

**An Archaeological Evaluation
Investigating Rock Outcrops
at Pookchurch Wood,
Nymans,
Handcross,
Near Haywards Heath
W.Sussex
RH17 6EB**

**NGR: 527000 129000
(TQ 27000 29000)**

**ASE Project No: P109
Site Code: PWN 013**

**ASE Report No: 2013332
OASIS ID: archaeol6-171567**

M.Pope and P.Stephenson

**With contributions by
K Krawiec, K le Hegarat, and Richard James**

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Abstract

Archaeology South East were commissioned by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological evaluation comprising auger survey and two hand excavated trial trenches at the foot of the sandstone outcrop known as Pook's Pulpit in Pookchurch Wood to the north-east of Nymans, within the National Trust property. Intended as an Outreach and Community project, £2300 was pledged by the Origins Foundation to fund a programme of outreach activities.

Six flint flakes were retrieved, all from secondary locations, either within the deposits in the trial trenches, or from animal burrow up-cast within the immediate vicinity of the trenches. No intact buried soil horizons preserving in-situ Mesolithic or Prehistoric occupation were identified either by the auger survey or the trial trenches. The presence of several flakes in the vicinity of the trenches confirms the probability of Mesolithic hunter-gatherer activity in the location. However, the low density of the finds indicates that either a) our research has not pin-pointed an exact locus of occupation or more likely b) the site has been disturbed by later bioturbation and slope processes. The low density of lithic material is probably indicative of transitory occupation.

Pook's Pulpit is likely to be typical of other localities within the valley where Mesolithic hunter gatherers, moving through the landscape utilised the rock as setting for short term camps for short periods of time. The work helps to bring the central Weald in general, and localities like Nymans in particular into focus as an important research area for future field investigation.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by The National Trust, to evaluate the potential for study of the Mesolithic occupation of the High Weald within the woodland of their property at Nymans. Specifically, coring and trial trenches were to be undertaken at the foot of the Sandstone outcrop known as Pooks Pulpit rock.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 Pookchurch Wood lies within the National Trust property of Nymans, West Sussex. Nymans lies within the High Weald, a dome of Mesozoic deposits forming part of the Hastings Beds geological sequence, and 146-132 million years old. The underlying geology comprises a sandwich of superimposed layers of Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand (typically variegated soft mudstones, silts, thinly bedded sandstones and clay ironstones) and Grinstead Clay (shales, mudstones and silty mudstones) (BGS 1972). The latter deposit contains beds of Cuckfield Stone, a hard sandstone formerly extensively quarried¹ (Gallois 1965). The processes by which the deposits were formed is unclear, but has been variously ascribed to lacustrine (lake) and deltaic deposits laid down within a vast basin (Gallois 1965) or as flood-plain deposits laid down by rivers. Following periods of geological uplift, coupled with the erosion of later superimposed material, the deposits now form an upland zone of poor quality marginal land, known as the Forest Ridges of the High Weald.

1.2.2 The Estate is situated at the point where a tributary stream valley of the River Ouse has cut back into the ridge forming the watershed between the Ouse and Mole valleys. The main ridge trends Southwest-Northeast, and is followed by a ridgeway of some probable antiquity (now the A279/B2110). The garden at Nymans occupies a subsidiary spur trending NW-SE and defined by the main valley of the infant Ouse to the south, with an un-named² stream valley to the south-east formed from the confluence of three named ghylls (wooded valleys) within the estate itself: Cow Ghyll, Carroty Ghyll and Foxhole Ghyll. These valleys and their slopes form the main eastern part of the Estate. The western part, formerly within Slaugham Park, comprises both sides of a further small tributary valley of the Ouse, named on a 19th century map as the Orange Ghyll, aligned North-South and rising from springs to the east of East Park Farm. Water is a prominent feature of the estate with, apart from the streams, a number of ponds, wells and springs around the property. The instability of the geological strata is clearly indicated by a number of natural terraces visible in the parkland around the garden, caused by slippage of sandstone over clay, lubricated by groundwater – many of the small streams begin at such slippage points, with a prominent example visible immediately north-east of the garden and feeding into Cow Ghyll).

1.3 Aims and Objectives

1.3.1 Summary

This project has been conceived as a targeted programme of prospective fieldwork, undertaken within a short time period and fixed limited budget. It comprises a piece of funded research aimed primarily at delivering to the public and school children an understanding of the history of prehistoric environmental change and human activity for a specific valley location as well as engaging them in wider issues of climate change and human evolution. In order to achieve this, the following project aims have been set out:

1. To characterise through coring the sedimentary sequence for the Pookchurch Valley in terms of Lithology, sedimentary structure and geomorphology (landform development).
2. To recover a complete palaeoenvironmental sequence for the valley. This will include the recovery of material from colluvial sedimentation dating from late prehistory through to the industrial period.
3. To identify potential palaeo-landsurfaces associated with the outcrop of Tunbridge Wells Sandstone on the west side of the valley.
4. To undertake prospective archaeological excavation to see if these landsurfaces have associated evidence of prehistoric human activity.
5. To deliver information necessary for the production of a site interpretation board and other materials for the National Trust
6. To provide opportunities for outreach and public engagement.

1.4 Scope of Report

- 1.4.1 This report summarises the findings from the coring and trial trenches undertaken to evaluate the potential for further study. The work was conducted by Kris Krawiec and Liz Chambers (Coring), excavations taking place between the 4th and 10th November 2013 undertaken by K. Le Hegarat (Lithics specialist and on-site project consultant), P. Stephenson (Site Supervisor), V. Tsamis (surveyor). Volunteers from Horsham District Archaeology Group assisted with the excavations and on-site finds sieving.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 The sandstone ridges of the High Weald offered a rich hunting territory for the Mesolithic populations of the early Holocene. The large number of sites from this period which have been found associated with outcrops of Sandstone between Horsham and Tunbridge Wells attests to the importance of the landscape for these hunting groups. The landscape of this environment today is also exceptional in being close to the major urban areas of London, Brighton and Crawley but managed largely for woodland, game and low impact agriculture. The combination of regionally important hunter gatherer archaeology, preserved rural habitat and close proximity to urban area makes the landscape well suited for engaging the public in the exciting aspects of early prehistoric archaeology and what it can tell us about human evolution, the effects of climate change and the development of our landscape.

2.1.2 The National Trust property at Nymans is situated within this ancient Mesolithic landscape and offers all the affordances that the last hunters of the region would have desired. In a recent Desktop assessment of archaeological potential for the site undertaken by Archaeology South-East (ASE), it was noted that rock outcrops in Pookchurch Wood offered potential for the preservation of early prehistoric archaeology (James 2008). Rock outcrops within Pookchurch Wood, along the deep narrow valley of Cow Ghyll would have provided shelter for camps, the valley offering access routes from the major Ouse River to the high Wealden ridges, as well as game intercept points for ambushing deer and other mammals. However, while evidence for the presence of prehistoric activity in the form of flint scatters on the property has been documented, the possibility that Mesolithic hunters occupied the Pookchurch rock outcrops is still only speculation.

2.2 The Mesolithic of the Weald

2.2.1 The High Weald of West and East Sussex has a rich record for the activity of Mesolithic hunter gatherers. Tebbutt (1975) found numerous Mesolithic flint scatters within the Ashdown Forest and the immediately surrounding farmland. He also noted a number of rock-shelter sites situated on and around the sandstone outcrops that populate the High Weald which had produced evidence of Mesolithic activity. In East Sussex, these include High Rocks (Money 1960), The Hermitage (Jacobi and Tebbutt 1981), Rock Fields (Hemingway 1980), Withyam (Harding and Ostojka-Zagórski 1987) and Eridge (Greatorex and Seager Thomas 2000). In West Sussex few sites have been investigated to the same extent but recent work at Stonehurst Rocks, Chiddingly (Allen 2007) have demonstrated the use of rock shelters into the late Mesolithic in the county. These sites have been subject to only limited modern excavation but have proved profitable in terms of archaeological material. Not only have large lithic assemblages been uncovered (for example over 10,000 pieces at Uckfield and 4,000 at the Hermitage) but hearths have been located with associated preserved charcoal, sealed within in-situ soil horizons. The Hermitage and High Rocks have both provided material suitable for C14 dating and have produced evidence of post-holes that may be associated with shelter-structures.

2.2.2 Paleoenvironmental work within the high reaches of the Sussex river valleys has proved very successful in shedding light on the ecology and environment in the Mesolithic and in assessing the impact of anthropogenic activity. For example, work on the build-up of alluvial deposits of Ouse Valley (Scaife and Burrin 1983) provided evidence for the removal of vegetational cover in the Mesolithic. Palynological studies (e.g. at Selmeston (Macphail 1985) and Pannel Bridge (Waller 1993)) have also led to a greater understanding of the vegetation sequence on differing geological zones during the Mesolithic. From these and similar studies, Scaife and Burrin discussed the important environmental impact prehistoric man had on the Sussex Weald, evidence of which was found within river valleys in the area. The burial of organic material by 7.45m of inorganic alluvium in the Rother valley at Robertsbridge was almost certainly the result of widespread prehistoric deforestation, with similar sequences at Mayfield (Scaife & Burrin 1987). If more data can be collected throughout the south-east, this should allow the opportunity to test assumptions made in respect to the types of ecological resources available in the different geological zones. It should also give a clearer insight into general changes in the environment through the different biostratigraphic divisions associated with the Mesolithic. The upper reaches of the Sussex river valley systems within the High Weald have a demonstrated potential to provide these datasets.

2.2.3 Thus at the core of future research frameworks for Early Holocene archaeology in the central Weald should be an attempt to locate sites which combine *in-situ* lithic assemblages, preserved environmental, botanical and faunal material and material suitable for dating, all within the same sealed contexts. Jacobi (1978) and more recently Holgate (2003) point specifically to the potential of the Ashdown Forest and particularly to rock-shelter sites for “building up an absolute chronology for the Sussex Mesolithic” through the combination of these datasets. Following cues from the findings at Uckfield (Hemingway 1980; 1981), where a substantial flint scatter was located at least 25m from the base of the rocks, and on the basis of the recommendations by Grotorex and Seager Thomas (2000), the focus of investigation should be widened out from the immediate vicinity of these rock shelters in order to understand their wider context and to test their potential in providing evidence of different ‘activity areas’.

2.3 The Pookchurch Wood Rock Outcrops

2.3.1 Pookchurch Wood (NGR 2705 2955 – 2716 2953) is located in Cow Ghyll and is traditionally named after the Rev. Pook, who is said to have preached from the sandstone cliffs within the Estate, but the name may also be a reference to Puck, meaning goblin – there are many such names in Sussex. Mawer & Stenton (1930, 562) refer to Sussex being ‘goblin-haunted to an extent without parallel elsewhere’. However, puck is also a nickname for the nightjar, a bird found in woodlands with a supernatural reputation due to its silent flight.

2.3.2 Outcrops of Tunbridge Wells Sandstone extend along the western edge of Cow Ghyll in Pook Church wood for some 200m, forming an important part of the properties landscape. Up to 5m of exposed sandstone is visible along this

outcrop but in many places the rock is obscured by slopes of colluvial deposit which obscure all but the upper portion of the rock.

- 2.3.3 The outcrop cliffs were formed by downcutting due to seasonal discharge of peri-glacial meltwater at the end of the last ice age, forming a steep-sided gorge at the base of Cow Ghyll. The original depth and profile of the valley is unknown but within the early post-glacial landscape, reoccupied by Mesolithic hunters, the outcrop would have been far more extensive and provided a fantastic landscape resource for siting camps. At the most prominent outcrop (Pook's Pulpit) the top of a rock arch or cave is visible, it is not known how deep or extensive this cave is but the possibility remains that it might have provided an important focus for human activity in prehistory, a possibility which this project intended to test.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 The project was broken down into two phases (fieldwork and post-excavation assessment) scheduled to run consecutively, with public engagement activities scheduled throughout the course of the project. All intrusive fieldwork was undertaken with preservation of the natural environment in mind. In the event that protected wildlife (badgers, dormice, etc) was found the investigation works would stop and a qualified ecologist consulted. Care was taken regarding the impact on vegetation and the restoration of trenches to their former condition where possible.

3.2 Fieldwork: auger survey

3.2.1 Using an Eijkjcamp hand auger, a sequence of cores were logged to the underlying local solid geology. The logs comprised detailed descriptions of lithology and sedimentology. Samples were to be taken for palaeoenvironmental classification and pollen retrieved in the event that paleolandsurfaces were identified.

3.2.2 A total of 18 cores were located in three transects perpendicular to the rock outcrop in the vicinity of Pulpit Rock (Figure 2). These were spatially located in order to determine the presence of palaeolandsurfaces for targeting through direct excavation.

3.2.3 Cores were undertaken using an Eijkjcamp gouge corer with both a 1m open chamber and a stony head (Edelman) attachment. Due to the level of tree cover it was not possible to use a GPS and transects were measured using offsets from surrounding landscape features. The lithology of the cores was recorded using the Troels-Smith (1955) classification system. The scheme breaks down a sediment sample into four main components and allows the inclusion of extra components that are also present, but that are not dominant. Key physical properties of the sediment layers are also identified according to darkness (Da), stratification (St), elasticity (EI), dryness of the sediment (Dr) and the sharpness of the upper sediment boundary (UB).

3.3 Fieldwork: test trenches

3.3.1 A seven day programme of archaeological excavation was undertaken focussing on 2 test trenches measuring no more than 2.25m² in extent. The location of these trenches was decided on the basis of the coring results, targeting sediment contacts with high potential for preserving ancient landsurfaces close to the rock outcrop. The location was agreed in conjunction with the Nymans staff to avoid areas of ecological sensitivity. Excavation was undertaken by hand utilising methodologies developed for the recovery of fine-grained archaeological signatures at UCL run projects such as Boxgrove, the Valdoe and Beedings.

- 3.3.2 In order to preserve the environment, the investigation comprised two minimally invasive trenches, 1.5 x 1.5 m in extent. The trenches avoided the area directly under the canopy to protect tree roots.
- 3.3.3 Trench 1 was located in front of the cave in Pook's Pulpit Rock at a distance of 1.5m from the rock edge in order to preserve rare ferns present on the outcrop. Trench 2 was located on the flatter ground at the base of the slope below Pook's Pulpit rock.
- 3.3.4 The leaf mould was removed and placed on tarpaulins. The spoil was placed on tarpaulins up to 2.0m away from the trenches, far enough to prevent in-wash and as far as possible on clear ground. The trenches and spoil heaps were enclosed with plastic temporary fencing to protect the public from accident due to the on-going work programme.
- 3.3.5 Each trench was divided into four squares given a unique capital letter (A-D). The trenches were excavated by hand in 10cm spits. The excavation continued in spits to the top of each major stratigraphic unit. Excavation ceased at a depth of 0.70m (Trench 1) and 0.85m (Trench 2) where clean yellowish sand was encountered
- 3.3.6 All sediment was hand sieved on-site using a maximum mesh of 0.4cm.
- 3.3.7 No intact horizons or flint concentrations were identified. No pollen or environment samples were taken due to the lack of buried soil horizons and due to the mixed, coarse-grained nature of the colluvial build-up that characterised the deposits at the site.
- 3.3.8 Exploration of animal burrow up-casts was undertaken in the vicinity of the trenches and at the foot of the outcrop to the east.

3.4 The archive

- 3.4.1 On completion of the work, the archive will be held by the National Trust.

Number of Contexts	10
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	2
Bulk Samples	0
Photographs	138
Bulk finds	6 flint flakes, 13 small fe objects, 3CTP, 1 pot, 1 modern coin
Registered finds	0
Environmental flots/residue	0

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Auger Survey

4.1.1 The results of the auger survey described the general profile of the valley that the rock shelter overlooks. The overlying sediments comprised colluvial sand and sandstone deposits up to 0.70-1.00m in thickness. This was then overlain by a thin leaf litter deposit that characterises the modern forest floor. The presence of large fragments of sandstone (>c.0.02m) resulted in the open chamber being unable to penetrate to a great depth. The Edelman head was therefore used to remove a greater depth of material. The assumption with this survey was that when the auger was no longer able to penetrate the underlying deposits the base of the valley was considered to have been reached.

4.1.2 The profile of the valley was similar to the slope that it now exhibits. There was a lack of buried soil deposits at the site and the character of the colluvial material was extremely coarse with sand and fragments of sandstone throughout (Figure 4). The small misfit stream at the bottom of the valley was dry along most of its length at the time of the survey and the bedrock was exposed along its base. To the eastern end water was present but within the survey area no evidence of in-channel sedimentation was identified.

4.1.3 The auger survey has characterised the underlying deposits as being colluvial in origin as suggested by the generally mixed loose nature of the material. The sandstone fragments at the base of the cores may represent the weathered upper surface of the bedrock. Due to the free draining nature of the sediment and the lack of identifiable buried soil horizons the site has a low palaeoenvironmental potential and therefore no samples were recovered

4.2 Test Trenches: Trench 1

4.2.1 Length: 1.50m Width: 1.50m Depth: 0.70m

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
01	Topsoil	Leaf mould	Trench	Trench	0.05
02	Colluvium	Recent hillwash	Trench	Trench	0.04
03	Colluvium or animal upcast	Yellow sandy deposit	Trench (N-S)	1.0m (E-W)	0.07
04	Forest floor build-up and colluvium	Soft greyish brown sandy silt with frequent bioturbation	Trench	Trench	0.20
05	Forest floor build-up and colluvium	Mid brown soft sandy silt with frequent bioturbation	Trench	Trench	0.40

06	Upper Substrate	Loose light yellowish-brown sand	0.40 (N-S)	Trench	0.40 +
07	Lens / occupation?	Lens of light grey sandy-silt. Possible modern occupation layer	0.45 (N-S)	0.75 (limit of observation (E-W))	0.20m

Table 2: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

4.2.2 Overview

Trench 1 (Figure 2) was located in front of the cave in the face of the Sandstone outcrop Pook's Pulpit. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.70m. A clean yellow sandy deposit, corresponding to undisturbed upper substrate deposit was identified at the top of the slope to the south of the trench at a depth of 0.40m. Sloping away steeply to the north, it was covered by a series of forest floor build-up deposits mixed by probable colluvial episodes, deepening down slope and heavily disturbed by animal burrows and tree roots. The trench yielded two flint flakes, both retrieved from superficial deposits, animal up-cast or recent colluvium. The excavation was abandoned prior to the attainment of the geological substrate across the trench owing to the paucity of results.

Clean yellow sand [1/006] was attained in the southeast quadrant only (Quadrant A), which was excavated to a greater depth than the adjacent upslope quadrant (B). Presumed to be an upper substrate deposit this was hence attained upslope at a depth of 0.40m below current ground level. Tipping away steeply to the south, this deposit was not attained in the downslope part of the trench.

A rectangular block of sandstone, observed over a length of 0.27 x 0.08 x 0.08m was seated on the flat surface of [1/006], and may have belonged to recent human activity in the vicinity of the cave mouth. A lens of grey sandy-silt [1/007] immediately overlying this block, observed in section (Figure 3) appears to correspond to a minor occupation event.

A light-mid grey sandy-silt lens [1/007] overlay the upper level of the sandstone block seated on [1/006]. It is possibly indicative of ephemeral recent (post-medieval) human activity in the vicinity of the cave mouth.

Two layers of forest floor build-up/colluvium were identified, [1/005] directly above [1/006] to the south of the trench and observed to a thickness of 0.30m to the north, with [1/004] forming the upper deposit approximately 0.20m thick across the trench. Both deposits were fine sandy-silts, distinguished only by the colour: the lower deposit [1/005] was a light-mid brown, the upper deposit having a greyish hue. Both deposits were heavily disturbed by bioturbation, rooting and burrows. Sub-angular fragments of sandstone not displaying any organisation and tipping downslope were present in the lower deposit. These appear to derive from the decay of the

sandstone outcrop.

No finds were retrieved from the lower deposit, whilst [1/004] yielded a flint flake and three fragments of clay tobacco pipe from Quadrant A, and a piece of post-medieval or modern pottery from Quadrant D. The flint flake was clearly re-deposited. The presence of clay tobacco pipe suggests a post medieval up to the very early twentieth century date range for this deposit.

A clean yellow sand deposit [1/003] extended across the eastern half of the trench, lensing away to the west, with a maximum depth of 0.07m. Situated at a maximum of 0.10m below current ground level. It represents either up-cast from an animal burrow to the east or south east of the trench or colluvium occasioned by a storm, from the slope above the trench to the south east.

A single flint flake, clearly situated in a secondary context, was retrieved from this deposit.

A thin deposit of compact dark-grey sandy silt [1/002], not exceeding 0.04m in depth, with root disturbance and humic inclusions, underlay a thin topsoil [1/001] comprising forest leaf mould and present to an average depth of 0.05m. In the northwest quadrant the topsoil filled a recent animal burrow to a depth of 0.30m.

Two fragments of modern iron and a modern penny coin were retrieved from [1/002].

4.3 Test Trenches: Trench 2

4.3.1 Length: 1.50m Width: 1.50m Depth: 0.85m

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
2/001	Topsoil	Leaf mould	Trench	Trench	0.10
2/002	Colluvium	Light brown sandy deposit, recent hill wash	Trench	Trench	0.20
2/003	Forest floor build up	Mid-brown sandy silt with frequent charcoal fragments	Trench	Trench	0.50
2/004	Substrate interface	Light-mid brown silty sand sand	Trench	Trench	0.27

Table 3: Trench 2 list of recorded contexts

4.3.2 Overview

Trench 2 was situated on the near flat ground at the base of the slope, approximately 20.00m to the north of Trench 1. An interface horizon [2/004] with the sandy substrate was attained at a depth of 0.85m below present ground level. A thick, stable, forest-floor build up deposit [2/003] was overlain by recent hill-wash [2/002] and a thin topsoil deposit of leaf mould [2/001]. A single re-deposited flint flake was retrieved from deposit [2/003].

A light-mid brown sandy silt deposit [2/004] was observed at the base of the trench, to a maximum depth of 0.27m, representing a probable interface horizon between natural sandy substrate and the overlying forest floor build-up deposit. This deposit was attained in the south-east quadrant only (Quadrant A) which was excavated to a greater depth. No finds were identified within this horizon.

A thick deposit of dark brown friable sandy- silt [2/003] was identified across the trench, to a maximum depth of 0.50m with lower/upper horizon of varying depth. Frequent dispersed lenses of charcoal fragments, some as large as 50mm, were found throughout this layer. This deposit corresponds to a fairly stable forest floor build-up layer, with frequent bio-turbation. The upper horizon was probably disturbed by the storm damage of 1987 which up-rooted numerous trees in the vicinity. The single flint flake identified within this deposit is evidently within a secondary context. The frequent lenses of charcoal suggest the presence of charcoal production on the site. This deposit is undated.

A light-mid brown friable sand layer [2/002], 0.20m deep on average, overlay the preceding layer and corresponds to recent hill-wash. It yielded a single modern iron peg.

Leaf-mould [2/001] overly the full area of the trench to a maximum downslope depth of 0.10m.

4.4 Animal Burrows

4.4.1 The entire location was heavily disturbed by animal burrows, the entrances to many of which were clearly visible. Light brown sandy up-cast situated in front of the entrances was clearly derived from burrows extending into the substrate. As such, any occupation layers overlying the substrate would naturally have been disturbed and possible finds re-deposited within the up-cast. Inspection of the up-cast deposits offered the opportunity to verify the presence of finds within a number of locations not attained by the trenching.

4.4.2 Burrows on the slope immediately below Trench 1 were inspected two of which yielded a flake and a blade. The later indicates a Mesolithic / early Neolithic date. A further flake was found on the footpath immediately to the north-east of Trench 1, probably deriving again from up-cast material. A final flake was retrieved during the initial prospection phase of the overall study programme from a badger hole to the west of Trench 2.

4.4.3 Burrows were inspected at the base of the outcrop extending along the

valley to the east of the location under study. With flat areas located immediately at the sandstone outcrop base, several possible propitious locations for Mesolithic occupation were identified. Inspection of the animal burrow up-casts however yielded no finds.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 A small collection of finds were recovered during the investigations (Table 3). All were washed and dried or air dried as appropriate. Finds were subsequently quantified by count and weight and were bagged by material and context. All finds have been packed and stored following IfA guidelines.

Context	CB M	Wt (g)	Flin t	Wt (g)	F e	Wt (g)	CT P	Wt (g)	Copp coin	Wt (g)
1003 T1 Quadrant D			1	<1						
1004 Quadrant A			1	3			3	6		
1004 Quadrant D	1	56								
2002 T2 Quadrant					1	20				
2003			1	<1						
002 Quadrant A					7	88				
002 Quadrant B					5	72			1	4
Surface on track			1	7						
Surface on slope										
Badger hole			1	<1						
Rabbit hole			1	22						
Animal hole			1	<1						
Total	1	56	7	32	13	180	3	6	1	4

Table 3: Finds quantification

5.2 Worked Flint by Karine Le Hégarat

5.2.1 A small assemblage comprising seven pieces of struck flint weighing 32g were recovered through hand collection and sieving during the archaeological work in Pookchurch Wood, Nymans. The artefacts came from Trench 1 (2 pieces), Trench 2 (1 piece) and from within the immediate surroundings of the investigated area. The small assemblage is largely composed of un-modified pieces of flint débitage and contains few chronologically distinctive types. The flintwork was quantified by piece count and weight and was directly catalogued into an Excel spreadsheet. A breakdown of the composition of the assemblage is presented in Table 4.

5.2.2 The artefacts were manufactured from light to dark grey flint with occasional inclusions. The outer surface, present on two pieces only, is abraded to a smooth off-white cortex. The raw material used for knapping which appears to be of good flaking quality is characteristic of chalk-derived flint. It is likely to originate from surface deposits on the Chalk which outcrops approximately 22km to the north and 20km to the south of the site. The majority of the pieces exhibit fresh unabraded edges implying that although re-deposited, the material had undergone negligible post-depositional disturbance. Five pieces were recorded as broken and two were burnt.

5.2.3 The small assemblage comprises five flakes, a blade and a retouched blade. On technological grounds, the flakes are not diagnostic of a particular period. However, the burnt broken blade with parallel lateral margins as well as the retouched blade are typical of a blade-based industry, and both pieces may therefore be of Mesolithic or early Neolithic date. The retouched blade was found on the footpath immediately to the northeast of Trench 1. It exhibits minimal inverse retouch along the right side at the proximal end and could have been used as a side scraper. In addition the implement displays a few retouch struck from the ventral face, forming a notch towards the distal end on the right side.

5.2.4 The assemblage consisting mostly of undiagnostic flakes suggests activity in the area during the prehistoric period. Nonetheless, two pieces (a fragmentary blade and a retouched blade) would not out of place in a Mesolithic / early Neolithic context.

Context	Flake	Blade	Retouched blade
From upcast-deposit associated with badger hole located to the west of Trench 2; collected during the initial inspection of the site	1		
From upcast-deposit associated with a rabbit hole and located to the NE of Trench 1	1		
From upcast-deposit associated with an animal hole and located to the NE of Trench 1; different upcast deposit		1	
On footpath immediately to the NE of Trench 1			1
1/004	1		
1/003	1		
2/003	1		
Total	5	1	1

Table 4: The flintwork

5.3 The Ceramic Building Material by Trista Clifford

5.3.1 A small fragment of interior and exterior glazed land drain weighing 56g was recovered from [1004] Quadrant D. The object is of modern date.

5.4 The bulk metalwork by Trista Clifford

5.4.1 Thirteen iron fragments weighing 180g in total were recovered from three separate contexts. Included are ten rod fragments from context [002] Quadrant A and B, as well as a single rectangular sectioned nail from [002] Quadrant B. Context [002] contained a large U shaped staple. Context [002] also contained a small folding penknife with horn side plates. All are much corroded and of modern date.

5.5 The Clay Tobacco Pipe by Trista Clifford

5.5.1 Context [1004] Quadrant A contained three fragments of clay tobacco pipe

stem weighing 6g. Two conjoining pieces with a fresh break are of 17th century date; the remaining fragment has a slightly later 17th-18th century date.

5.6 The coin by Trista Clifford

- 5.6.1 A worn copper alloy new penny of Elizabeth II issued between 1971 and 1981 was recovered from [002] Quadrant B.

7.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1** The project successfully assessed the potential of the site for preserving prehistoric archaeology and determined a clear prehistoric presence at the locality. The recovered flintwork, elements of which are indicative of Mesolithic occupation, indicates an Early Holocene human presence at the site.
- 7.2** Six flint flakes were retrieved, all from secondary locations, either within the deposits in the trial trenches, or from animal burrow up-cast within the immediate vicinity of the trenches. No intact buried soil horizons preserving in-situ Mesolithic or prehistoric occupation were identified either by the auger survey or the trial trenches. The mixed nature of the colluvial material that comprised the deposits at the site meant that it was inappropriate to recover material for palynological analysis. The free draining nature of the soil as well as the depositional processes at work on the site (hill-wash and bioturbation) meant any samples recovered would have been subject to reworking and modern contamination making them unsuitable for sampling.
- 7.3** The presence of several flakes in the vicinity of the trenches confirms the probability of Mesolithic hunter-gatherer activity in the location. However, the low density of the finds indicates that either a) our research has not pinpointed an exact locus of occupation or more likely b) the site has been disturbed by later bioturbation and slope processes.
- 7.4** The low density of lithic material is probably indicative of transitory occupation. It is likely to be typical of other localities within the valley where Mesolithic hunter gatherers, moving through the landscape utilised the rock as setting for short term camps for short periods of time. The work helps to bring the central Weald in general, and localities like Nymans in particular into focus as an important research area for future field investigation.

8.0 CONSIDERATION OF RESEARCH AIMS

- 8.1** The project successfully implemented Aims 1 to 3 (section 1.3) in determining the cross valley sedimentary profile and assessing for palaeoenvironmental potential and possible buried land surface horizons. While no landsurfaces were identified, the work was able to determine that the valley did not contain substantially deep colluvial sequences likely to deeply bury or seal archaeological remains. It was therefore considered more probable that artefactual evidence would be found, close to the rock line at relatively shallow depths.
- 8.2** Despite challenging weather conditions, the proposed test pit methodology was successfully implemented to prospect for flintwork and other archaeological finds associated with occupation in the valley. The careful excavation strategy and accompanied sieving was able to isolate the very low density distribution of material from the site, being able to recover evidence of a human presence which might have been missed otherwise. Consequently Aim 4 was achieved.

- 8.3** Aim 5 was to provide information to aid the interpretation of the locale to the public by the National Trust. On the basis of the project result we are now able to confirm the presence of Mesolithic hunter gather groups within the valley and begin to shape appropriate text with National Trust staff.
- 8.4** Perhaps the most important long term outcome of the project was establishing, through the National Trust, a relationship with Horsham District Archaeological Group. The project was a success only through the dedicated input of their volunteers, under challenging conditions, allowing for careful sieving of sediment and completion of the project. We have since built on this initial collaboration with lithic training sessions, evening lectures and a further collaboration on assessment of Mesolithic material from the National Trust property of Blackdown, laying foundations for future work between the three organisations.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank the National Trust, Nymans for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, particularly that of Head Ranger Chloe Bradbrook and Tom Dommett (Archaeologist) ASE would also like to thank John Mills Senior Archaeologist West County Council for his guidance. ASE would like to particularly thank all the volunteers from HDAG who worked on the excavations.

Appendix 1: Augur Logs

Logs

Transect 1

Core 1 Top of slope

0-0.70m Sandy leaf litter/modern forest floor

0.70-1m	DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
	1	0	0	4	4

Gmin4 Gmaj+

Yellow white sand with occasional sandstone fragments

Core 2

0-0.25m Sandy leaf litter/modern forest floor

0.25-0.45m	DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
	2	0	0	4	4

Gmin4 Gmaj+

Brown sand with occasional sandstone fragments

0.45-0.60m	DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
	1	0	0	4	4

Gmin4 Gmaj+

Yellow white sand with occasional sandstone fragments

Core 4

0-0.40m Sandy leaf litter/modern forest floor

0.40-0.55m	DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
	1	0	0	4	4

Gmin4 Gmaj+

Orange yellow sand with occasional sandstone fragments

Core 5

0-0.54m Sandy leaf litter/modern forest floor

0.54-0.70m	DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
	1	2	0	4	4

Gmin4 Gmaj+

Orange yellow sand with occasional sandstone fragments

Core 6

0-0.40m Sandy leaf litter/modern forest floor

0.40-0.70m	DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
	1	0	0	4	4

Gmin4 Gmaj+

Orange yellow sand with occasional sandstone fragments

Core 7

0-0.27m Sandy leaf litter/modern forest floor

0.27-0.67m	DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
	1	0	0	4	4

Gmin4 Gmaj+

Orange yellow sand with occasional sandstone fragments

Core 8

0-0.05m Sandy leaf litter/modern forest floor

0.05-0.84m	DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
	1	0	0	4	4

Gmin4 Gmaj+

Brown yellow sand with occasional sandstone fragments

0.84-0.90m	DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
	1	0	0	4	3

Gmin4 Gmaj+

Yellow white sand with occasional sandstone fragments, charcoal flecks

Core 9

0-0.52m Sandy leaf litter/modern forest floor, occasional charcoal

0.52-0.71m	DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
	1	0	0	4	4

Gmin4 Gmaj+
 Yellow white sand with occasional sandstone fragments, very loose and mixed

Core 10

0-0.20m Sandy leaf litter/modern forest floor

DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
1	0	0	4	4

Gmin4 Gmaj+
 Mixed yellow sand with occasional sandstone fragments and charcoal, very loose

Core 11

0-0.40m Sandy leaf litter/modern forest floor

DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
1	0	0	4	4

Gmin4 Gmaj+
 Mixed yellow sand with occasional sandstone fragments

Core 12

0-0.40m Sandy leaf litter/modern forest floor

DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
1	0	0	4	4

Gmin4 Gmaj+
 Mixed yellow brown sand with occasional sandstone fragments

DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
1	0	0	4	3

Gmin4 Gmaj+
 Light yellow sand with occasional sandstone fragments

Core 13

0-0.30m Sandy leaf litter/modern forest floor

DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
1	0	0	4	3

Gmin4 Gmaj+
 Mixed yellow brown sand with occasional sandstone fragments and charcoal flecks, too rooty to core further

Core 14

0-0.30m Sandy leaf litter/modern forest floor

DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
1	0	0	4	4

Gmin4 Gmaj+
 Mixed yellow brown sand with occasional sandstone fragments, loose

Core 15 bottom of slope

DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
2	0	0	4	0

Gmin4 Gmaj+
 Brown silt sand with occasional sandstone fragments and charcoal, very loose

Transect 2

Core 3 outside 'cave' entrance

0-1.40m Sandy leaf litter/modern forest floor

1.40-1.65m	DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
	1	0	0	4	3

Gmin4 Gmaj+

Yellow white sand with occasional sandstone fragments

Transect 3

Core 16 Top of slope

0-0.50m Sandy leaf litter/modern forest floor, very loose

0.50-1.00m	DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
	1	0	0	4	3

Gmin4 Gmaj+

Light yellow orange sand with occasional sandstone fragments, possible animal burrow- whole area riddled with burrows

Core 17

0-0.05m Sandy leaf litter/modern forest floor

0.05-0.82m	DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
	2	0	0	4	4

Gmin4 Gmaj+

Mixed brown sand with occasional sandstone fragments at base

Core 18

0-0.05m Sandy leaf litter/modern forest floor

0.05-0.60m	DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
	2	0	0	4	4

Gmin4 Gmaj+ Ag+

Light yellow brown sand occasionally silty with occasional sandstone fragments

0.60-0.70m	DA	ST	EL	SICC	UB
	2	0	0	4	4

Gmin4 Gmaj+

Light yellow orange sand with occasional sandstone fragments, loose

Appendix 2 : Physical and sedimentary properties of deposits according to Troels-Smith (1955)

Degree of Darkness	Degree of Stratification	Degree of Elasticity	Degree of Dryness
nig.4 black	strf.4 well stratified	elas.4 very elastic	sicc.4 very dry
nig.3	strf.3	elas.3	sicc.3
nig.2	strf.2	elas.2	sicc.2
nig.1	strf.1	elas.1	sicc.1
nig.0 white	strf.0 no stratification	elas.0 no elasticity	sicc.0 water

Sharpness of Upper Boundary	
lim.4	< 0.5mm
lim.3	< 1.0 & > 0.5mm
lim.2	< 2.0 & > 1.0mm
lim.1	< 10.0 & > 2.0mm
lim.0	> 10.0mm

	<i>Sh</i>	<i>Substantia humosa</i>	Humous substance, homogeneous microscopic structure
<i>I Turfa</i>	<i>Tb</i>	<i>T. bryophytica</i>	Mosses +/- humous substance
	<i>Tl</i>	<i>T. lignosa</i>	Stumps, roots, intertwined rootlets, of ligneous plants
	<i>Th</i>	<i>T. herbacea</i>	Roots, intertwined rootlets, rhizomes of herbaceous plants
	<i>Dl</i>	<i>D. lignosus</i>	Fragments of ligneous plants >2mm
<i>II Detritus</i>	<i>Dh</i>	<i>D. herbosus</i>	Fragments of herbaceous plants >2mm
	<i>Dg</i>	<i>D. granosus</i>	Fragments of ligneous and herbaceous plants <2mm >0.1mm
	<i>Lf</i>	<i>L. ferrugineus</i>	Rust, non-hardened. Particles <0.1mm
<i>IV Argilla</i>	<i>As</i>	<i>A. steatodes</i>	Particles of clay
	<i>Ag</i>	<i>A. granosa</i>	Particles of silt
<i>V Grana</i>	<i>Ga</i>	<i>G. arenosa</i>	Mineral particles 0.6 to 0.2mm
	<i>Gs</i>	<i>G. saburralia</i>	Mineral particles 2.0 to 0.6mm
	<i>Gg(min)</i>	<i>G. glareosa minora</i>	Mineral particles 6.0 to 2.0mm
	<i>Gg(maj)</i>	<i>G. glareosa majora</i>	Mineral particles 20.0 to 6.0mm
	<i>Ptm</i>	<i>Particulae testae molloscorum</i>	Fragments of calcareous shells

Physical and sedimentary properties of deposits according to Troels-Smith (1955)

HER Summary Form

Site Code	PWN 13					
Identification Name and Address	Pookchurch Wood, Nymans, Handcross, Near Haywards Heath, RH17 6EB					
County, District &/or Borough	W.Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR: 527000 129000, (TQ 27000 29000)					
Geology	The High Weald is a dome of Mesozoic deposits forming part of the Hastings Beds geological sequence, and 146-132 million years old. The underlying geology comprises a sandwich of superimposed layers of Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand (typically variegated soft mudstones, silts, thinly bedded sandstones and clay ironstones) and Grinstead Clay (shales, mudstones and silty mudstones) (BGS 1972).					
Arch. South-East Project Number	P109					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval. √	Excav.	Watching Brief	Standing Structure	Survey √	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other <i>Woodland</i>		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval. 4 th -9 th Nov. 2013	Excav.	WB.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	National Trust					
Project Manager	Matt Pope and J.Stevenson					
Project Supervisor	K.Le Hegerat and P.Stephenson					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso. √	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern		
<p>Summary</p> <p><i>Archaeology South East were commissioned by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological evaluation comprising auger survey and two hand excavated trial trenches at the foot of the sandstone outcrop known as Pook's Pulpit in PookChurch Wood to the north-east of Nymans, within the National Trust property. Intended as an Outreach and Community project, £2300 was pledged by the Origins Foundation to fund a programme of outreach activities.</i></p> <p><i>Six flint flakes were retrieved, all from secondary locations, either within the deposits in the trial trenches, or from animal burrow up cast within the immediate vicinity of the trenches. No intact buried soil horizons preserving in-situ Mesolithic or Prehistoric occupation were identified either by the auger survey or the trial trenches. The presence of several flakes in the vicinity of the trenches confirms the probability of Mesolithic hunter-gatherer activity in the location. However, the low density of the finds indicates that either a) our research has not pin-pointed an exact locus of occupation or more likely b) the site has been disturbed by later bioturbation and slope processes. The low density of lithic material is probably indicative of transitory occupation.</i></p> <p><i>Pook's Pulpit is likely to be typical of other localities within the valley where Mesolithic hunter gatherers, moving through the landscape utilised the rock as setting for short term camps for short periods of time. The work helps to bring the central Weald in general, and localities like Nymans in particular into focus as an important research area for future field investigation.</i></p>						

OASIS ID: archaeol6-171567

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological evaluation investigating rock outcrops at Pookchurch Wood, Nymans, W. Sussex
Short description of the project	Six flint flakes were retrieved, all from secondary locations, either within the deposits in the trial trenches, or from animal burrow up-cast within the immediate vicinity of the trenches. No intact buried soil horizons preserving in-situ Mesolithic or Prehistoric occupation were identified either by the auger survey or the trial trenches. The presence of several flakes in the vicinity of the trenches confirms the probability of Mesolithic hunter-gatherer activity in the location. However, the low density of the finds indicates that either a) our research has not pin-pointed an exact locus of occupation or more likely b) the site has been disturbed by later bioturbation and slope processes. The low density of lithic material is probably indicative of transitory occupation. Pook's Pulpit is likely to be typical of other localities within the valley where Mesolithic hunter gatherers, moving through the landscape utilised the rock as setting for short term camps for short periods of time. The work helps to bring the central Weald in general, and localities like Nymans in particular into focus as an important research area for future field investigation.
Project dates	Start: 04-11-2013 End: 10-11-2013
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	National Trust land
Current Land use	Woodland 3 - Mixed

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WEST SUSSEX MID SUSSEX SLAUGHAM Pookchurch Wood, Nymans
Site coordinates	TQ 27000 29000 51.0457458616 -0.188079575998 51 02 44 N 000 11 17 W Point

Project creators

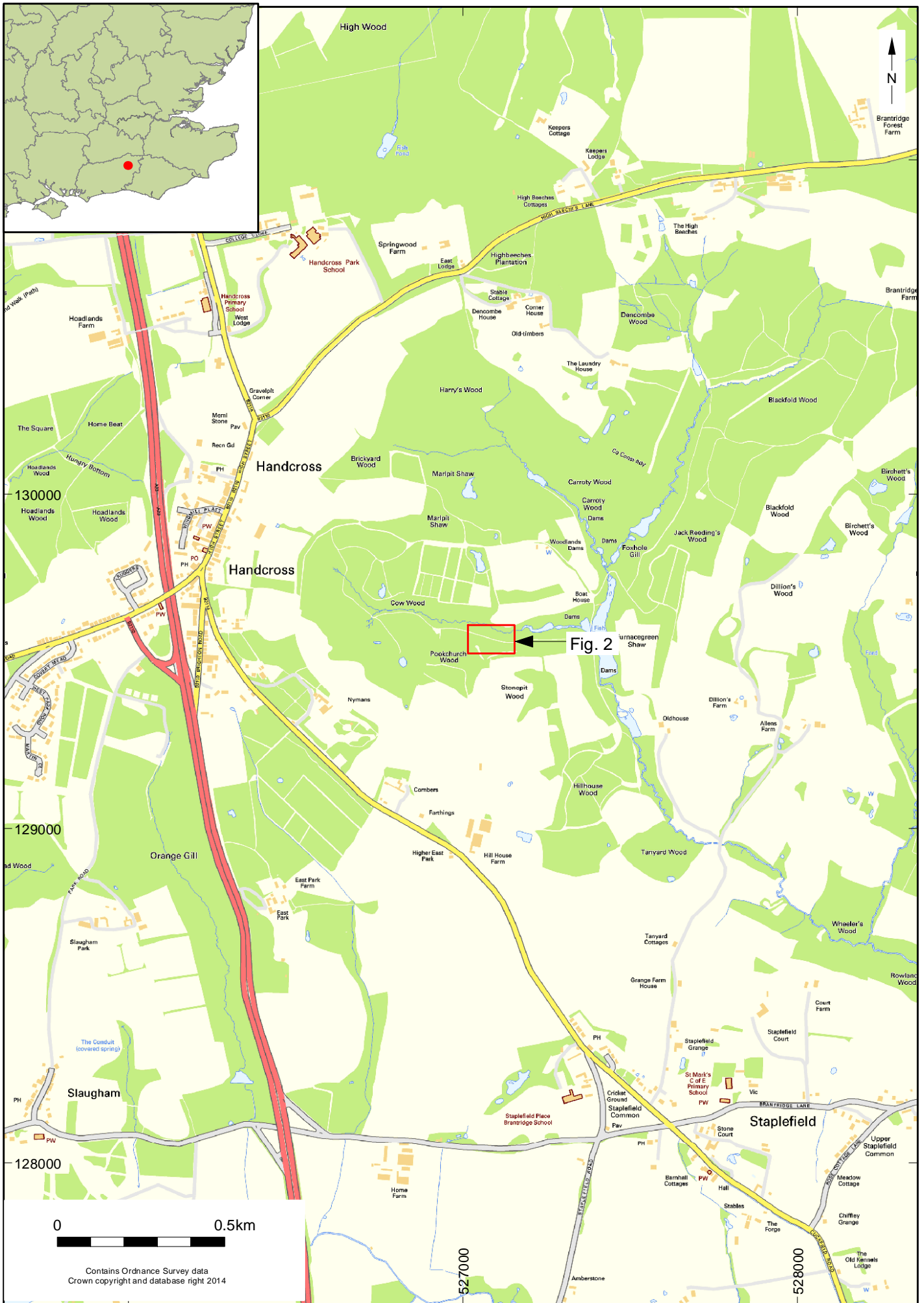
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	National Trust
Project design originator	National Trust
Project director/manager	J.Stevenson
Project supervisor	Matt Pope

Type of
sponsor/funding
body National Trust

Name of
sponsor/funding
body National Trust

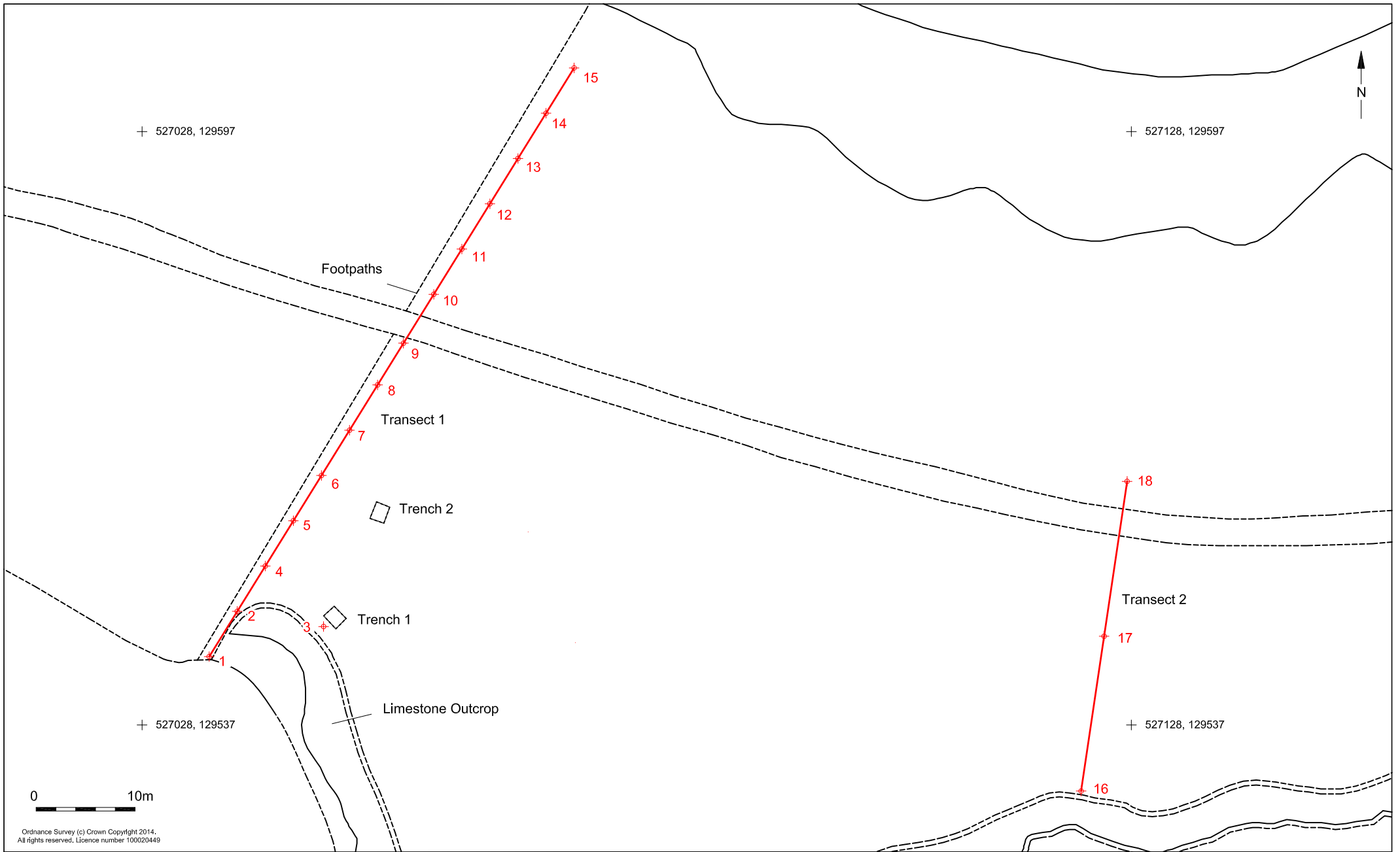
Entered by Jim Stevenson (jim.stevenson@ucl.ac.uk)

Entered on 14 February 2014



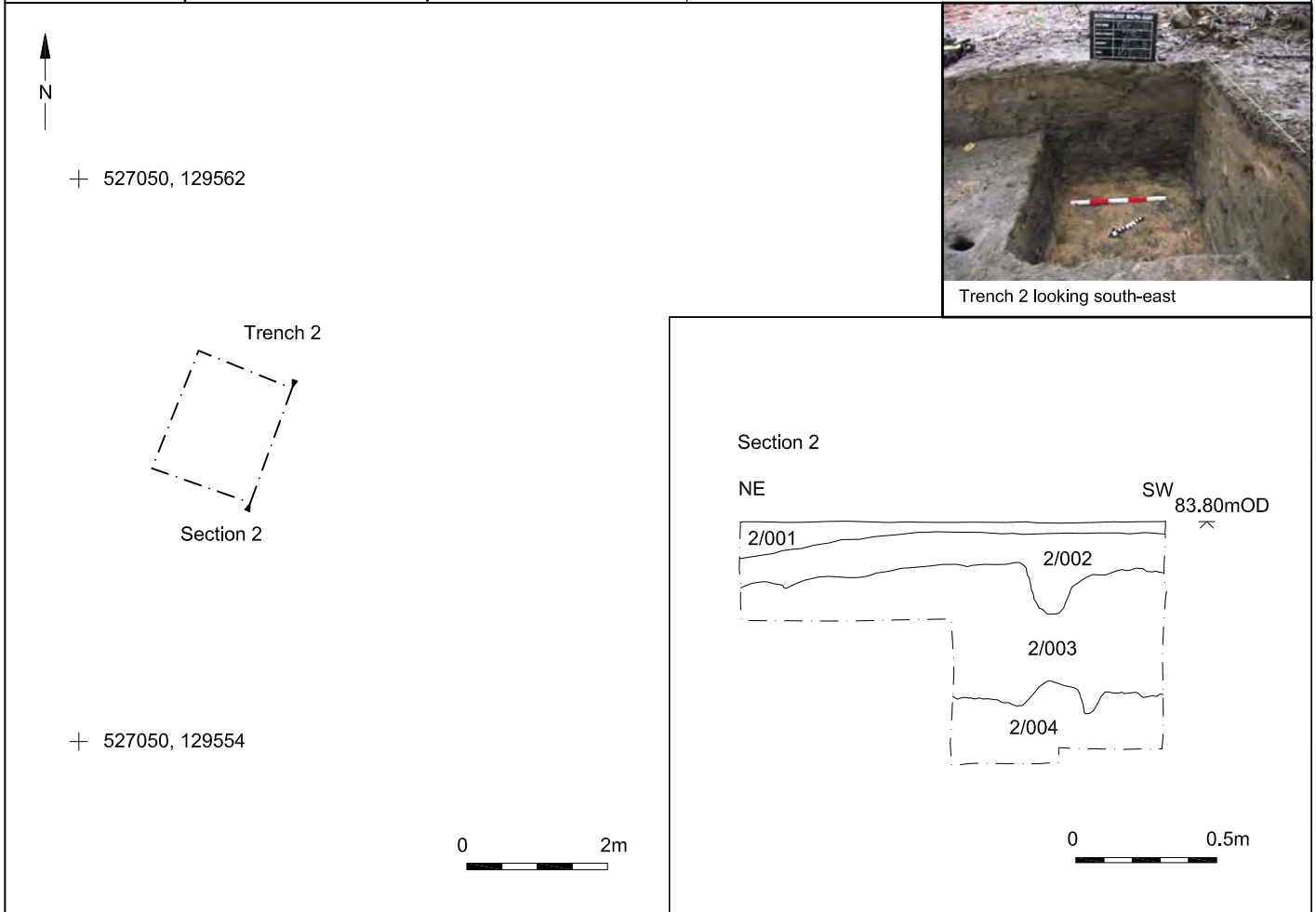
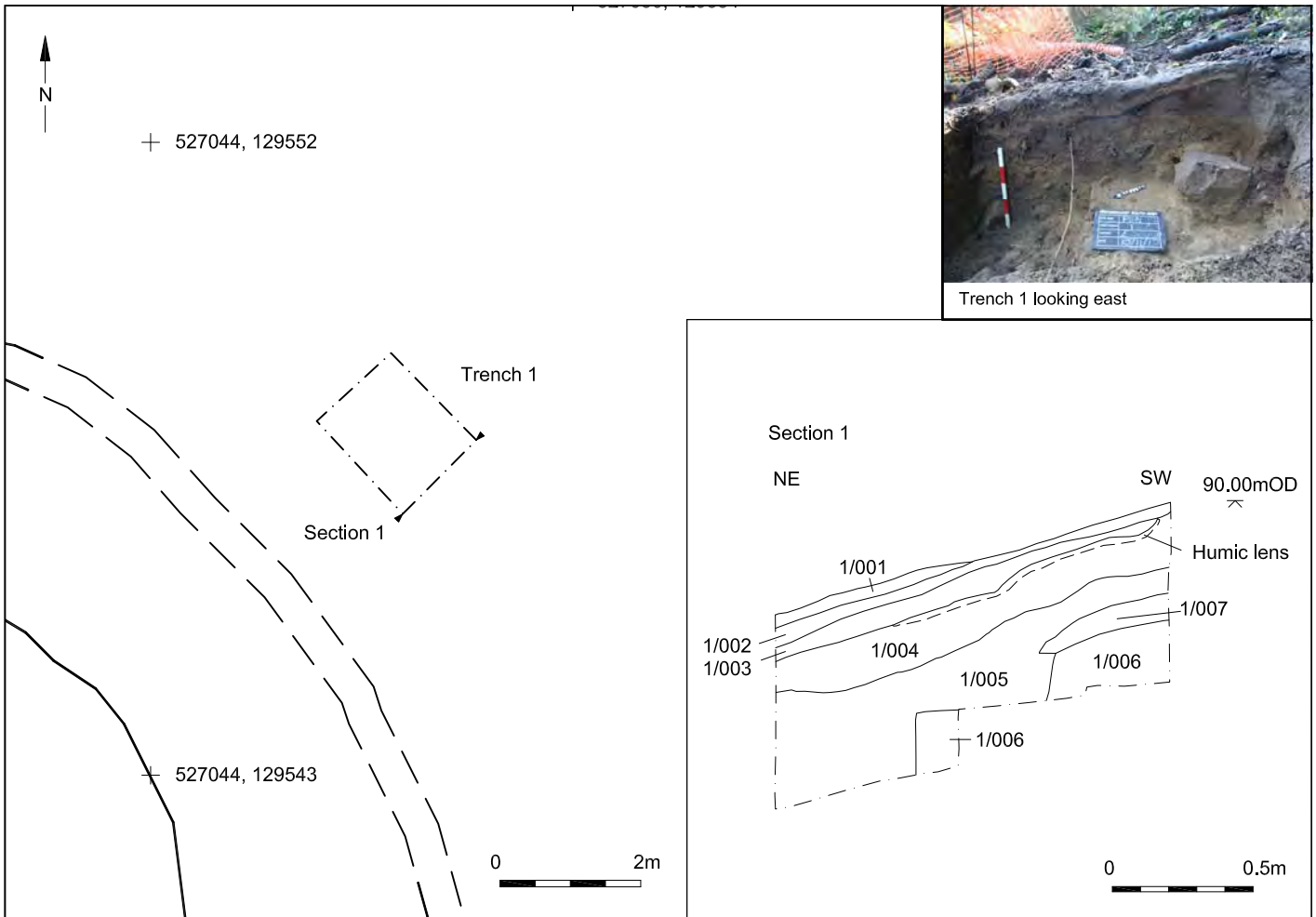
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Project Ref: P109	January 2014	Site location		
Report Ref: 2013332	Drawn by: JC			



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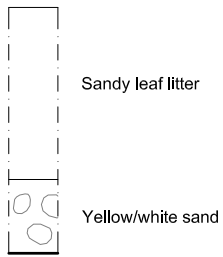
© Archaeology South-East		Pookchurch Wood, Nymans		Fig. 2
Project Ref: P109	January 2014	Location of auger transects, cores and trenches		
Report Ref: 2013332	Drawn by: JC			



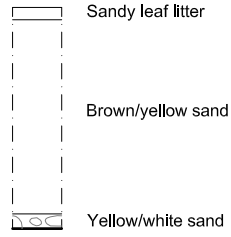
© Archaeology South-East		Pookchurch Wood, Nymans	Fig. 3
Project Ref: P109	January 2014	Trench plans, sections and photographs	
Report Ref: 2013332	Drawn by: JC		

Transect 1

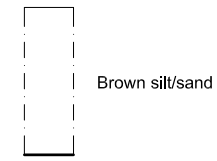
Core 1



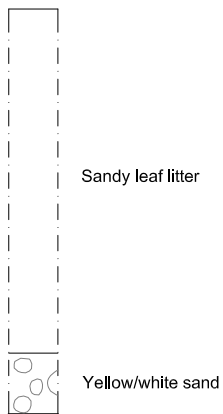
Core 9



Core 15

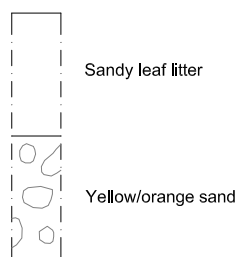


Core 3

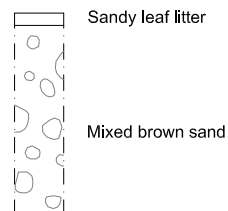


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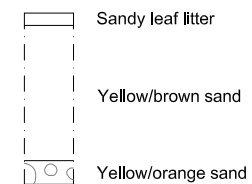
Core 16





Core 17



Core 18



 Sandstone fragments
 Bedrock

0 0.5m





Volunteer from HDAG



Volunteers from HDAG



Trench 1 location and rock outcrop



Trench 1



Volunteers from HDAG

© Archaeology South-East		Pookchurch Wood, Nymans	Fig. 5
Project Ref: P109	Feb 2013	Photographs	
Report Ref: 2013332	Drawn by: JLR		

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