Wessex Archaeology

Round Hill, Wittenham Clumps Oxfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation and an Assessment of the Results

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ROUND HILL, WITTENHAM CLUMPS, OXFORDSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND AN ASSESSMENT OF THE RESULTS

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Prepared for:

Videotext Communications Ltd
49 Goldhawk Road
LONDON
SW1 8QP

By:

Wessex Archaeology
Portway House
Old Sarum Park
SALISBURY
Wiltshire
SP4 6EB

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Summary

Videotext Communications was commissioned by Channel 4 to carry out an archaeological evaluation as part of the Time Team television series at Round Hill, Wittenham Clumps, Oxfordshire (centred on National Grid Reference SU 5665 9255).

The project was designed to provide archaeological information about the area surrounding the Iron Age hill fort of Castle Hill and to supplement the results of work currently being undertaken on the hill fort jointly by the Northmoor Trust and Oxford Archaeology.

The work, which involved the use of an extensive geophysical survey supplemented by trial trenching, aimed to examine any archaeological remains on Round Hill and in the area to the south-west. Previous archaeological work in 1947 had established that a Roman building and well-preserved Iron Age deposits were present in this area.

The project was restricted in extent by woodland on Round Hill and was unable to produce evidence for any activity on the hill top. The results of the work on the lower slopes, however, were able to place the findings of 1947 in a more precise context. The geophysical survey indicated that this area contains the remains of a large open settlement, characterised by dense groups of pits. Evaluation demonstrated that these pits were of Early Iron Age date and that well-preserved, stratified remains of contemporary Early Iron Age occupation were sealed beneath plough soil derived from higher up the slope. A number of post-holes may indicate the presence of timber buildings. Small square enclosures, which also appeared to be of Early Iron Age date, were identified below the slopes of Castle Hill. The evaluation produced a small assemblage of Early Iron Age pottery with sheep/goat and cattle bones that provided evidence of husbandry and meat processing.

The work has established that there appears to be no evidence for Middle and Late Iron Age occupation and suggests that the land may have been cultivated at this time.

The spread of Roman demolition material identified in 1947 was relocated and shown to represent the remains of a farmstead within a ditched enclosure and approached by an entrance to the east. Pottery suggests that activity occurred throughout the Roman period, however the majority of the finds, including coins, indicated a large scale redevelopment of the site in the mid 3rd to 4th century AD. This phase of activity included the construction of a high status residence, possibly of flint construction and with a tessellated floor.

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Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned and funded by Videotext Communications. The collaborative role and support of Tim Allen of Oxford Archaeology is especially acknowledged. Special thanks are also extended to Sarah Coulson, Rod D'Ayala and Steve Gregory of the Northmoor Trust who were responsible for ensuring that the evaluation was conducted within acceptable environmental guidelines and provided no threat to the SSSI or to Great Crested Newts.

The geophysical survey was undertaken by John Gater and Chris Gaffney, with staff from GSB Prospection, and survey by Henry Chapman, University of Hull. Evaluation strategy was conducted by Professor Mick Aston (Bristol University) and site recording was co-ordinated by Phil Harding, assisted by Nick Best of Wessex Archaeology. The evaluation was undertaken by the Time Team's retained excavators with help from members of Oxford Archaeology. The archive was collated and all post-excavation analysis and assessment undertaken by Wessex Archaeology including management (Roland J C Smith), report (Phil Harding), finds (Lorraine Mepham) and illustrations (Mark Roughley). Specialist comment was provided by Stephanie Knight (animal bone), Sarah Wyles and Chris Stevens (plant remains) and Nick Cooke (Roman coins).

The progress and successful completion of the work also benefited from discussion on site with specialists of Iron Age archaeology especially Francis Pryor and Paul Booth (pottery).

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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND AN ASSESSMENT OF THE RESULTS

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Description of the site

1.1.1 Videotext Communications was commissioned by Channel 4 to carry out an archaeological evaluation as part of the Time Team television series at Wittenham Clumps, Little Wittenham, Oxfordshire (centred on NGR SU 5665 9255) (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 Round Hill and Castle Hill are two very prominent Chalk outliers lying north of the main Chalk escarpment in south Oxfordshire. The two hills and their environs form the Little Wittenham Nature Reserve, which is owned and managed by The Northmoor Trust. Castle Hill is capped by an Iron Age hill fort, a scheduled ancient monument (No. 208), which is the focus of a long-term project by Oxford Archaeology and the Northmoor Trust, in collaboration with English Heritage. The Time Team project at Round Hill was designed to run independently of the Oxford Archaeology project but to supply results that would be of value to the work being undertaken on Castle Hill.

1.1.3 Round Hill lies less than 350 m north-west of Castle Hill, with a saddle in between the two. Round Hill is the higher, with an elevation of 120m OD, while Castle Hill rises to only 107 m OD. There are no earthworks apparent on the slopes of Round Hill, whereas Castle Hill retains clear and impressive earthwork defences, with the entranceway to the hill fort being particularly clear.

1.1.4 From the north, the two hills are prominent features within the landscape and form a clear focal point as they rise above the River Thames valley, which flows in a broad meander some 1.5 km to the north of Round Hill. To the south, a broad spread of land is drained by the Mill Brook, a minor tributary stream of the River Thames. The ascent to the hills is more gradual from this direction and their appearance less prominent.

1.1.5 Round Hill and Castle Hill form part of the Sinodun Hills, outliers of Lower Chalk that are capped by a veneer of glacial sands and gravels of the Fourth Terrace. The lower slopes of the hill, which coincided with the location of most of the Time Team trenches, lie at the boundary of the Lower Chalk and the underlying Upper Greensand (BGS 1:50,000 Solid and Drift Series Sheet 254).

1.2 Previous archaeological work

1.2.1 The most conspicuous features at Wittenham Clumps are the defensive earthworks of the Iron Age hill fort on Castle Hill. Excavations by Oxford Archaeology, in collaboration with the Northmoor Trust, in 2003 (www.oxfordarch.co.uk/wittenham) showed that occupation of the hill top could be traced almost continuously from the Mesolithic period to the late Roman period, with medieval pits suggesting 12th century occupation. The site was initially defended by a ditch during the Late Bronze Age, which was superseded by the ramparts of the Iron Age fort.

1.2.2 The 1st edition OS map of 1887 indicates that human remains were found in the early 19th century immediately north and west of the defences. In 1950, a bronze bracelet was recovered from the centre of the clump on Castle Hill (SMR 3163). Coins of Domitian, Gratian and Arcadius have also been recovered from the vicinity. In 1984, further burials were found and excavated on the north-east of Castle Hill (Chambers 1986). These were judged to be of a late Roman date, although there were no finds.

1.2.3 The Abingdon Chronicle (written in the 12th century), state that Offa of Mercia established a frontier on the Berkshire Downs in the 8th century and from this it has been suggested that Castle Hill was taken and refortified as part of this frontier (Parker 1885). A charter of 862 (BL. Cotton Claudius c.ix.108v; Kelly 2000, 15) lists the estate as 10 hides and gives the bounds, but does not mention Castle Hill.

1.2.4 By 1048, the manor of Little Wittenham was owned by Abingdon Abbey, and is listed in Domesday. There is at that time no mention of occupation on either hill.

1.2.5 Rocque's map of Berkshire 1761 shows both hill tops as bare, and the tithe map of 1843 indicates that the interior of Castle Hill was ploughed for arable. The 'clump', which refers to the beech plantations at the summit of each hill, is thought to date from the 18th century.

1.2.6 No formal archaeological work had ever taken place on the summit of Round Hill, although there has been a number of small-scale investigations on the neighbouring Castle Hill and the slopes to the south of both sites. Antiquarian references mention the discovery of two burials on the summit of Round Hill (Hearne 1716).

1.2.7 In 1947 a field walking exercise on the southern slopes of Round Hill was carried out (Rhodes 1948) and revealed a Roman building defined by a dense scatter of surface finds including pottery, painted wall plaster, tesserae and tegulae. During subsequent excavations Rhodes found, beneath the Roman building debris, a dark occupation layer between 0.3 and 0.5m thick, within which was a rectangular chalk and stone platform. The layer was associated with large quantities of Early Iron Age pottery and animal bones. This layer could have been a midden.

1.2.8 Rhodes recovered a wealth of Iron Age pottery within occupation layers from the excavation. Beneath the Iron Age layer was a possible buried turf line, and below it a grey clay containing occasional sherds, including Beaker pottery and a struck flint, which implied possible early prehistoric occupation on the site.

1.2.9 Near by to the east, two cinerary urns and part of a third were found within a pit in the corner of a rectangular enclosure (SMR 7904), aligned north to south, that was revealed by geophysics using a fluxgate gradiometer (Price 1995). The survey was undertaken on an area just over 1 hectare to the south and east of the site of Rhodes' 1947 excavation.

2 METHODS

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 A project design for Time Team's evaluation was compiled and provided by Videotext Communications (Videotext Communications 2003). Full details of the circumstances and methods are contained in the project design and are summarised below.

2.2 Aims and objectives

2.2.1 The project provided an opportunity to examine the archaeology of Round Hill and its lower slopes and place the results in context relative to the large, ongoing Castle Hill project. The results would include any previously unrecorded archaeological remains and establish their chronology, distribution, function, status and state of preservation.

2.2.2 It was proposed to examine an undated earthwork feature inside the clump and to re-locate and re-assess the Iron Age and Roman remains, including the chalk building platform identified by Rhodes, south of Round Hill. This would help to determine its function and establish whether it related to the geophysical anomaly highlighted by Price (1995).

2.2.3 Rhodes (1948) suggested that the occupation on the southern slope between the two hills is the settlement of the people who built the Castle Hill hill fort. He also suggested that the large spread of material within which the building platform was identified might be evidence of a small Roman villa.

2.2.4 A small scale, well-resourced three-day evaluation, incorporating landscape and geophysical survey and supplemented with precisely targeted trial trenches, was considered sufficient to address these aims and objectives. It was considered essential to extend the English Heritage geophysical survey (Price 1995) to determine the presence of a fourth side to the rectangular enclosure.

2.2.5 Evaluation would make it possible to examine in greater detail the earliest deposits, including the chalk structure relating to Iron Age activity, and to

establish and understand the extent and relationship of Rhodes' Roman building to the rectangular enclosure. The results would provide dating evidence for the enclosure, its phasing and function and investigate its position in the wider landscape.

2.2.6 The results would also provide a condition survey of the archaeological remains along the lower slopes of the site. The site has been vulnerable to ploughing in this area up until 1947 and to tree planting at the top of Round Hill.

2.3 Fieldwork methods

2.3.1 The fieldwork strategy was undertaken using a combination of an extensive magnetometer and resistivity geophysical survey across the site and a series of machine excavated trial trenches.

2.3.2 Eleven machine-excavated trenches of varying sizes were dug (**Figure 1**) after consultation with the on-site director, Professor Mick Aston and associated specialists from Oxford Archaeology, particularly Tim Allen and Paul Booth. The precise location of individual trenches on Round Hill was guided by the availability of open space within the tree canopy. Trenches in the open pasture were located across geophysical anomalies from the results of the geophysical survey to answer specific aims and objectives of the project design.

2.3.3 The trenches were excavated using a wheeled JCB mechanical digger and back hoe fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. A small tracked mini-digger was also used for the removal of topsoil in the wooded area on Round Hill. All machine work was undertaken with constant archaeological supervision and ceased at the identification of significant archaeological deposits, or where natural deposits were encountered first. When machine excavation had ceased all trenches were cleaned by hand and archaeological deposits were excavated.

2.3.4 A sufficient sample of all deposits was examined to allow the resolution of the principal questions outlined in the aims and objectives above.

2.3.5 All archaeological deposits were recorded using Oxford Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets with a unique numbering system for individual contexts. This ensured a compatible recording system with that being used on the excavation at the adjacent Castle Hill. Trenches were located using a Trimble Real Time Differential GPS survey system. All archaeological features and deposits were planned at 1:20 or 1:50 and sections drawn at 1:10 or 1:20, whichever was appropriate for the circumstances. All principal strata and features were related to Ordnance Survey datum and a photographic record of the investigations and individual features was maintained.

2.3.6 The work was carried out over three days on 29th-31st July, 2003. All spoil was metal detected by an individual recommended by Oxford Archaeology.

2.3.7 At the completion of the work all trenches were reinstated using the excavated spoil from the trenches. All artefacts were transported to the offices of Wessex Archaeology where they were processed and assessed for this report.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Details of individual excavated contexts and features, a full geophysical report (GSB 2003) and results of artefact and environmental sample analysis are retained in archive.

3.2 Geophysical survey

3.2.1 Two areas comprising a total of 7.5 ha were investigated. Area 1 lay south of Round Hill and Area 2, to the south of Castle Hill were investigated using magnetic survey (**Figure 1**). A small area across the centre of the rectangular enclosure in Area 1, which coincided with the distribution of Roman building debris recorded by Rhodes, was also surveyed using resistance.

3.2.2 The magnetic survey in Area 1 revealed a series of rectilinear anomalies in the west part of the survey area, which may be part of an enclosure.

3.2.3 Numerous anomalies, some in clusters, were apparent in the west part of the survey area. Similar better-defined examples in the east suggest that these features are likely to represent pits. Elsewhere there were numerous, more isolated and larger pits. These features are likely to indicate the distribution of storage and rubbish pits, although others may be associated with burning and represent hearths, ovens or small-scale industrial/workshop activity.

3.2.4 The clearest anomaly in the centre of Area 1 was the rectilinear enclosure with an entrance on the east side. The resistance survey also indicated a high resistance anomaly that was also visible on the results of the magnetic survey and which coincided with the Romano-British building investigated by Rhodes.

3.2.5 Several other anomalies were present within and immediately outside the enclosure, including three well-defined pits in the north-west corner of the enclosure. The southernmost feature was sampled with the ditch in trench 6.

3.2.6 A possibly semi-circular feature was also detected immediately north of the enclosure, however it was possible that this represented an interconnecting group of pits.

3.2.7 Two small sub rectangular enclosures, less than 20 m across and with internal features, were identified in the south-east of survey Area 1. A noticeably strong magnetic anomaly, which may represent interconnecting pits was located between the two enclosures.

3.2.8 Two strong parallel linear anomalies that coincided with a modern track were located in the north-east of the survey area. They lay immediately west of three curvilinear responses that may be associated with the defensive ditches of Castle Hill.

3.2.9 A large area of magnetic response was detected on the higher slopes of Round Hill. It was considered that although these responses may represent ploughed out defences it was thought more likely that they represented thinner, plough damaged soils on the upper slopes.

3.2.10 The entire survey area was overlain by a series of parallel linear anomalies that could be attributed to ridge and furrow agriculture.

3.2.11 Area 2 lay in land below the ramparts of Castle Hill (**Figure 1**). The results indicated that there was a dense concentration of probable pits across most of the area, although there was a clear eastern boundary. Two curvilinear features were also detected, one in the west of uncertain interpretation. The other, in the central part of the area, measured approximately 12 m across with a break on the south-east part of the circuit that may be an entrance, which suggests that it may be a round house (or ploughed barrow).

3.2.12 Two linear anomalies beyond the main concentration of pits may indicate outworks to the main defences of the hill fort with a hollow way leading to the entrance.

3.3 Archaeological evaluation

3.3.1 Archaeological features were overlain by mid grey-brown well-sorted silty clay topsoil, that averaged 0.35-0.40 m thick and represented a soil profile associated with well established unploughed pasture. Most features were filled with dark brown or grey-brown silts and silty clays derived from the parent Lower Chalk.

3.4 Trenches 1, 2 and 3

3.4.1 Three trenches were excavated within small open areas between the tree-canopy on the heavily wooded summit of Round Hill (**Figure 1**). They were dug to re-examine the possibility that human burials were present on the hill, to identify any evidence of settlement and section the earthwork within the clump.

3.4.2 Trenches 1, 2 and 3 were excavated using a tracked mini digger and measured 5 m, 8.5 m, and 2 m long respectively and a bucket width, 1 m wide. Trench 2 was aligned obliquely across the slight bank that enclosed the more mature trees.

3.4.3 The evaluation indicated that there was a consistent covering of heavily rooted, dark brown humic silt topsoil (101, 201, 301), which varied from 0.15 m to 0.4 m thick, and which overlay the weathered Chalk bedrock. In places

residual patches of mid brown chalky silt subsoil (102, 302, 303) or pebbly gravel (103) filled pockets in the weathered Chalk surface (105, 203).

3.4.4 The bank was very slight but was visible as a deposit of pale grey-brown chalky material (202), 0.20 m thick that was indistinguishable from the subsoil. The spread of the bank coincided with a slight rise in the level of the underlying bedrock. There were no datable finds and it was concluded that the bank dated to the establishment of the 18th century plantation.

3.4.5 No archaeological artefacts or traces of occupation were observed in trenches 1, 2 and 3.

3.5 Trench 4

3.5.1 This trench was located from the results of the magnetic survey to examine the entrance of the rectangular enclosure (**Figure 1**). The trench (**Figure 2**) measured 4.70 m long and 1.90 m wide and was aligned approximately north-west to south-east across the south terminus.

3.5.2 The topsoil horizon (401) overlay a soil accumulation of grey brown sandy silt (402, 403, 404). This undifferentiated subsoil deposit contained large quantities of archaeological material and was excavated by hand in two spits (402, 404) 0.10 m thick at the south end but only one spit (403), 0.10 m thick at the north end. The two ends of the trench were characterised by pottery assemblages of widely differing dates. Large quantities of Iron Age pottery were common towards the south end (402, 404) of the trench with a concentration of Roman material (403), including pottery, bone, tile, flint and metal at the north end. There was no definable boundary between them.

3.5.3 A second spit (404) was removed from the south end of the trench, which included a high concentration of rounded pebbles. However at the north end it was possible to define the edges of a ditch (406), 2 m wide and 0.70 m deep with moderately sloping sides and a rounded base. It became apparent that most of the material excavated as spit (403) formed the tertiary fill of this ditch with an underlying soft grey brown silty clay (405) and a firm mid to dark yellow brown primary fill (407).

3.5.4 The excavation of ditch (406) revealed that it cut the terminus of the main enclosure ditch (409) as defined by geophysics, although the written archive suggests that terminus (409) was later. The terminus extended approximately 0.40 m from the south section of the trench, was cut with vertical sides and a flat base and penetrated the natural bedrock by 0.80 m. It was filled with mid grey brown clay silt (408).

3.6 Trench 5

3.6.1 Trench 5 (**Figures 1 and 3**) was located from measurements calculated from the excavation report of Rhodes to re-locate the chalk floor, the associated Iron Age levels and any evidence for a Roman building. It was dug as a trench 3 m by 3 m but was subsequently extended to a pair of interlocking squares,

with an extension to the north to provide a trench with a total area of 30 square metres.

3.6.2 Following the removal of the topsoil (501) and plough-disturbed subsoil (502), Rhodes' excavation could be defined within an area of unexcavated deposit. The former excavation (516) measured 3.10 m north-west to south-east and 2.90 m north-east to south-west. The depth and extent of the archaeological work undertaken by Rhodes varied. Some deposits (503 and 513) had been left *in situ*, while others had been sectioned.

3.6.3 The complete stratigraphic sequence of the trench was evaluated in two slots, 0.50 m wide, that were excavated along the north-east and south-west sections of the trench. A firm grey brown chalky clay (514) was exposed in the base of the slot in the north-east of the excavated area. It was considered likely that this deposit, at 99.17 m OD formed the natural bedrock surface in the trench.

3.6.4 This deposit was overlain by friable grey brown chalky silt (515), which was similar in composition and stratigraphy to material (504) sectioned in the slot along the south-west edge of the trench.

3.6.5 These basal soils were overlain by a cobbled surface (503), composed of quartzite pebbles up to 0.12 m long. The surface, into which fragments of Early Iron Age pottery and bone were impressed, was most well-defined towards the south-east corner of Rhodes' trench. Here it was concentrated although it thinned away from the former excavation to the south-east.

3.6.6 It was sealed by a chalk floor (513) towards the north-east, which is likely to be the chalk floor described by Rhodes. It was of varying thickness but reached up to 0.10 m thick in places. Rhodes did not remove either of these surfaces.

3.6.7 The chalk surface appeared to have been cut into by two possible post-holes (510 and 512), which lay within the area of Rhodes' excavation but which are not shown on his plan. Post-hole (510) was approximately 0.45 m in diameter and survived to 0.15 m deep, while post-hole (512) was smaller, approximately 0.20 m in diameter and depth. Both post-holes had irregular sides, flat bases and were filled with dark brown silt (509 and 511) and both contained Early Iron Age pottery.

3.6.8 This occupation surface was sealed across the trench by a deposit of dark brown silt (517), 0.20 m thick, which is likely to represent a soil horizon.

3.6.9 The soil was covered by a thin off-white chalk surface (506), which was most prevalent in the north-west corner of the area where it had been truncated by Rhodes' trench. However it was also traced across the site to the north-east corner of the trench where it was recorded in the section. This surface was overlain by a deposit (505) containing Roman material, including tesserae.

3.6.10 An additional undated possible post-hole (508) appeared to be cut through this chalk surface. The post-hole was approximately 0.20 m in diameter and 0.15

m deep, with steep sides and a flat base. It is unclear whether it had any direct relationship to post-holes (510) and (512), which contained Iron Age pottery but which are likely to have been truncated by Rhodes' excavation. They are all of similar size and lie on a similar arc.

3.6.11 This trench re-established the precise location of Rhodes' trench and confirmed the date and accuracy of his observations. It relocated the Iron Age cobbled surface and overlying chalk floor although there was little to demonstrate conclusively that they lay within a building, apart from two post-holes and it is possible that they formed part of an exterior yard. However this part of the site clearly lay within an occupation area that was not set aside for pits. The results of the geophysical survey indicated that similar areas could be defined which may make it possible to reconstruct the settlement plan in more detail. The stratigraphy of the trench is very reminiscent of that seen at the base of trench 8 where a sequence comprising a cobbled surface and soil containing Iron Age material were sealed by a chalk surface capped by Roman demolition rubble.

3.6.12 The Roman material lay towards the south-east extent of the spread of demolition material defined by the geophysical survey. This material was derived from a building represented by the substantial wall foundations observed in trench 7. However the chalk surface (506) may have lain within a timber outbuilding within the enclosure.

3.6.13 The results of the Time Team excavation reveal both similarities and variations to the account published by Rhodes (1948). There are clear correlations between Rhodes's topsoil horizon, his Romano-British occupation (layer 1) and the 'upper' part of his black soil (layer 2) with Time Team's 501-2, 506 and 517. His published plan of the floor of the Iron Age hut also shows remarkable similarities to the extent of the compacted chalk floor (513) with large Bunter pebbles to the south (503) as re-excavated by Time Team. The inclusion of the post-hole excavated by Rhodes to the plan shown by Time Team does nothing to clarify the plan of any hut superstructure. The post-hole is recorded as being 2 feet (0.61 m) deep (1948, 22) but was not relocated in the recent excavations.

3.6.14 The 'floor of the hut' was 'left intact' by Rhodes (1948, 20), which accounts for the remarkable similarities in the two plans. It is apparent from his illustration that although he excavated around the hut floor he only reconstructed the complete stratigraphic sequence in a test pit dug in the north west corner of the trench. This test pit, which measured approximately 4 feet long (1.22 m) and 1 foot 6 inches (0.46 m) wide, penetrated approximately 2 feet 6 inches (0.76 m) below the level of the chalk floor (513) to the natural bedrock, which he identified as a chalky clay overlain by yellow clay.

3.6.15 The correlation of the stratigraphy between the two excavations can be further matched in the 'lower' part of Rhodes's black soil (layer 2) with 515 and his grey clay (layer 4), which measured approximately 1 foot (0.30 m) thick, with 514. The yellow clay horizon lay approximately 3 feet 2 inches (0.96 m) below the ground surface. There is no record of any yellow clay from the

Time Team excavations in trench 5, which reached a maximum depth of 0.80 m; however clay deposits, which may equate to Rhodes's yellow clay, were detected at the base of trenches 7 and 8. In the light of these results it is apparent that the Time Team excavations did not reach the natural bedrock in trench 5. Strangely no trace of Rhodes' test pit was detected in the north west corner of his former excavation.

3.6.16 The re-excavation of Rhodes's Iron Age hut floor provided an opportunity to reassess the extent and condition of the deposit. Rhodes's plan (1948, fig 8) showed a clearly defined compacted chalk surface with straight edges, bounded by a band of Bunter pebbles to the south. The Time Team excavations were able to confirm the general accuracy of this plan. It is possible that minor variations, including post holes 510 and 512, which were not noted by Rhodes, have resulted from bioturbation or surface weathering. The Time Team excavations traced the chalk surface to the east, beyond Rhodes's trench, but suggest that the floor thinned to the north, where it was recorded in section as a 'thin cobble spread'.

3.7 Trench 6

3.7.1 A trench, 12.5 m long and 1.8 m wide (**Figures 1 and 4**) was opened by machine to locate and examine the ditch on the west side of the enclosure and included a pit-like anomaly detected by geophysics.

3.7.2 The friable dark brown loamy topsoil horizon (6001) measured 0.2 m thick and overlay a brown silt loam subsoil (6002), 0.18 m thick that contained mixed fragments of roof tile, animal bone, oyster shell and Roman pottery. This disturbed deposit is likely to represent plough soil including additional material from further up the hill.

3.7.3 The natural pale yellow brown clay bedrock (6008) was overlain and diffused into a veneer of stiff brown silty clay (6020), 0.08 m thick. This horizon, which was only recorded to the east of the ditch produced no finds but was cut through by the enclosure ditch (6015). It is most likely that this deposit represents the remains of a truncated pre-Roman old ground surface and may equate with contexts (515) and (504) as seen in trench 5.

3.7.4 Pre-Roman activity in the trench was represented by a steep sided pit (6016), which extended from the south trench edge immediately west of the outer lip of enclosure ditch (6015). It measured approximately 1.5 m north to south and was excavated to 0.5 m deep but was not bottomed due to lack of time. It was filled with a series of loose mid orange grey silt loam deposits (6017, 6018), which became more grey brown (6019) towards the base. These upper pit fills, which are likely to represent only the tertiary deposits of the feature, produced considerable quantities of Early Iron Age pottery including some very large pieces. This pit represents the most westerly extent of the Early Iron Age occupation yet excavated on the site.

3.7.5 The enclosure ditch (6015) was 2.8 m wide and was cut into the chalky marl bedrock. It measured 1.08 m deep with moderately sloping sides to a slightly

rounded base 0.20 m across. The ditch appears to have silted naturally with a primary fill of light grey brown chalky silt (6014), derived from the ditch sides, which was replaced by darker less chalky silts in the secondary and tertiary fills (6012, 6011, 6010). There were no intervening lenses of domestic refuse, although small quantities of residual Iron Age pottery were incorporated with the Roman material, nor were there indications of re-cutting, or of turf lines. The sedimentation was slightly off centre to the east, suggesting that some of the filling was derived from an internal bank.

3.7.6 The ditch fill was capped by a dump (6009) of angular Chalk rubble and flint nodules, up to 0.12 m across, that was mixed with Roman material, particularly roof tile.

3.7.7 There was very little conclusive evidence for an internal bank apart from a deposit of dark grey-brown silty clay (6005), up to 0.25 m thick, which extended across the trench to the east of the inner ditch edge. This material contained a mixed assemblage of Early Iron Age and Roman pottery and must therefore be at least Roman in date. It was considered by the excavator to represent the remnants of a spread bank; however its composition and pottery assemblage was remarkably similar to the overlying subsoil 6002. The frequency of Roman pot and tile was noticeably less frequent towards the ditch. Regrettably the stratigraphic relationships between deposits in sections 1 and 2 were not included in a single drawing.

3.7.8 The bank spread was cut into by a pit (6006), although the evaluation record indicates that the relationship was indistinct. The pit extended approximately 1.5 m from the north edge of the trench and was 0.65 m deep with steep sides and rounded base. The dark grey silty clay (6013) primary fill was overlain by a deposit of similar composition (6007), but which contained large quantities of Roman pottery, animal bone, tile and oyster shell. The pit was sealed by spreads of chalk rubble and flint nodules (6004, 6003) similar to that in the top of the enclosure ditch. It sees likely that these deposits, which represent imported materials, represent spreads of demolition material that have been heavily truncated by ploughing from buildings of chalk and flint construction that once stood within the enclosure. It is possible that the rubble was introduced deliberately as make-up or merely filled weathering hollows in the tops of earlier features.

3.8 Trenches 7, 8 and 10

3.8.1 Three trenches (**Figures 1 and 5**) were excavated in a group to define and interpret an approximately rectangular disturbance that was located by resistance in the centre of the enclosure. The anomaly, which measured approximately 25 m long and 11 m wide, was aligned approximately south-east to north-west with a rounded apsidal north end. It was thought that this anomaly might represent the plan of the principal building within the enclosure.

3.8.2 Trench 7 measured 4 m long and 2 m wide and was aligned north-east to south-west across the south side of the anomaly, at a point at which the edge

was most clearly defined. Trench 8 was added 3 m to the north-east and measured 3 m long and 2 m wide to trace the north side of the anomaly, while trench 10 was inserted to locate the west apsidal end. It measured 3.5 m north-west to south-east and was 1.8 m wide. All three trenches were opened by machine and excavated to their full extent but were later sectioned using hand excavated slots 0.70 m wide to locate the natural bedrock and establish the overlying sequence of deposits.

3.8.3 A mottled grey green compact clay (811) was observed in a small sondage at the north end of trench 8 at 100.70 m OD. A similar deposit (709) was also recorded in the base of a robber trench in trench 7. It was thought likely that these two units formed part of the natural bedrock on the site; however elsewhere on the site features were cut into chalky marl, which may indicate that the clay is an archaeological deposit.

3.8.4 The clay was overlain, in trench 8, by a cobbled surface (810) which was also traced to trench 10 (1004). It comprised ochreous stained, sub rounded flint cobbles, approximately 0.05 m across, with some mixed quartzite pebbles. They were present throughout the excavated section in trench 8 but thinned to the north-west of trench 10.

3.8.5 The cobbles in trenches 8 and 10 were undated but were overlain by a soil (809, 1003). A few fragments of Early Iron Age pottery from (809) were found with a sherd of Roman material, which is likely to be intrusive, and suggest that this is a pre-Roman horizon.

3.8.6 A thin, continuous chalky surface (808, 1008) spread across trenches 8 and 10 but thinned to the north and west. It was particularly well defined at the east end of trench 10 and the south end of trench 8, where it butted a compact flat creamy yellow mortar surface, (807) that extended 0.50 m north-east from the end of trench 8.

3.8.7 Demolition material corresponded closely to the anomaly detected by the geophysics survey. It included a patchy spread of limestone roof slates (805, 1007) interleaved between thin soil horizons (806, 804, 1006) and a layer of flint nodules (803, 1005) and roof tile fragments (1002). The soil accumulations were principally of chalk flecked, grey brown compact silty loam that averaged 0.10 to 0.20 m thick. There were few finds, which suggested that the soils were not directly related to areas of occupation.

3.8.8 The clearly defined sequence of individual soil and demolition layers could not be traced to trench 7. They appeared to be represented by a single deposit of dark grey silt (706, 705, 702) that included quantities of Roman roof tile. This horizon corresponded to (1002) and was present above the natural clay exposed in the section of robber trench (708).

3.8.9 At the south end of trench 7 a robber trench (708) aligned east to west was cut through the demolition deposits and through a dark grey brown plough soil (704) to the south. The robber trench, which was also filled with demolition

rubble (703, 707), measured 0.70 m across and was 0.65 m deep with steep sides and slightly rounded base.

3.8.10 The excavation of these three trenches demonstrated that the anomaly detected by geophysics coincided with the extent of demolition debris. Its southern edge was marked by a robber trench, which ran approximately parallel to the north edge of the enclosure. This feature provided evidence for at least one substantial building on the site, which may have formed the principal structure on the site and have included a tessellated floor. However it was not possible to confirm the orientation, extent or precise location of the building nor was it possible to provide evidence for floor levels or of domestic occupation. It is possible that the demolition debris merely marked an accumulation of debris from a range of buildings, incorporating at least one of flint construction with others of clay wall or timber construction.

3.8.11 The presence of a range of roofing materials suggests that buildings with both stone and ceramic tiles were present on the site. These buildings may have been located around a central open yard, set inside the perimeter bank or around a principal building in the middle of the enclosure. The bulk of the Roman pottery is of mid 3rd to 4th century AD date and probably relates to the main phase of occupation and its later use including the demolition of buildings within the enclosure. However the stratigraphic record, indicated by the re-cut ditch in trench 4 across the entrance, indicates prolonged Roman activity on the site, which is confirmed by the presence of Early Roman pottery from the site.

3.9 Trench 9

3.9.1 A small trench 2.5 m north to south and 2 m east to west was excavated over an anomaly detected by geophysics that was believed to indicate a pit (**Figure 1**). The removal of the topsoil (901) and subsoil (902) horizons revealed that the trench area contained three inter-cutting pits (**Figure 6**) that were cut into the chalky marl bedrock of the Lower Chalk.

3.9.1 The evaluation initially concentrated on the examination of what appeared to be the final pit (904) in the sequence. It was circular, approximately 1.20 m in diameter and 0.70 m deep with a slightly belled profile on the north but with a rounded concave profile on the east, sloping to a flat base. It was filled with a primary fill of stiff, slightly chalky, mid grey brown silty clay (905) that was overlain by similar but more friable material (903). Both deposits contained quantities of Early Iron Age pottery.

3.9.2 The initial interpretation suggested that it post-dated pit (910) to the north and pit (906) to the south. However a reassessment of the dipping stratigraphy that was visible in the section and a reconsideration of the excavated edge on the south side of pit (904) cast some doubt on this sequence.

3.9.3 The revised interpretation considered that the earliest pit (910) lay to the north and was approximately 0.60 m in diameter and 0.30 m deep. It was filled with dark brown friable clay silt (911), which was exposed in the edge of pit (904)

but was not excavated. Pit (904), which was cut with a slightly belled profile was subsequently cut by pit (906) to the south. This pit measured approximately 1 m in diameter and at least 0.70 m deep. It was not fully excavated but was filled by a series of friable mid to dark grey brown clay silts (907, 908, 909) with faint, but visible, tip lines that trended to the south.

3.9.4 It seems most likely that this small trench was cut within a concentration of Early Iron Age storage/rubbish pits that were dug in sequence and migrated to the south.

3.10 Trench 11

3.10.1 This trench was located towards the south-east corner of the lower slopes of Round Hill. It was excavated to examine one of two small square enclosures with central anomalies that were revealed in that area by geophysics (**Figure 1**).

3.10.2 The geophysics plot revealed that the enclosure measured approximately 16 m across with a central anomaly. A trench 12 m long and 2 m wide was therefore excavated from the centre northwards across the enclosure ditch (**Figure 7**). A representative sample of features that were cut into the chalk marl bedrock were excavated by hand.

3.10.3 The trench demonstrated that the enclosure ditch (1113) measured 1 m across and was 0.50 m deep with moderately sloping sides and a narrow, slightly concave base 0.15 m across. It had silted with, an upper, dark grey brown (1114) and, lower, grey brown silty clay (1115). A veneer of primary grey clay (1116), containing two sherds of Early Iron Age pottery, lay across the base. There was nothing to indicate an inner earthen bank or that the feature had been recut.

3.10.4 The central feature comprised a large Early Iron Age storage/rubbish pit (1103). It projected from the east edge of the trench but was 1.80 m across and 0.85 m deep with steep vertical sides that were slightly undercut in places, and a flat base. It was filled with homogeneous grey brown silty clay (1104, 1105) that was marginally darker and chalkier towards the base. It contained Early Iron Age pottery, and animal bone.

3.10.5 A small rounded extension (1123) was situated on the west edge of the pit. This may have been the arc of a smaller, earlier pit that was cut by the main feature or was a step to provide access to the main pit.

3.10.6 A shallow ditch (1106) ran north-west to south-east across the site immediately south-west of pit 1103. The ditch was 0.90 m across and 0.50 m deep with sloping sides and a rounded base. It was filled with dark grey silty clay (1107) that overlay lighter material (1109), which were separated by a lens of charcoal (1108), which contained Early Iron Age pottery.

3.10.7 An additional pit (1110), with vertical sides and a flat base, was exposed at the base of the excavated ditch. It measured 0.6 m in diameter and was 0.30 m

deep. It was filled with a layer of grey-green clay (1112), 0.20 m thick that also contained Early Iron Age pottery and which was overlain by silty clay (1111).

3.10.8 A shallow post-hole (1117) 0.26 m in diameter and 0.10 m deep lay between pit (1103) and the enclosure ditch. It was poorly cut into the underlying natural rubble with sloping sides and a rounded base. A possible post-hole (1126), which was unexcavated but of similar diameter extended from the edge of the trench approximately 1.30 m west of this post-hole.

3.10.9 There were also two other miscellaneous features at the south end of the trench. These features (1119, 1121) were recorded but could not be excavated in the time available.

4 FINDS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Finds were recovered from eight of the eleven trenches excavated; no finds were recovered from Trenches 1 – 3, and relatively little material came from Trenches 9 and 11. All finds have been quantified by material type within each context. Quantified data form the primary finds archive for the site, and these data are summarised by trench in **Table 1**.

4.1.2 Subsequent to quantification, all finds have been at least visually scanned in order to gain an overall idea of the range of types present, their condition, and their potential date range. Pottery has been subjected to more formal scanning, including quantification by ware type (details below). Spot dates have been recorded for selected material types as appropriate. All finds data are currently held on an Access database.

4.1.3 This section presents an overview of the finds assemblage, on which is based an assessment of the potential of this assemblage to contribute to an understanding of the site in its local and regional context, with particular reference to the long-term Oxford Archaeology/Northmoor Trust project at Castle Hill. The assemblage is divided into two chronological groups, Early Iron Age and Romano-British, with a small quantity of worked flint of earlier date.

4.2 Pottery

4.2.1 The entire pottery assemblage has been scanned, and quantified by broad ware group (e.g. sandy wares) or known type (e.g. samian) within each context. Spot dates have been recorded on a context by context basis, and the presence (but not quantity) of diagnostic forms noted. Results are summarised by trench in **Table 2**.

4.2.2 The Early Iron Age assemblage is characterised by a high proportion of sandy wares, with a low frequency of shelly and flint-tempered wares. Sandy wares

cover a wide range of coarseness, from fine, silty fabrics, well finished and frequently burnished (and sometimes red-finished) to fabrics containing very coarse (10mm+) rounded pebble inclusions, and others containing prominent angular quartz. Identifiable forms include fineware carinated bowls, frequently burnished and sometimes red-finished; and coarseware angular jars with finger impressed shoulders (an almost complete profile was recovered from pit (6016) in trench 6), and convex jars. There are also two expanded, finger impressed rims from coarseware jars of uncertain form, and three lug handles. Two body sherds with furrowed decoration almost certainly derive from fineware bowls.

4.2.3 This assemblage finds numerous parallels within Early Iron Age assemblages from sites in the Upper Thames Valley. Angular bowls and jars comparable to the Round Hill vessel forms can be seen in phase 1 at Farmoor (Lambrick and Robinson), period 2 at Ashville (de Roche 1978), and at Appleford (Hinchliffe and Thomas 1980). The emphasis on sandy wares at the expense of shelly and flint-tempered wares contrasts with the ceramic sequence seen at Farmoor and Ashville, but sandy wares are now recognised as a common element of Earliest Iron Age assemblages at sites such as Yarnton. One or two convex forms are present here, but the sandy wares are definitely dominated by angular forms.

4.2.4 The bulk of the Early Iron Age assemblage was recovered from Trenches 4, 5 and 6, with smaller quantities from Trenches 9 and 11, and only a handful of sherds from Trenches 7, 8 and 10. The largest context group came from soil accumulation deposit (402/403/404) (129 sherds), but this was mixed with Romano-British material. In fact, only 38% of the Early Iron Age assemblage (by number of sherds) occurred in contexts unassociated with Romano-British pottery (none of these from trench 4).

4.2.5 The Romano-British assemblage is dominated by coarsewares, largely greywares. These undoubtedly represent the products of more than one source, but a high proportion are likely to be of relatively local manufacture, from the Oxfordshire production centres (Young 1977). The same is likely to be true of the oxidised wares, which occur in much smaller quantities. Other recognisable ware types include Black Burnished ware (BB1) from the Poole Harbour area of Dorset, and one example of a Verulamium region whiteware. Finewares are likewise dominated by Oxfordshire products – colour coated wares in a range of vessel forms, and whiteware mortaria and other vessels. There is a small amount of samian (one vessel from ditch (406) is stamped), but amphorae are noticeable by their absence. The range of fabrics and vessel forms (everted rim jars, ‘dog dishes’, dropped flange bowls) suggests a date range spanning the Roman period, but with an emphasis on the late Roman period (mid 3rd to 4th century AD). One greyware jar from possible bank material (6005) has a swastika graffito.

4.2.6 The majority of the Romano-British pottery came from trenches 4 and 6, with small quantities from trenches 5, 7, 8 and 10; trenches 9 and 11 produced no Romano-British pottery. The largest context group came from possible bank material (6005) (113 sherds).

4.3 Ceramic building material

4.3.1 Large quantities of Romano-British ceramic building material were recovered, in particular from trenches 7 and 10 – more than half of the total came from demolition rubble deposit (702/705/1002) which extended across trenches 7 and 10. All of this material is fragmentary. Recognisable fragments of *tegulae* and *imbrices* are present, as well as examples of bricks, although individual brick types (e.g. *pedalis*, *bipedalis*) have not been identified at this stage. There are also tesserae, cut down from bricks and tiles. No fabric analysis has been undertaken, but it is apparent that more than one fabric type and therefore, presumably, source, is represented; a few fragments from trench 4 are distinctive by their creamy-white colouring.

4.3.2 One piece of tile from topsoil in trench 6 (6001) has been neatly trimmed to a disc approximately 80mm in diameter.

4.4 *Opus Signinum*, wall plaster and mortar

4.4.1 Other building materials in the form of *opus signinum* and mortar were recovered in small quantities (trenches 4 and 7), and a single piece of painted (monochrome) wall plaster was found unstratified. All these are consistent with the existence of a substantial, high status building on the site.

4.5 Stone

4.5.1 Nearly all the stone represents building material, consisting largely of fragments of limestone roof tiles, some with surviving nail holes. There are also a few (white) limestone tesserae, in similar sizes to the ceramic tesserae (see above). One large piece of quartz conglomerate (pit 6016) could be from a quern, but otherwise portable objects (querns and whetstones) are entirely absent.

4.6 Coins

4.6.1 Seven coins were recovered. All of these are Roman, and all date to the late 3rd or 4th centuries AD. All were sufficiently legible to be assigned to period, although their general condition is poor, with some showing signs of heavy corrosion, possibly indicating that they had been in topsoil or ploughsoil deposits for some time. One of the coins, a contemporary Barbarous copy of a radiate *antoninianus* dates to the late 3rd century, whilst the remaining six date to the 4th century. None of the latter are particularly rare or unusual, with most being fairly common 4th century types. Barbarous Radiates are common throughout the Western Empire in the late third century and are thought to be poor contemporary copies of 'official' coinage, although opinion is divided as to whether these 'barbarous' copies were officially sanctioned. The 4th century coins also include some possible contemporary copies, evident from their stylised engraving. Only one of the coins was recovered from a stratified context (ploughsoil (704) in trench 7) This was a badly corroded coin of the early 4th century.

Table 1: Finds totals by material type (number / weight in grammes)

Material	**Tr 4**	**Tr 5**	**Tr 6**	**Tr 7**	**Tr 8**	**Tr 9**	**Tr 10**	**Tr 11**	**Unstrat**	**TOTAL**
Pottery	321/3327	203/2584	365/5409	46/560	44/360	54/473	44/467	45/368	-	**1122/13,548**
Iron Age	*171/1921*	*180/2505*	*171/2888*	*8/139*	*6/33*	*54/473*	*1/10*	*45/368*	-	***636/8337***
Romano-British	*150/1406*	*23/79*	*194/2521*	*38/421*	*38/327*	-	*43/457*	-	-	***386/5211***
Ceramic Building Material	275/9062	117/3358	146/12,440	503/34,721	135/16,684	-	270/36,790	-	9/428	**1455/113,483**
Opus Signinum	2/56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**2/56**
Mortar	1/8	-	-	13/618	-	-	-	-	-	**14/626**
Wall Plaster	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1/4	**1/4**
Fired Clay	-	-	1/14	-	-	-	-	6/154	-	**7/168**
Stone	21/2117	21/995	3/1250	49/8571	55/10,415	2/164	18/4284	-	-	**169/27,796**
Worked Flint	21/131	13/23	2/5	-		3/10	-	-	-	**39/169**
Burnt Flint	2/45	3/26	-	-	1/24	2/5	-	-	-	**8/100**
Glass	-	-	-	2/40	-	-	-	-	-	**2/40**
Slag	-	20/39	-	-	-	-	-	12/43	-	**32/82**
Metal	15	7	3	21	8	-	3	-	14	**71**
Coins	-		-	*1*	-	-	-	-	*6*	***7***
Iron	15	*6*	*3*	*19*	*8*	-	*3*	-	*5*	***59***
Copper Alloy	-	-	-	*1*	-	-	-	-	*3*	***4***
Lead	-	*1*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	***1***
Marine Shell	21/140	-	38/810	3/18	-	-	1/47	-	-	**63/1015**

Table 2: Pottery totals by ware group (number / weight in grammes)

Ware	Tr 4	Tr 5	Tr 6	Tr 7	Tr 8	Tr 9	Tr 10	Tr 11	TOTAL
IRON AGE									
Calcareous ware	-	1/11	1/20	-	-		-	-	2/31
Flint-tempered ware	3/26	1/2	3/18	1/23	-	4/48	-	2/14	14/131
Sandy ware	155/1757	171/2350	165/2838	7/116	6/33	48/408	1/10	39/320	592/7832
Shelly ware	13/138	7/142	2/12	-	-	2/17	-	4/34	28/343
sub-total Iron Age	***171/1921***	***180/2505***	***171/2888***	***8/139***	***6/33***	***54/473***	***1/10***	***45/368***	***636/8337***
ROMANO-BRITISH									
Black Burnished ware	14/103	-	3/31	6/77	-	-	3/12	-	26/223
Greyware	95/985	17/67	152/1964	21/217	29/215	-	26/285	-	340/3733
Grog-tempered ware	3/59	-	7/115	1/44	1/37	-	4/92	-	16/347
Misc. colour coat	1/8	-	9/85	-	-	-	-	-	10/93
Misc. whiteware	4/9	1/1	6/47	-	-	-	1/8	-	12/65
Oxidised ware	3/7	1/2	3/20	1/10	1/5	-	1/4	-	10/48
Oxon colour coat	22/118	2/3	3/170	9/73	6/48	-	8/56	-	50/468
Oxon whiteware	1/41	1/5	2/69	-	1/22	-	-	-	5/137
Samian	7/76	1/1	9/20	-	-	-	-	-	17/97
sub-total RB	***150/1406***	***23/79***	***194/2521***	***38/421***	***38/327***	***-***	***43/457***	***-***	***486/5211***
OVERALL TOTAL	**321/3327**	**203/2584**	**365/5409**	**46/560**	**44/360**	**54/473**	**44/467**	**45/368**	**1122/13,548**

4.6.2 The small number of coins recovered from the site makes intra-site comparisons invalid. The date range of these coins (the earliest dated to AD 270 – 90, whilst the latest dates to AD 364 – 378) indicates that activity on the site continued into the later 4th century. The absence of any 1st or 2nd century coins or post-Valentinian coins need not be significant, as the coin assemblage is small, and coins of these dates are rarer as site finds

4.7 Metalwork

4.7.1 This category includes objects of copper alloy, iron and lead. Apart from the coins (see above), the copper alloy includes one pin (Roman) and one button (post-medieval). The remaining two objects are unidentified and of uncertain date. None of these objects were stratified.

4.7.2 The iron consists largely of nails (54), with one hobnail, one harness ring (402), one socketed spearhead (404) and two strip fragments. Of these objects the hobnail, one of the strips and 21 of the nails were unstratified finds. The spearhead and harness ring both came from soil accumulation deposit (402/403/404) in trench 4. The spearhead, which is incomplete, appears to be an unusual pierced form, perhaps a ceremonial rather than purely functional object.

4.7.3 The single lead object is a piece of waste.

4.8 Marine shell

4.8.1 This consists entirely of oyster, and includes both left and right valves, in other words, both preparation and consumption waste. Most of the shell came from trenches 4 and 6.

4.9 Other finds

4.9.1 Other finds comprise small quantities of ironworking slag, worked and burnt flint, fired clay (one piece with a probable wattle impression, plus six featureless fragments) and vessel glass (post-medieval bottle).

4.10 Animal bone

4.10.1 The species present in each context was recorded, in order to give a species *frequency* (O'Connor 1985) rather than absolute numbers of fragments (NISP). The potential of the assemblage to provide information about husbandry patterns, population structures and consumption practices was ascertained from estimating the proportion (high over c.10%, medium c.4-10% or low c.1-3%) of bones that could give information on the age, size and sex of animals, butchery, burning and breakage. Using species frequencies and rough estimations, although obviously less accurate, is more rapid than counting exact numbers, and is considered adequate for the purposes of this assessment.

4.10.2 The extent of mechanical or chemical attrition to the bone surface was recorded, with 1 indicating poor condition, 2 fair and 3 good. The proportions of gnawed bone were noted as high, medium or low in the same manner as outlined above. Any unusual combinations of bones that may have resulted from a specific activity or could have been articulated were recorded.

4.10.3 1594 fragments of animal bone were recovered from 49 contexts. 548 bones were from the 12 contexts that contained only pottery dating to the early Iron Age, and 37 bones were from the four contexts that contained only Roman pottery. The remaining deposits were undated or mixed (containing both early Iron Age and Roman pottery), the latter are probably Roman in origin but contain an undefined quantity of reworked earlier material. Only the bone from contexts containing ceramics of just one period was included in this assessment, as there is no way of knowing what proportion or which bones in the mixed deposits was residual. The assessed sample has also excluded bone from undated contexts that form part of the fills of dated features (such as the enclosure ditch).

Early Iron Age

4.10.4 Of the twelve contexts dating (on pottery grounds) to the early Iron Age, the bones from ten were recorded as in fair condition, with two contexts in poor-fair condition. Marks from canine gnawing were common in one context, frequent in seven and rare in two, and may have destroyed the more fragile parts of the skeleton, in addition to butchery evidence.

4.10.5 Bone was recovered from samples taken from five of these deposits, totalling 205 fragments, a large proportion of the 548 bones assessed. Seven different species were noted in the samples, with a greater proportion of smaller species (**Table 3**). Bird, fish, amphibian and small mammal bones were found only in the coarse residue of samples. However, hand recovery was generally good, as small bones such as sheep phalanges and hyoids were collected. Unidentified fragments of bone from larger animals made up the majority of bones from samples, and the potential for sample material to provide information on butchery, age and size of animals was generally limited.

Table 3: Animal bone species list and frequency for Early Iron Age contexts.

	Frequency (hand recovered)		Frequency (sampled)	
Species	No. contexts	% contexts	No. contexts	% contexts
Cattle	10	83	1	20
Sheep/goat	10	83	4	80
Pig	6	50	2	40
Horse	1	8	0	0
Bird	0	0	1	20
Fish	0	0	1	20
Rodent	0	0	1	20
Amphibian	0	0	1	20
Unidentified	11	92	5	100

4.10.6 Cattle and sheep/goats (no positive identifications of goat) were found in the same number of contexts, although the bones of these two species were not

always found in the same deposits. One would expect more sheep/goats than cattle in the Iron Age, and the apparently equal frequency may be a symptom of the method of quantification rather than a true representation. For example, cattle provide large quantities of meat and their carcasses may have been divided into more 'portions' than sheep/goat, resulting in a wider dispersal of skeletal elements, which might then be deposited in more contexts per individual. Pigs were found in fewer contexts, and horse was even less frequent, as only one bone was represented. Only one context did not contain any unidentified fragments.

Table 4: Number of Early Iron Age contexts containing bones with high, medium or low potential to inform on husbandry, butchery and disposal practice.

	Age	Size	Butchery	Burning
Abundant	1	0	0	0
Frequent	9	2	4	4
Rare	1	9	5	2
Absent	1	1	3	6

4.10.7 Ageing information was relatively common, with most contexts containing numerous bones that could be aged (**Table 4**). Very young or neonatal sheep/goat and pigs were in evidence, suggesting breeding on or near site. Size information was more limited, as many of the bones were fragmentary, but most contexts contained some measurable bones. One pig tooth with furrows in the enamel suggests that some animals may have been through periods of malnourishment (Hillson 1986, 129), and a porous cattle rib head with exostoses indicates at least one animal suffered from injury or disease associated with old age.

4.10.8 Butchery marks and burning were infrequent in most contexts, although the majority of contexts contained bones with some evidence of butchery, often including helical fractures (breaks made when the bone was fresh). Burning was seen in six contexts but the majority of burnt fragments were from samples. No pattern was noted, suggesting that burning resulted from the inclusion of bone in fires rather than from the cooking process.

4.10.9 No unusual combinations of bone elements were seen, although it the large number of large mammal rib bone fragments in pit (6016) can be noted. A mouse-sized rodent in pit (904) was represented by three bones, two of which may have been articulated, suggesting that this animal was buried (but not excavated) whole, perhaps an accidental inclusion or intrusive individual.

4.10.10 Working or wear was noted on a sheep metatarsal, which had been worn in several places across the shaft of the bone, especially just above the distal epiphysis. Similar wear, although more pronounced, was noted on Iron Age sheep metapodials at Danebury (Sellwood 1982: 389).

Roman

4.10.11 The bone in Roman contexts is in fair-good condition, with gnawing frequent in two contexts, rare in another and absent in a fourth.

Table 5: Animal bone species list and frequency from Roman contexts.

	Frequency (hand recovered)	
Species	No. contexts	% contexts
Cattle	2	50
Sheep/goat	3	75
Pig	2	50
Horse	2	50
Bird	2	50
Unidentified	2	50

4.10.12 The species frequency differs from that in the early Iron Age, with horse and bird (probably chicken) bone more frequent (**Table 5**). Sheep/goat appear to be more frequent than cattle, often regarded as evidence of an 'unromanised' settlement, although the numbers are too small to provide confirmation of this.

4.10.13 The proportion of bones that could provide evidence of age and size is generally high, although butchery marks are less frequent and burnt bone is not present.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES

5.1 This is an assessment of six bulk samples, averaging around 30 litres, processed by Wessex Archaeology and three bulk samples processed by Oxford Archaeology. Bulk samples were taken from Early Iron Age and Roman features to determine the presence, preservation and diversity of charred remains and to assess their potential to provide information about the function of features, activities conducted, and the nature of the site.

Table 6: Assessment of the charred plant remains and charcoal

				Flot							Residue	
Feature type/ No	Context	Sample	size litres	flot size ml	Grain	Chaff	Weed Seeds Uncharred	Weed Seeds Charred	Charcoal >5.6mm	Other	Charcoal >5.6mm	analysis
Trench 4												
Roman ditch 406	405	1	**?**	40 [15]	A	C	-	C	C	Moll-t (A*)	A*	C
	407	4	33	60 [5]	B	B	c	B	C	Moll-t (A*)	-	
Trench 5												
EIA surface	506	6	37	400 [200]	C	B	c	C	C	Moll-t (B)	-	
EIA silt layer	515	5	36	200 [100]	C	-	c	C	C	Moll-t (A)	-	
IA soil	517	7	33	700 [500]	B	B	c	C	C	Moll-t (C)	-	
Trench 6												
Roman pit 6006	6007	600	35	100 [40]	B	B	c	A	C	Moll-t (A*)	-	P
Trench 9												
EIA pit 904	903	2	**?**	30 [15]	C	C	c	B	C	-	C	C
	905	3	**?**	30 [15]	B	C	c	B	C	Moll-t (C)	-	
Trench 11												
EIA pit 1103	1105	1100	16	90 [50]	A	A	c	B	C	-	-	P

KEY: A* = 30+ items, A = ≥10 items, B = 9 - 5 items, C = < 5 items, Moll-t = terrestrial molluscs. Analysis: P = plant. NOTE: [1]flot is total, but flot in superscript = ml of rooty material.

5.2 The bulk samples were processed by standard flotation methods and the results are quantified in **Table 6**.

5.3 Some of the flots were very large and contained large quantities of rooty material. While few of the samples were highly rich, most contained several grains, glumes and spikelet forks of emmer and spelt type wheat (*Triticum dicoccum*, *T. spelta*). The former, emmer, is of some interest as it is rarely recorded in the Upper Thames sites to the west (Robinson and Wilson 1987; Jones 1984; Stevens 1996). Several weed seeds were also recorded in the samples. These were mainly of large seeded species, oats (*Avena* sp.), brome grass (*Bromus* sp.), knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), corn gromwell (*Lithospermum arvense*) and vetch/tare (*Vicia/Lathyrus* sp.). These are commonly recorded from other sites along with some of the smaller seeded species found in the samples, annual meadow grass (*Poa* sp.), goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp.), dock (*Rumex* sp.), clover and medick (*Trifolium /Medicago* sp.). Most of these species are associated with drier soils although a possible seed of rush (*Juncus/Lathyrus*) was recorded.

5.4 A large range of Iron Age and Roman Thames sites have seen archaeo-botanical studies to the west of Wittenham Clumps, especially in the area around Abingdon and the Windrush confluence. However, fewer sites have been studied within the Dorchester-upon-Thames region so the site is of some importance. A point noted from previous work in the region is the difference between sites located predominately in the west of the Upper Thames to those lying to the east. Those around the Windrush, Mingies Ditch (Jones 1993), Gravelly Guy (Moffett 1989), Yarnton (Stevens 1996) and to the west, Groundwell West (Stevens 2001) had evidence for both earlier and later stages of processing indicative of storing crops in a relatively unprocessed state, perhaps as partially threshed ears (Stevens 2003). Those from the south-eastern part of the Upper Thames including Ashville (Jones 1978), Mount Farm (Jones 1984) and Whitehorse Road (Letts 1993) contained evidence for the later stages of processing. These were characterised by the predominance of seeds of large seeded species. Such seeds are only removed in the final stages and so can be seen as indicative of the storing of crops in a relatively clean state, probably as semi-cleaned spikelets or grain. The samples from Wittenham Clumps, through the predominance of larger seeds, would appear to represent only the final stages of processing and so in keeping with this pattern.

5.5 One sample from Romano-British pit (6006) contained quite high numbers of seeds of vetch (*Vicia* sp.). This species has been seen by Jones (1981) to increase during the later Iron Age into the Roman period. Given the Roman date of this sample the high numbers are then in keeping with this pattern.

5.6 No other remains of cultivated crops were recovered. A few fragments of hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) from chalk surface (506), are likely to result from at least some small scale exploitation of such wild resources for food.

5.7 Charcoal was noted from the flots of the bulk samples and is recorded in **Table 6**. Land snails were also noticed in a number of the flots. The species were typically open country and included *Helix aspersa*, *Hellicella itala* and *Vallonia* sp. These are typical assemblages for late prehistoric and Roman contexts. The presence of *H. aspersa* a Roman introduction (Kerney 1966) confirms a Roman or later date for the sampled features.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Time Team's evaluation at Round Hill has produced significant new information on a site of regional importance. The value of the results is enhanced by their association with the on-going work of Oxford Archaeology and the Northmoor Trust at Castle Hill and its environs. The results provide information on the location, extent and condition of buried remains that can be used by the Northmoor Trust in their plans for the long-term management of their Estate and contribute to education and outreach on the archaeological heritage to visitors.

6.2 This discussion does not attempt to place the results of Time Team's evaluation within the framework of the on-going research project, as this is best undertaken by others, and forms part of the recommendations for further work set out below. However statements on the nature, character and condition of the archaeology can be made as follows.

6.3 While the limited trial trenching on the summit of Round Hill failed to produce evidence for archaeological remains, the geophysical survey and trial trenching evaluation on the southern slopes of the Hill produced excellent results.

6.4 The geophysical survey produced results of clarity that have enabled an interpretative plan to be proposed. Trial trenching has tested the survey results and confirmed their reliability. The survey results can therefore be viewed with some confidence and provide a landscape wide picture of the archaeology to the south of Round Hill and Castle Hill. The survey has corroborated, enhanced and extended the results of English Heritage's survey in 1995 (Price 1995).

6.5 The evaluation results indicated the remains of a widely spread, open settlement, characterised by dense groups of pits. Finds of pottery and animal bone indicate an Early Iron Age date. On at least the lower slopes of Round Hill, well-preserved, stratified remains of contemporary occupation were sealed beneath plough soil. The evaluation re-establishing the precise location of Rhodes' 1947 trench in trench 5 and confirmed the date and accuracy of his observations. It relocated the Iron Age cobbled surface and overlying chalk floor, although there was little to demonstrate conclusively that they lay within a building. It is possible that they formed part of a yard. However this part of the Early Iron Age settlement lay within an area that was not set aside for pits. A comparable sequence comprising a cobbled surface and soil containing Iron Age material, sealed by a chalk surface, was recorded in trench 8.

6.6 A number of post-holes indicated the possible presence of timber buildings, while geophysical survey in Area 2 suggests at least one possible roundhouse. Small square enclosures of unknown function, were also identified and were likely to be of Early Iron Age date. A small assemblage of Early Iron Age pottery was recovered, along with sheep/goat and cattle bones that provided evidence of husbandry and meat processing.

6.7 No discernible evidence for Middle and Late Iron Age occupation or activity was recorded and suggests that the land may have been in long-term pasture or limited cultivation at this time.

6.8 The next phase of activity occurred in the Roman period. Known Roman activity on the southern slopes of Round Hill was identified in 1947 by Rhodes and Time Team's evaluation was aimed at re-assessing the results of that earlier work. The spread of Roman demolition material identified in 1947 was relocated and shown to represent the remains of a farmstead within a ditched enclosure, approached by an entrance to the east.

6.9 A robber trench provided evidence for at least one substantial building on the site, which may have formed the principal structure, and have included a tessellated floor. However it was not possible to confirm the orientation, extent or precise location of the building nor was it possible to provide evidence for floor levels or of domestic occupation. It is possible that the demolition debris merely marked an accumulation of debris from a range of buildings, incorporating at least one of flint construction with others of clay wall or timber construction. Pottery suggests that activity occurred throughout the Roman period, however the majority of the finds, including coins, indicated a large-scale redevelopment of the site in the mid 3rd to 4th century AD.

6.10 Post-Roman material is limited to small quantities of post-medieval material recovered from superficial deposits.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER WORK

7.1 The following recommendations have been proposed by Wessex Archaeology in consultation with Oxford Archaeology. They will form a programme of work that will enable an appropriate level of post-excavation analysis and reporting to be achieved and to enable the results to be placed alongside the on-going archaeological work of Oxford Archaeology at Wittenham Clumps.

7.2 The results of the project should be made available to the wider archaeological and academic community through publication of the results in an appropriate form. It is proposed that the results of Time Team's evaluation form an adjunct to Oxford Archaeology's future academic publication of the results of their long-term project.

7.3 The site data from Time Team's evaluation will be condensed from this evaluation and assessment report and the geophysical survey report. This will

include the background to the project and a summary of the principal findings. Plans, sections and photographs will be incorporated as appropriate.

7.4 The following finds and environmental analyses are proposed. Appropriate specialists, agreed in consultation with Oxford Archaeology, will undertake the analysis with the aim of ensuring the assemblages are placed within their local and regional context and particularly in relation to the on-going finds and environmental analyses for the Wittenham Clumps project.

7.5 The pottery will be analysed following nationally recommended guidelines for the recording and analysis of prehistoric pottery (PCRG 1997) and using the standard Oxford Archaeology pottery recording system for the Romano-British pottery. Text will present the range of types present and set the prehistoric and Romano-British assemblages in their local and regional context. Any implications for patterns of production and distribution will be discussed. A representative selection of vessel forms (mainly Iron Age) will be illustrated.

7.6 Ceramic building material will be quantified by type (e.g. tessera, tegula, etc) and by fabric (using relevant type series created for other Romano-British sites in Oxfordshire, held by Oxford Archaeology). Text will set out the range of types present (including *opus signinum*, mortar and wall plaster), and discuss with reference to the nature of any structure(s) present, the implications for site status, and any links with identifiable sources of the building material. Stone will be identified to geological source with the text summarising the implications for usage and supply.

7.7 Selected metal objects (coins, pin, spearhead) will be submitted for investigative conservation treatment, to aid identification and to stabilise the objects for long-term storage. The existing coin catalogue will be updated if necessary following conservation, as will existing catalogue-style archive descriptions of other objects. The significance of the unusual spearhead type will be briefly discussed, citing relevant parallels. The spearhead, and possibly the pin, will be illustrated.

7.8 Although the Early Iron Age animal bone assemblage is not large, it is relatively well preserved. Formal identification of species, age and size of animals should be carried out to enable animal husbandry and consumption patterns to be characterised and compared to similarly dated sites. Some possibly unusual deposits of bone should be quantified to assess whether some deposits contain the waste from specific activities or an amalgamation from several activities. Comparison of taphonomic indicators, such as gnawing and fragmentation, and bone element representation of bones from pits and 'occupation' deposits can also be carried out on a limited scale to try to understand the different deposition practices involved.

7.9 Despite its good condition and the relatively high proportion of bones with the potential to inform on the age and size of animals, the Roman animal bone assemblage is too small to provide any useful information about animal

husbandry or consumption and deposition practice. No further work is proposed.

7.10 Other categories of material do not warrant further analysis, but data gathered as part of this assessment may be utilised in the final report.

7.11 The charred plant remains are of value as they provide information from one region that has received less study within the well-studied Upper Thames corridor. The remains provide the potential to determine the function and role of the site (cf. Stevens 1996; 2003) within the broader Iron Age and Roman landscape. Charcoal is, surprisingly, relatively sparse, excepting a dump in a Roman ditch in trench 4. This paucity may indicate the excavated area does not lie within the main foci of domestic and burning activity. Nevertheless, the charcoal from Early Iron Age and Roman contexts has the potential to provide some information about the character of local woodland, and evidence of management.

7.12 Two plant remains samples have been selected for analysis (Table 6). It is also recommended that this analysis be reported along with data from this assessment. Two charcoal samples have also been selected from an Early Iron Age and Roman context to examine the character of the local woodland and evidence of any woodland management. Although preservation is good, the snail assemblages have little information to provide any further detailed information about the site and its environment.

7.13 A consideration of the overall results of the evaluation in relation to the wider evidence for landuse and settlement at Wittenham Clumps should be undertaken by an appropriate authority in the archaeology of the region.

7.14 A copy of this assessment report, along with a copy of the geophysical survey report, will be submitted to the Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record.

8 THE ARCHIVE

8.1 The archive, which includes all artefacts, written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken, is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology under the site code RH 03 and Wessex Archaeology project code 52568.

8.2 It is intended that, in accordance with the wishes of the landowner, the excavated material and records will be deposited with the Oxfordshire Museums Service in due course. In consultation with Oxford Archaeology, the project archive may by integrated into that of the overall Wittenham Clumps project and deposited as a single entity.

8.3 The paper archive is contained in a lever arch ring binder file. It includes:

Project Design
Finalised Assessment Report

The geophysics report includes a record of all data, plots of the results, interpretation with detailed comments and conclusions.

The excavation archive includes:
12 A4 context checklist sheets
125 A4 context record sheets
3 A4 graphics register sheets
2 A1 drawing sheets
5 A3 drawing sheets
14 A4 drawing sheets
6 A4 Photographic register sheets
1 A4 Object Register sheets
2 A4 Sample Collection sheets
5 A4 Sheets of GPS data of trench location, geophysics grid and TBMs
6 A4 Sheets of Environmental Sample Records

The photographic archive includes:
76 colour transparency slides
Monochrome photographs

There are 15 large cardboard boxes of artefacts
2 small cardboard boxes
3 plastic tubs

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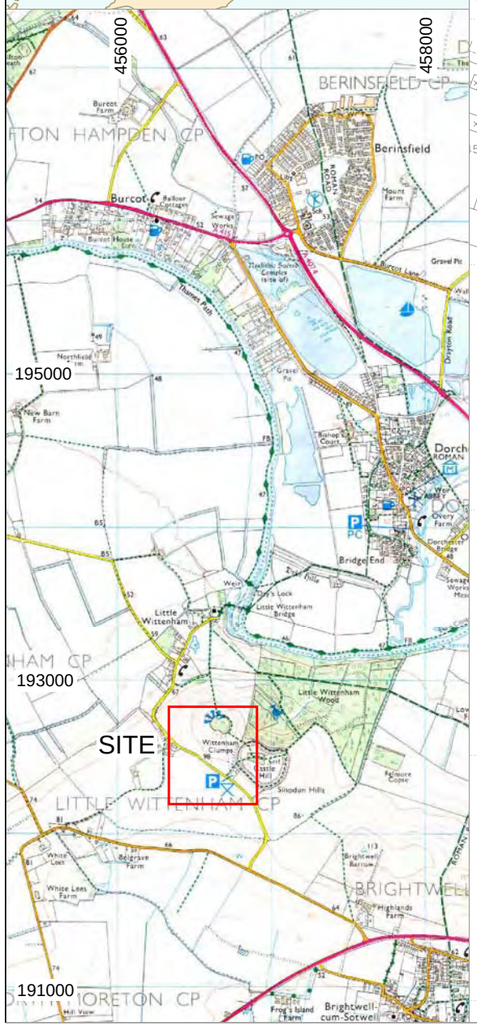

Wessex Archaeology

Archaeology

? Archaeology

Area of Increased Magnetic Response

Ploughing

Ferrous

Modern / Track

Geophysical survey data supplied with permission by GSB Prospection Ltd.

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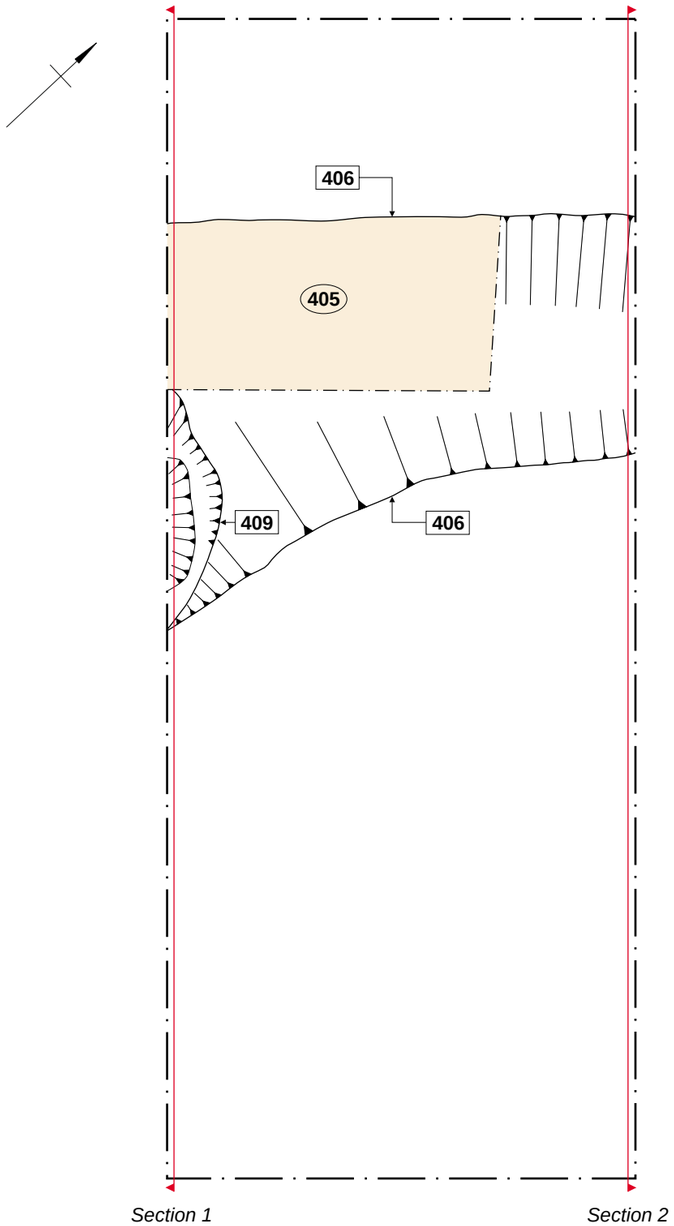
Location map showing geophysical survey results and trench locations

Figure 1

TRENCH 4



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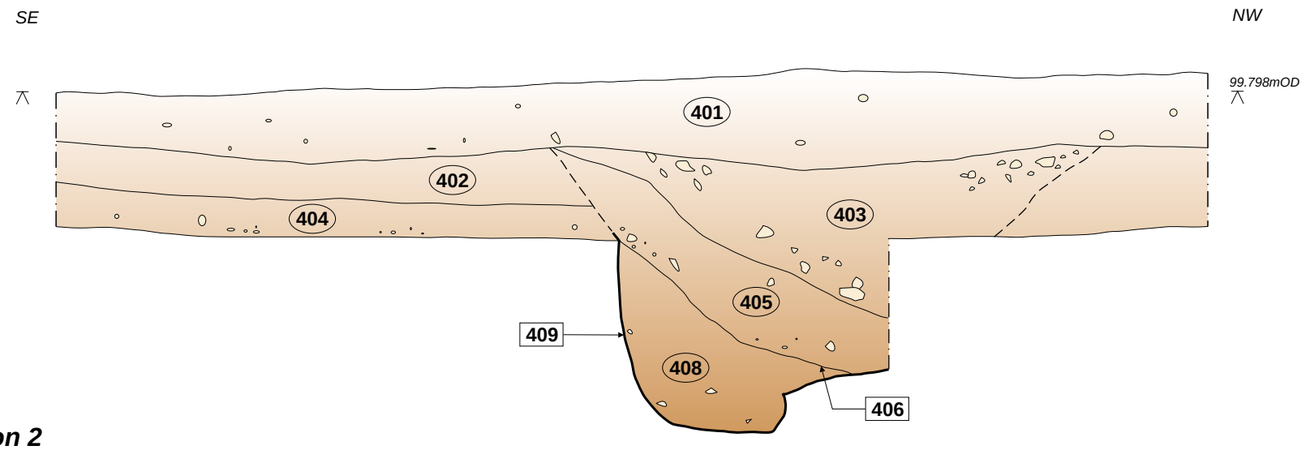

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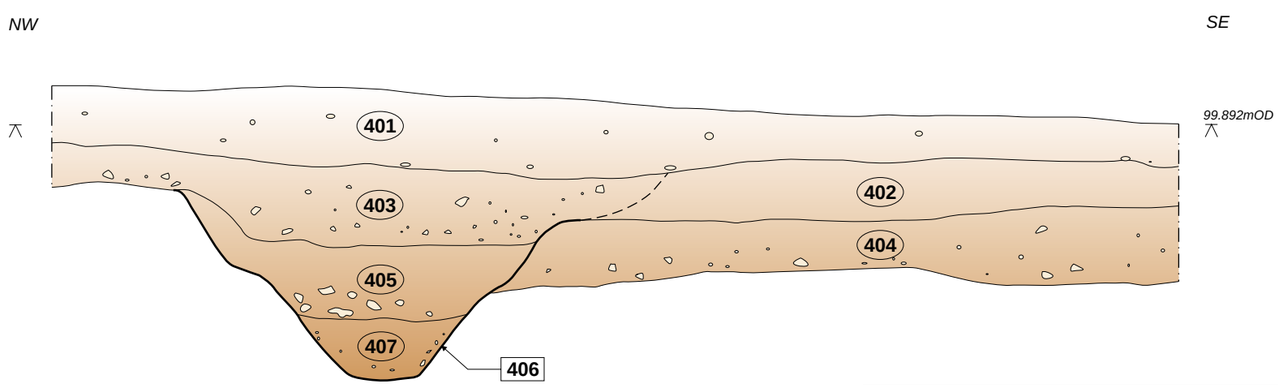

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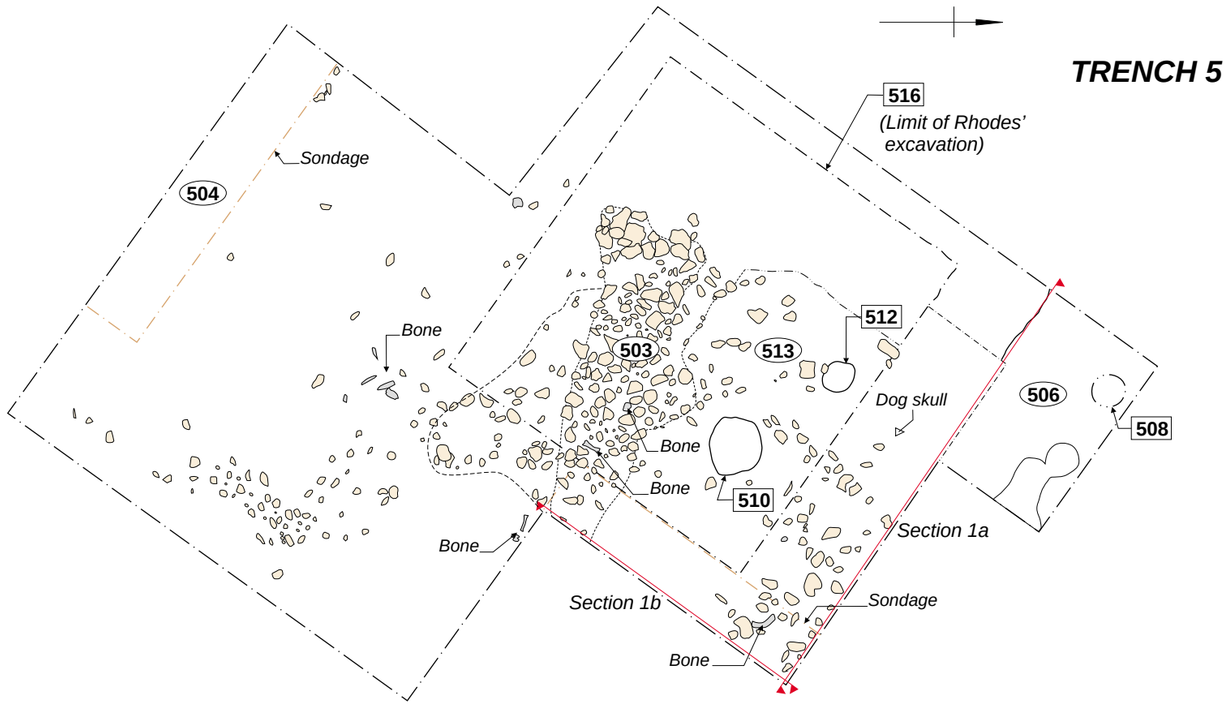
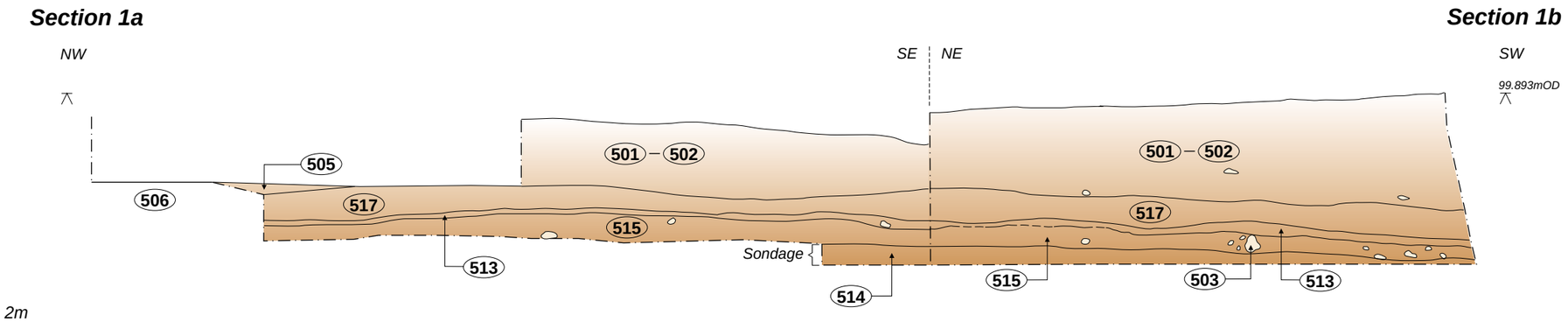
Trench 4 plan and sections

Figure 2



View of Trench 5 looking north



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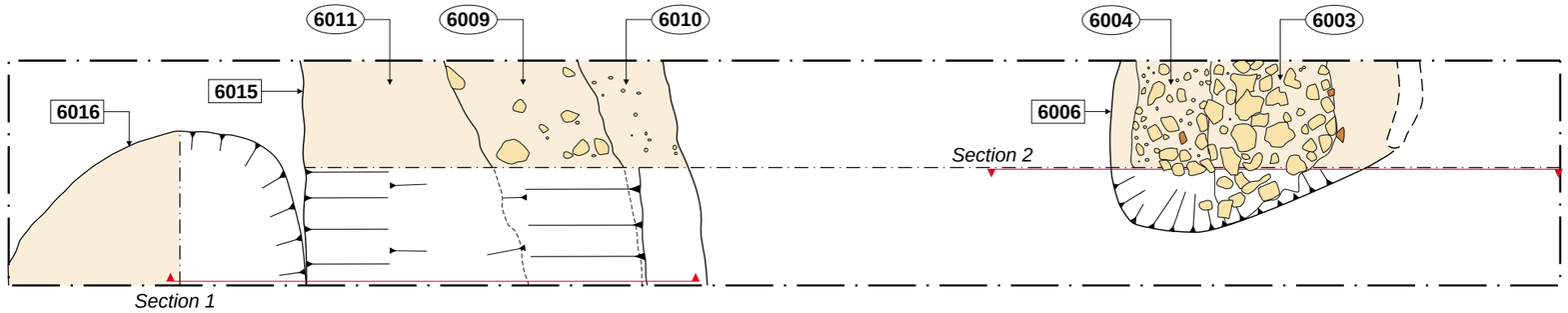
Trench 5 plan and sections

Figure 3

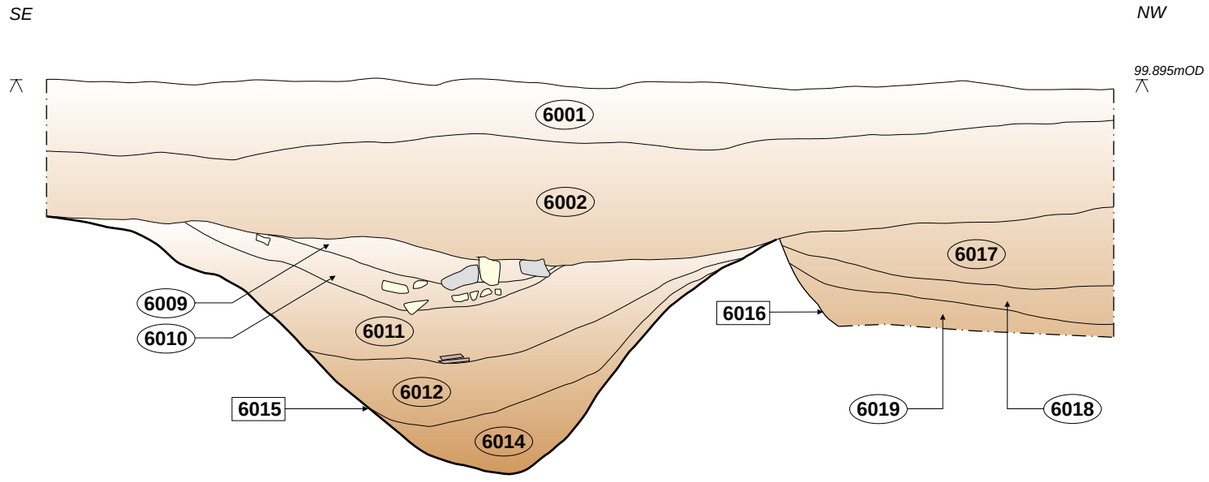
TRENCH 6



Section 1 (before excavation of pit 6016)

Section 2

Section 1



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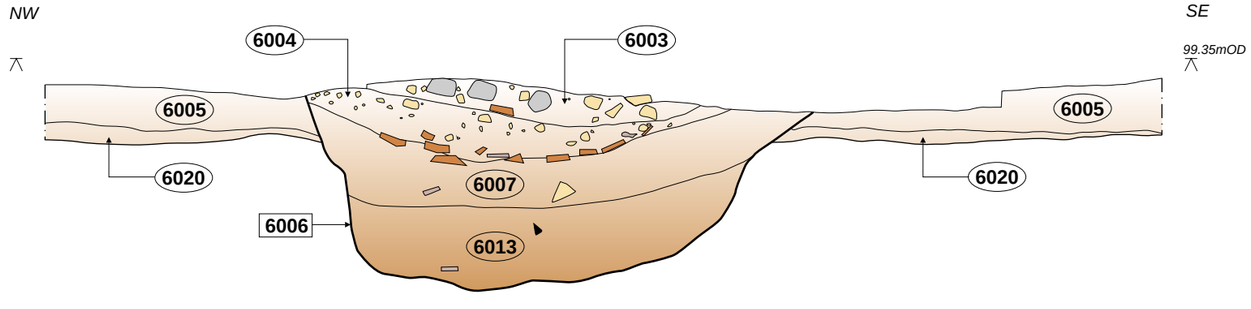

Stone
Flint
Chalk
Tile
Pot
Bone

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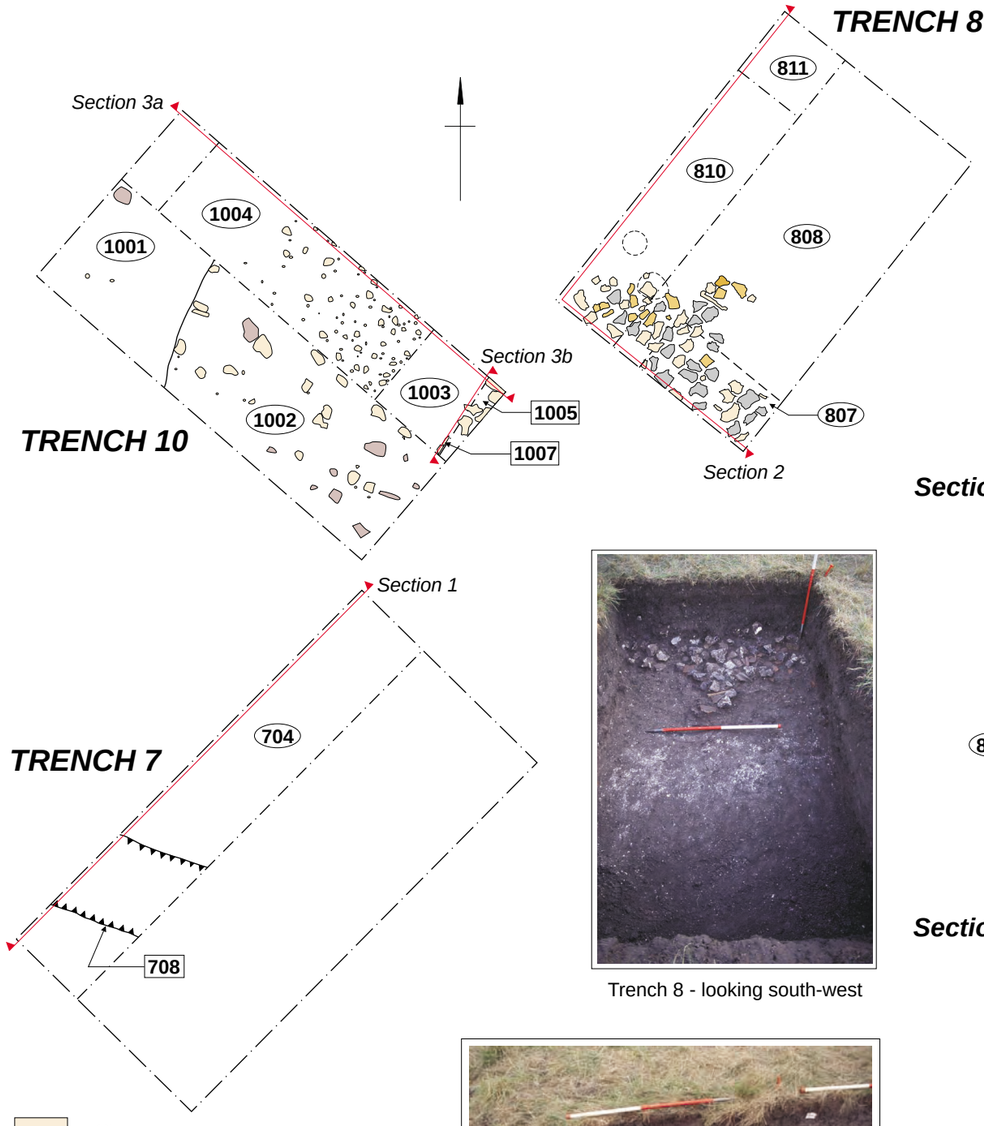
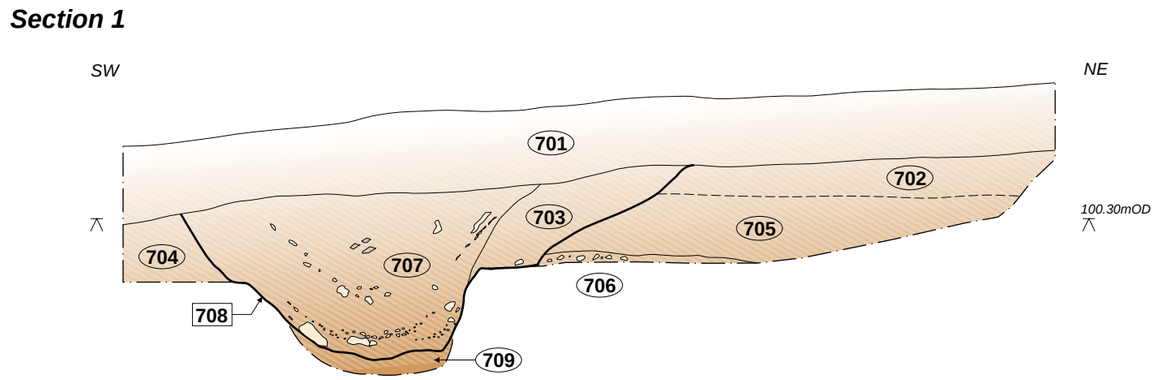
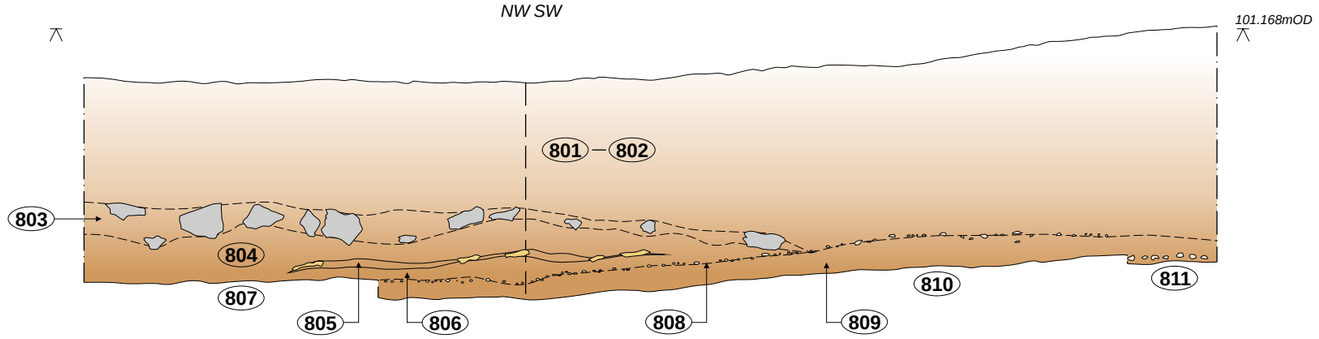
Trench 6 plan and sections

Figure 4

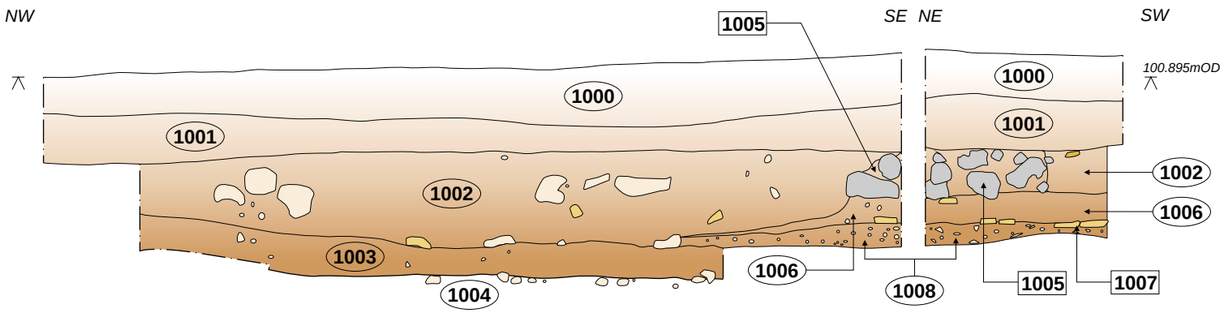






Trench 8 - looking south-west

Trench 7 - Section 1



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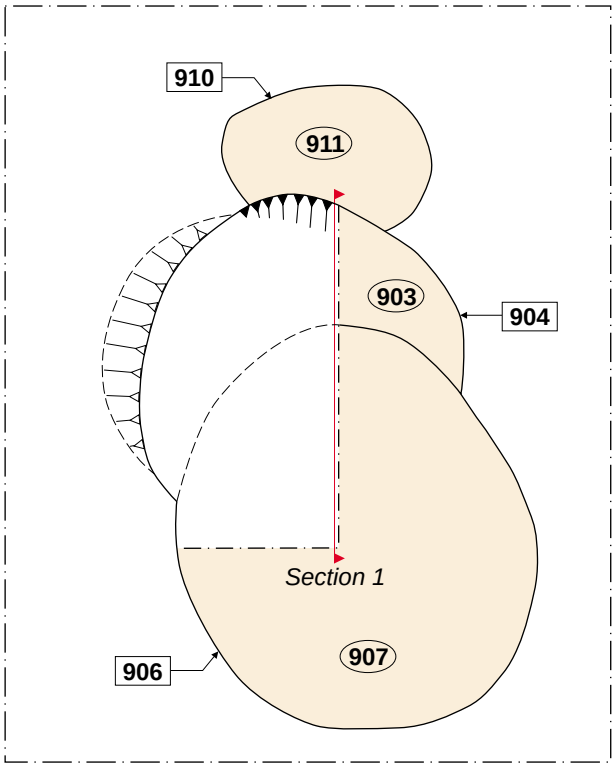
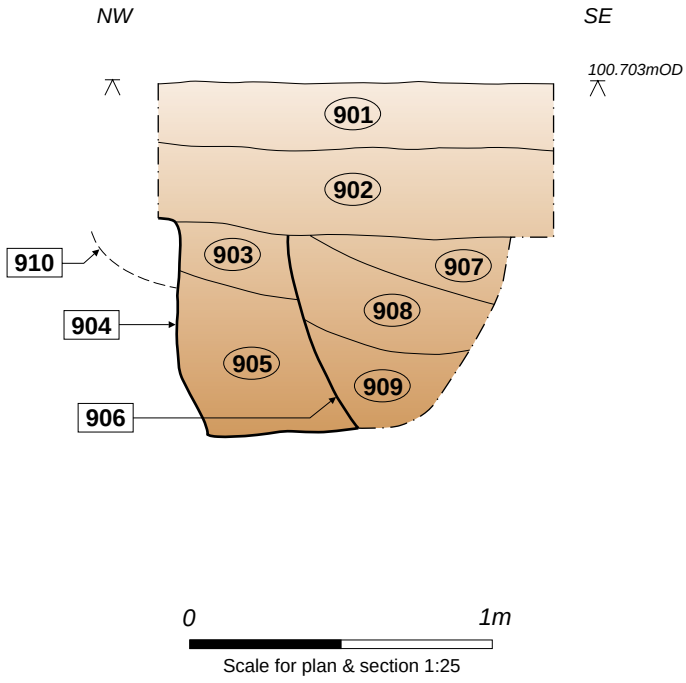
Trenches 7, 8 and 10, plans and sections

Figure 5

TRENCH 9



Section 1



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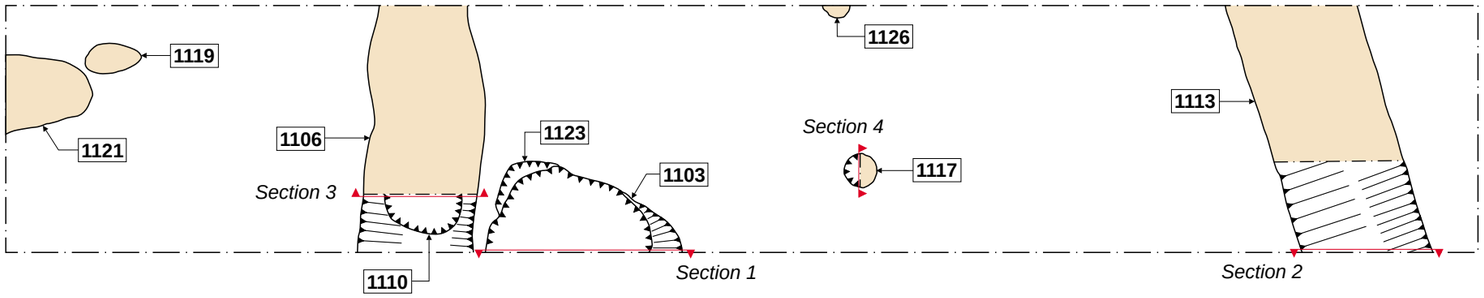
Trench 9, plan and section

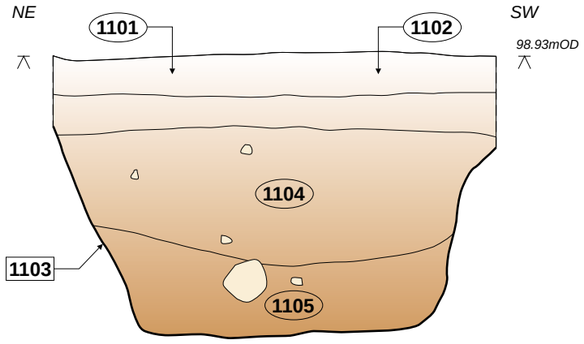
Figure 6

TRENCH 11



Section 1

Section 1



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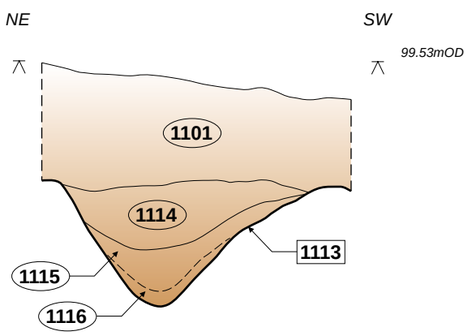

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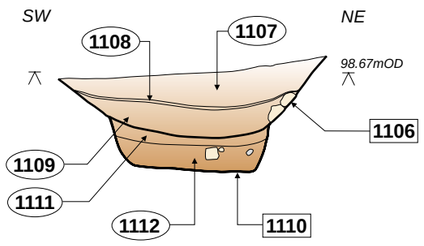

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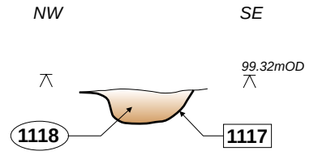

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Trench 11 plan and sections

Figure 7

THE TRUST FOR WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY LTD.
Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB
Tel:(01722) 326867 Fax:(01722) 337562
E-mail:info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk
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