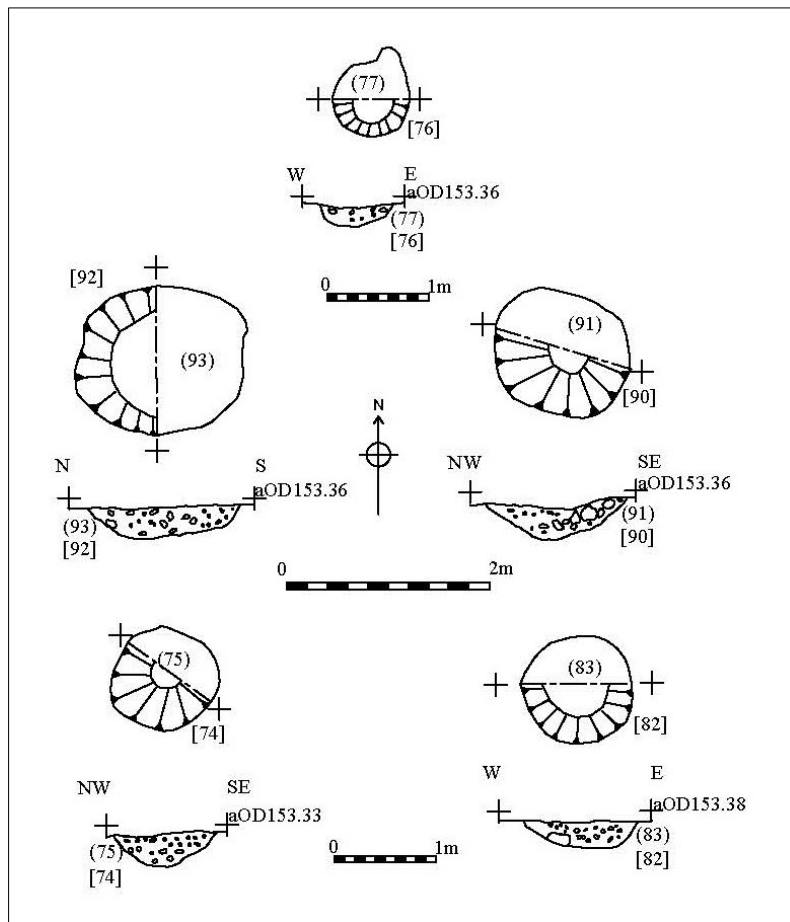


Figure 22: Plans and sections of Pits [74] – [92]



Figure 23: Pit [90]

Post-hole [80] (81) was an isolated feature located eight metres to the west of pit [90]. The post hole was a well-defined sub-oval in shape with a width of 0.54m and steep sides to a concave base and depth of 0.22m. The post-hole contained a single fill of a dark reddish grey silt (81).

A group of four post-holes were recorded in close proximity of one another. All were reasonably well-defined, sub-circular and of roughly the same diameter varying between 0.38m to 0.56m, and depths between 0.13m to 0.26m deep with moderate to steep sides (Figure 34).

Post-holes [34] & [42] were filled with similar light to mid-orangish brown sandy silts, with occasional well sorted small rounded pebbles (35) and (43) respectively.

Post-hole [40] was filled by a dark yellowish grey silty loam with rare small rounded pebbles with some charcoal flecks (41).

Post-hole [36] was of 0.56m across, with a sub-oval shape and shallow sides onto a flat base. The single fill consisted of a dark yellowish brown sandy silt with rare small rounded pebbles (37).



Figure 24: Post-hole [34]

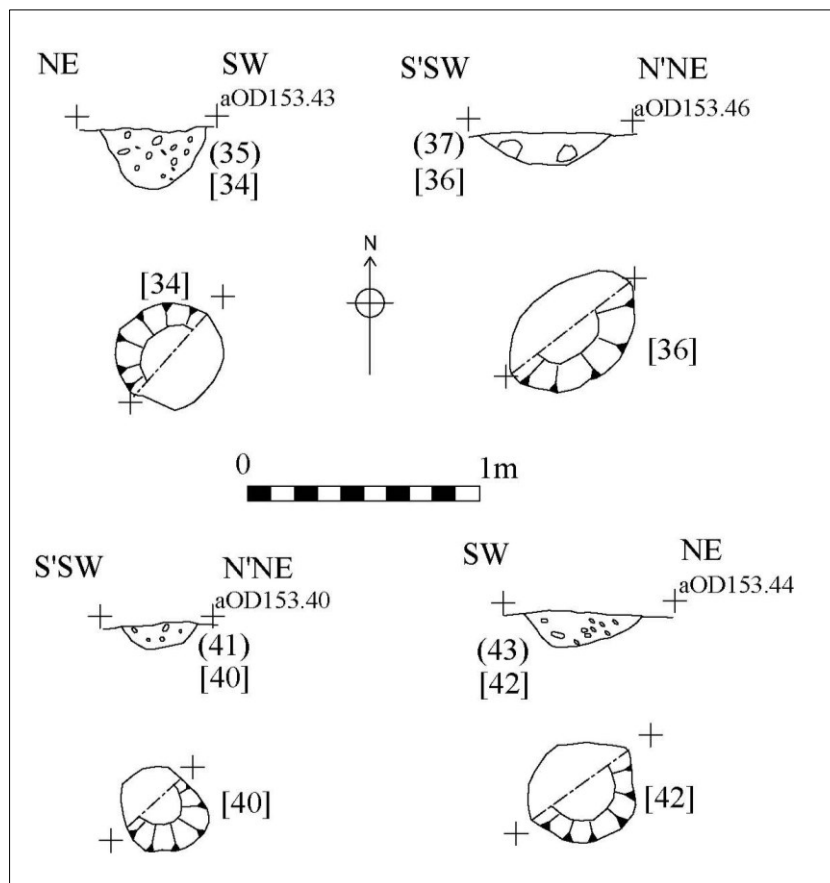


Figure 25: Plans and sections of Post-holes [34] – [42]

Post-hole [78] was sub-circular with a diameter of 0.60m and depth of 0.22m, with steep sides to a flat base. It contained a single fill, (79) which was of a dark orangish brown sandy silt with rare charcoal flecks, with an abundant concentration of poorly sorted rounded stones up to 0.12m representing about half of the fill. A single sherd of 2nd to 3rd century AD pottery was recovered.

Post-hole [109] was 0.45m in diameter and 0.13m deep, filled with a mid-reddish brown silty sand with rare small pebbles (108).

Post-holes [98] & [100] were similar and adjacent. Both were well-defined in plan, circular in shape with concave profiles, moderate sloping sides onto a concave bases. Both were filled by similar mid-greyish brown silty sand deposits with frequent well sorted rounded pebbles (96) and (99) respectively. [98] also contained a primary of a light reddish brown silty sand deposit (97), with occasional pebbles.

Post-hole [147] was very well-defined and clearly cut the fill of an adjacent post-hole [149] on its southern edge. [147] had a diameter of 0.70m and depth of 0.20m with a concave profile. It contained two fills with the upper fill (148) a dark yellowish black silty sand with abundant charcoal. A single pottery sherd of mid-2nd to mid-3rd century date was recovered. The clarity was sharp between the two deposits with the primary fill, (154), dark yellowish brown in colour

and consisting of sandy silt with 1% charcoal flecks and pebbles. It was observed slumping down the northern side of the feature with a width of 0.14m and a depth of 0.20m.

Earlier post-hole [149] was similar in shape and diameter but with shallower sides and half the depth at 0.10m. The single deposit (148) consisted of a light yellowish grey sandy silt with very rare charcoal flecks and rare small rounded pebbles.

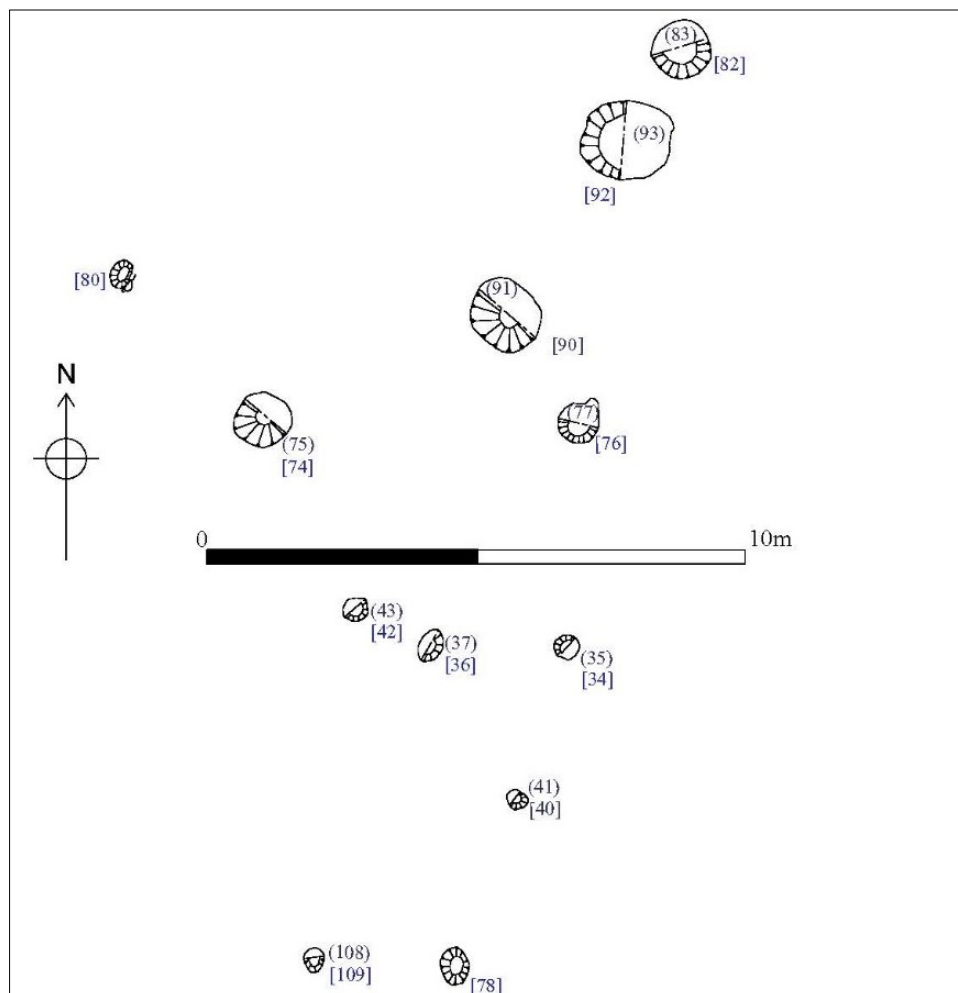


Figure 26: Pits [74] – [92] in north and Post-holes [34] – [42]

Post-holes [38](39), [147](148)(154), [149](150), [170](171).

Post-holes [78](79), [98](96)(97), [100](99), [103](104), [109](108)

Post-holes [38], [147], & [149] were arranged in a line, and were substantial and well-defined.

Post-hole [38] was very well-defined and sub-circular feature with a diameter of 0.60m and depth of 0.46m with vertical sides and a 'U' shaped profile. A single fill (39) consisted of a loose dark orangish brown sandy silt with charcoal flecks. Approximately 15% of the fill consisted of fragments of irregular shaped un-worked sandstone with some slate fragments.

Fragments of sandstone were present on the surface of the feature along with the heavily-worn, lower stone from a rotary quern (SF 2) (p35).

Further small pits or post-holes were recorded to the south (Figure 36), some of which [78], [47], [58], [38] and [156] contained Romano-British pottery.



Figure 27: Pre-excitation of quern stone on surface of post-hole [38]



Figure 28: Photograph showing half-sectioned of deep Post-holes [147]& [149]



Figure 29: Photograph showing substantial post-hole [38]

Pit [158] was located 1.45m west from [38]. Although the diameter was 0.76m, the depth was relatively shallow at 0.18m. The pit has reasonable definition forming a sub-circular shape with shallow sides with a concave profile and base. The deposit (159) was not too dissimilar to (39), consisting of a mid-reddish brown sandy silt, 50% of which consisted of poorly sorted pebbles with a small percentage of sandstone together with rare charcoal flecks. A single sherd 2nd century of Romano-British pottery along with an undiagnostic sherd were recovered.

Post-hole [170] was located 2.30m away to the east of [38] and possibly represented remains of the porch structure although the size was more comparable to the main group forming the possible round house circle. It was well-defined in plan with a diameter of 0.42m. It was sub-circular in shape with a 'U' shaped profile, steep sides, with a depth of 0.28m onto a sloping base. The single fill (171) consisted of a dark yellowish brown sandy silt with 1% charcoal, 2% small rounded pebbles, 2% fragments of slate, and 1% fire-cracked pebbles.

Pit [156] was located to the immediate south-east of east of [170]. Comparatively isolated it was once a substantial cut, comparable to post-hole [38] which lay 6m to the north-west. It was well-defined with a diameter of 0.84m, sub-circular in shape with steep sides and a depth of 0.29m onto a flat base. The single deposit (157) consisted of a mixed mid-reddish brown silty clay with rare charcoal flecks and common poorly sorted rounded and sub-angular stones.. Heavy deposits of red clay were encountered which possibly served as post packing. Romano-

British pottery sherds dated from mid-2nd to mid-4th century including a sherd of 2nd to early 3rd century Amphora were recovered from **(157)**.



Figure 30: Pit [156]

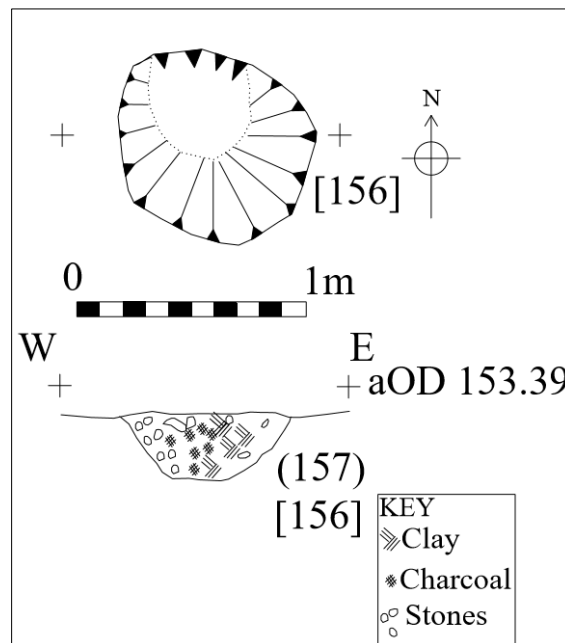


Figure 31: Plan & section drawing of Pit [156]

Pit **[142]** was located to the immediate east of **[156]**. The feature was reasonably well-defined with a diameter of 0.44m sub-oval in shape with steep sides with a depth of 0.16m onto a concave base. The sterile fill **(141)** consisted of a mid-orangish brown sandy silt with 5 % small rounded pebbles.

Post-hole **[103]** was 0.38m in diameter and 0.16m deep filled by a distinctive dark reddish brown clayey silt with rare charcoal flecks and occasional small pebbles **(104)**.

Post-hole **[95]** was located eight metres from the north-west corner of a ditched enclosure located in the south-east of the excavation area.

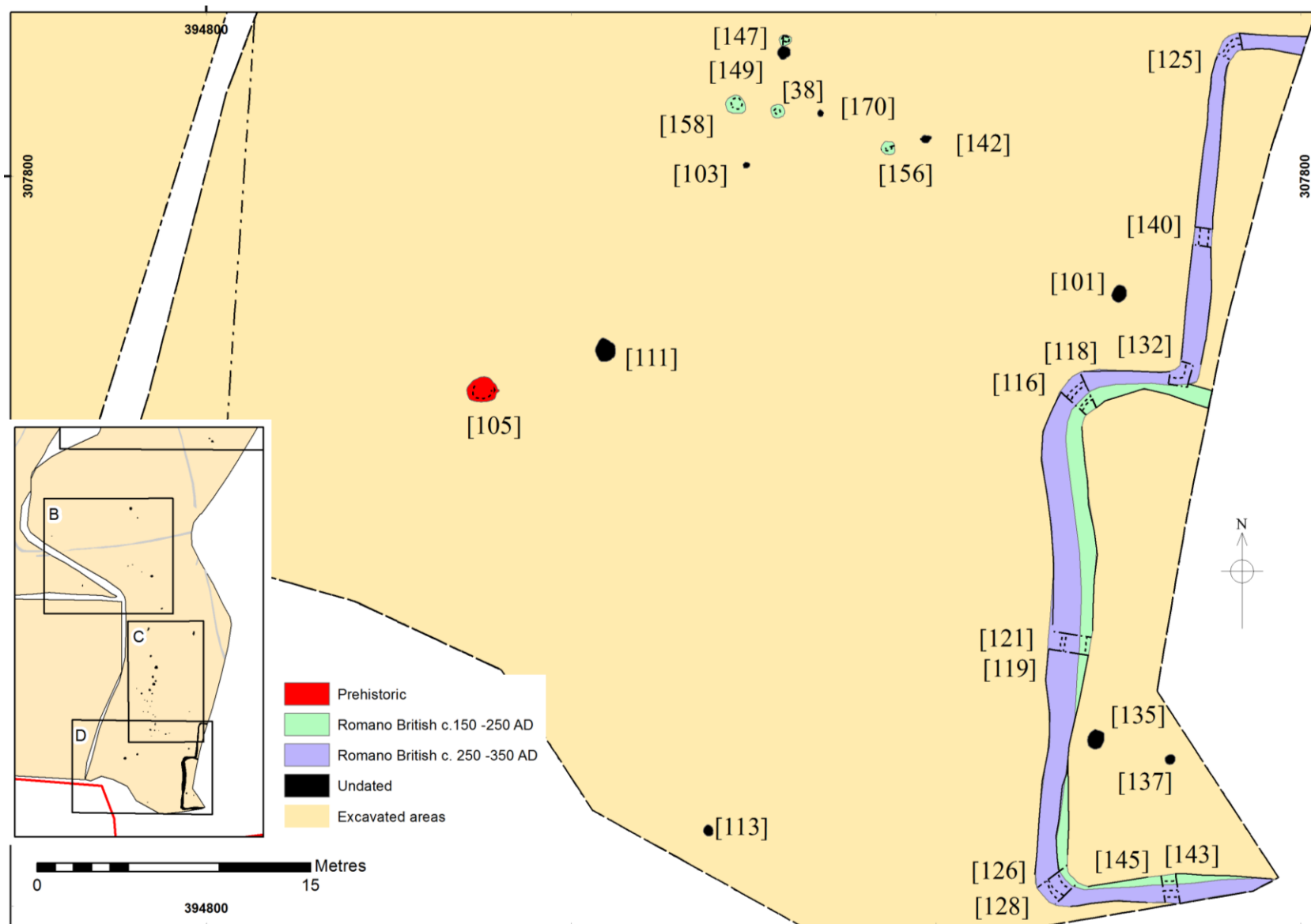


Figure 32: Plan D

Plan D

Pit [105] (106)(107)

Stake-holes [160](161), [162](163), [164](165), [166](167), [168](169).

Located 12 metres from the southern excavation limit, and 23 metres from the south-western corner of the site, was an isolated pit [105] (Figure 33) The feature was reasonably defined with a sub-oval shape 1.60m long and a depth of 0.26m onto a flat base. The shallowness of the pit sides suggest that it had been heavily truncated.

The upper fill (106) with a depth of 0.20m, took up the greater volume of the pit. It was light yellowish brown sandy silt with rare small moderately well sorted pebbles with rare charcoal flecks. It had sharp boundary onto a primary fill (107) which was of a dark greyish black silt rich in charred material. A single sherd of hand-made pottery was recovered (below p33). An estimated 50% of the deposit's volume comprised charred material. The pit was fully excavated with bulk environmental samples taken of the primary fill (below p38)

Full excavation revealed five possible stake-holes forming a line across the northern half of the pit base. They varied in diameter from 0.08m [162], 0.12m [166], 0.14m [160] & [164], to 0.22m in [168] which was the largest at the east end of the pit on the surface. All the holes were steep sided and sub-rectangular with 'U' shaped profiles, with depths between 0.06m and 0.12m. All five were defined in plan by dark yellowish brown sandy silt deposits with rare small pebbles. Charred grains were notable in all the fills, and made up slightly more of the deposit in (165) and (167) than the other three. The stake-holes were not observed cutting through (107) but were rather sealed by it, and contained the same charred grain deposits. The stake-hole(s) on the east side may have been disturbed by an animal burrow.

Pit 111 was a heavily truncated poorly defined pit/ tree throw 6m to the east of pit [105]. The pit was sub-circular, 1.10m in width, 1.26m long and 0.15m deep filled with reddish brown silty sand.

Pit [101] lay 27m to the east of pit [111]. It was sub-circular. 0.76m diameter and 0.20m deep with generally truncated shallow sides and filled with a mid- to dark yellowish brown sandy silt both containing occasional pebbles with a greater charcoal concentration of 5% within (102). Pit 113 was circular, 0.60m in diameter and 0.10m deep with a concave profile. It was filled by a mid-reddish brown sandy silt (112).

Post-hole [137] was located within the enclosure ditch in the south-east of the area. The post-hole was 0.50m in diameter, and 0.28m deep with vertical sides to a flat base. It contained a single fill of a mid-yellowish grey silty sand.

Pit [135] was located 3.5m to the west of [137]. The pit was sub-circular, 1.00m in diameter and 0.25m deep filled with a dark yellowish brown silty sand that contained rare charcoal flecks (136)



Figure 33: Fully excavated pit [105] & stake-holes



Figure 34: Half section of pit [105]

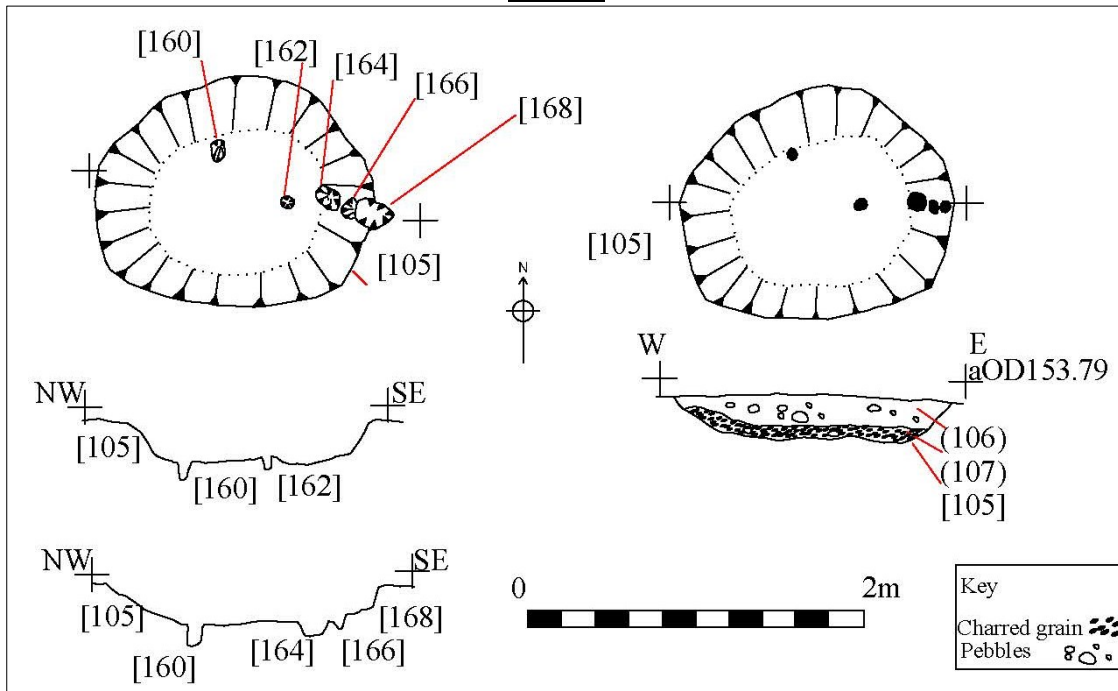


Figure 35: Pit [105] plan & profiles

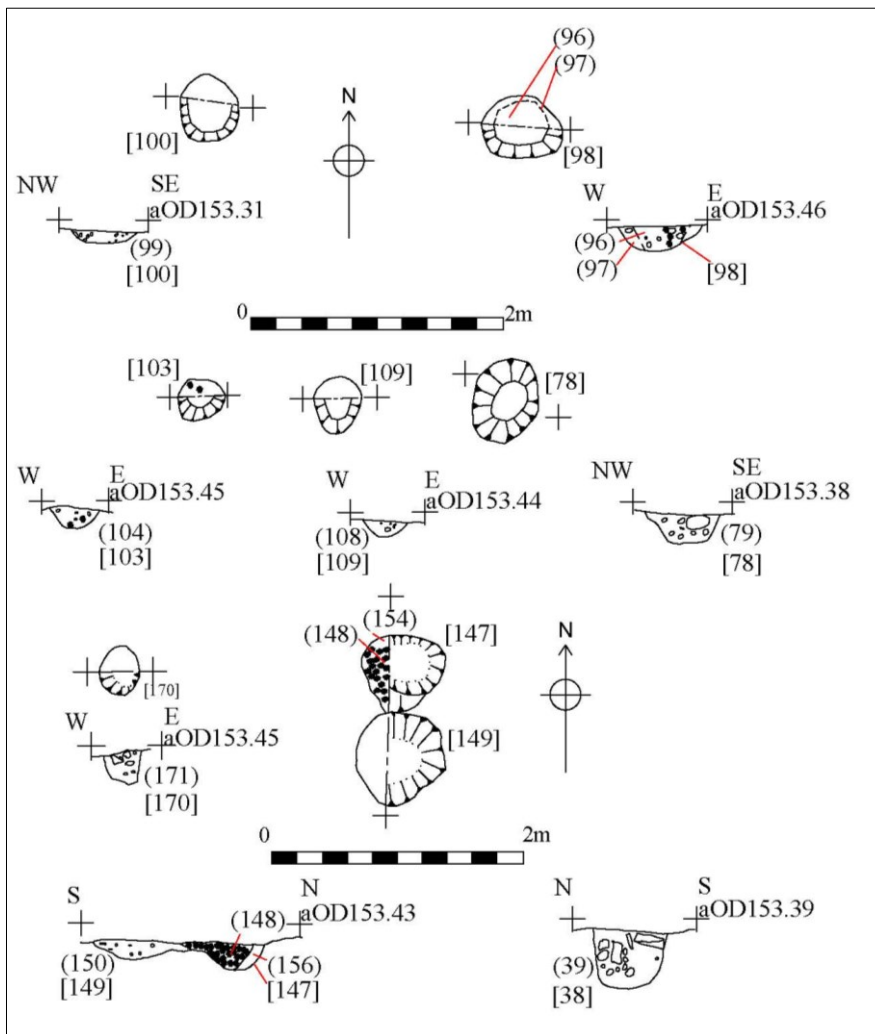


Figure 36: Post-holes (Plan D)

Romano-British Enclosure Ditch

Phase 1: [118](117), [119] (120), [126](127), [143](144).

Phase 2: [116](114)(115), [121](122), [128](129)(130), [145](146), [125](124), [140](139), [132](131).

In the south-east of the excavation area were the westernmost sections of two enclosures of unknown size and form (Figure 37, Figure 38).

At least two phases of activity were represented.

The earliest phase was identified in the south. Cuts [118], [119], [126], & [143] are may have been a rectangular enclosure that had an internal area 27 metres across north-south (Figure 31). The excavated sections were filled with orangey brown silty sand (117), light orangey brown loose fine sand (120), light yellowish brown loose silty sand (127) and a mid-orangey brown loose silty sand.

The second phase ([125], [140], & [132]) was defined by a recut around the perimeter of the first phase ditch with a new ditch extending the enclosure by a further 19m to the north (Figure 32). The recut was filled with a consist homogeneous reddish brown silty sand (125), (139), (131).

Pottery recovered from the second phase ditch 114 [116], 124 [125], 139 [140] ranged in date from 2nd to 4th Centuries AD.



Figure 37: Section through Enclosure Ditch [145] & [143]. Looking west

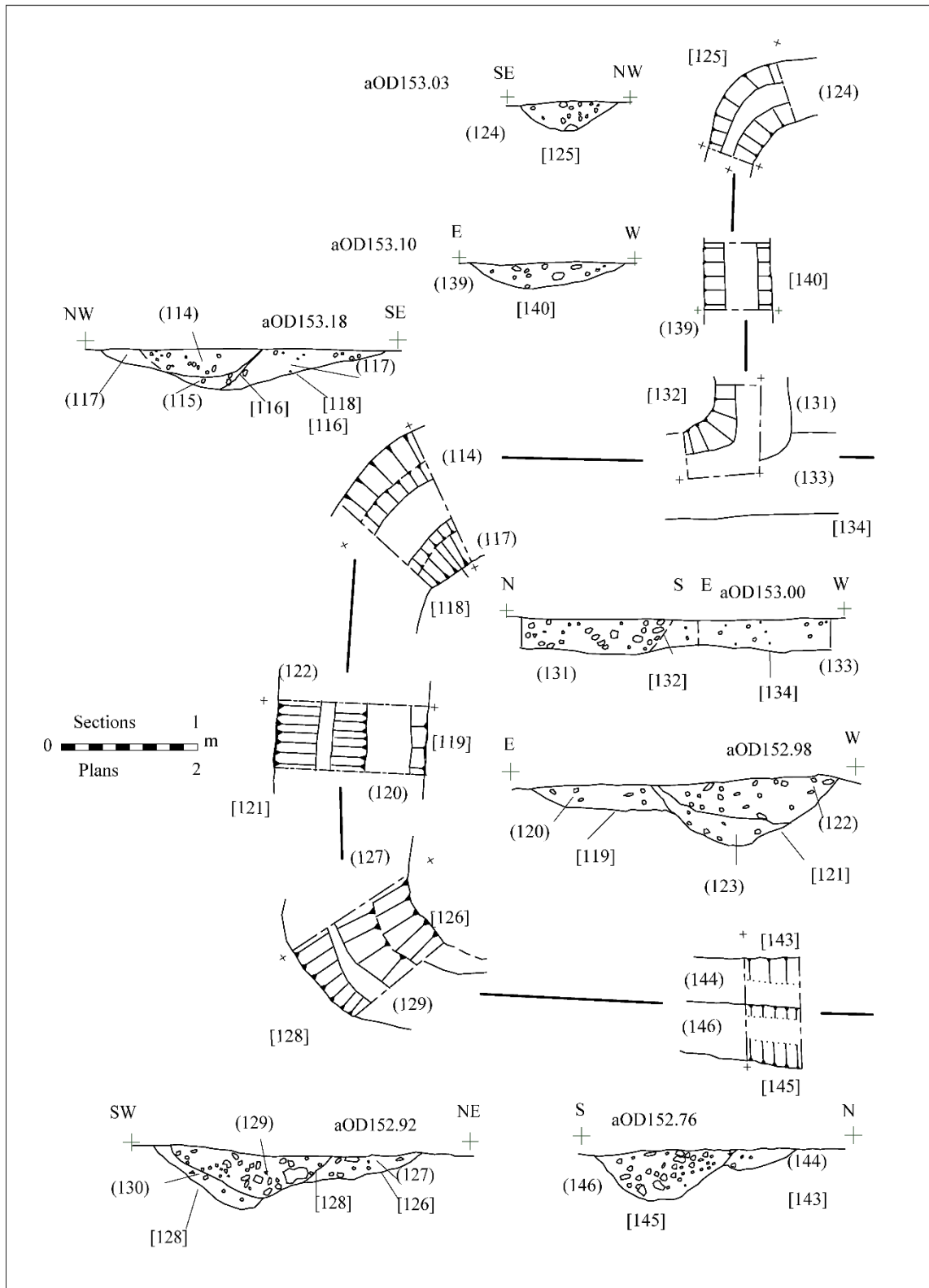


Figure 38: Enclosure Ditch drawings of plans & sections Phase 1 & 2

Post Medieval boundary ditches

Ditches that could be matched to boundaries recorded on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey mapping (1884) were recorded in all excavated phases. Some sections were excavated across the infilled features and records can be found in the site archive.

Subsequent analysis has included comparison with the Tithe map (1841) and the strong correlation between map and excavated evidence is shown below (Figure 48).

Cropmarks have been identified in an aerial photo from 1947 (Wardell Armstrong 2013a, 9.10.2, p73) and some of these also look to correspond with post medieval field boundaries, and a post medieval date is probable.

Lithics

Lynden Cooper

A secondary flake and a tertiary bladelet of Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date were recovered from Roman context (131).

Iron Age and Roman pottery

Nicholas J. Cooper

Introduction

A stratified assemblage of 74 sherds (773g) of Roman pottery and two sherds (22g) of Iron Age pottery was recovered from 15 contexts. In the absence of a comprehensive series for Staffordshire, the pottery has been analysed by form and fabric using the Leicestershire County Museums prehistoric and Roman fabric series (Marsden 2011, 62, Table 1; Pollard 1994, 113), in accordance with *The Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology* (Barclay *et al.* 2016), and quantified by sherd count, weight and EVEs.

Analysis of the pottery by form and fabric

The quantified record of the assemblage is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Quantified record of Iron Age and Roman pottery from the excavation (see table 2 for common fabric names).

Context	Cut	Fabric	Form	Type	Sherds	Weight	EVEs	Diam	Date
14	15	OW2	misc	misc	1	11			2nd-4th
29	28	OW2	jar	necked	1	25	0.19	140	2nd-3rd+
29	28	BB1	jar	HB20.1	4	33			250-350
29	28	BB1	jar	HB20.1	4	15			250-350
32	31	BB1	bowl	HB45	1	15	0.06	220	250-350
45	44	MO4	mort	B&F	1	25	0.06	260	150-250
45	44	OW2	jar	necked	1	28	0.05	220	150-250+
55	54	GW5	misc	misc	3	55			2nd-3rd+
55	54	OW2	misc	misc	1	6			2nd-3rd+
79	78	GW3	misc	misc	1	8			2nd-3rd+
86	87	R1	misc	misc	1	20			Iron Age
106	105	Q4	misc	misc	1	2			Iron Age

Context	Cut	Fabric	Form	Type	Sherds	Weight	EVEs	Diam	Date
114	116	MO4	mort	misc	2	25			2nd+
114	116	OW2	misc	misc	2	20			2nd+
124	125	BB1	bowl	misc	2	5			120-350
124	125	OW2	misc	misc	6	15			2nd+
124	125	GT	jar	misc	1	20			L1st-2nd
131	132	BB1	jar	HB20.1	20	185	0.13	200	250-350
139	140	OW2	misc	misc	2	3			2nd+
139	140	GW7	jar	necked	2	50	0.1	280	2nd-3rd
139	140	Q4	misc	misc	1	4			?Roman
148	147	BB1	bowl	HB39	1	22	0.08	180	M2nd-3rd
157	156	AM9	amph	Dressel20	2	65			2nd-E3rd
157	156	BB1	jar	misc	1	1			150-350
157	156	OW2	misc	misc	1	5			2nd+
159	158	OW2	misc	misc	3	64			2nd+
159	158	Q4	jar	misc	9	60			?Roman
172		CG Sam	dish	DR 18/31	1	8			E2
Total					75	784	0.67		

A quantified summary of the assemblage by fabric is presented in Table 2

Table 2: Quantified summary of the assemblage by fabric

Quantified summary of Iron Age and Roman pottery by fabric				
Fabric	Code	Sherds	Weight	% sherds
Amphora	AM9	2	65	3
Mortaria	MO4 (M-H)	3	50	4
BB1	BB1	33	276	45
Grog-temp	GT	1	20	1
Grey ware	GW3/5/7	6	113	8
Oxidised ware	OW2	17	166	23
Handmade	R1/Q4	12	86	16
Total	ASW 10.5	74	776	100

Results

Only two sherds of handmade later prehistoric pottery were recovered; one in granodiorite-tempered Fabric R1 from stone-filled pit (86) and the other in a pebble quartz fabric (Q4) from the grain rich pit [105] (106), radiocarbon dated to the late Bronze Age. The sherd from (86) in R1 could also be of this date although it is close in character to vessels in the East Midlands Scored ware tradition (Elsdon 1992) dating to the mid-late Iron Age, and although the roughened surface is not scored, the fabric indicates that it comes from the Charnwood district NW of Leicester (Marsden 2011, 61). The remaining ten handmade sherds in fabric Q4 are from two Roman contexts, the most diagnostic being from (159) which contained the remains of a flat based jar with lightly burnished surfaces and incised burnished lines. This may represent the local

copying of BB1 style jars during times of shortage; a single small sherd from a similarly thin-bodied handmade vessel also came from Roman fill (139).

The Roman assemblage spans much of the Roman period but is weighted towards the 3rd to mid-4th century characterised by the preponderance of BB1 cooking pots of Holbrook and Bidwell (1991) Type 20.1 with wide rims and obtuse angle lattice from (29) and (131) and a conical bead and flange rim bowl from of Type 45 from (32) dating from *c.*250 to 350. An earlier flanged bowl of Type 39 also came from (148). The BB1 which makes up an impressive 45% of the assemblage by sherd count was probably coming up from Dorset along the Fosse Way and then up Watling Street which is close by. Diagnostically earlier pottery includes two imported vessels comprising a central Gaulish Samian ware dish dating to the first half of the 2nd century and sherds of a Dressel 20 olive oil amphora from (157) which will date to before the 3rd century, although its condition suggests it might be residual. . Additionally, two examples of locally-made Mancetter-Hartshill mortaria were recovered from (45) and (114) with a bead and flange rim which will date from *c.*150 to the early 3rd. As would be expected in the West Midlands, oxidised wares (OW2) are more prolific than grey wares (GW3 and 5), and the former including a necked jar with hooked bead rim belongs to the Severn Valley ware industry. The grey wares include a necked jar in a sandy light grey fabric with darker surfaces, from (139), which is probably from the Mancetter Hartshill potteries. Overall, though small, the assemblage is typical of other jar-dominated rural settlements, with an almost complete lack of fine wares but some specialist wares such as mortaria. The occurrence of samian, amphora and BB1 in particular demonstrates there was not much local pottery production (within 15 miles) and that the site was dependent to a large extent on long distance supply.

The occurrence of local handmade vessels in 'prehistoric' fabrics represents an intriguing response to periods of shortage which is more often seen on the Northern Frontier at sites such as Piercebridge and Faverdale, Darlington (Cooper and Vince 2008, 232).

Small Finds

Heidi Addison and Nicholas Cooper

Sf.1 (29)

An incomplete later Roman copper alloy cable armlet. Internal diameter oval, *c.*42mm by *c.*35mm. The armlet is manufactured from two twisted strands of copper alloy wire, oval in section (6mm), and has lost one terminal; the remaining one formed by wrapping one strand around the other, so that the central strand probably emerged as a hook for a clasp. A complete two-strand armlet, with soldered terminals, came from a grave deposit in Colchester, ranging in date from *c.*320-450 (Period 2) as did another, three-strand example, with a terminal and hook similar to the present example (Crummy 1983, 39, fig.41.1613 and 1628).



Figure 39: Two-strand cable armlet (Sf.1) from (29)

Sf.2 (39)

Complete (but in three joining fragments), heavily-worn, lower stone from a rotary quern, of Roman date, manufactured from a grit stone, possibly Millstone Grit from the Derbyshire Peak District (Fig.2). Upper worn surface convex and becoming slightly conical around central pivot hole, due to wear. Diameter 400mm; thickness 40mm.



Figure 40: Lower stone of Roman rotary quern from (39)

Environmental Remains

Adam Santer & Rachel Small with contributions from William Johnson

Introduction

Seventeen soil samples were taken from deposits of later prehistoric and Roman date.. This report will present the analysis of the charred plant remains, together with a discussion of potential evidence that can be obtained regarding past diet, crop husbandry and human-plant relations.

Methodology

Large samples (over four litres in volume) were processed in a York tank using a 0.5mm mesh with flotation into a 0.3mm sieve. Smaller samples were processed using bucket flotation. The soil was poured into a bucket, which was then filled with water and agitated by hand. The suspended material was then poured through a 0.3mm sieve and the process repeated until the water ran clear.

The flotation fractions (flots) were sorted for plant remains and other artefacts under an x10-40 stereo microscope. The heavy residues were passed through 4mm and 2mm

sieves separating them into the following fractions to aid identification and recovery of material: greater than 4mm, 2 to 4mm and under 2mm. The larger fractions were sorted in their entirety by eye and the under 2mm fractions by microscope.

Plant remains were identified by Adam Santer by comparison to modern reference material available at ULAS and their names and habitat information follow Stace (1991) and Mabberley (2008). Material from all contexts was quantified as follows: grains representing over 60 percent of the specimen were counted as one (fragments were recorded separately); rachis internodes, culm nodes and lemma bases were counted as one; the presence of spikelets was indicated, but each glume base was counted as one when included in ratios; and, each nut shell and seed fragment was counted as one.

The ratio of glume bases to wheat grains was calculated following Van der Veen (2007) to interpret the crop-processing stage represented. The ratios were only calculated when adequate numbers were available, a minimum of 25 for each item. When indeterminate grains were present in a sample, the number was divided according to the proportion of identified grains and included in the relevant ratios. The ratios were calculated to one decimal point

Results

The majority of the samples were taken from a pit [105] with related stake-holes [160], [162], [164], [166], and [168], which were cut in a fairly straight row into a large pit [105]. It is not known if the stake-holes were contemporary with the pit; but they were filled with deposits (161), (163), (165), (167), and (169), which were similar to the fill (107) of the large pit.

Emmer wheat (*Triticum dicoccum* Schübler) and barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L.) grains recovered from context (107) were radiocarbon dated to the ninth century BC (Late Bronze Age) (p43). Samples were also taken from smaller pits, post-holes and a pit feature [87] that contained pottery dating to the Iron Age and Roman periods. Fourteen of the samples contained charred plant remains (82.4%) (see table 1). These were of a good preservation and there was no evidence for bioturbation within the contexts. Eight of the samples contained low densities of charred plant remains (one item per litre) and these dated to the Iron Age and Roman periods. Samples 13 and 14, which were from stake-holes within pit [105], contained a medium density (circa 30 to 60 items). The remaining four samples were of high density, ranging from 443 to 1190 items per litre, and were from the primary fill (107) of pit [105] and the remaining stake-holes across it. These late Bronze Age samples were grain dominant. In comparison to charred plant remains, fragments of charcoal were scarce in the samples. These samples are discussed in more detail below by phase.

Iron Age and Roman features

The low density samples dated to the Iron Age and Roman periods and were represented by scatters of wild seeds including ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata* L.), goosefoot (*Chenopodium* spp.), cleavers (*Galium aparine* L.) and large grass (Poaceae); hazelnut shell fragments (*Corylus avellana* L.); and, grains including barley and wheat. The remains likely represent processing waste that was wind-blown across the site accumulating in open features.

Late Bronze Age pit and stake-holes

The medium to high density samples from the late Bronze Age pit [105] and stake-holes that crossed it were dominated by grain (figure 2 and 3). Grain typically represented 83.63 percent of the assemblage. Two species were identified: hulled barley and emmer wheat. Hulled barley was most frequent in each sample, representing two thirds of the grain identified to species (figure 1). The husks (palea and lemma) had not been removed (figure 4) and there were no clear examples of twisted grains which are indicative of the six-row variety. Three of the emmer grains identified had the glume bases still attached. There were no signs of infested or germinated grains.

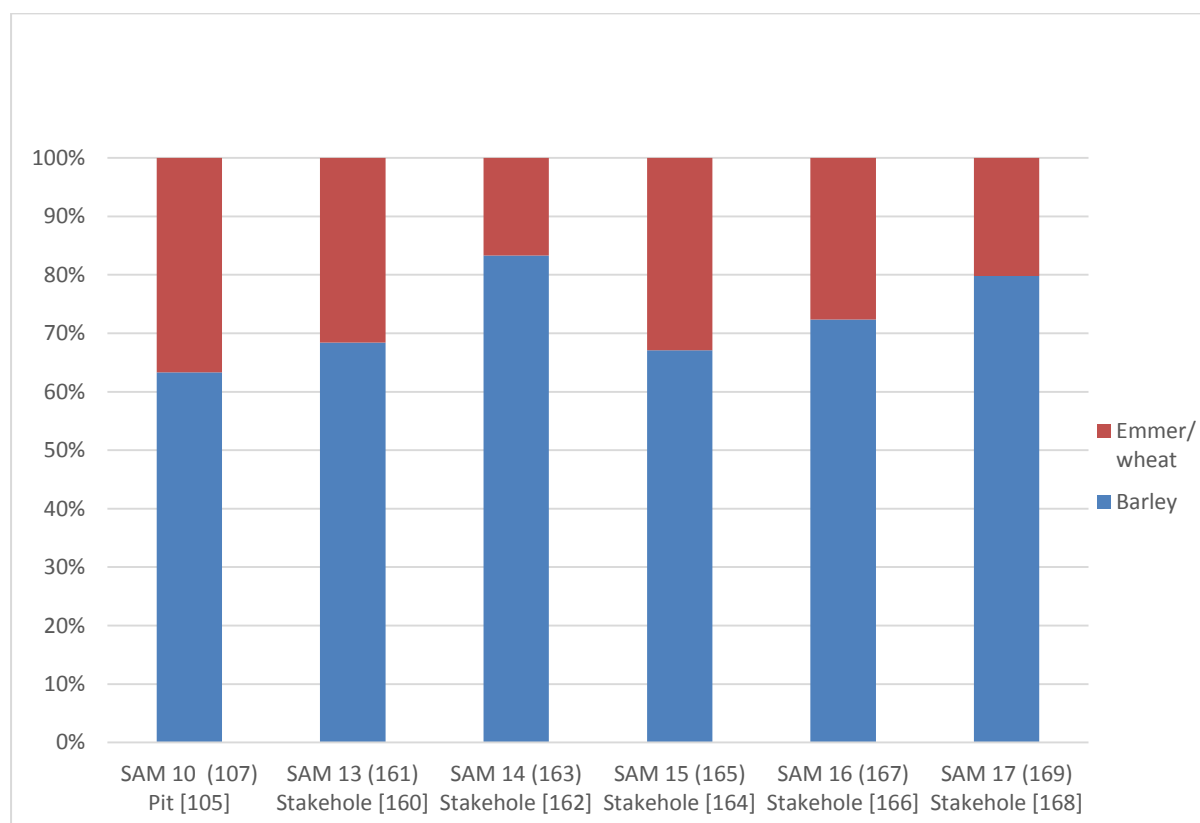


Figure 41: The proportion of barley and emmer grain identified from late Bronze Age features

Chaff was present in these samples and included a small number of barley rachis internodes, large grass lemma bases and straw culm nodes. Most commonly identified were wheat glume bases of which a large proportion were identified as emmer. Chaff typically represented circa 10 to 15 percent of the assemblage. The percentage of chaff was inflated in sample 13 (161) at 27.4% as several spikelet forks were present.

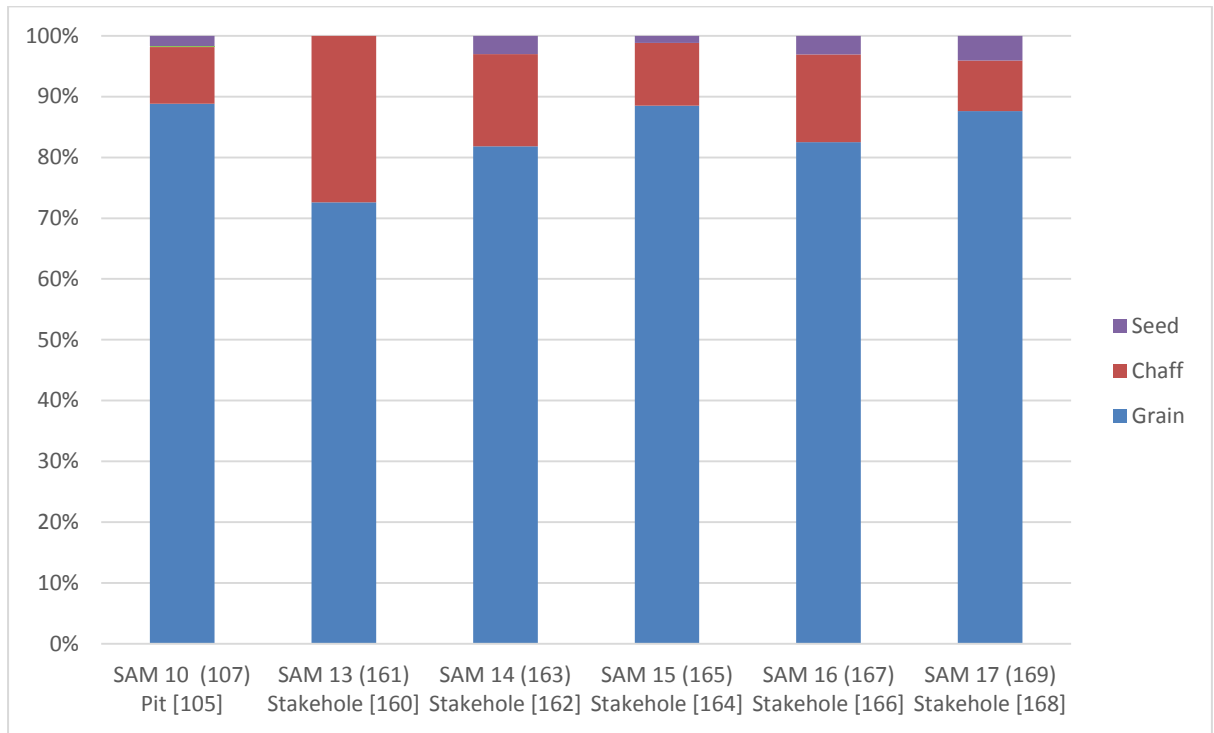


Figure 42: Percentage of grain, chaff and wild seeds from late Bronze Age features

Table 3: 1: Record of the charred plant remains recovered from samples. NB: Spikelets have been counted twice in the 'total number of items' to account for the two glume bases present

Sample	4	5	7	8	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
Context	29	32	65	86	107	39	157	161	163	165	167	169	159	102	
Cut	28	31	64	87	105	38	156	160	162	164	166	168	158	101	
Feature type	Pit	Small pit	Fire cracked stone pit	Grave fill	Pit	Post-hole (group 1)	Post hole	Stake hole within pit [105]	Stake hole within pit [105]	Stake hole within pit [105]	Stake hole within pit [105]	Stake hole within pit [105]	Pit	Pit	
Date	3rd-4th C. Roman	3rd-4th C. Roman	No dating currently available	Iron Age	Late Bronze Age	No dating currently available	2nd-3rd C. Roman	Late Bronze Age	Late Bronze Age	Late Bronze Age	Late Bronze Age	Late Bronze Age	2nd C. Roman	No dating currently available	
Grain															
<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> L.			1		795			26	10	512	319	174			Barley
<i>Triticum dicoccon</i>					408			10	1	206	122	24			Emmer wheat
<i>Triticum dicoccon</i> glumes attached					3										Emmer wheat, glumes attached
<i>Triticum</i> sp.					50	1		2	1	45		20			Glume wheat
Indeterminate cereal grain			1		271	2		7	15	290	205	170			Indeterminate cereal grain
Chaff															
<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> L. rachis internode					6			1	1	1	3	1			Barley rachis
<i>Triticum dicoccon</i> spikelet fork					40			7	1	22	28	7			Emmer wheat spikelet fork
<i>Triticum dicoccon</i> glume base					66			2	2	32	54	22			Emmer wheat glume base
<i>Triticum</i> sp. glume base					2					46					Glume wheat glume base
Poaceae lemma base					3										Grass lemma base
Straw culm node					3										Straw culm node
Nuts															
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L. nut shell fragment		6		1	3								1	3	Hazelnut shell fragment
Wild seeds															
<i>Chenopodium</i> sp.					2	1				1		1			Goosefoot
<i>Galium aparine</i> L.					1		1								Cleavers
Poaceae (large)					13	1			1	4	11	7			Large grass
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i> L.					8					7	9	9			Knotgrass
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i> L.	1														Ribwort plantain
<i>Polygonum lapthafolium</i> L.					5					2	4				Pale persicaria
<i>Vicia</i> sp.													1		Vetch
Indeterminate seed						1									Indeterminate seed
Total number of items	1	6	2	1	1719	6	1	62	33	1190	783	443	1	3	
Soil volume	8	15	3	12	9	5	15	1	1	1	1	1	8	6	
Percentage sorted	100%	100%	100%	100%	25%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Number of items per litre	0.13	0.4	0.67	0.08	764	1.2	0.07	62	33	1190	783	443	0.13	0.5	

The ratio of glume bases to wheat grains was calculated for samples which had a sufficient number of remains. Naturally in the plant, the ratio is one (two glume bases to two grains); all the sample ratios (table 2) were lower than one suggesting a relatively ‘clean’ wheat grain product.

Table 4:: Calculations for the ratio of glume bases to wheat grains.

Sample	10	15	16	17
Context	107	165	167	169
Cut	105	164	166	168
Triticum sp. glume base (total)	148	122	110	36
Triticum sp. grain (total)	560	346	179	78
Triticum sp. glume base/grain	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.5

A very small number of hazelnut shell fragments were present and wild seeds. The wild seeds included goosefoot, cleavers, large grass, knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare* L.), ribwort plantain, pale persicaria (*Polgonum lapthafolium* L.) and vetch (*Vicia* sp.). These are likely weeds of agricultural fields. Ribwort plantain is associated with grassier areas and pale persicaria damper areas and they may be indicative of the field margin conditions (Stace 1991). Cleavers are associated with soils with a higher nitrogen content possibly suggestive of the use of soil improvement strategies such as manuring (Hill et al 1999). The weeds are classed as ‘small, free and heavy’ and ‘big free and heavy’ according to Jones (1984) and are generally removed during fine sieving and hand picking, the final stages of crop processing (ibid.).

Discussion

The medium to high density samples from the large late Bronze Age pit [105] and stake-holes [160], [162], [164], [166] and [168] which crossed it were very similar in composition being abundant in well-preserved grain with low numbers of chaff, wild seeds, nut shell and charcoal, and this is indicative of partially cleaned grain deposits. Barley was the dominant species, but emmer was a fundamental part of the assemblage representing approximately a third of the identified grains. Of note was that the barley grains still had their husks present, these are indigestible to humans. This could suggest the grain was intended for use as fodder or further processing was still required and had not yet been undertaken.

Modelling the pit as a perfect semi-ellipsoid, context 107 would have contained 54.2 litres of soil if it was excavated in its entirety. This would have contained circa 40,000 grains (assuming the fill was homogenous). This represents around one percent of a season’s harvest of a standard 30x30m Iron Age field (based on Shaw 2007). This does not account for the stake-holes (however, this are unlikely to significantly alter the value). This is a large amount of grain and could perhaps suggest the accidental burning of grain held in a small store subsequently deposited in the pit (burning was not in-situ).

The grain may also have been accidentally burnt during processing the grain for consumption. The grain may have become charred during heating prior to bulk storage or husk removal (Van der Veen 1989). Due to the lack of germination, heating is unlikely to have taken place during the brewing process (see Hill et al 1983).

The burning may also have been deliberate. There were no visible signs of infestation or deformities of the grain suggesting that the grain was of good quality. However, infestation which is not archaeologically visible may have been the reason. The grain may have been perceived to have been contaminated due to ontological symbolic reasoning. Other ‘ritualised’

practises may have also been the purpose; such as deposition in the pit, perhaps as a sacrificial offering to promote fertility or the conclusion of a communal feast, for example (see Leonard 2014).

The concentrations encountered at this site are highly unusual for the period. No comparative sites in the West Midlands are known to the author. However, a similar example is present at Black Patch, East Sussex (see Hinton 1982). At the site, two pits filled with charred cereal grains were found associated with hut platforms. Whilst the pits showed no evidence of stake-holes being driven into them; short rows of post-holes were excavated within a meter of them. The condition of the pit and the charred grain within was remarkably similar to Saredon. For example, at both sites there was no evidence of in-situ burning and both assemblages were dominated by barley grains followed by emmer wheat.

Hinton (1982) presumed that the cause of burning was accidental and that the fire likely occurred in a storage or grain processing area. Hinton did not elaborate further but did suggest that accidental burning could be disputed due to the presence of charred beans (which do not need to be heated during preparation). No legumes were identified at Saredon.

Conclusion

Seventeen samples were taken during an excavation at Saredon Quarry dating to the late Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman periods. Of note were the samples from large pit [105] and the associated series of stake-holes dating to the late Bronze. The fills contained high densities of charred plant remains (up to 1,190 items per litre) and were grain rich, containing specimens of barley and emmer. The burning of grain may represent an accident during processing or burnt store. It may also provide a rare opportunity to contribute to arguments for possible ritualised activity involving archaeobotanical remains. Broadly speaking, ritual deposits are usually only considered in terms of artefactual evidence (such as metal, ceramics and bone).



Figure 43: the sheer quantity of grain recovered from sample 10 (107) [105].



Figure 44: an example of a barley grain with the palea and lemma still attached

Radiocarbon Dating

Matthew Beamish

Samples of Charred plant remains Emmer wheat (*Triticum dicoccum*) and Barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) from context 107 were submitted for radiocarbon dating.

The results are shown in Table 5, and are quoted in accordance with the international standard known as the Trondheim convention (Stuiver and Kra 1986). They are conventional radiocarbon ages following Stuiver and Polach (1977). All have been calculated using the calibration curve of Reimer et al. (2013) and the computer programme OxCal (v4.3.2) (Bronk Ramsey 1995; 1998; 2001; 2009). They are quoted in the form recommended by Mook (1986),

with the end points rounded outward to 10 years on the basis of the error terms. The ranges quoted in italics are posterior density estimates derived from mathematical modelling of archaeological problems (see below). The ranges in plain type in Table 5 have been calculated according to the maximum intercept method (Stuiver and Reimer 1986).

The two determinations (SUERC-84632; SUERC-84636) are statistically consistent ($T' = 0.7$; $n = 1$; $T'(5\%) = 3.8$), and could represent material of the same age. As the grains were part of a homogeneous deposit the dates were combined as a single weighted mean (R_Combine_2747 \pm 25) which is calibrated to 970-820 cal BC at 95% confidence.

Table 5: Radiocarbon determinations

Laboratory No	Context	Material	δC_{13} (%)	Radiocarbon Age (BP)	Calibrated date 95% confidence
SUERC-84632	(107)	Burnt grain (Emmer)	-23.7	2727 \pm 34	960-800 cal BC
SUERC-84636	(107)	Burnt grain (Barley)	-24.6	2767 \pm 34	1010-830 cal BC
R_combine				2747 \pm 25	970-820 cal BC

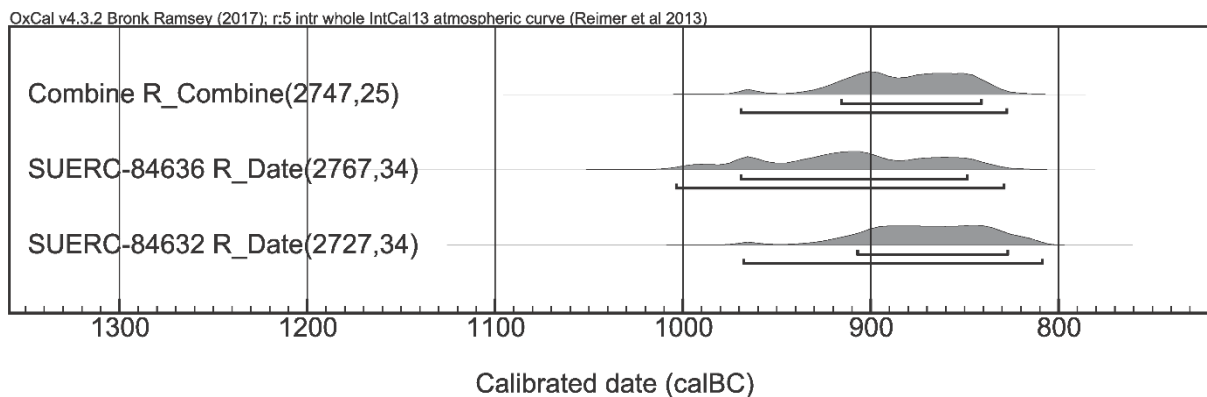


Figure 45: Calibrated and combined Radiocarbon determinations

General Discussion

There is clear evidence of occupation of the hill-top in the Late Bronze Age and in the Romano-British periods. Apart from the enclosures in the south-west of the area where a structural form is clear, the evidence is somewhat mixed and presents problems for interpretation, as in most instances, there is insufficient dating evidence and it is not possible to differentiate prehistoric from Roman period features. Therefore although some features appear in alignments and clusters, there can be little certainty in any associations or groupings, and therefore interpretation is for the most part not attempted apart from for those groups discussed below.

Undated

Post-holes [48],[50] and [56] were similar and adjacent, and these would look to form part of a structure of unknown form and date. Post-holes [50] and [56] would be described as a typical 'two-post' structure. Two-post structures are often identified on later prehistoric sites, and might represent the remains of a drying-frame, or the door posts or interior of a round-house (cf Hurst 2011, 106)

Pits [62] and [151] were both irregular in character possibly indicating a tree throw holes, although the presence of fire-cracked stone on one and burnt sand and charcoal in another suggests some anthropogenic component in the features' formations.

Pit 87 was notable for a particularly stone rich fill which couple with a grave like plan form had similarity to cairn burials observed in a similar topographic locations elsewhere in the Midlands. However there was no evidence of any bone in the pit and such a function for the feature can remain only speculation.

Cropmarks of substantial pit and linear features have been identified in an aerial photograph taken in 1947 (Wardell Armstrong 2013a, 9.10.2, p73) (Figure 49). These comprise up to 20 pits like marks which are between 5 and 10m across. Fourteen pits are arranged predominantly in two lines some 35m apart and 75m long. One of the lines aligns with a field boundary marked on the Tithe map. To the north and south of the lines are rectilinear marks that may represent infilled ditches or linear quarries. The linear features appear between 9 and 20m across.

The linear forms may represent enlarged ditches, and the pits may represent quarry holes: they appear too big to represent tree planting holes arranged along the boundaries.

Fire-cracked Stone Pits: amongst the very dispersed discrete pits recorded in the soil strip during May 2016 (Figure 2) were two containing charcoal and fire-cracked stone. These have now been joined by two more examples ([62] p13, [68] p16) from the current phase of work. With no readily accessible water-source nearby, it seems unlikely that there relate to burnt mound type activity (e.g. Beamish 2009, 157): stream edge burnt mounds have been recorded 900m to the north-east (HER01082).

No stones appeared fire-cracked in situ, and no evidence of burning was recorded down the pits sides. The fire-cracked stone with associated waste may have been deposited from elsewhere.

Late Bronze Age and Iron Age

Pit [105] with associated stake-holes and in-fill rich in carbonised grain is a notable discovery. The grain deposit is remarkably rich and represents an important assemblage of cereal grain from the 9th to 10th Centuries BC which is of significance for Staffordshire and the region overall.

The deposit which had been preserved by charring was abundant in well-preserved grain. The low numbers of chaff, wild seeds, nut shell and charcoal indicates that the deposit has been partially cleaned – i.e. prepared for storage. The grains were mostly of barley but emmer wheat represented a third of the identified grains. The environmental archaeologist noted that the barley grains retained their husks which are indigestible to humans. This could suggest the grain was intended for use as fodder or further processing was still required and had not yet been undertaken.

Charred cereal remains from prehistoric sites are rare from the West Midlands (Pearson 2017, 10). Sites with significant assemblages tend to be from lower lying locations in the major river valleys (e.g. Barton under Needwood, Whitemoor Haye and Fisherwick) and are more usually of Iron Age date.

A parallel for the deposit has been identified at Black Patch, East Sussex from a Bronze Age settlement (Drewett, P. 1982).

Pit [105] and stake-holes were the only certain Bronze Age features on site – other pits and post-holes may also be contemporary but this cannot be established due to a lack of evidence.

Other Bronze Age evidence in the vicinity of the quarry includes burnt mounds 770 metres north-east and 840 metres south of the site (HER **01082** and **01075**), and a probable Barrow (funerary monument) 780 metres east of the site (HER **01813**). The incomplete tip of a cast bronze socketed axe head dating from circa 1050-600 BC was recovered some 700m to the south-west during metal detecting.

Burnt Mounds are a common form of archaeological site in the British Bronze Age. Their distribution has broadened as a consequence of increased archaeological survey. They are signalled by the presence of quantities of fire-cracked stone, the product of repeated heating followed either by immersion in water-bearing pits (troughs) or by quenching with water being poured over them, resulting in their thermal fracture with the stones becoming increasingly small until they are ultimately disposed of, along with quantities of charcoal and ash in a surrounding mound often with pits central to the deposit. Rarely are artefacts recovered from burnt mound deposits, despite large scale excavation and sampling, which has presented great difficulty for their interpretation, although some excavated examples (e.g. Wareham, Dorset; Ladle and Woodward 2003 and Tangwick, Shetland; Moore and Wilson 1999) run counter to this trend. Burnt mounds are rarely directly associated with settlement and are often located in marginal areas. Investigation of two burnt mounds in South Derbyshire led to a food preparation interpretation on the basis of the available evidence for monuments of Late Neolithic and Middle Bronze Age dates (Beamish 2009, p157).

Find spots of Bronze Age and Iron Age material increase in density in the south-east of the County probably reflecting increased survey. Examples of excavated Late Bronze Age activity are rare in Staffordshire, although examples in the vicinity of Saredon Hill are known from Coven Heath (HER 51633) 4km to the south-west.

A single sherd of Iron Age pottery was recovered from an elongated pit [87] with notable stone rich fill.

Hill-forts

The most well-known later prehistoric hilltop settlement site is the hillfort. Within Staffordshire as many as twelve hillforts may exist, of which two are promontory forts, although not all are confirmed examples (Wardle 2015) (Figure 52). A hill-top settlement may be a more likely interpretation for Saredon Hill with Burrow suggesting the widely accepted term as 'Hillfort' being unsatisfactory and rather placing the Forts/ Settlements into categories from Group 1 (highly defensible locations & major earthworks to Group 4 (non-defensive locations, weak earthworks), (Burrow 1981, 19&24). Saredon Hill does have a prominent position and is reasonably well defended with good vantage points to the west, but no artificial earthworks have been identified. Although intensive cultivation coupled with erosion on the slopes may have removed traces of any banks no infilled defensive ditches have been located within the areas so far stripped. Although there is a steep drop of over nine metres along the southern edge (Figure 46), it does not make up for 50% of the circumference if using Burrow's Categories for Somerset. Therefore Saredon Hill could be allocated to Group 4 with any weak earthworks and any ditch ploughed away or alternatively did not exist. The nearest Hillfort is Castle Ring 11.5 kilometres to the North-east.



Figure 46: View of steep drop along the South of settlement with the Wrekin Hill Fort approximately 20km west (right of the photograph)

Romano-British

Pits containing Roman period pottery or associated metalwork were found across the full extent of the area investigated although they were generally very dispersed. In the south-east of the area, the western sides of two enclosures of at least two phases were exposed.

Romano-British pottery recovered from the ditch infills indicates that the enclosure was initially formed in the 2nd century AD, with later re-cutting and in-filling in the mid-3rd to mid-4th Centuries A. Combined, the exposed western ditches forming the two enclosures cover a North to South distance of fifty metres. It is probable that the enclosures represent parts of a small farm and either enclosed settlement areas or are animal pens.

The rotary quern from post-hole [38] (above p22 and p35) probably stems from Roman occupaton on the hilltop, and indicates that Roman period structures were located some 20m west of the enclosures (Figure 47). The stone was found sealing the fills of a post-hole and may have been deposited when a building was dismantled or formally *closed*.

An indicator of potentially higher status Romano-British settlement is the small Roman copper alloy bracelet (above p34) deposited in an isolated pit and recently disturbed by the plough.

Much of the Roman pottery has probably come to the site by road from Dorset, along the Fosse Way and then Watling Street which is close by. Oxidised wares are more prevalent than grey wares and some examples can be ascribed to the Severn Valley ware industry, while the grey wares include an example probably from the Mancetter Hartshill potteries. Overall, the small assemblage is typical of other jar-dominated rural settlements, with a complete lack of fine wares but some specialist wares such as mortaria. There was probably not much local pottery production and the site was dependent to a large extent on long distance supply.

The only other evidence of Roman period activity on the Historic Environment Records is the finding of a copper alloy Colchester derivative Polden brooch of 1st-2nd century AD date recovered during metal detecting (HER **60652**) located approximately 200m south-east of the Enclosures.

The deposits are Saredon Hill are shown in relation to key Romano-British sites in Staffordshire (Figure 53)

Post Medieval Field Boundaries

Infilled field boundaries were recorded in all areas investigated. All can be identified on the Tithe map of 1841 (Figure 49 p50). To the immediate east of the excavation area the cropmarks of substantial pit and linear features have been identified in a 1947 aerial photograph and these at least in part also correspond with the Tithe map (Wardell Armstrong 2013a, 9.10.2, p73). These lie within the permitted extraction area and therefore may be exposed by future soil stripping. (See below 'Undated').

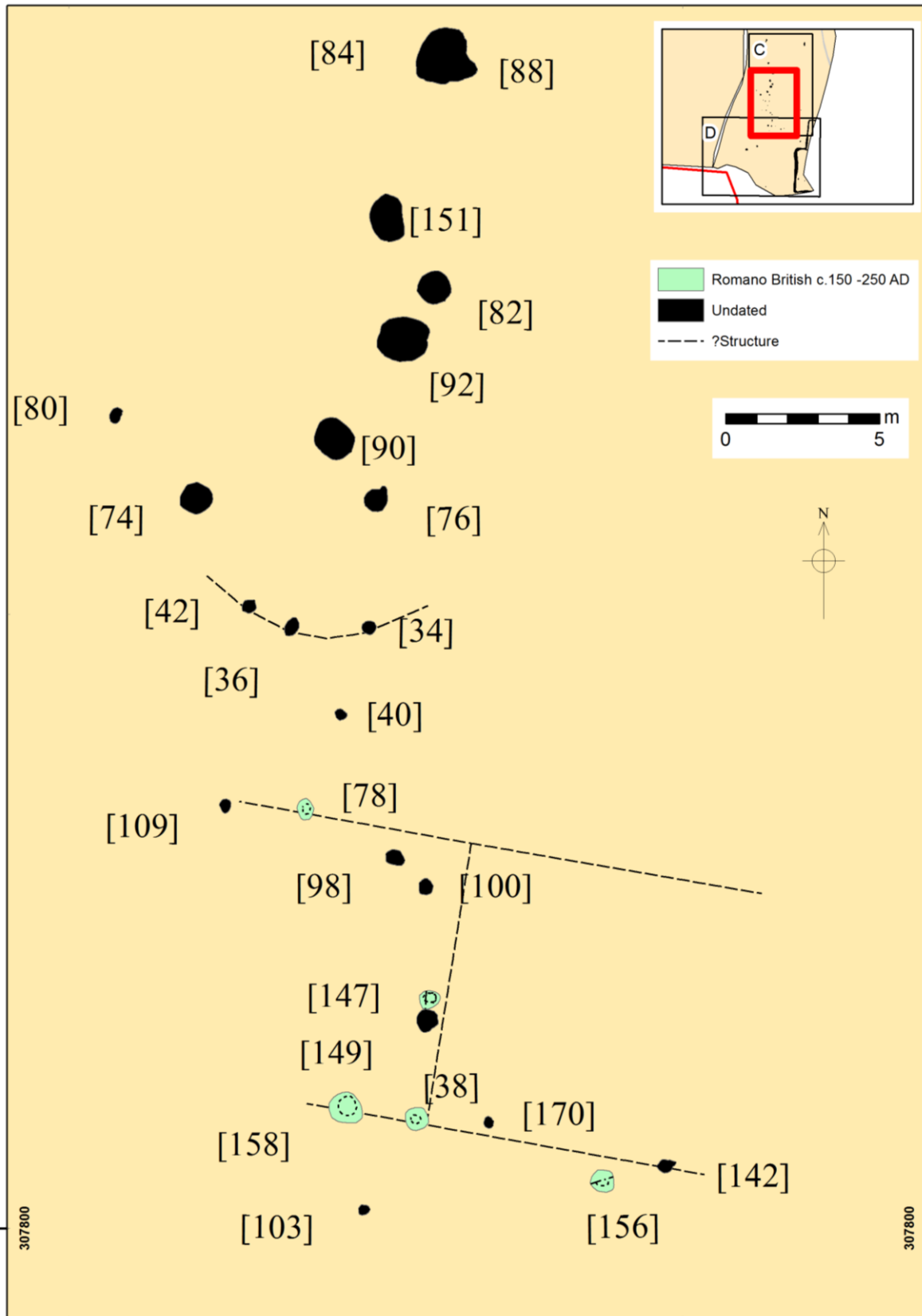


Figure 47: Indications of possible structures. The rectilinear arrangement looks to be of Roman date, but as post-holes from Late Bronze Age and Iron Age may also be present, no clear building foot print can be established.



Figure 48: Development area, excavation areas, and recorded ditches in relation to Tithe Map (1841).

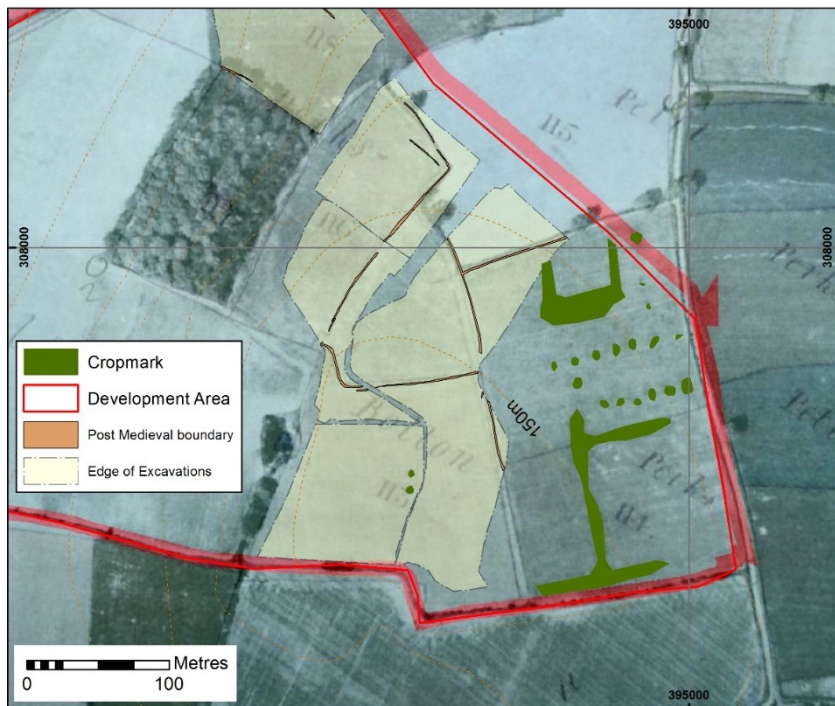


Figure 49: Development area, excavation areas in relation to Tithe Map (1841) and Aerial Photo (1947) with interpreted cropmarks of substantial pit and linear features in the east of the development area.

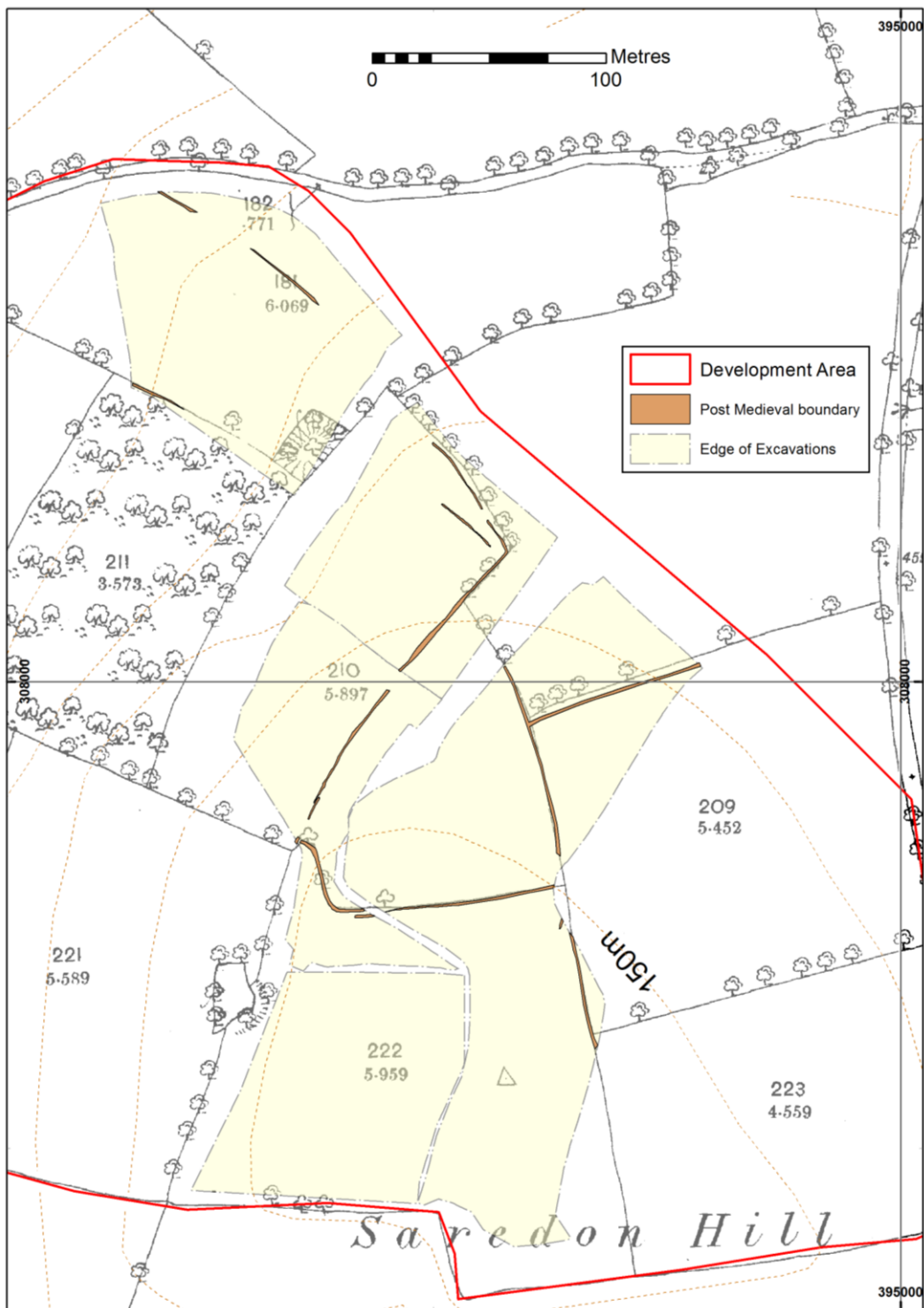


Figure 50: Excavation areas with ditch features of post medieval date and 1st edition Ordnance Survey (1884). (Contours interpolated across modern quarry).

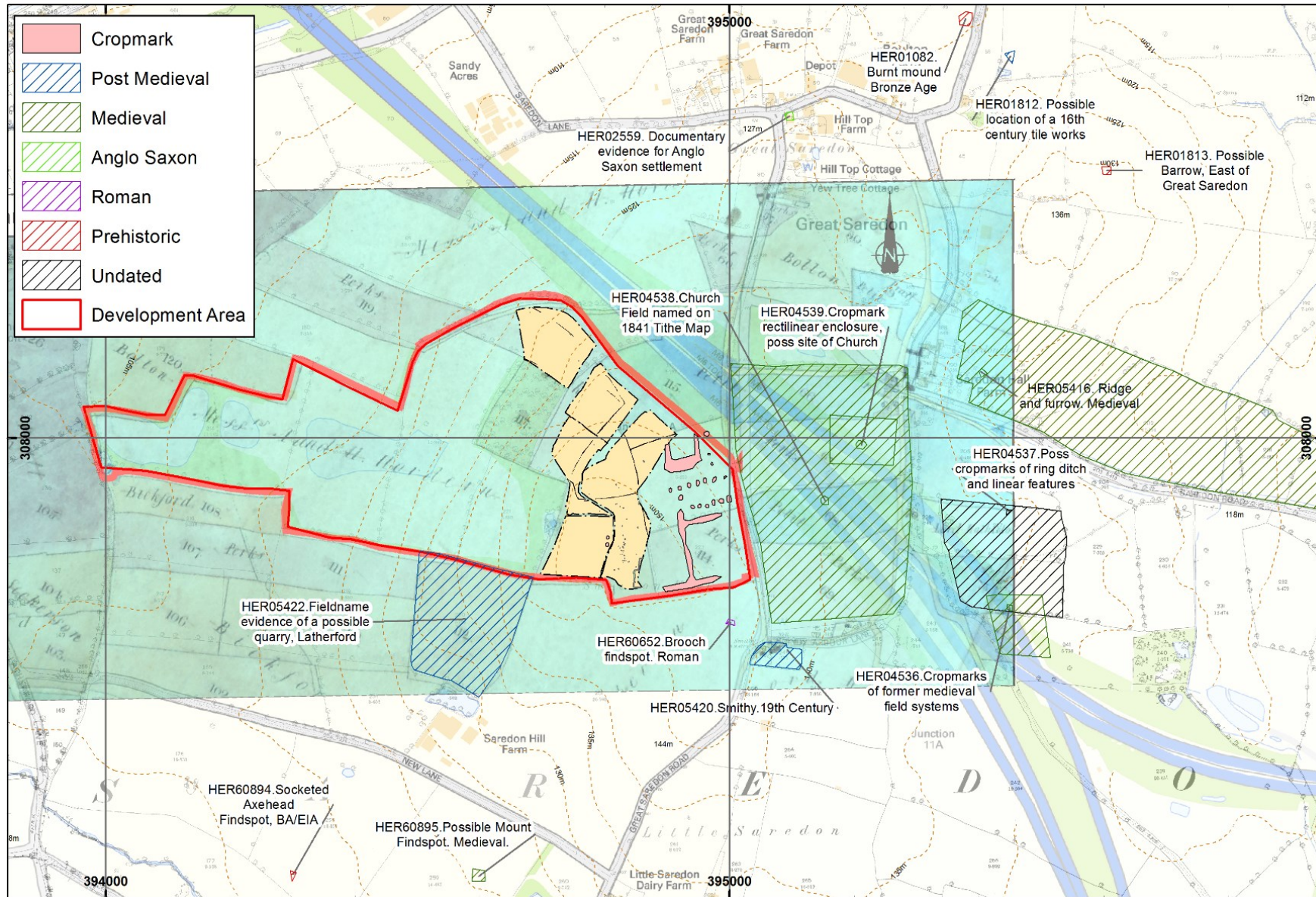


Figure 51: Quarry in relation to HER records, Tithe map (1841), and cropmarks from the 1947 photo. Contours across quarry area and motorway interpolated.

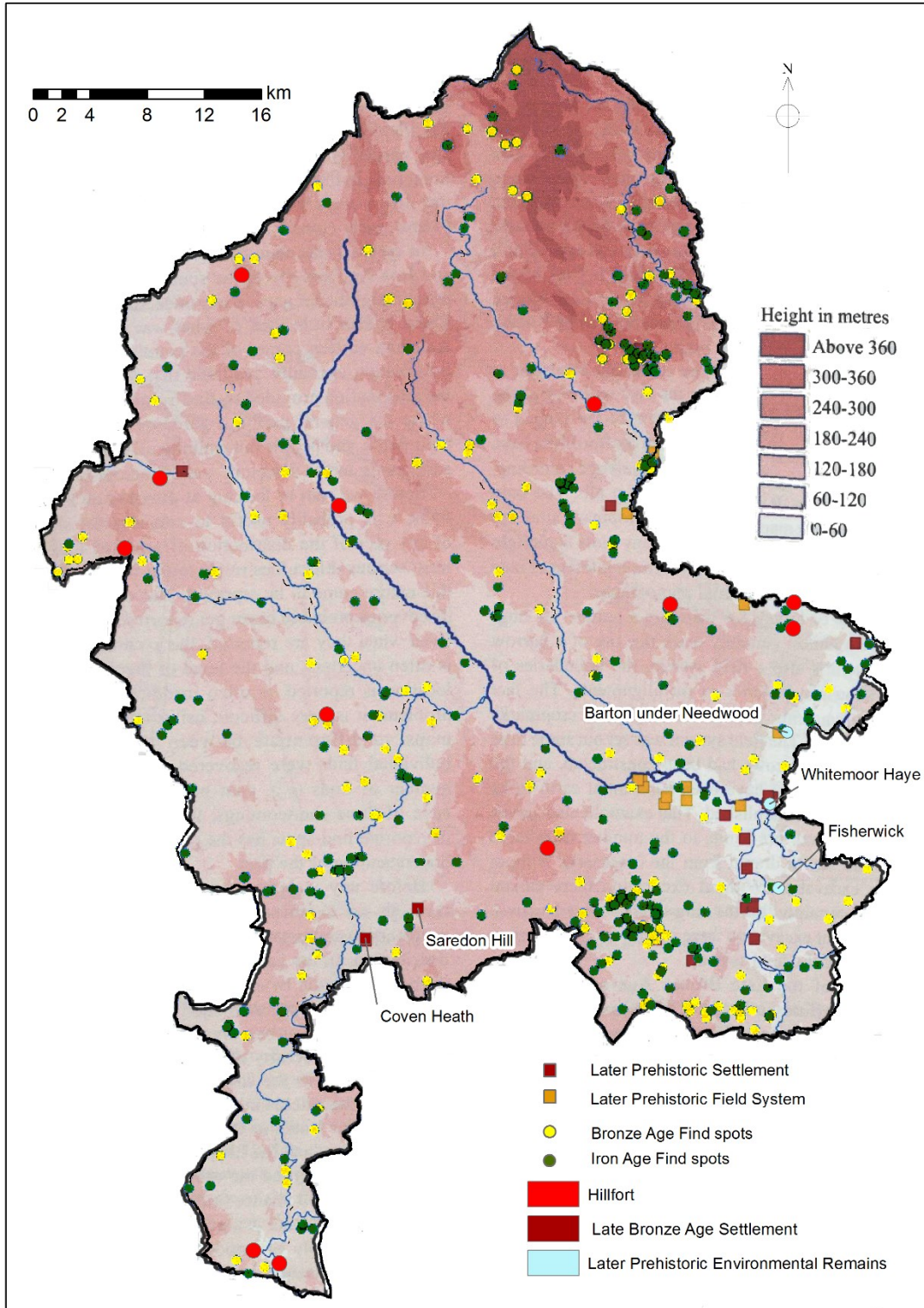


Figure 52: Distribution of Saredon Hill in relation to Hillforts (red circles), and later prehistoric settlements (dark square), field systems (orange square), find spots of Bronze Age (yellow) and Iron Age (green) date, and notable sites with environmental material (light blue) in Staffordshire (after Pearson 2017 fig 2.1, and Wardle 2017, figs 8.4,8.5)

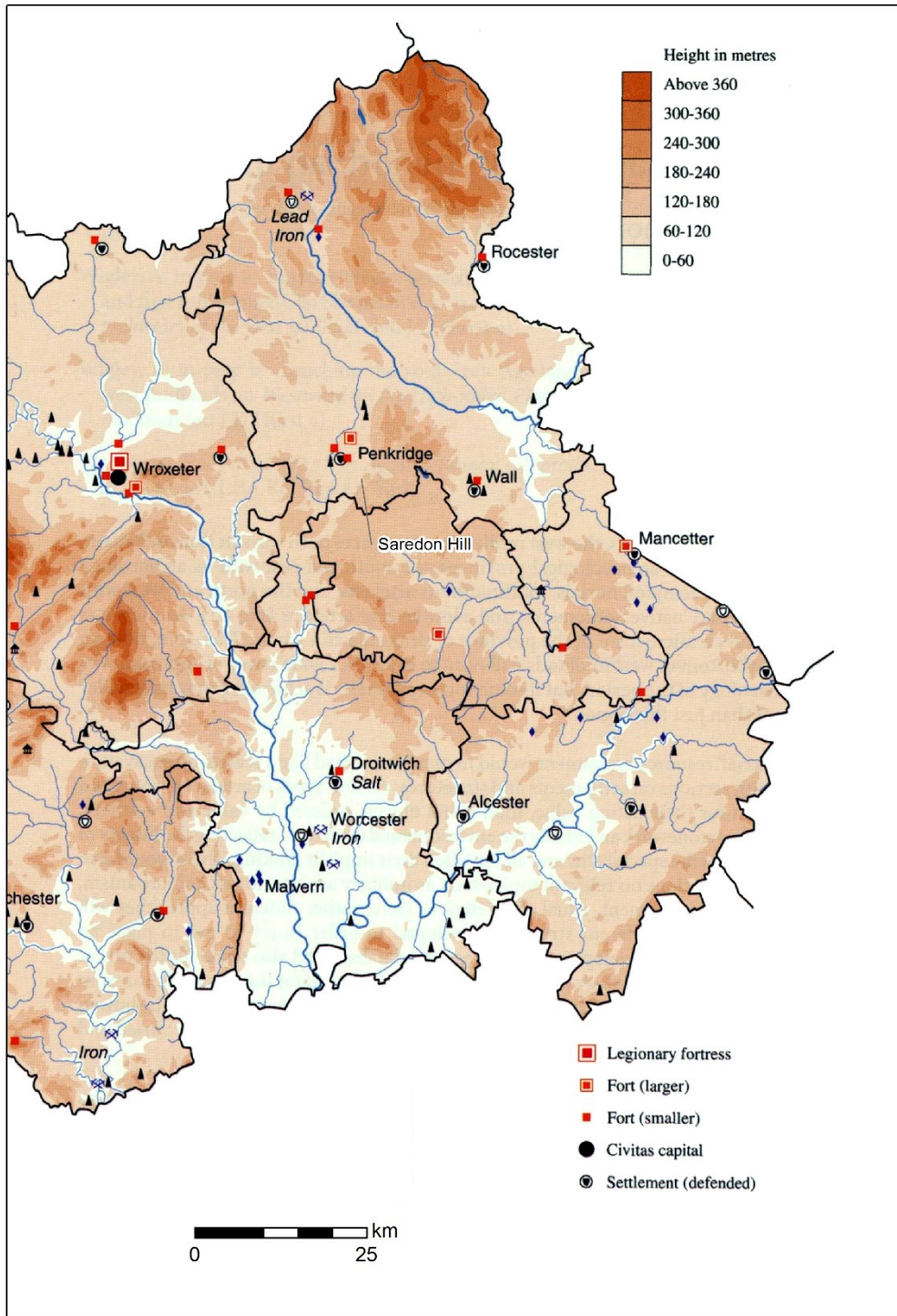


Figure 53: Saredon Hill in relation to key Romano-British sites in Staffordshire (after Esmonde Cleary 2011, Fig 4.1)

Conclusion

The bulk of the archaeological evidence exposed at Saredon Hill Quarry has been much eroded and has limited interpretative potential.

Romano-British deposits have survived with some structural form surviving, and further Romano-British archaeology can be anticipated with the continuation of the enclosures part recorded in the south of the quarry area.

The highlight of the archaeological survey is without doubt the deposit of charred grain from the Late Bronze Age pit recorded on the hill plateau. This is an important environmental assemblage of regional significance. It signals that the hill was occupied at some time around the 9th century BC and that emmer and barley were being cultivated and stored. It is likely that extensive occupation occurred on the hill that has been lost to intensive plough agriculture.

Acknowledgements

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Archive

The archive for this project will be deposited with the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent as the accepting museum for archaeological archives in Staffordshire with accession number 2016. LH.37 and consists of the following:

1 Unbound Copy of this report (ULAS Report No. 2018-)

13 Watching Brief Recording Sheets

Contact Sheets of digital photographs

1 CD of digital photographs

11 Sheets of A3 permatrace with primary drawings

132 Context Sheets

Publication

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work through the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York.

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in a suitable regional archaeological journal in due course.

OASIS data entry

Appendix

OASIS

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1-346612
	Project Name	An Archaeological Strip, Map, and Sample at Saredon Hill Quarry (phases 2&3).
	Start/end dates of	11/09/2018- 26/10/2018

	field work			
	Previous/Future Work	Yes		
	Project Type			
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Arable (not under crop)		
	Monument Type/Period	N/A		
	Significant Finds/Period	N/A		
	Development Type	Aggregates		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition		
	Planning Ref.	SS12/15/602/MW		
PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	Little Saredon, Staffordshire. WV10 7LL		
	Study Area	1.8ha		
	Site Coordinates	SK 5280 1010		
	Height OD	154m OD max		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Local Planning Authority (SCC)		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	Matt Beamish		
	Project Director/Supervisor	James Patrick		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Developer NRS Aggregates		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	NA	Potteries Museum & Art Gallery	Potteries Museum & Art Gallery
	ID (Acc. No.)		2016.LH.37	2016.LH.37
	Contents		Photos Survey data	Watching brief records Field Notes
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	Title	An Archaeological watching brief...		
	Author	Patrick, J.		
	Other bibliographic details	ULAS Report No 2018		
	Date	2017		
	Publisher/Place	University of Leicester Archaeological Services / University of Leicester		
	Description	Developer Report A4 pdf		

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