



making sense of heritage

Defence Training Estate: Salisbury Plain
EIP – Perham Down
Tidworth, Wiltshire

Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Excavation



Ref: 86850.01
April 2013



**Defence Training Estate: Salisbury Plain
EIP – Perham Down
Tidworth, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Excavation

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Defence Training Estate: Salisbury Plain EIP – Perham Down Tidworth, Wiltshire

Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Excavation

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Front cover: Pre-excavation view of military practice trench **20016** and adjacent area (view from west; scales = 2m)



Defence Training Estate: Salisbury Plain EIP – Perham Down Tidworth, Wiltshire

Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Excavation

Summary

Wessex Archaeology were commissioned by White Young Green Plc to carry out an archaeological strip, map and record excavation during the development of a new access track at Perham Down to the east of Tidworth, Wiltshire, centred on NGR 426250 149300.

The groundwork comprised stripping of topsoil and subsoil along the 1km route of the new track, whilst pre-construction ancillary works included the excavation of a cable trench across the line of the route. The County Archaeology Service at Wiltshire Council requested that an archaeological strip, map and record excavation should be undertaken as part of the works following an earlier evaluation which identified potential military features in Trench 46 and due to the archaeological potential of the area.

Overall, relatively few archaeological remains were uncovered within the excavation area. A small assemblage of worked flint of probable Bronze Age date was found in later features and tree throws, and a single sherd of possible Iron Age pottery was also recovered from a tree throw. Two small ditches at the southern end of the route are more certainly assigned to the Roman period, and may form part of a field system recorded from aerial photographs. Sections of World War I practice trenches have been discovered near the central section of the track, in an area of known military activity, and on the opposing slope of a shallow dry valley, which the track bisects, a previous unknown trench system including a forward firing bay and rear sinuous communication trench were recorded.

The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken between 17th September and 12th October 2012.



Defence Training Estate: Salisbury Plain EIP – Perham Down Tidworth, Wiltshire

Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Excavation

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Mathew Wilkey of White Young Green for commissioning the archaeological strip, map and record excavation on behalf of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation. Wessex Archaeology would also like to acknowledge Martin Brown of White Young Green and Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger of Wiltshire Council for their assistance during the course of the project.

Thanks are extended to Nick Dredge of Defence Infrastructure Organisation, John Reid of Landmarc Support Services and WO1 Les French, Senior Training Area Safety Marshall, for their roles in the successful completion of the project.

The fieldwork was directed by Steve Beach, assisted by Ben Cullen, Neil Fitzpatrick, Daryl Freer, Dave Murdie, Mark Stewart and Rebecca Wills. This report was written and compiled by Phil Andrews and Steve Beach, with the finds described by Lorraine Mephram and the report illustrations prepared by Rob Goller. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Paul White and Sue Farr, who also edited the final report.



Defence Training Estate: Salisbury Plain EIP – Perham Down Tidworth, Wiltshire

Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Excavation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by White Young Green to undertake a programme of archaeological strip, map and record excavation in advance of the construction of a new access track at Perham Down to the east of Tidworth, Wiltshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 426250 149300 (**Figure 1**), hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’.
- 1.1.2 Planning permission (K/56690/F) with conditions has been granted for the construction of a 2.1km long track at Perham Down. The purpose of the track is to enhance the infrastructure of the training estate and to improve the connectivity of the training areas across Salisbury Plain.
- 1.1.3 Based on an earlier evaluation undertaken for the Site (Wessex Archaeology 2007), the County Archaeologist at Wiltshire Council requested that approximately 1km of the track should be investigated under a strip map and record exercise (the Site reported on here) with the remainder dealt with under an archaeological watching brief (the subject of a separate programme of work).
- 1.1.4 The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken between 17th September and 12th October 2013.

1.2 The Site, location and geology

- 1.2.1 The Site is located within the Defence Training Estate (DTE) Salisbury Plain at Perham Down, to the east of Tidworth and south of Ludgershall. This section of the EIP (Eastern Infrastructure Project) access track runs predominantly through arable farmland with adjacent stands of trees, from close to the polo pitch to the east of Busigny Barracks in the north (NGR 426050 149650), to between Little Perham Copse and Great Perham Copse in the south (NGR 426300 148800) (**Figure 1**). The 1km long route was crossed by overhead electricity cables (re-routed underground during the course of the fieldwork), a gas main and, further to the south, Perham Down Road.
- 1.2.2 The British Geological Survey map for the area shows that the route of the access track lies on Upper Chalk (1975, Sheet 283, Andover). The surface topography of the Site is generally at c. 105 - 115m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), with a shallow dry valley in the central part.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The Salisbury Plain Training Area is well known for its prehistoric archaeology including round and long barrows, field systems and enclosures and contains over 2,300 archaeological sites and monuments from all ages. The area has been in military use for



over 100 years and contains features associated with the development of warfare over this period.

- 2.1.2 Although there are no recorded designated heritage assets within the Site or immediate vicinity, the Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record has a number of finds and features recorded in the immediate vicinity. Archaeological remains of key historical periods are represented in close proximity to the Site, which also contains a number of undated features including linear earthworks.
- 2.1.3 The Site lies within an area of cropmarks which, although undated, are thought likely to represent ditches belonging to various elements of the prehistoric and Romano-British landscape (**Figure 1**). These include one group of ditches recorded from aerial photographs at the southern end of the Site, a second group immediately to the west and a single ditch to the north. Some of these ditches are parallel to each other, and probably represent field divisions, whilst others appear to define trackways or enclosures. In addition Romano-British pottery sherds have been recorded to the west of the Site adjacent to Somme Road, though a watching brief revealed nothing of interest (Wessex Archaeology 2013). There are also several military features, including a zone of military trenching immediately to the east of the Site recorded from aerial photography (**Figure 1**).
- 2.1.4 Archaeological evaluation in 2007 along parts of the proposed route of the EIP included seven evaluation trenches within the section at Perham Down (Wessex Archaeology 2007; areas 6 and 7, Trenches 41 - 47). The five trenches in the northern half of this section (area 6) revealed only undated tree throws and modern agricultural features, whilst the two trenches in the southern half recorded a possible early modern military trackway or rail-bed (Trench 46).

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1.1 The objective of the strip, map and sample excavation was to record the location, extent, date, nature, character and relationships of any surviving archaeological remains uncovered during the groundwork programme.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Fieldwork methodology

- 4.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the guidance and standards outlined in the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations* (IfA 2008).
- 4.1.2 The archaeological works consisted of a strip, map and record excavation following removal of topsoil and subsoil down to the surface of the Upper Chalk natural geology along the 8m wide, 1km-long route of the new track. Three small gaps were not stripped during the course of the fieldwork, comprising a 20m-wide gap towards the north end of the Site where there were overhead electricity cables (subsequently re-routed underground), and two narrower gaps to the south for a gas main and Perham Down Road respectively (**Figure 2**). Pre-construction ancillary works included the excavation of a (electricity) cable trench 1.8m wide and approximately 115m long across the line of the route, and this was also monitored and recorded.
- 4.1.3 All topsoil and subsoil stripping, using a 21 tonne 360° tracked excavator employing a 1.8m ditching bucket, was monitored by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist.



- 4.1.1 All archaeological deposits were hand-excavated and recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets with a unique numbering system for individual contexts. Archaeological features and deposits were hand-drawn at either 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate. The Site limits and individual archaeological features were located using a Leica Viva series GNSS unit using the OS National GPS Network through an RTK network and referenced to OS mapping.
- 4.1.2 A full photographic record was compiled using digital images. The record illustrates both the detail and the general context of the principal features, finds excavated, and the Site as a whole.
- 4.1.3 A unique site code **86850** was allocated to the Site, and was used on all records and finds.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The overburden was generally of shallow depth, with topsoil comprising dark greyish brown silty clay loam 0.2 – 0.3m thick and subsoil, a mid to dark yellowish brown silty clay, 0.15 – 0.3m thick. The topsoil contained common chalk and flint inclusions, with notably less in the subsoil, which directly overlay natural Chalk.
- 5.1.2 Tree throws (**Plate 1**) were found along the entire length of the stripped area, though generally thinly scattered, whereas the few archaeological features were confined to the central and southern areas (**Figure 2**). No features were present in the cable trench.

5.2 Bronze Age (2200 – 700 BC) and Iron Age (700 BC – AD 43)

- 5.2.1 Although no certainly dated archaeological features of Bronze Age date were identified, a small number of tree throws and Romano-British features contained residual worked flint of probable Bronze Age date.
- 5.2.2 Two adjacent tree throws (**20038** and **20040**) both contained worked flint (**Figure 2**). Tree throw **20038** was situated approximately 11.5m north of tree throw **20040**, in the central part of the Site. Both features contained relatively fresh and un-abraded assemblages of worked flint (30 pieces from **20038** and 11 pieces from **20040**), which are unlikely to have travelled far from their original site of deposition. Tree throw **20038** also contained one tiny sherd (1g) of possible Iron Age sand tempered pottery; the presence of possible Iron Age pottery from **20038**, should not be taken as a clear indication of an Iron Age date (*terminus post-quem*) for this tree throw, as 1g of pottery could easily be intrusive, and the 471g of probable Bronze Age worked flint recovered was fairly fresh, though not necessarily *in-situ*.
- 5.2.3 Probable Bronze Age worked flint was also recovered from ditches **20047** and **20049** in the southern portion of the Site. Ditch **20047** contained one heavily patinated residual worked flake, while ditch **20049** contained ten fairly fresh patinated flakes. A few sherds of Romano-British pottery were also recovered from both ditches, and given the relatively shallow nature of these two linear features, the later date would seem more credible.

5.3 Iron Age (c.700 – AD 43)

- 5.3.1 One tiny sherd of possible Iron Age pottery recovered from tree throw **20038** was the only artefact pertaining to this date recovered during the fieldwork (see above). This find may

be indicative of Iron Age activity in the wider area, but does not indicate Iron Age activity in the immediate vicinity of the Site.

5.4 Prehistoric?

- 5.4.1 A large quantity of burnt flint (106 pieces, weighing 11,498g) was recovered from tree throw **20028**, a small feature c. 9.0m south of tree throw **20036** in the central part of the Site (**Figure 2**). This material may be indicative of prehistoric settlement activity in the immediate area, and the relatively large quantity of burnt flint within a single feature suggests that it was deliberately deposited here.

5.5 Romano-British (AD 43 – 410)

- 5.5.1 Roman pottery was recovered from three features comprising tree throw **20032** in the central part of the Site and ditches **20047** and **20049** in the southern part (**Figure 2**).
- 5.5.2 The relatively large and irregular shaped tree throw **20032** was situated c. 2m south-west of tree throw **20040**, which contained Bronze Age worked flint. Tree throw **20032** contained two sherds (13g) of probably residual Roman greyware pottery.
- 5.5.3 Ditch **20047** extended across the Site in an east-west direction for 12m. The ditch was 1.6m wide and up to 0.3m deep with moderate to steep, irregularly sloping sides and an uneven convex base. The single fill (**20048**) comprised a mid yellow-brown silty clay with common small chalk fragments and fractured flint inclusions, from which came one piece of probably residual heavily patinated Bronze Age worked flint and one large sherd (233g) of late 1st to 2nd century grog tempered Roman storage jar rim.
- 5.5.4 Ditch **20049** extended in a north-west to south-east direction at the southern end of the Site. This ditch was 0.75m wide and 0.2m deep with irregular, moderately sloping sides and a concave base (**Plate 2**). The single fill (**20050**) was similar to the fill of ditch **20047** and contained ten pieces of fairly fresh patinated Bronze Age worked flint and one large sherd (109g) of grog tempered 1st to 2nd century Roman jar rim. The patinated Bronze Age worked flint is considered to be most likely residual, but is unlikely to have travelled far from its original place of deposition.

5.6 Modern (AD 1800 - present)

- 5.6.1 With the exception of a sheep/goat burial, interred with modern bottle glass within pit **20059**, and presumed to be a diseased animal, all datable modern features identified were elements of World War I military practice trenches.
- 5.6.2 The practice trenches were in two distinct groups (**Figure 2**) within the central part of the route. The first being previously unknown and comprising part of a communication trench (**20019**) and a section of firing bay (**20016**) on the east-facing slope of the north-south dry valley just to the north of Perham Down Road. Communication trench (**20019**) was 1.55m wide and at least 1.35m deep (not bottomed), with very steeply sloping sides near the top, becoming near vertical lower down (**Plate 3**). Firing bay **20016** was more U-shaped, 1.95m wide and 1.25m deep, with steeply sloping sides and a flat base (**Plate 4**). Both trenches were filled largely with redeposited chalk, with numerous lenses of redeposited topsoil.
- 5.6.3 The second group of practice trenches, less than 100m to the north-east of the first group, relate to a previously known practice trench system transcribed by the RCHME in 1995 (WSMR No. SU24NE525), situated on the west-facing slope of the dry valley. This second group included slit trenches **20014** and **20025** and slit trench/firing bay **20042**. These were



between 0.75m and 1.05m wide, and up to 0.85m deep; **20014** was vertical sided and flat-bottomed, **20025** somewhat more irregular, and slit trench/firing bay **20042** vertical-sided and flat-bottomed, with a fire step on the east side (**Plate 5**). All three of these features were filled with a mixture of redeposited topsoil and chalk in varying quantities.

5.7 Features of uncertain date

- 5.7.1 The majority of undated features comprised tree throws, with approximately 20 recorded along the entire length of the stripped area. All were investigated but most contained no finds; a few produced small quantities of worked flint, one contained burnt flint, but none produced any modern material. There were no stratigraphic relationships between these and other features and a prehistoric date for many of the tree throws is considered likely.
- 5.7.2 Other undated features include a ditch adjacent to Perham Down Road and several plough marks, all of probably relatively modern date.

6 FINDS

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 A small assemblage of finds has been recovered, which includes material of prehistoric, Romano-British and modern date. A deposit of burnt, worked flint is of unknown date. Quantities of finds by material type and by context are given in **Table 1**.

Table 1: All finds by context (number / weight in grammes)

Context	Animal Bone	Burnt Flint	Worked Flint	Metal	Pottery	Other Finds
20024				2 Fe	4/21	1 glass
20027	34/775			1 Fe		2 CBM; 4 glass
20029		106/11,498				
20033					2/13	
20039			30/471		1/1	
20041			11/52			
20043				3 Cu		1 clay pipe
20048			1/23		1/233	
20050			10/60		1/109	
TOTALS	34/775	106/11,498	52/606	3 Fe; 3 Cu	9/377	

CBM = ceramic building material; Cu = copper alloy; Fe = iron

6.2 Prehistoric

- 6.2.1 Prehistoric finds comprise worked flint, and one small sherd of pottery. The flint, which amounts to 52 pieces, consists entirely of waste flake and core material, with no identified tools or other utilised pieces. The flint is patinated, but to a variable degree, and is in relatively fresh condition. Flake morphology and technology (broad, squat flakes struck using hard hammer technique) suggests a Bronze Age date.
- 6.2.2 Only one sherd of prehistoric pottery was recovered – a small, abraded body sherd from **20039**, in a medium grained sandy fabric. The sherd is completely undiagnostic, and has been tentatively dated on fabric grounds alone to the Iron Age.

6.3 Romano-British

- 6.3.1 Four sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered. These are all jar rims, and include one medium-sized jar (probably dating to the later 1st or 2nd century AD) in a coarse greyware fabric from **20033**; and two large storage jar rims, both in grog-tempered fabrics, from **20048** and **20050** respectively.

6.4 Modern

- 6.4.1 Modern finds were recovered from **20024**, **20027** and **20043**, and comprise glass bottles and jars (one complete); a tin can (probably liver salts); part of a bone china saucer; a button, probably military; some miscellaneous pieces of metal; and part of a clay tobacco pipe, stamped with the maker's name (E Southorn of Broseley, Staffordshire). All these finds could fall within an early 20th century date range. Animal bone from context **20027**, although not in itself datable, is also likely to be of this date; it consists of cattle rib, pelvis and vertebra, and several bones have been sawn.

- 6.4.2 With the exception of the button and clay pipe, none of the modern finds have been retained.

6.5 Undated

- 6.5.1 A deposit of burnt, unworked flint from **20029** is undated, and is of uncertain origin, although this material type is often taken as an indicator of prehistoric activity. There were no associated datable finds.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1.1 Overall, relatively few archaeological remains were uncovered within the excavation, and no features are certainly of prehistoric date. A small assemblage of worked flint of likely Bronze Age date was found in later features and tree throws, as was a relatively substantial deposit of burnt flint (in tree throw **20028**), and a single tiny sherd of possible Iron Age pottery also came from a tree throw.

- 7.1.2 Two small ditches (**20047** and **20049**) at the southern end of the route are more certainly assigned to the Roman period. Both are considered likely to be part of a known but undated field system (Wiltshire SMR No. SU26104885) identified by aerial photography, though the excavated ditches don't closely match the cropmark transcriptions in this area (see **Figure 1**). A further cropmark is shown crossing the northern end of the Site, but neither the evaluation trenches targeted on it or the subsequent excavation revealed any trace of a linear feature in this location; most likely it has either been ploughed out or reflects a geological or similar variation. A cropmark shown crossing the central part of the Site has also left no archaeological trace.

- 7.1.3 Additional sections of World War I practice trenches have been discovered in the central section of the Site, in an area of known military activity (transcribed by the RCHME in 1995 (WSMR No. SU24NE525), see **Figure 1**). However, on the opposing slope of a dry valley, which the proposed track bisects, a previous unknown trench system including a forward firing bay and rear sinuous communication trench were recorded. The layout, form and size of the various elements conform to known arrangements for trench warfare (Anon 1997). No further evidence was found of the possible modern military trackway or rail-bed identified in the evaluation and the existence of this must remain questionable.



8 ARCHIVE

8.1 Preparation and Deposition

8.1.1 The complete project archive has been prepared in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's *Guidelines for Archive Preparation* and in accordance with *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage* (UKIC 1990). Details of the watching brief have also been entered into the online Oasis1 database maintained by the Archaeological Data Service (ADS). A copy of the OASIS entry is included below.

8.2 Archive

8.2.1 The strip, map and record project archive consists of:

- One A4 file containing the paper records
- Digital data (site photographs, Word and pdf files).

8.2.2 The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury under the WA project code 86850. On completion of the project, the archive will be deposited with Wiltshire Heritage Museum, 41 Long Street, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 1NS.

8.3 Copyright

8.3.1 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. You are reminded that you remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

8.4 Security Copy

8.4.1 In line with current best practice, on completion of the project a security copy of the paper records will be prepared, in the form of microfilm. The master jackets and one diazo copy of the microfilm will be submitted to the National Monuments Record Centre (Swindon); a second diazo copy will be deposited with the paper records at Wiltshire Heritage Museum (Devizes), and a third diazo copy will be retained by Wessex Archaeology.

9 REFERENCES

9.1 Bibliography

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APPENDIX 1: OASIS RECORD FORM

9.2 DTE: SP Perham Down, Wiltshire - Wessex Archaeology

OASIS ID - wessexar1-149125

Versions

View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
View 1	1	Sue Farr	s.farr@wessexarch.co.uk	29 April 2013

Completed sections in current version

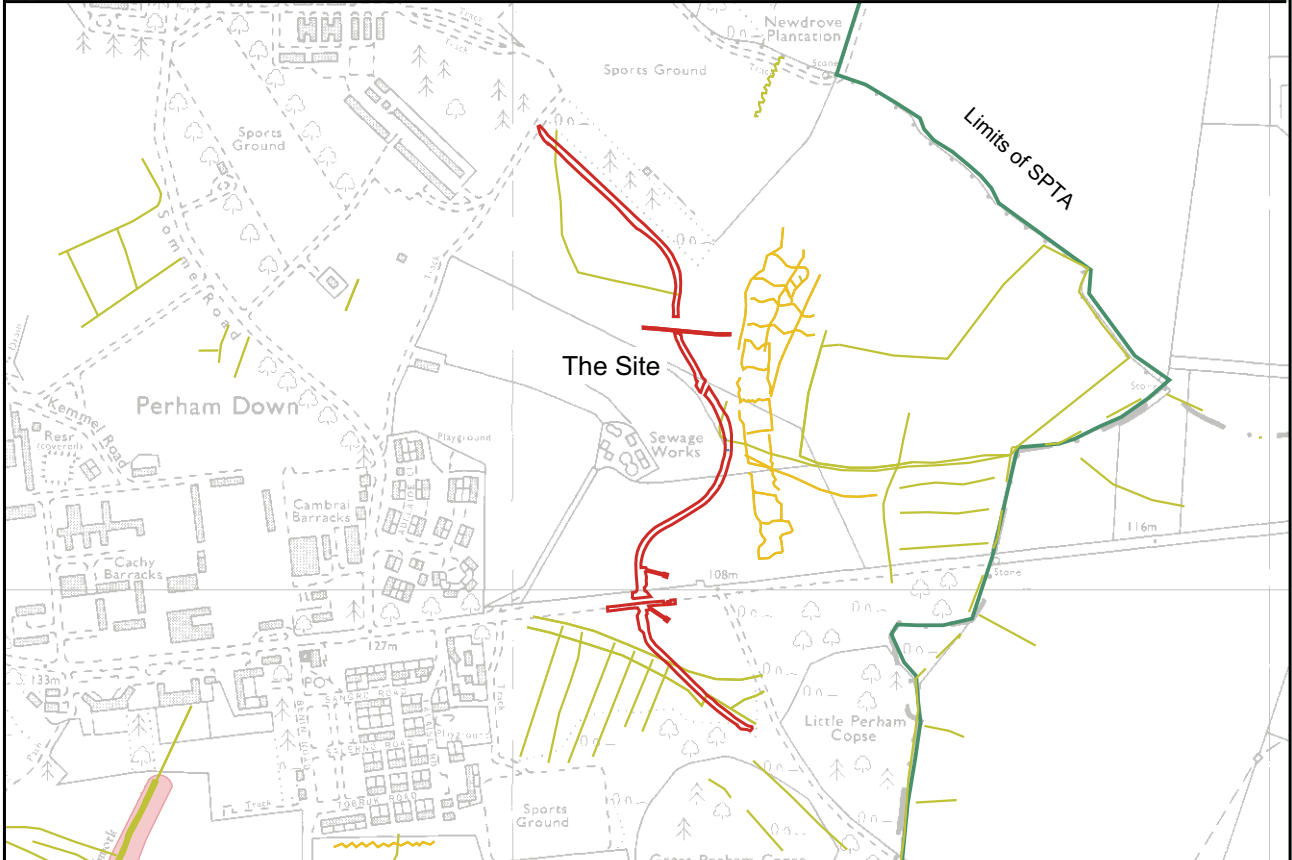
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Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1

Validated sections in current version

Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
No	No	No	No	0/1


File submission and form progress

Grey literature report submitted?	No	Grey literature report filename/s	
Report release delay specified?	Yes	Release delay	Release into ADS library once signed off
Images submitted?	No	Image filename/s	
Boundary file submitted?	No	Boundary filename	
HER signed off?		NMR signed off?	



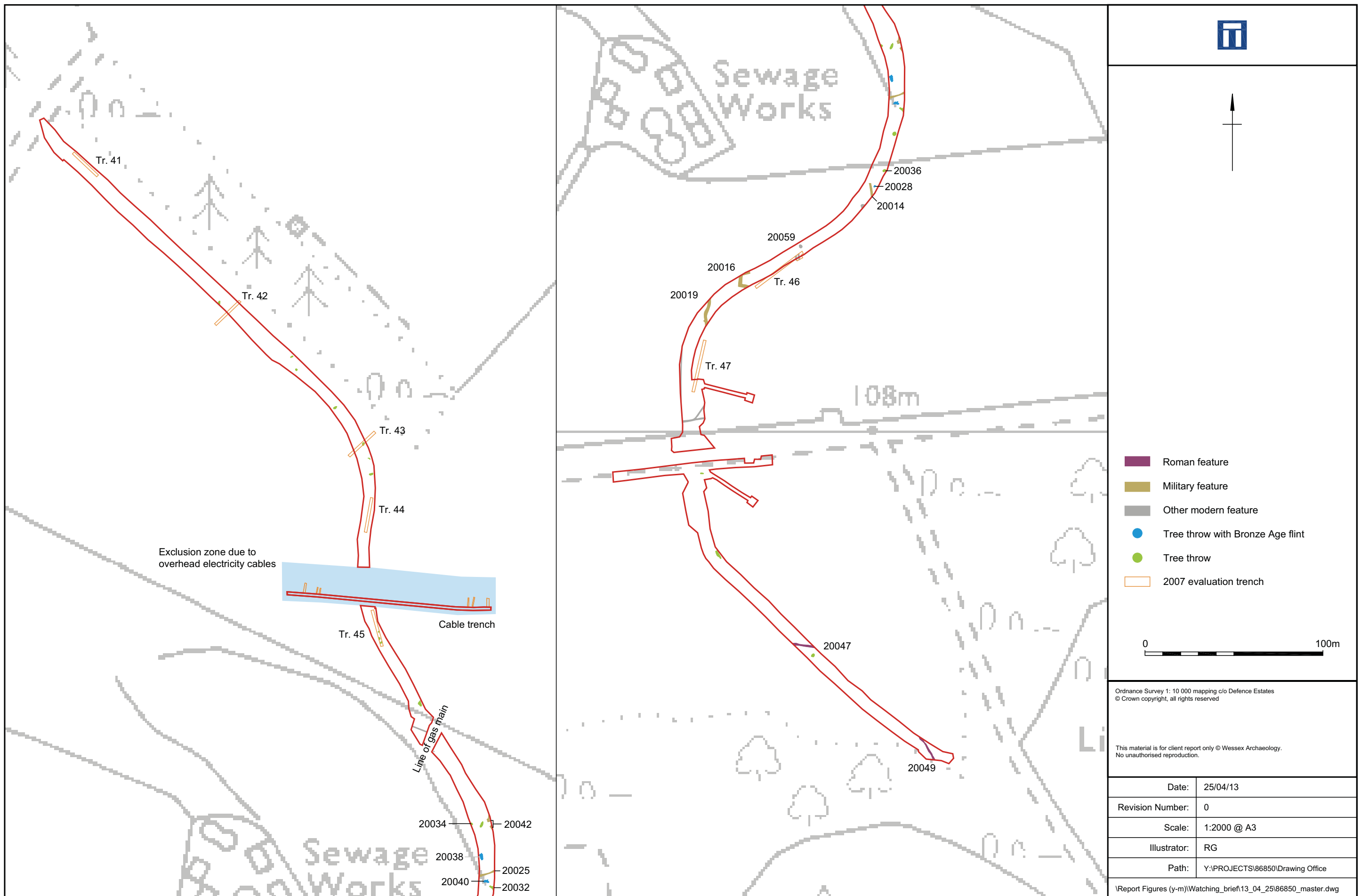
- Cropmark - prehistoric/Romano-British
- Cropmark - military
- Scheduled monument
- Stripped area

0 0.5 km

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Site location plan

Figure 1



Plan of features

Figure 2



Plate 1: Tree-throw 20036 (view from south-west; scale = 0.5m)



Plate 2: Romano-British ditch 20049 (view from south; scale = 0.5m)


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Plate 3: Military practice trench: communications trench 20019
(view from north; scale = 1m)



Plate 4: Military practice trench: firing bay 20016 (view from north; scale = 1m)



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Plate 5: Military practice trench: slit trench/firing bay 20042
(view from east; scale = 1m)

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