

CAM ARC Report Number 982

Chippenham Gallops, Cambridgeshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

Thomas Lyons BA

With contributions by Barry Bishop

Site Code: SNA CHG 07
CHER Event Number: ECB 2777
Date of works: October 2007
Grid Ref: TL 649 666

Status	Draft/Approved		
Author	Thomas Lyons		
Checked By	James Drummond Murray		
Authorised By	James Drummond Murray		

Editor: Elizabeth Popescu BA PhD MIFA
Illustrator: Séverine Bézie BA MA

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OASIS Number:

PROJECT DETAILS				
Project name	Evaluation at All Weather Track, Chippenham Gallops, Cambridgeshire			
Short description	150m of trenches along 5m easement. Only modern archaeology encountered. Fieldwalking survey found worked / struck flint.			
Project dates	Start	30/10/2007	End	1/11/2007
Previous work	None		Future work	unkown
Associated project reference codes	SNA CHG 07 ECB 2777			
Type of project	Trench Evaluation & Fieldwalking			
Site status	None			
Current land use (list all that apply)	None			
Planned development	Gallop track			
Monument types / period (list all that apply)	None			
Significant finds: Artefact type / period (list all that apply)	Prehistoric worked / struck flint			
PROJECT LOCATION				
County	Cambridgeshire	Parish	Snailwell	
HER for region	Cambridgeshire			
Site address (including postcode)	Chippenham Gallops, Newmarket road, Snailwell. Cambs.			
Study area (sq.m or ha)	5000 sqm			
National grid reference	TL 649 666			
Height OD	Min OD	22.5m	Max OD	38m
PROJECT ORIGINATORS				
Organisation	CAM ARC			
Project brief originator	Kasia Gdaniec			
Project design originator	Aileen Connor			
Director/supervisor	Thomas Lyons			
Project manager	James Drummond Murray			
Sponsor or funding body				
ARCHIVES				
	Location and accession number		Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, database, context sheets etc)	
Physical	Cambs. County Store		Pot, CBM, Flint	
Paper	Cambs. County Store		Plans & Sections. Flint report from specialist	
Digital	CAM ARC		Photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY				
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Summary

Between the 30th of October and the 1st of November 2007 CAM ARC carried out an archaeological evaluation at Chippenham Gallops, Snailwell, Cambridgeshire. The work was in advance of a proposed all weather track, the development area for which was 1km x 5m. A field walking survey of the easement was followed by excavation of 150m of trial trenches. 17 pieces of worked flint were recovered from the plough soil. These were mostly undiagnostic. Two archaeological features were discovered, both likely to be C20th.

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1 Introduction

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice team (CAPCA; pre-Planning Application), supplemented by a Specification prepared by CAM ARC, Cambridgeshire County Council (formerly Archaeological Field Unit).

The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by CAPCA, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by CAM ARC and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

2 Geology and Topography

The site overlies chalk (British Geological Survey 1981) and is located approximately 2.5km to the north of Newmarket. The proposed development area occupies a south facing chalk hill on the south east side of the village sloping down towards the A14; the southern end has an OD height of approximately 22.5m while the northern end has an OD height of approximately 38m. Patches of 3rd and 4th terrace sands and gravels occur on the upper slope of the hill.

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The area is rich in prehistoric flint scatters, Bronze Age barrows and Roman burials (eg. MCBs 8964, 8983, 8980) some of which have been partly excavated. Iron Age and Roman settlements (MCBs 9354, 15491) occur just outside the development area and stray metalwork finds relating to these periods of activity are widespread (eg MCBs 16680, 14733). The development itself lies on the higher land with the fen edge to the west.

Much of Snailwell was field walked as part of the Fenland Project and a number of sites have been located in this way (East Anglian Archaeology Report No 79, 1996 by David Hall). The closest sites to the subject site include a burial (possibly from a Bronze Age Barrow), a cremation with grave goods of probably late Iron Age date, and to the south of the A14 a group of Barrows excavated by Lethbridge in 1940 (*ibid*).

4 Methodology

The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using CAM ARC's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

A field walking survey was undertaken prior to the excavation of the trenches. Finds were immediately located using GPS. This was done over the length of the entire easement although the majority of the surface had been compressed by repeated tractor movements which reduced the visible area by at least 50%. The field walking was also slightly compromised by very bright and low sunshine.

Six trenches were opened along the course of the proposed development using a 1.8m wide toothless bucket. All were approximately 25m long and separated by gaps of 140m.

5 Results

Two archaeological features were discovered. They were both linear ditches and likely to have been part of the RAF base which occupied the site in the C20th. All worked flints came from the surface and none were found in the excavated material.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.36m. The underlying geology was white chalk with patches of orangey brown sandy silt. Topsoil was between 0.25m and 0.3m. No finds were recovered from the excavated material. One ditch was discovered towards the north end of the trench (Ditch 1, Section 1). This was cut from immediately beneath the topsoil and aligned east – west. It was 1.3m wide and 0.4m deep. It was filled with a dark and friable chalky

silt matrix which contained rubble, flecks of brick, chicken wire and a piece of iron lettering.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.38m. No archaeological features were encountered. Topsoil was 0.26m deep. The remainder of the trench depth consisted of a mixture of weathered chalk and silty sand. A possible circular sink hole was revealed in the chalk. It was filled with an orangey brown silty sand.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.53m. Topsoil was 0.34m deep. No archaeological features were encountered. The underlying geology was chalk with a large area of sandy silt. The remainder of the trench depth consisted of orangey brown silty sand which was present across much of the base of the trench.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.39m. Topsoil was 0.3m deep. The remainder of the trench depth consisted of a mixture of weathered chalk and sandy silt. The underlying geology was a mixture of chalk and sandy silt. To confirm that the silty material was geological and that it contained no cultural material (specifically worked flint) two small investigative holes were dug through it. These were no wider than 0.5m and no deeper than 0.3m. No flint was found.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.46m. Topsoil was 0.25m deep. The underlying geology was chalk. The remainder of the trench depth consisted of orangey brown natural and a rubble and makeup layer at the south end of the trench (Section 10). At the south end of the trench was a ditch on a north-east south-west alignment (Ditch 2, Section 10). This was cut from immediately beneath the topsoil and contained modern rubble as well as flecks of brick and charcoal. It was 1.6m wide and 0.5m deep.

Trench 6

Trench 6 was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.46m. Topsoil was 0.3m deep. The remainder of the trench depth consisted of a mixture of natural sandy silt and chalk. The underlying geology was chalk.

5 Discussion

Until 2005 there was a concrete taxiway present on site to the east of the proposed development. This was roughly on a north-east south-

west alignment. The rubble layer and Ditch 2 in Trench 5 are presumably part of this development. Ditch 1 in Trench 1 is also presumed to be C20th in date. It may be associated with slight terracing of the hillside between trenches 1 and 3, likely to be part of RAF activity.

The flint recovered from the field walking does indicate prehistoric activity on or in the vicinity of the site but there were no specific concentrations of material. The assemblage contained no truly diagnostic pieces and represented activity from the Mesolithic period to the Bronze Age.

The northern end of the development area lies on a slope. To the south of Trench 2 lies the 25m contour whilst near the south end of Trench 1 lies the 35m contour.

7 Conclusions

This evaluation discovered evidence for only modern archaeological features. The field walking revealed the presence of prehistoric worked flint in the topsoil but as this was partly recovered from a hillside it is not necessarily in its original context and location.

Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Mott Macdonald who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by James Drummond Murray. Tom Eley and Louise Bush assisted with the fieldwork and field walking survey, respectively.

The brief for archaeological works was written by Kasia Gdaniec. The site was visited by Eliza Gore who monitored the evaluation.

Bibliography

- | | | |
|----------|------|---|
| Hall, D. | 1996 | The Fenland Project, Number 10: Cambridgeshire Survey, The Isle of Ely and Wisbech. EAA Report no. 79 |
|----------|------|---|

Appendix 1:

Archaeological Field Walking at Land at Snailwell, Cambridgeshire
 Project Code: SNA CHG 07
 Lithic Assessment
 Barry Bishop November 2007

Introduction

The field walking investigations at the above site recovered 17 struck flints and a small quantity of burnt flint. This report quantifies the material, describes its basic technological and typological characteristics and includes some general, preliminary impressions and interpretations of the material, including recommendations for any further work required.

Quantification

Context	Cortical Blade	Blade	Blade-like flake	Flake	Core	Retouched Flake	Burnt Flint (no.)	Burnt Flint (wt:g)
02				1				
05				1				
06				1				
07				1				
09					1			
10							1	3
12					1			
13				1				
13			1	1				
14		1						
16			1					
17				1				
18							1	14
20				1				
99999	1			2		1		

Table 00: Quantification of Lithic Material by Context

Burnt Flint

Two pieces of heavily burnt flint were recovered. These were both small but the degree that they were burnt would suggest incorporation within a hearth rather than through incidental causes, such as stubble burning. They are therefore indicative of settlement-type activity in the vicinity although they remain undateable.

Struck Flint

Condition

The condition of the struck flint was variable although most pieces exhibited some edge damage and abrasion, in some cases quite markedly so, and there was a high incidence of broken pieces. This degree of damage would be consistent with their recovery from dynamic burial environments, such as topsoil horizons.

The degree of recortication also varied, from being thick and heavy to absent. This variation may have a chronological significance although, as localized differences in burial conditions may also be a factor, it cannot be used to suggest estimations for either the age of the assemblage or over how long it was produced.

Raw Materials

The raw materials used consisted of pebbles and small cobble of flint, often retaining a thick and rough but weathered cortex as well as ancient thermal scars. Where recortication permitted, it could be seen that the flint was fine grained and translucent black in colour. It would have been of good knapping quality but this was somewhat limited both by the size of the cobbles available and the presence of thermal faulting. The raw materials would have been easily available from glacio-fluvial deposits as present in the vicinity of the site.

Technology, Typology and Dating

No truly typologically diagnostic pieces were recovered. The single retouched piece consisted of a small thick flake from context [99999] which had a few flakes removed from its distal end, possibly forming a small denticulated scraper. Such types were in use from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age. Two cores were also recovered. The example from context [12] had two keeled striking platforms that had produced a number of narrow flakes and possibly blades then, after those flaked surfaces had recorticated and presumably some considerable time later, a few, perhaps only two or three, further blades had been removed. The core from context [09] consisted of an opposed platformed blade core. Both types were indicative of a blade based reduction strategy, which is most characteristic of Mesolithic and Early Neolithic industries. The remainder of the assemblage consisted of blades and flakes showing wide variation in shape and size. The blades and blade-like flakes were the product of a similar technology as that of the cores and may be similarly dated. Many of the flakes were thin and exhibited prepared striking platforms and would be also compatible with a Mesolithic to Early Neolithic date although, taken together, may indicate flint working occurring at the site over a longer period, perhaps from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age.

Significance

The assemblage is small and no concentrations of lithic material were identified, but it does indicate prehistoric activity at the site during the Mesolithic and/or Early Neolithic periods, which perhaps continued into the Bronze Age period. The present of cores indicates core reduction occurring at the site although little further can be said concerning the nature and range of activities represented by the flint.

Recommendations

As evidence of prehistoric activity at the site the assemblage should be noted in the local Historic Environment Record and a brief description should be included in any published account of the fieldwork.

Should further fieldwork be considered, attention should focus on obtaining as large and closely contextually defined lithic assemblage as possible, in order to attempt to understand the nature, extent and chronology of any prehistoric lithic-based activities. Should sufficient quantities of lithic artefacts be procured from any future work, full metrical, typological and technological analysis may be warranted and, through consideration of other recovered artefact groups and environmental based evidence, this information should be incorporated into establishing as detailed and complete an understanding as possible of the prehistoric exploitation of the area.

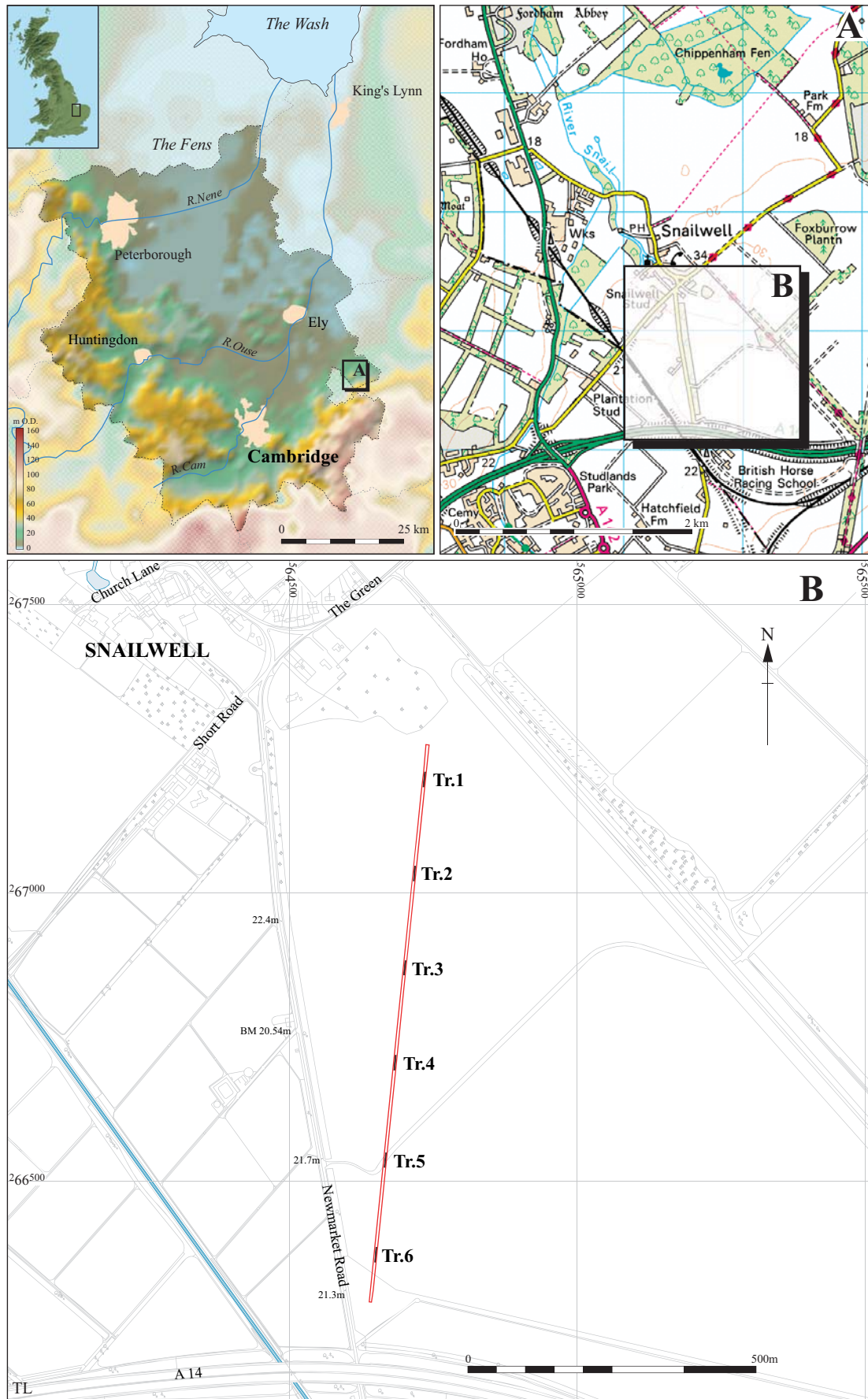
Drawing Conventions

Plans

Limit of Excavation	—————
Evaluation Trench	-----
Deposit - Conjectured	-----
Natural Feature
Sondages/Machine Strip	-----
Test Pit	-----
Intrusion/Truncation
Illustrated Section	S.14 —————
Archaeological Feature	
Excavated Slot	
Chalk	
Cut Number	118
Small Find	11

Sections

Limit of Excavation	-----
Cut	—————
Cut-Conjectured	-----
Deposit Horizon	—————
Deposit Horizon - Conjectured	-----
Intrusion/Truncation
Top Surface/Top of Natural	—————
Break in Section/ Limit of Section Drawing	-----
Cut Number	118
Deposit Number	117
Ordnance Datum	18.45m OD ⌘
Inclusions	Ⓞ



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Figure 1: Location of trenches (black) with the development area outlined (red)

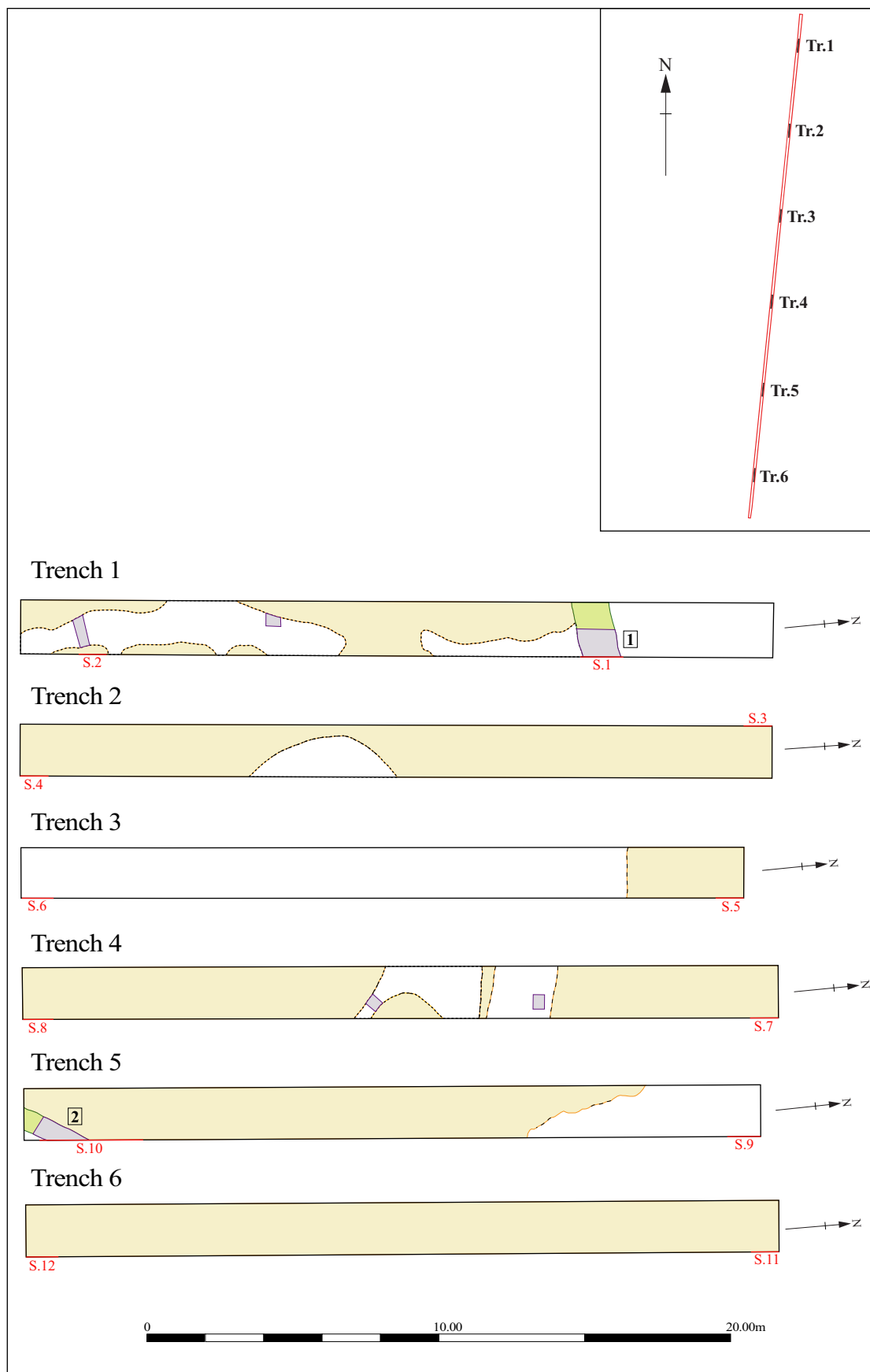


Figure 2: Trench plans

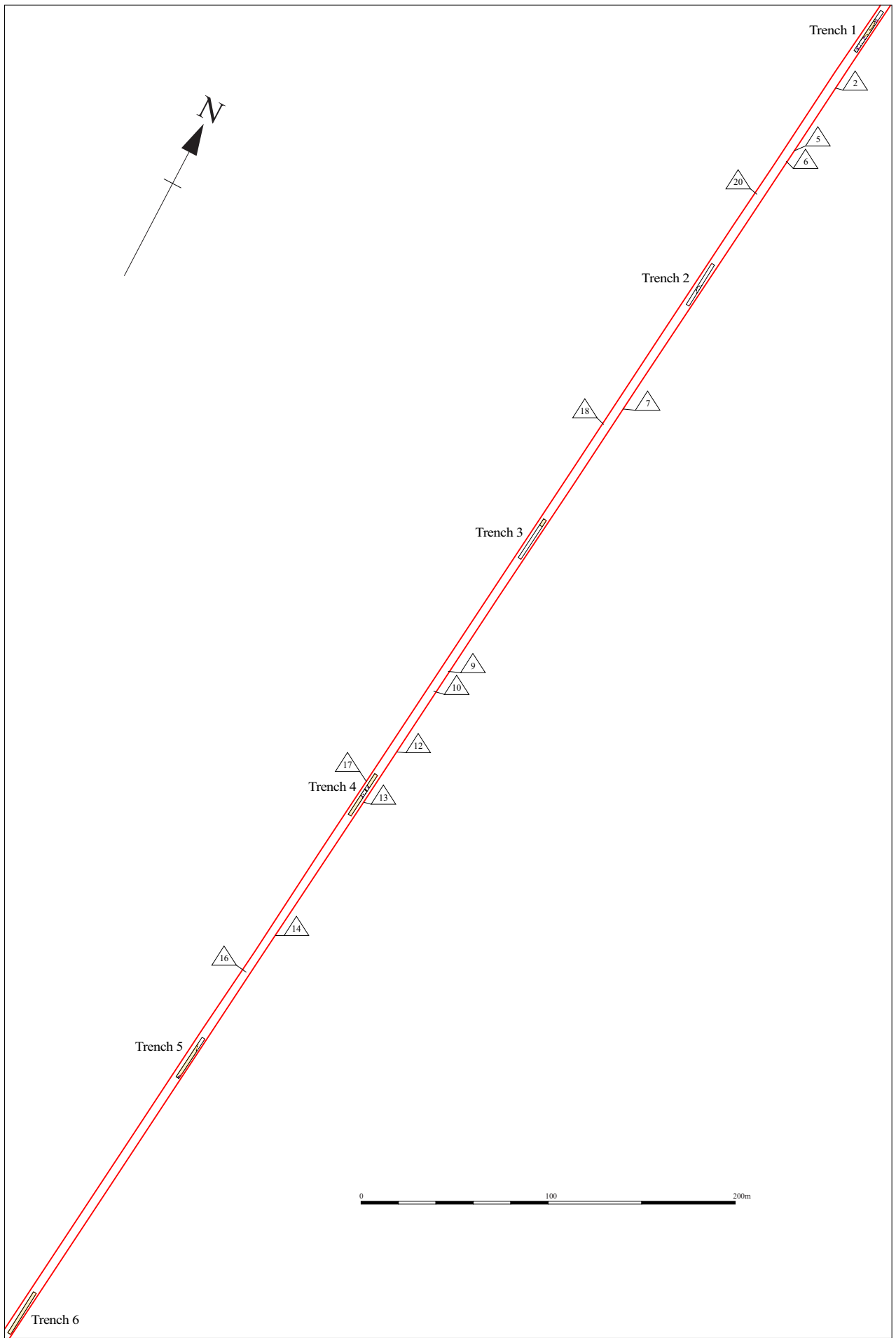


Figure 3: Trench plans with worked flint locations

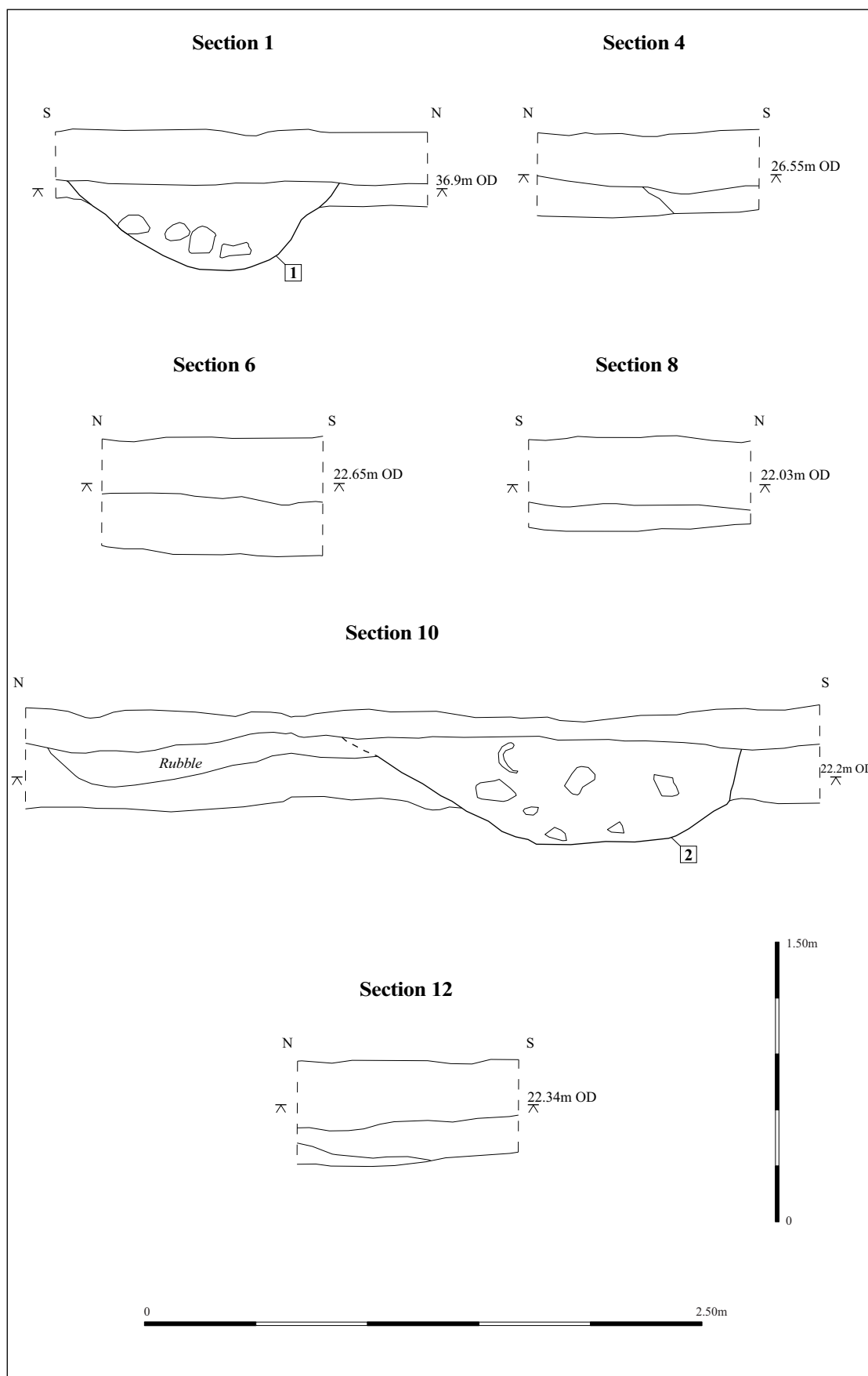


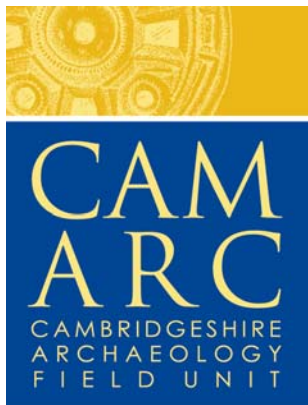
Figure 4: Section drawings



Plate 1: Trench 1



Plate 2: Trench 3



CAM ARC,
Cambridgeshire County Council,
15 Trafalgar Way,
Bar Hill,
Cambridgeshire,
CB3 8SQ

General Enquiries: 01954-204191
Fax: 01954-273376

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/archaeology>