

An Archaeological Watching Brief from East Lodge to Threefords, Milfield, Northumberland



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Executive Summary

Project Name: An Archaeological Watching Brief from East Lodge to Threefords, Milfield, Northumberland

Site Code: MILL14

Planning Authority: Northumberland County Council

Location: The route of the A697 between East Lodge and Threefords, Northumberland

Geology: Glaciodeltaic and Glaciofluvial sand and gravel

NGR: NT 93948 33494

Date: August 2014

In March 2014 Archaeological Research Services Ltd was commissioned by Northumbrian Water Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief on a service trench excavated prior to the installation of approximately 2.12km of water pipe between East Lodge and Threefords, Northumberland. The route of the water pipe trench was located within the vicinity of the Milfield South henge and the Coupland enclosure (SM ND505).

The excavated water pipe trench measured 0.50m by 2122m x 1.39m at its maximum extents and was excavated through the modern tarmac road surface (1018). Tarmac surface (1018) represented the uppermost context present within the bounds of the excavated trench. Road surface (1018) sealed a levelling deposit (1019). Deposit (1019) overlay a brown-yellow, silty-sand (1022), which forms the uppermost layer of the Devensian fluvio-glacial sand and gravel terrace which forms the natural substrate over the length of the trench. The natural sand and gravel terrace substrate (1022) was identified 0.44m below ground level and remained visible at the maximum depth of the excavation trench. 1.68km south of the northern extent of the excavation trench levelling deposit (1019) also overlay an earlier road surface (1020). Road surface (1020) was identifiable at a depth of 0.34m below the present ground level.

Thirteen features of archaeological significance (F.1037, F.1041, F.1043, F.1050, F.1054, F.1056, F.1058/F.1060, F.1062, F.1064, F.1066, F.1078 and F.1080) were identified 166m south of the Threefords and Milfield intersection of the A697. The archaeological features revealed within the excavation trench were sub-divided into Area A, Area B and Area C. Area A measured 21.87m in length and was situated 142m south of the Threefords intersection. Additionally, Area A contained linear features F.1037, F.1041 and F.1043. Area B was situated 119m south of the Threefords intersection, measured 19m in length and contained linear features F.1050, F.1054, F.1056 and F.1069. Potential pit F.1078 was also located within Area B and bordered the northern extent of linear F.1069. Area C measured 13.15m in length and was located 10m north of Area B. Area C contained linear F.1058/F.1060 and potential pits/postholes F.1062, F.1064 and F.1066.

A comparative analysis of the aerial survey data for the Milfield complex compared against the geo-referenced location of ditch F.1050 would suggest that the route of the excavated service trench bisected the eastern extent of the southern ditch of the Milfield South henge. This interpretation is supported by the broadly similar dimensions displayed by the henge ditch revealed during archaeological excavation in 1977/78, and the measurements exhibited by ditch F.1050 during the current phase of works.

Furthermore, a radiocarbon date of 2295-2062 cal BC was assigned to a charred wood sample from a secondary fill of the ditch (1045) within henge ditch F.1050. Consequently, the southern ditch of the Milfield South henge was constructed sometime prior to this date within the 'Beaker' period making it contemporary with other nearby ritual sites such as the Duddo stone circle. It is also of note that the presence of re-deposited natural sand and gravel (1047), within ditch F.1050, could indicate that a partially eroded bank made from the ditch upcast existed inside the henge ditch.

The presence of pits F.1069 and F.1078, within close proximity to henge ditch F.1050, may also be indicative of internal features associated with activity related to the Milfield South henge. Both the prehistoric and early medieval features identified during the 1977/78 excavations were of comparable form to pits F.1069 and F.1078. Without secure dating evidence, however, no secure chronological phasing could be assigned to either feature. Their function also remains unknown.

No dating evidence was recovered from E-W orientated linears F.1037, F.1041, F.1054, F.1056, F.1058 and F.1060 so no secure phasing was assigned to the above features. The isolated features within Area C, F.1062, F.1064 and F.1066, were interpreted as likely post-medieval post-pits, similar in form to a number of 'bowl shaped' features identified during the 1977/78 excavations.

Linear F.1080 displayed no obvious association with any of the potential prehistoric features and was interpreted as a boundary ditch of unknown date and function.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In September 2014 Archaeological Research Services Ltd was commissioned by Northumbrian Water Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief on three trenches excavated prior to the installation of approximately 2.08km of water pipe between East Lodge and Threefords, Northumberland. The route of the water pipe trench was located within the vicinity of the henge site at Milfield South and the Coupland henge/enclosure (SM ND505), both of which are located to the south of Milfield village and to the immediate west of the A697 trunk road. Any potential for adverse impact by the works upon the deposits associated with these monuments was identified in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Clarke 2014).

Archaeological and Historical Background

Prehistoric

- 1.2 The Milfield Basin was subject to intense prehistoric activity during the later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (Waddington 2009; Passmore and Waddington 2009; 2012). One focus of prehistoric activity is characterised by the largest complex of henge monuments known in Britain, and which including the Milfield South henge. The other henge sites include those at Ford Bridge West, Milfield North, Whitton Hill, Coupland, Marleyknowe, Ewart Park, Akeld Steads, Yeavering and Wooler Cricket Pitch. Additionally, two roughly parallel ditches which vary between 15-30m apart comprise the Milfield Avenue or Drove and form a defined routeway which links from a fording point across the river Till in the north, through the Coupland enclosure (the largest of all the Milfield henge complex) to the Galewood Depression and a natural routeway back to the river Till in the south (Waddington 1999). This 'avenue' runs past the west side of the Milfield South henge, through the Coupland enclosure and to the west of the Marleyknowe henge suggesting a processional link between some of the henge monuments.
- 1.3 Milfield South henge is of particular note to the current phase of works as the route of the service pipe trench passes in close proximity to this monument. Milfield South henge is situated south of the village of Milfield and measures 35m in diameter at its maximum external extents. The henge monument is defined by a broadly circular, but irregularly segmented, ditch with a north-west facing entrance, although others could have existed on its east side which lies underneath the A697 road. This henge was subject to a phase of partial archaeological excavation between 1977-78 (Harding 1981) and fieldwalking (Passmore and Waddington 2009). During the course of the 1977/78 excavations a large pit measuring 2m in diameter and 1.9m in depth was identified within the centre of the henge and contained a rectangular stone setting, a substantial post and a number of small post holes. Additionally, the henge ditches have been suggested to have been filled by naturally occurring waterborne silts and not the subject of deliberate man-made back-filling (Harding 2003), but this is considered

to be flawed being based on a misinterpretation of the geology of the area and the process and character of sedimentation. The Milfield South henge is not visible at ground level, surviving only as a heavily truncated site buried below the current field and road surfaces. It was only identified by aerial photography in the 1940's.

Roman

- 1.4 No archaeological evidence of Roman date has been found within the vicinity of the route taken by the service pipe trench.

Early Medieval

- 1.5 The royal Anglo-Saxon palace of Maelmin was founded at Milfield during the 7th and 8th centuries AD. The site included a large enclosed settlement comprising domestic houses, a large hall and a number of sunken featured buildings enclosed by a double palisade (Gates and O'Brien 1988). Excavations on the other side of the A697 opposite the Milfield South henge in advance of the car park for the Maelmin Heritage Trail ('Maelmin West') revealed evidence for extra-mural Anglo-Saxon settlement outside the enclosure around the town of Maelmin and a radiocarbon date on a breadwheat grain from a posthole for a field boundary provided a date of cal AD 680-890 at 95.4% confidence (Passmore and Waddington 2009, 251-264).
- 1.6 Archaeological excavations conducted in 1975 and 1977-78 revealed re-use of both the Milfield North henge and Milfield South henge as Anglo-Saxon cemetery sites in the 6th and 7th Century (Harding and Scull 1990)

Method Statement

- 1.7 The aim of the archaeological watching brief was to:
- identify and assess any archaeological features within the bounds of the foundation trenches and establish the extent, condition, character and date of any of these features
 - assess the potential significance of buried archaeology on the site and the likely impact of the development upon such buried archaeological remains
 - record any features or deposits identified
- 1.8 All trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. The deposits contained within the foundation and service trenches were removed in 100-200mm thick gradients to the required depth.
- 1.9 Each of the features identified during monitoring was subject to sample excavation and recording. This involved the sectioning of deposits to determine their form and dimensions, the collection of any artefacts or samples suitable for

radiocarbon dating and environmental analysis. All excavation was undertaken with small hand tools. Deposits with potential for containing organic material were subject to flotation through a 500µm sieve. All sections and plans were drawn at either 1: 10 or 1: 20 scale as appropriate.

- 1.10 The photographic record included photographs of all identified features together with general shots of the groundworks. The photographic archive consists of 35mm full frame sensor (36x24mm) digital SLR colour photography at a minimum of 12 megapixels. All detailed photographs contained a graduated photographic scale.
- 1.11 All the deposits and cuts were described in the field on pro-forma context sheets. The sheets contain prompts for the recording of sediment composition, compaction and colour, the dimensions of the deposit, its relationship to other deposits and features, artefact content, environmental samples, drawing and photographic records and an interpretative discussion to ensure consistency across all records. Drawings were produced on drawing film. Artefacts were bagged individually and assigned an individual find number, with the site code and the deposit from which they were recovered clearly indicated. Any single entity charred material samples suitable for radiocarbon dating were wrapped in aluminium foil before being placed in labelled bags.
- 1.12 All archaeological fieldwork was carried out to the standards set out in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Practice (2000) and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation (2008).

2 Results

- 2.1 The excavated water pipe trench measured 0.50m by 2122m x 1.39m at its maximum extents and was excavated through the modern asphalt road surface (1018). The road surface (1018) displayed a thickness of 0.10m and represented the uppermost context present within the bounds of the excavated trench. Road surface (1018) sealed a 0.24m thick, blackish-grey levelling deposit (1019), comprising a poorly sorted silty-gravel matrix containing frequent small-medium sized, sub-angular and sub-rounded stony inclusions. Deposit (1019) overlay a brown-yellow, silty-sand natural substrate (1022) containing frequent, small-medium, sub-rounded stony inclusions. This is the upper layer of the late Devensian fluvio-glacial sand and gravel outwash terrace. Sand and gravel natural substrate (1022) was identified 0.44m below ground level and remained visible at the maximum depth of the excavation trench. 1.68km south of the northern extent of the excavation trench and 409m north-west of the water compressor station levelling deposit (1019) also overlay an earlier road surface (1020). Road surface (1020) was identifiable at a depth of 0.34m below the present ground level and had a maximum thickness of 0.08m. Surface (1020) persisted throughout the northern extent of the excavation trench and sealed a 0.10m thick, brown-grey, sand and gravel sub-base deposit (1021). Sub-base deposit (1021) overlay

natural substrate (1022) and was identifiable beneath the full extent of lower road surface (1020).

- 2.2 Thirteen features of archaeological significance (F.1037, F.1041, F.1043, F.1050, F.1054, F.1056, F.1058, F.1060, F.1062, F.1064, F.1066, F.1078 and F.1080) were identified at a maximum distance of 166m south of the Threefords and Milfield intersection with the A697. All of the features were considered to be associated with the Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age (ie. Beaker Period) monument of the Milfield South henge. The archaeological features revealed within the excavation trench were sub-divided into Area A, Area B and Area C. Area A measured 21.87m in length and was situated 142m south of the Threefords intersection. Additionally, Area A contained linears F.1037, F.1041 and F.1043. Area B was situated 119m south of the Threefords intersection, measured 19m in length and contained linears F.1050, F.1054, F.1056 and F.1069. Potential pit F.1078 was also located within Area B and bordered the northern extent of linear F.1069. Area C measured 13.15m in length and was located 10m north of Area B. Area C contained linear F.1058/F.1060 and potential pits/postholes F.1062, F.1064 and F.1066.

Area A

- 2.3 F.1037 was situated 3.84m south of ditch F.1050 and 2.0m north of F.1041 (Figures- 3, 10 & 20). F.1037 bisected the trench on an ENE-WSW alignment and comprising a gully with cut [1036] and filled by deposit (1037). Cut [1036] measured 0.42m x 0.54m x 0.28m at its maximum visible extents and was excavated in to the natural sand and gravel (1024). It displayed concave sides, a rounded, uneven base and a gradual break of slope at both the top and bottom. Deposit (1037) was the only identifiable fill of this feature and had an orange-brown, sandy-silt composition. The gully feature was sealed by the 20th Century sub-base deposit (1021). There was no dating evidence recovered from the fill. As previously mentioned, F.1037 was visible within both the west and east facing sections and is interpreted as a boundary ditch or drainage gully.
- 2.4 F.1041 was located 1.91m south of F.1037 and bisected the service trench on an ENE-WSW orientation (Figures- 3, 11 & 21). F.1041 comprised a concave sided cut with a rounded base [1040], filled by a dark, orange-brown, sandy-silt (1041). The feature was sealed by 20th Century sub-base deposit (1021) and produced no datable finds. It measured 0.66m x 0.54m x 0.42m at its maximum visible extents and was interpreted as boundary ditch or drainage gully of unknown date.
- 2.5 F.1043 was situated approximately 17m south of linear F.1041 and measured 0.46m x 0.54m x 0.36m at its maximum visible extents (Figures- 3, 12 & 22). The feature was cut into the natural sand and gravel substrate (1024) and comprised a concave-sided cut [1044], filled by an orange-brown, sandy-silt (1043). Deposit (1043) was likely formed by wind/waterborne silt deposition and was sealed by sub-base deposit (1021). No dating evidence was recovered from deposit (1043).

Linear F.1043 was also visible within both the east and west facing sections and was, therefore, interpreted as a boundary ditch or gully of unknown date.

- 2.6 It is worth noting that linears F.1037, F.1041 and F.1043 were directly overlain by a 20th Century construction deposit (1021). Consequently, these features have been truncated and were evidently of greater depth and had broader dimensions when originally cut.

Area B

- 2.7 F.1054 was located 3.77m north of pit F.1078 and measured 0.71m x 0.54m x 0.23m at its maximum visible extents (Figures- 4, 13 & 23). F.1054 comprised cut [1055], filled by deposit (1054). Cut [1053] was excavated into the natural sand and gravel substrate (1024) and displayed concave sides, a gradual break of slope at the top and a rounded, even base. The fill comprised a dark orange-brown, sandy-silt (1054) which was sealed by sub-base deposit (1021). No datable finds were recovered from (1054). F.1054 is interpreted as a ditch or gully of unknown date and function.
- 2.8 F.1056 was situated 0.97m north of linear F.1054 and measured 0.50m x 0.54m x 0.20m at its maximum extents (Figures 4, 14 & 24). Linear F.1056 was excavated into the natural sand and gravel substrate (1024) and comprised a concave sided cut [1055] filled by a well sorted, orange-brown, sandy-silt deposit (1056). It was sealed by sub-base deposit (1021) and contained no dating evidence. The composition and form of (1056) was indicative of the fill forming through the action of waterborne siltation. Consequently, linear F.1056 was interpreted as a boundary or drainage ditch of unknown date.
- 2.9 F.1050 was located 3.89m north of F.1037 and measured 5.24m x 0.54m x 1.13m at its maximum visible extents (Figures 4, 6, 25-27). F.1050 was comprised a cut [1044] filled by deposits (1045), (1046), (1047), (1048), (1049) and (1050). The northern side of cut [1044] displayed a concave profile before descending into a gradually declining step at a depth of 0.92m below ground level. A sharp break of slope was identified at the top of the step which descended 0.55m down a near vertical-side to the base of F.1050 (Figure 6). The southern side of cut [1044] displayed a concave profile and a gradual break of slope at both the top and bottom. The earliest identifiable fill within cut [1044] was a well sorted, orange-brown, silty-gravel (1046) measuring 1.93m x 0.54m x 0.30m at its maximum visible extents. Deposit (1046) contained no datable finds and was sealed by deposits (1045) and (1047). The composition and form of deposit (1046) was indicative of natural siltation, likely related to initial erosion and consolidation of the sides of F.1050 following excavation. Deposit (1045) overlay fill (1046) at its southern extents and displayed maximum dimensions of 3.04m x 0.54m x 0.36m. Deposit (1045) had a dark, orange-brown, sandy-silt composition and contained a piece of short-lived charred roundwood that has produced a date of 2295-2062 cal BC at 95.4% confidence and 2278-2144 cal BC at 68% confidence (see below)

(SUERC-57563). Deposit (1045) was overlain by deposits (1047) and (1048). As previously mentioned, deposits (1045) and (1046) were overlain by a yellow-brown, sandy-silt containing frequent small to medium sized, sub-rounded and sub-angular stony inclusions. Deposit (1047) measured 1.9m x 0.54m x 0.89m at its maximum visible extents and was sealed by deposit (1049). It should be noted that (1047) was interpreted as re-deposited natural substrate and was located at the northern extent of [1044]. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to assume that (1047) could represent slippage of an internal bank due to partial erosion and not be the result of a man-made 'dumping' event. No finds were recovered from deposit (1047).

- 2.10 Deposit (1048) overlay the southern extent of (1047) and measured 2.86m x 0.54m x 0.25m at its greatest extents. Deposit (1048) comprised a well sorted, orange-brown, sandy-silt and was interpreted as a naturally formed silting event within the henge ditch [1044]. A well sorted, grey-brown, sandy-silt deposit (1049) measuring 4.05m x 0.54m x 0.50m overlay both (1047) and (1048). No finds were recovered from fill (1049) which, due to its composition, was interpreted as a naturally silting event. No finds were recovered from deposit (1049). The uppermost deposit within cut [1044] was an orange-brown, sandy-silt deposit (1050) containing occasional, small, sub-rounded, stony inclusions. Deposit (1050) measured 5.24m x 0.54m x 0.26m at its maximum extents and sealed both deposits (1049) and (1048). Modern sub-base deposit (1021) sealed fill (1050). Deposits (1048), (1049) and (1050) were interpreted as final phase dis-use events related to the likely abandonment of the ditch.
- 2.11 Linear feature F.1050 was interpreted as the eastern extent of the southern ditch associated with the Milfield South henge. This interpretation was formed by a comparative analysis of both the location of the Milfield South henge, as established by aerial survey, and the geo-referenced location of F.1050 (Figure 2). Additionally, the composition displayed by the fills of [1044] were similar to those deposits described within the ditches of the Milfield South henge during the 1977/78 excavations (Harding 1984). Deposit (1045), although secondary, represents an early stage in the phasing of the henge ditch F.1050 and so the date that it produced provides a *terminus ante quem* (ie. a date before which) the henge was constructed. This is consistent with a Beaker period date for the monument and that it was constructed and used in the two or three centuries prior to 2000 cal BC, and matches the other few dates currently available for some of the other henge monuments in the complex (Harding 1981; Waddington 2009). The northern ditch of the Milfield South henge was not identified within the excavated service trench. The lack of any returning henge ditch, north of linear F.1050, might indicate that the excavated service trench passed through a previously unrecognised entrance causeway into the henge on its eastern side.
- 2.12 F.1069 bisected the service trench 0.77m north of the henge ditch F.1050 and measured 2.66m x 0.54m x 0.67m at its greatest extents (Figures 4, 7, 8, 28 & 29). F.1069 comprised a concave-sided cut [1051] filled by deposits (1052), (1067),

(1068) and (1069). Cut [1051] was excavated into both the natural sand and gravel substrate (1024) and pit F.1078. The cut [1051] displayed a gradual break of slope at the top, a gradual break of slope at the bottom and a rounded, uneven base. The earliest identifiable fill of cut [1051] was an orange-brown, sandy-silt deposit (1052) measuring 2.23m x 0.54m x 0.27m. Deposit (1052) was overlain by deposits (1067) and (1068) and contained no datable finds. Deposit (1067) measured 2.21m x 0.54m x 0.35m at its maximum extents and displayed an orange-brown, sandy-silt composition. No datable finds were recovered from (1067). Deposit (1068) measured 2.45m x 0.54m x 0.29m and overlay both deposits (1067) and (1052). Fill (1068) comprised a well sorted, yellow-brown, sandy-silt which contained a moderate number of small, sub-rounded stony inclusions. No datable finds were recovered from (1068). A final stage, dis-use deposit (1069) sealed fill (1068). Deposit (1069) measured 1.05m x 0.54m x 0.26m at its greatest extents and was composed of a dark, yellow-brown, sandy-silt containing occasional, small, sub-rounded stony inclusions. No datable finds were recovered from deposit (1069). Both (1068) and (1069) were sealed by 20th Century sub-base deposit (1021).

2.13 Although F.1069 was visible in both the eastern and western sections of the service trench, the relatively narrow width of the excavated area prevented any conclusive interpretation with regard to the feature's function as either a ditch or pit. However, if we are to consider F.1050 as the southern ditch to the Milfield South henge then it seems likely that F.1069 should be regarded as an internal feature. The lack of datable finds or any physical relationship with F.1050 prevented any chronological determination of whether F.1069 pre-dated or post-dated the prehistoric phase of activity at the henge.

2.14 F.1078 was located at the southern extents of pit/ditch F.1069 and measured 2.17m x 0.34m x 0.74m at its maximum extents (Figure 4, 7 & 28). F.1078 was defined by a concave-sided cut [1074] filled by deposits (1074), (1075), (1076) and (1077). Cut [1074] also displayed a flat, uneven base and was excavated into the natural sand and gravel substrate (1024). The earliest identifiable fill within cut [1074] was a well sorted, orange-brown, sandy-silt (1075) measuring 0.87m x 0.34m x 0.14m at its maximum visible extents. Deposit (1075) contained no datable finds and was sealed by deposits (1076) and (1077). Deposit (1076) overlay the southern extent of (1075) and was composed of a yellow-brown, sandy-silt containing a moderate number of small, sub-rounded stony inclusions. Deposit (1076) measured 0.84m x 0.34m x 0.08m at its maximum extents and contained no datable finds. Deposit (1077) overlay both (1075) and (1076) and displayed a similar orange-brown, sandy-silt composition. Additionally, the maximum dimensions exhibited by deposit (1077) measured 2.06m x 0.34m x 0.37m. No datable finds were recovered from (1077). The latest identifiable fill within cut [1074] was deposit (1078) which measured 1.81m x 0.34m x 0.38m at its maximum visible extents. Deposit (1078) displayed a yellow-brown, sandy-silt composition and produced no datable finds. Deposit (1078) was sealed by 20th

Century sub-base deposit (1021) and truncated by pit/ditch F.1069 at its northern extent.

- 2.15 F.1078 was only visible within the east-facing section of the excavated service trench and was therefore interpreted as a potential pit, excavated within the interior of Milfield South henge. The lack of any secure dating evidence prevented any firm chronological understanding as to whether F.1078 was formed either during, or after, the prehistoric phase of activity at the henge.

Area C

- 2.16 F.1058/60 was located 11.6m north of F.1056 and measured 0.54m x 1.24m x 0.25m at its maximum visible extents (Figures 5, 15, 16 & 30). F.1058/60 comprised a concave-sided cut [1057/1059] filled by a well sorted, orange-brown, sandy-silt deposit (1058/60). Deposit (1058/60) was the only identifiable fill within cut [1057/59], was overlain by sub-base deposit (1021) and contained no datable finds. F.1058/60 was interpreted as a drainage ditch of unknown date.
- 2.17 F.1062 was situated 2.91m north of F.1058/60 and measured 0.74m x 0.24m x 0.20m at its maximum visible extents (Figure 5, 17 & 31). It comprised a concave-sided cut [1061] filled by a dark, orange-brown, sandy-silt deposit (1062). Deposit (1062) was the only identifiable fill within cut [1061] and was overlain by sub-base deposit (1021). No datable finds were recovered from F.1062. F.1062 was interpreted as a pit or posthole of unknown date due to the form and composition of both [1061] and (1062).
- 2.18 F.1064 measured 0.66m x 0.27m x 0.29m at its maximum visible extents and was located 3.75m north of F.1062 (Figure 5, 18 & 32). F.1064 displayed a concave-sided cut [1063] filled by a dark, orange-brown, sandy-silt deposit (1064). Deposit (1064) was overlain by sub-base deposit (1021) and overlay the natural sand and gravel substrate (1024). No datable finds were recovered from F.1064. F.1062 is interpreted as a pit or posthole of unknown date due to the form and composition of both [1063] and (1064) (Figures 5 and 18).
- 2.19 F.1066 was situated 1.88m north of F.1064 and measured 0.56m x 0.25m x 0.20m at its maximum extents (Figure 5, 19 & 33). F.1066 comprised a concave-sided cut [1065] filled by a dark, yellow-brown, sandy-silt (1066) containing occasional, small, sub-rounded stony inclusions. Deposit (1066) was the only identifiable fill within cut [1065] and was overlain by sub-base deposit (1021). No datable finds were recovered from F.1066. F.1066 is interpreted as a pit or posthole of unknown date.
- 2.20 F.1081 bisected the service trench 1181mm north of henge ditch F.1050 and measured 1.18m x 0.54m x 0.24m at its greatest extents (Figures 9 & 33). F.1081 comprised a concave-sided cut [1080], excavated through the natural sand and gravel substrate (1024) and filled by deposits (1081), (1082) and (1083). The

earliest identifiable fills of cut [1080] were two light, orange-brown, sandy-silt deposits (1082) and (1083). Deposit (1082) was identifiable at the southern extent of F.1081 and measured 0.81m x 0.54m x 0.17m. Deposit (1083) was visible at the northern extent of F.1081 and measured 1.12m x 0.54m x 0.18m at its greatest extents. Both fills (1082) and (1083) were overlain by deposit (1081) and were likely formed at a broadly contemporaneous date. Deposit (1081) measured 2.29m x 0.54m x 0.48m at its maximum extents and displayed an orange-brown, sandy-silt composition. No datable finds were recovered from (1081). F.1081 was visible within both the north-east and south-west sections and is therefore interpreted as a boundary ditch of unknown date. The form of [1080] coupled with a lack of association with any other archaeological features may suggest that F.1081 is associated with activity not connected with the henge, perhaps being of a later date.

3 Discussion

- 3.1 A comparative analysis of the aerial survey data for the Milfield complex compared against the geo-referenced location of ditch F.1050 indicates that the route of the excavated service trench bisected the eastern side of Milfield South henge. This is supported by the broadly similar dimensions displayed by the henge ditch revealed during archaeological excavation in 1977/78 (Harding 1981) and the measurements exhibited by ditch F.1050 during the current phase of works. The radiocarbon date from an early phase secondary fill of the ditch shows the monument to have been in use in the centuries preceding 2000 cal BC placing it in the Beaker period when metalwork was first used in the British Isles. The presence of re-deposited natural material (1047) within the northern extent of ditch F.1050 suggests a bank made from the ditch upcast existed inside the henge ditch.
- 3.2 The presence of pits F.1069 and F.1078 within close proximity to the henge ditch F.1050, may also be indicative of internal features associated with activity related to the functioning of the henge, or possibly later use in the early Anglo-Saxon period. The excavations on the Milfield South henge between 1977/78 revealed a number of features within its interior that were related to phases of both prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon activity. The Anglo-Saxon activity comprised a dense cluster of graves indicating its use as a cemetery during pagan Anglo-Saxon times. Both the prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon features identified during the 1977/78 excavations were of comparable form to pits F.1069 and F.1078. Without secure dating evidence, however, no secure chronological phasing or function can be assigned to either pit feature.
- 3.3 Similarly, no dating evidence was recovered from E-W orientated linears F.1037, F.1041, F.1054, F.1056, F.1058 and F.1060 so no secure phasing was assigned to any of them. The relative proximity of these linears to the henge ditch F.1050 may indicate a broadly contemporaneous relationship, however the known re-use of the Milfield South henge and high concentrations of activity during later periods means they could belong to a later phase of activity.

- 3.4 The isolated discrete features (F.1062, F.1064 and F.1066) located within Area C also produced no dating evidence but exhibited a similar form and dimensions to a number of 'bowl-shaped', post-medieval features identified during the 1977/78 excavations (Harding and Scull 1990). No conclusive interpretation of the post-medieval features was established during the 1970's aside from a consideration that they may have represented post-pits for a substantial temporary structure. Despite the lack of dating evidence, it does not seem unreasonable to assume that F.1062, F.1064 and F.1066 could have represented the same post-medieval 'post-pits' as were identified during the 1970's.
- 3.5 Linear F.1080 was identified in isolation from the other features revealed within the excavated service trench. The lack of dating evidence prevented any precise chronological phasing. Consequently, F.1081 was interpreted as a boundary ditch of unknown date with no obvious association to any other known or conjectured archaeological features.

4 Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright

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6 Acknowledgements

- 6.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those who contributed to the outcome of this project, in particular Ben Ralston of Northumbrian Water Ltd and Nick Best of Northumberland County Council.

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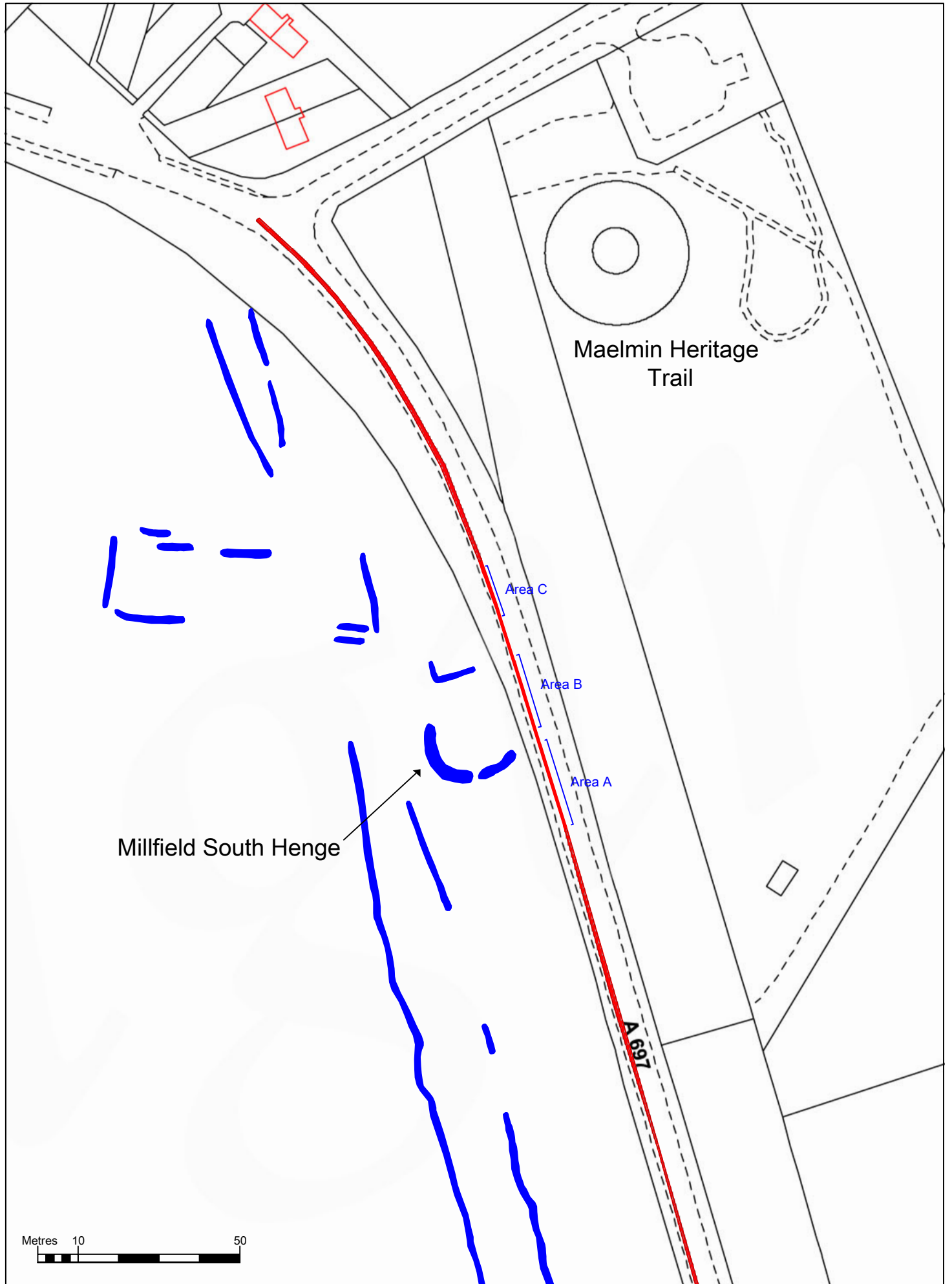
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Appendix 1- Figures



Figure 1: Site location



Title: Figure. 2 - Trench Location and localised Archaeological Features
 Scale: 1:1250
 Drawn: RL

Key: — - Trench Location
— - Archaeological Features Identified by Aerial Photography



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F.1037 s.3.1 s.3.2

F.1041 s.2.1 s.2.2

F.1043 s.1.1 s.1.2



Figure 3- Plan of Area A
Scale:1:100 @ A4
Drawn: RL

Key:



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F.1056 s.7.2
s.7.1

F.1054 s.6.2
s.6.1

s.5.2
F.1078

F.1069

s.5.1

s.4.1

F.1050

s.4.2



Figure 4- Plan of Area B
Scale: 1:100 @ A4
Drawn: RL

Key:



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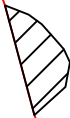
F.1066



F.1064



F.1062



F.1058/1060

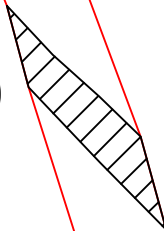


Figure 5- Plan of Area C
Scale:1:50 @ A4
Drawn: RL

Key:

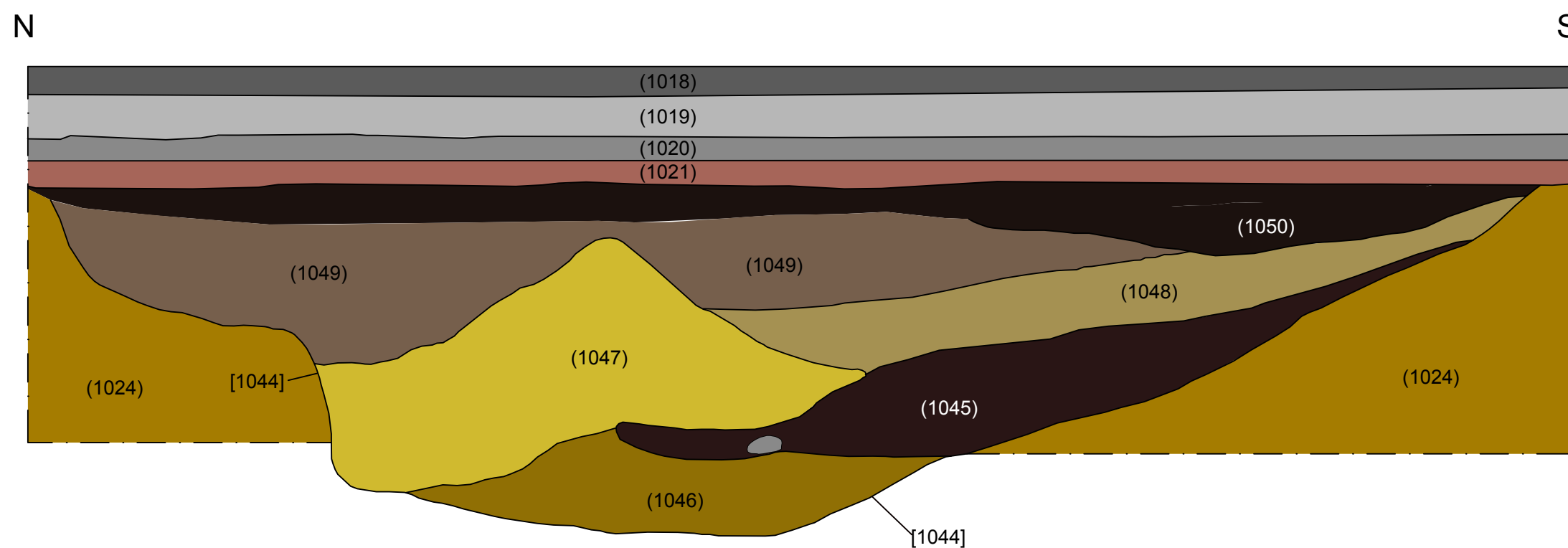


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Figure 6- West Facing Section through southern ditch of Milfield South Henge
Drawn: GE
Scale: 1:20@A3

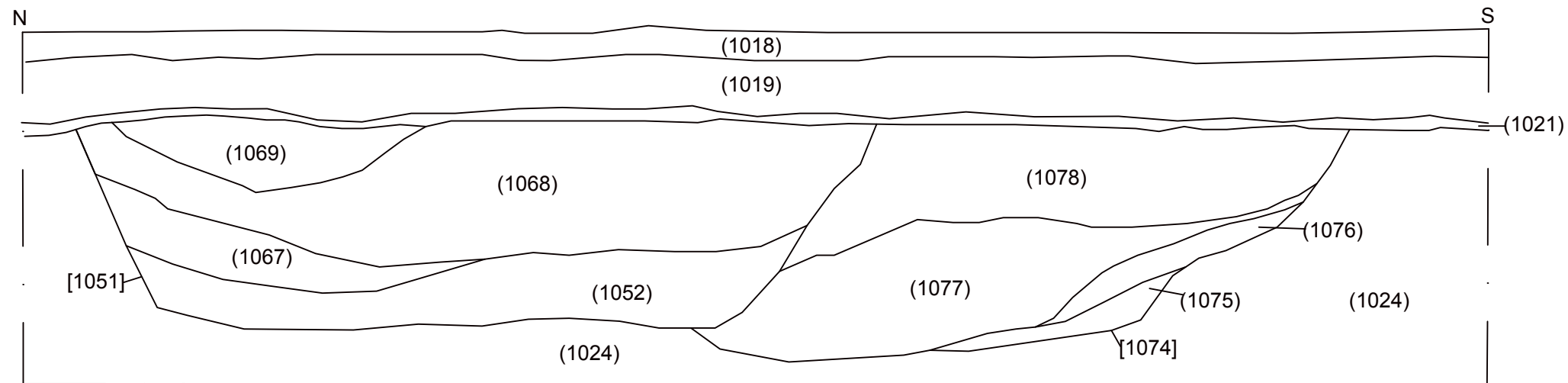
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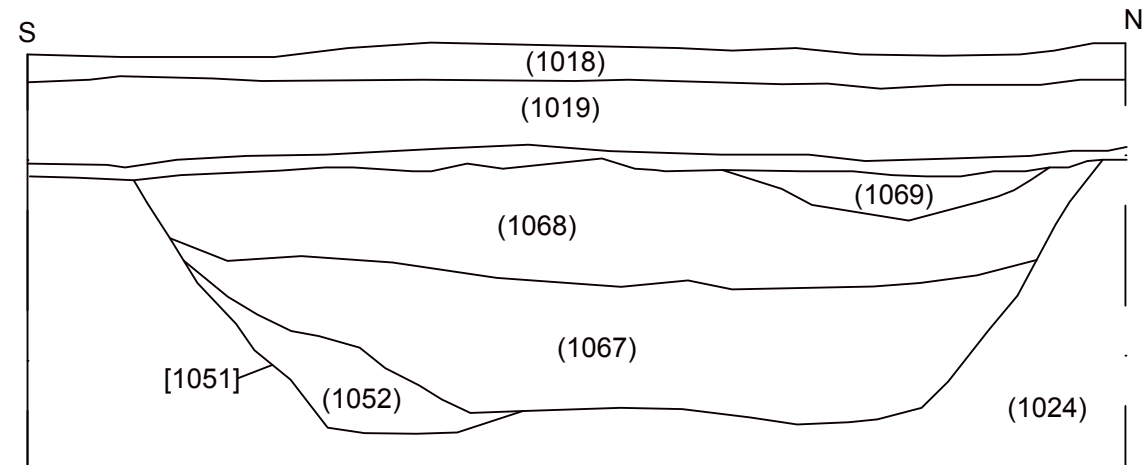
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Figure 7- E-facing section through pit/ditch F.1069 and pit/ditch F.1078



Key:

Figure 8- W-facing section through pit/ditch F.1069

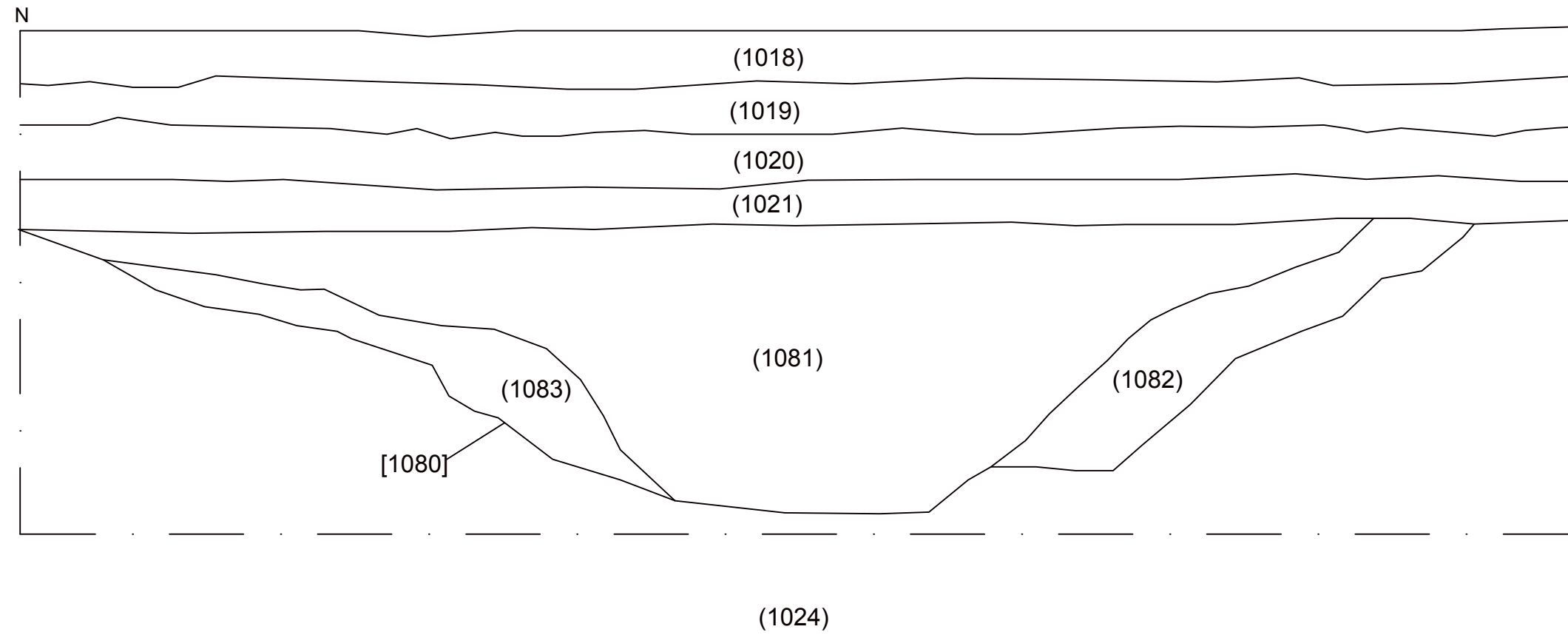


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Figure 9- E-facing section through ditch
F.1081
Scale: 1:10 @ A3
Drawn: TL

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Figure 10- W-facing section through F.1037

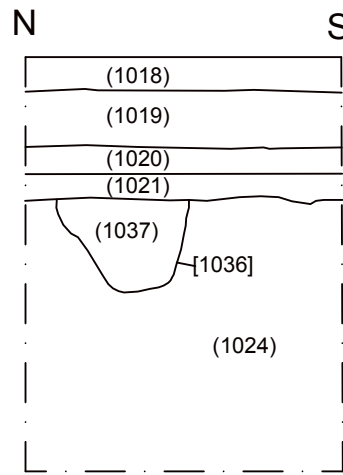


Figure 11- W-facing section through F.1041

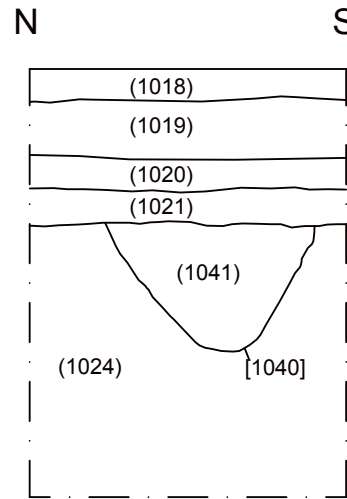


Figure 12- W-facing section through F.1043

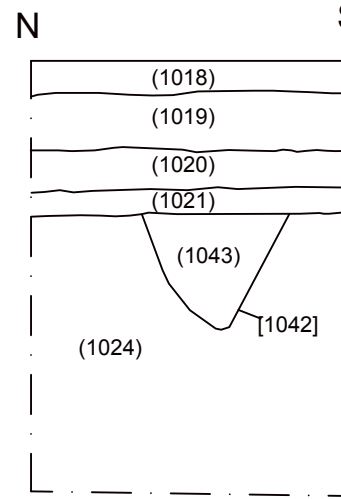


Figure 13- W-facing section through F.1054

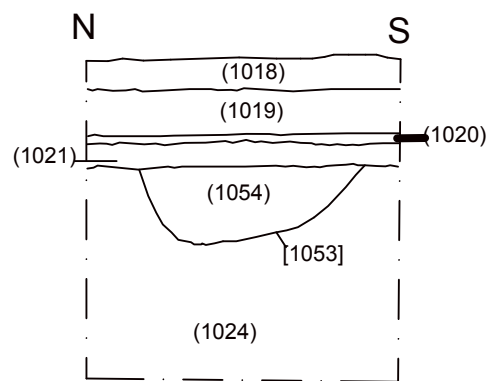


Figure 14- W-facing section through F.1056

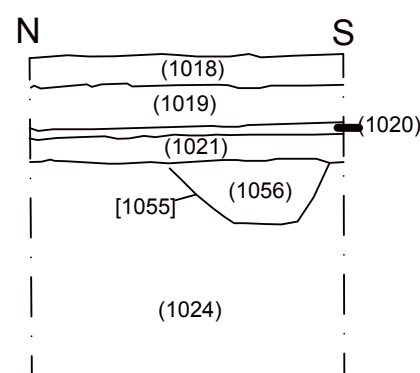


Figure 15- E-facing section through F.1058

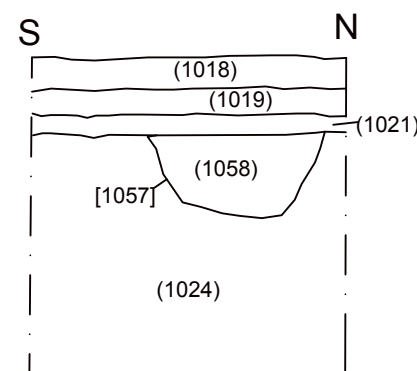


Figure 16- W-facing section through F.1060

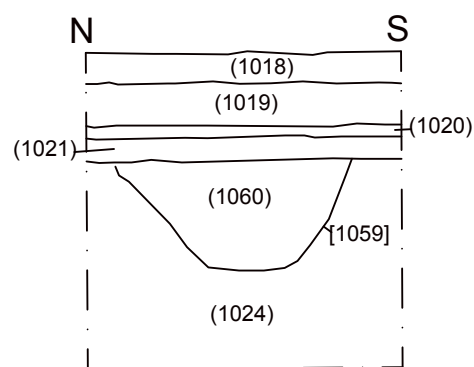


Figure 17- E-facing section through F.1062

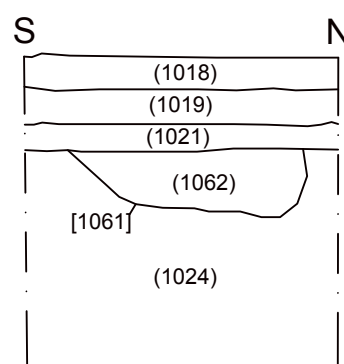


Figure 18- E-facing section through F.1064

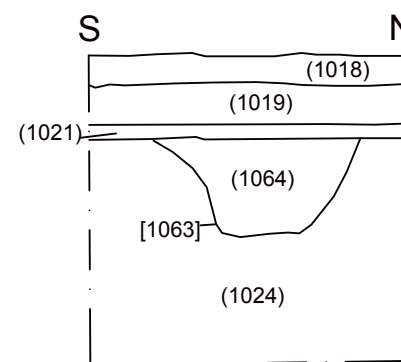
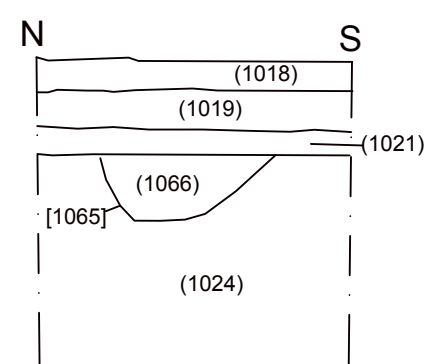


Figure 19- W-facing section through F.1066



Figures 10-19
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Scale: 1:20 @ A3

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Figure 20- N-facing oblique view of linear F.1037 (Scale 1 x 1m)



Figure 21- NW-facing oblique view of linear F.1041 (Scale 2 x 1m)



Figure 22- NW-facing oblique view of linear F.1043 (Scale 2 x 1m)



Figure 23- W-facing view of linear F.1054 (Scale- 2 x 1m)

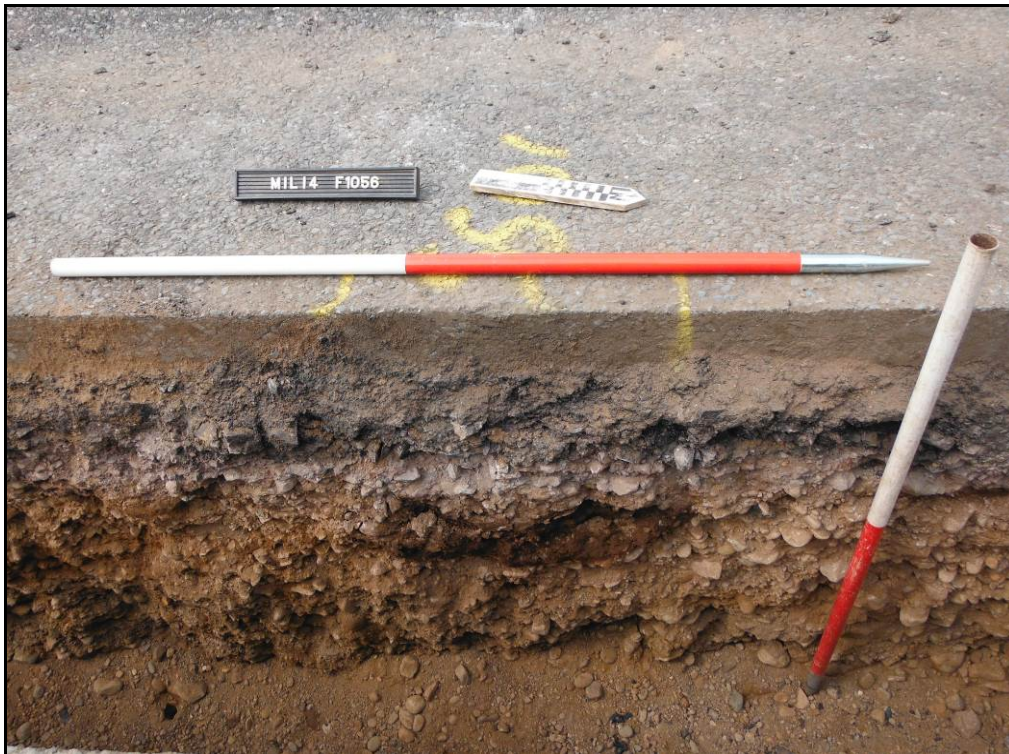


Figure 24- W-facing view of linear F.1056 (Scale 2 x 1m)



Figure 25- N-facing oblique view of southern henge ditch F.1050
(Scale- 1 x 1m & 2 x 2m)



Figure 26- NE facing view of henge ditch F.1050 (Scale- 1 x 2m)



Figure 27- SE- facing view of henge ditch F.1050 (Scale- 1 x 1m & 2 x 2m)



Figure 28- NW facing view of F.1069 and F.1078 (Scale 1 x 1m & 1 x 2m)



Figure 29- NNE facing view of F.1069 (Scale 1 x 1m & 1 x 2m)



Figure 30- E-facing view of linear F.1058/60 (Scale- 2 x 1m)



Figure 31- NW-facing view of F.1062 (Scale- 2 x 1m)



Figure 32- W-facing view of F.1064 (Scale- 2 x 1m)



Figure 33- W-facing view of F.1066 (Scale- 2 x 1m)



Figure 34- SW facing view of linear F.1081 (Scale- 1 x 1m)

Appendix 2- Context Register

Context No.	Type	Description
1018	Surface	Modern Tarmac surface
1019	Deposit	Sub-base for (1018)
1020	Surface	Early Tarmac Surface
1021	Deposit	Sub-base deposit below (1020)
1022	Deposit	Natural substrate
1023-35	-	VOID
1036	Cut	Cut of F.1037
1037	Deposit	Fill of [1036]
1038	-	VOID
1039	-	VOID
1040	Cut	Cut of F.1041
1041	Deposit	Fill of [1040]
1042	Cut	Cut of F.1043
1043	Deposit	Fill of [1042]
1044	Cut	Cut of Milfield South Henge southern ditch F.1050
1045	Deposit	Fill of [1040]
1046	Deposit	Fill of [1040]
1047	Deposit	Fill of [1040]
1048	Deposit	Fill of [1040]
1049	Deposit	Fill of [1040]
1050	Deposit	Fill of [1040]
1051	Cut	Cut of pit/ditch F.1069
1052	Deposit	Fill of [1051]
1053	Cut	Cut of F.1054
1054	Deposit	Fill of [1053]
1055	Cut	Cut of F.1056
1056	Deposit	Fill of [1055]
1057	Cut	Cut of F.1058
1058	Deposit	Fill of [1057]
1059	Cut	Cut of F.1060
1060	Fill	Fill of [1059]
1061	Cut	Cut of F.1062
1062	Fill	Fill of [1061]
1063	Cut	Cut of F.1064
1064	Fill	Fill of [1063]
1065	Cut	Cut of F.1066
1066	Fill	Fill of [1065]
1067	Fill	Fill of [1051]
1068	Fill	Fill of [1051]
1069	Fill	Fill of [1051]
1070	-	Same as 1052
1071	-	VOID
1072	-	VOID
1073	-	VOID
1074	Cut	Cut of pit/ditch F.1078
1075	Deposit	Fill of [1074]
1076	Deposit	Fill of [1074]
1077	Deposit	Fill of [1074]

1078	Deposit	Fill of [1074]
1079	-	VOID
1080	Cut	Cut of F.1081
1081	Deposit	Fill of [1080]
1082	Deposit	Fill of [1080]
1083	Deposit	Fill of [1080]

RADIOCARBON DATING CERTIFICATE

27 January 2015

Laboratory Code SUERC-57563 (GU36197)

Submitter Gillian Eadie
Archaeological Research Services Ltd
The Eco Centre
Windmill Way
Hebburn
Tyne and Wear, NE31 1SR

Site Reference East Lodge to Threefords
Context Reference 1045
Sample Reference ARS01

Material Charcoal : roundwood

$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ relative to VPDB -27.0 ‰

Radiocarbon Age BP 3781 \pm 29

N.B. The above ^{14}C age is quoted in conventional years BP (before 1950 AD). The error, which is expressed at the one sigma level of confidence, includes components from the counting statistics on the sample, modern reference standard and blank and the random machine error.

The calibrated age ranges are determined from the University of Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit calibration program (OxCal4).

Samples with a SUERC coding are measured at the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre AMS Facility and should be quoted as such in any reports within the scientific literature. Any questions directed to the Radiocarbon Laboratory should also quote the GU coding given in parentheses after the SUERC code. The contact details for the laboratory are email Gordon.Cook@glasgow.ac.uk or telephone 01355 270136 direct line.

Conventional age and calibration age ranges calculated by :- *E. Dunbar*

Date :- 27/01/2015

Checked and signed off by :- *P. Naynab*

Date :- 27/01/2015

Calibration Plot

