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## A LATE BRONZE AGE HOARD AND EARLY IRON AGE BOUNDARY AT LODGE FARM, COSTESSEY

### ARCHIVE REPORT

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# **A LATE BRONZE AGE HOARD AND EARLY IRON AGE BOUNDARY AT LODGE FARM, COSTESSEY**

By Tom Woolhouse

With contributions from Martin Tingle, Sarah Percival, Andrew Peachey, Nina Crummy, Carina Phillips and Val Fryer.

## *SUMMARY*

*In October 2005, Archaeological Solutions carried out the excavation of two small areas of land at Lodge Farm, Costessey, Norfolk, in advance of residential development. The potential of the site for prehistoric remains had been demonstrated by earlier phases of desk-based assessment, aerial photographic appraisal, fieldwalking and trial trench evaluation. The excavation revealed two phases of activity, spanning the late Bronze Age (Phase 1) and early Iron Age (8<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century BC; Phase 2). The two phases may have been contemporary. Phase 1 comprised several copper-alloy objects dispersed throughout the ploughsoil in the south-east corner of the site; other bronze objects were found in this area by a metal detector enthusiast in the 1980s. Both the metalwork items found during the excavation and those found previously were in a worn and fragmentary condition. Collections of worn and broken bronze tools have frequently been interpreted as founders' hoards of scrap metal gathered together for recycling. However, this interpretation is undermined by the frequency with which such 'hoards' were never recovered by their owners. It seems more likely that many metalwork deposits were never intended to be recovered at all. Instead, the broken bronze tools found at Lodge Farm may represent discarded refuse from a nearby late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age settlement, or more likely, a deliberate deposit which had symbolic or ritual significance. Structured deposits of metalwork have been identified on the boundaries of other middle to late Bronze Age settlements such as Springfield Lyons in Essex and South Dumpton Down in Kent. In Phase 2, a substantial ditch was established in the centre of the site. This yielded a moderately large assemblage of early Iron Age pottery and may represent part of a settlement boundary or stock enclosure. The site adds to the growing picture of early Iron Age occupation along the river valleys of east Norfolk, identified at sites such as Valley Belt, Trowse.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

During October 2005, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out excavations of two areas of land at Lodge Farm, Costessey, Norfolk (centred on NGR TG 1650 1030; Fig. 1). The investigation was commissioned by Taylor Woodrow Developments Ltd. in advance of a proposed residential development on the site. The archaeological potential of the site had been demonstrated by a desk-based assessment (Everill and Hall 2002) and phases of aerial photographic assessment and field survey (Palmer 2002; Beadsmoore, Cooper and Hall 2003a & b (HER 37646 & HER 39351)). The trial trench evaluation carried out by AS in October/November 2003 had revealed a large Iron Age ditch (Grant and Sutherland 2003 (HER 39796)). The main objectives of the excavation were to recover as much information as possible

from the ditch and to identify and record any other surviving evidence of Iron Age or earlier activity. Full descriptions of all features and deposits revealed by the excavation can be found in the Interim Report (Doyle and McConnell 2005).

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Location, topography and geology (Figs. 1 & 2)**

The site is located in Costessey on the western outskirts of Norwich. It comprises a sub-square area of *c.* 18ha, bounded to the north by the A1074, to the east by Bawburgh Lane and to the south by Long Lane. The western perimeter follows an existing field boundary, on the other side of which lies Lodge Farm. The site lies at 29-43m AOD and slopes gently downwards from north-west to south-east. It is located on a ridge of higher ground above the valleys of the rivers Wensum and Tud to the north and the river Yare to the south. The higher ground in the area is interrupted by occasional north to south aligned dry valleys running down towards the river Yare. One such valley extends south from the south-east corner of the site (Fig. 2) and although dry, was shown as marshy on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey map (another similar narrow valley *c.* 1.5km west at 'The Hangings' was similarly depicted). These valleys presumably act as channels for surface runoff and may in the past have contained small streams, or 'cockeys', as they are known locally. The solid geology of the area is Upper Chalk, overlain by glacial sands and gravels with occasional clay patches (Norwich Crag), and by alluvium in the river valleys (BGS 1985 & 1991). Soils are generally deep, well-drained and sandy (Newport association; SSEW 1983). The site was formerly under arable cultivation; extensive gravel extraction has taken place in the surrounding area, particularly to the north-west.

### **Archaeological and historical background (Fig. 2)**

Chance finds of several Palaeolithic tools (HER 9284, 9285 and 28712) and an assemblage of Mesolithic flints (HER 11385) suggest activity in Costessey from early prehistory. Neolithic flint tools and flakes have also been found close to the site (e.g. HER 7873, 9293, 16894 and 16895) and transient early Neolithic occupation, including the possible remains of a circular shelter, has been identified at Three Score Road, Bowthorpe, 2km to the south-east near the river Yare (Percival 2002). Continuing use of the Three Score Road site in the late Neolithic to early Bronze Age was indicated by a distinctive group of pits, which yielded a large assemblage of Beaker sherds and a piece of hazelnut shell radiocarbon dated to 2500 – 1950 cal. BC.

Cropmarks close to Lodge Farm may represent prehistoric settlement sites and field boundaries, although most of these are currently undated. They include systems of rectangular enclosures and linear features immediately to the west (HER 12988 and 31518). Surface scatters of struck flints are also widespread in the area and although many are undiagnostic, they nevertheless attest to fairly intensive prehistoric activity (e.g. HER 16424, 16426 and 36208). The higher ground between the valleys of the Wensum and Yare was used for funerary monuments during the Bronze Age; cropmark ring ditches indicate the former presence of several barrows close to the site (e.g. HER 9290 and 25986). One was excavated in 1979 and found to be the remains

of an early Bronze Age round barrow with a central inhumation in a wooden coffin which may have been designed to represent a log boat (HER 11431; the Bowthorpe Barrow; Lawson 1986).

Iron Age activity in Costessey and neighbouring Bawburgh is attested by several pottery scatters found between a few hundred metres and a kilometre from the site (HER 9293, 16894, 16895 and 25704). Isolated finds of a coin (HER 21705) and an Iron Age or Roman brooch (HER 33059) have also been made, but the scale and precise nature of Iron Age occupation in the area remains unclear. By the Roman conquest, the Norwich district was probably the political focus for the eastern half of the Icenii (Salway 1993, 39) and Costessey would have lain close to this 'core' area.

### **Previous investigations at Lodge Farm (Fig. 1)**

In the 1980s, a local metal detector enthusiast recovered ten late Bronze Age copper-alloy objects from the south-east corner of the site (HER 16398). The finds were dispersed throughout the ploughsoil, but were grouped fairly close together, suggesting that they originated from a single hoard deposit dispersed from its original context by ploughing.

Following the drafting of development proposals for the site, a desk-based assessment was carried out by Cambridge University Archaeological Unit (CAU; Everill and Hall 2002). This highlighted the potential of the site for prehistoric activity, noting in particular the presence of the hoard and the frequently close association between monuments, hoards and settlements in Bronze Age East Anglia (*ibid.*, 13).

The desk-based assessment also included an assessment of aerial photographs of the site (Air Photo Services; Palmer 2002). This identified several possible archaeological features (plotted on Fig. 1), including a ring ditch in the north of the site, perhaps representing the remains of a ploughed-out Bronze Age barrow. Just to the north of this, two closely-spaced parallel linear features ran on an approximately east to west alignment across the site for *c.* 140m forming what appeared to be a track or droveway. Around 60m to the south, another linear feature, possibly a ditch, ran parallel to the trackway for a similar distance, although in two separate lengths separated by a gap of *c.* 40m. In addition to the ring ditch and linear features, numerous probable pits were noted, some of which seemed to form 'arcs' or near-complete circles, and could feasibly have indicated the positions of roundhouses. Cropmark features were mainly concentrated in the north-west of the site; areas of deeper soil visible on the aerial photos were particularly widespread towards the south-east of the site, potentially masking additional archaeological features in these areas.

Following the desk-based assessment and aerial photographic appraisal, a field survey of the site was carried out by CAU (Beadsmoore, Cooper and Hall 2003a & b). The fieldwalking recovered large quantities of worked and burnt flint. Concentrations of worked flint were noted in several locations, including around the ring ditch and adjacent to the main section of the possible linear ditch. Burnt flint was particularly prevalent in the area between the ring ditch and linear ditch, and in the area between the east end of the 'trackway' and the parallel linear feature to the south. The character of the material was mainly consistent with late Neolithic and early Bronze

Age flint working, but a lower density of earlier Neolithic and later Bronze Age material on the site implied longer-term non-intensive prehistoric occupation (*ibid.*, 12). The high frequency of utilised and retouched material and comparatively large quantities of unworked burnt flint were thought to indicate settlement activity (*ibid.*, 7-8).

A thorough trial trench evaluation of the site (125 trenches, representing a 5% sample of the total site area) was carried out in Autumn 2003 (AS; Grant and Sutherland). The most significant feature identified was a large east-south-east to west-north-west aligned linear ditch containing a fairly large assemblage of early Iron Age pottery, in addition to struck and burnt flint and an amber bead. The ditch corresponded with the long linear feature identified in the aerial photographic assessment. The cropmark of the possible ring ditch was rectified and three separate trenches were excavated in order to investigate the feature. However, despite the thorough trial trenching of its location, no evidence of the conjectured ring ditch was found. Most of the pits suggested by the aerial photographic appraisal were found to be irregular and probably natural in origin.

## **THE EXCAVATION**

### **Methodology**

The excavation focused on two areas of the site, which were specified following the trial trench evaluation. Area 1 (50 x 30m) was located over the early Iron Age ditch discovered in the centre of the site and Area 2 (50 x 25m) centred on the previously discovered bronze hoard in the south-eastern corner (Fig. 1).

Topsoil and subsoil were removed under close archaeological supervision using a 360° excavator with a toothless ditching bucket, until the underlying archaeological horizon/natural deposits were encountered. The exposed surfaces were hand cleaned as appropriate and all further excavation was undertaken by hand. All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale, sampled and photographed as appropriate.

Finds were retrieved by hand and recovery may therefore have been biased towards larger objects and fragments. A metal detector was used to check excavated spoil for finds and for surface scans of the site throughout the excavation. A programme of purposeful environmental sampling was undertaken with the aim of obtaining information relating to the past environment and economy of the site.

### **Deposit model and previous ground disturbance**

Topsoil (L2000), comprising loose mid brown/grey silty sand, was present across both areas of the site to a depth of 0.38m. This was underlain by the subsoil (L2001), a loose mid brown/orange silty sand 0.36m deep. This was not present in the north-east of Area 1 and was entirely absent from Area 2. A colluvial layer (L2041) was present beneath the topsoil in the west of Area 2 and filled a dry valley extending southwards. The natural drift deposit (L2002), a silty sand of variable colouration, lay beneath Subsoil L2001 in Area 1 and beneath the topsoil and colluvium layer in Area 2. All

archaeological features were cut into the natural sand, with the exception of Pit F2032, which was cut into the colluvium.

Truncation from agricultural activity was observed across both areas of the site. This was apparent from the patchy distribution of the surviving subsoil and from plough scars running over archaeological features.

## **Phasing**

The excavation revealed a small number of archaeological features. These were assigned to phases primarily on the basis of the diagnostic material contained within them, due to the lack of stratigraphic relationships between features. Two phases of prehistoric activity were identified:

- *Phase 1: late Bronze Age*
- *Phase 2: early Iron Age (8<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century BC)*

It is possible that these two phases actually represent one single period of transitional late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age activity (see Discussion, below).

Undated features were also present. These included several small, irregular pits, thought likely to represent animal burrowing (F2017, F2012 and F2023), other undated pits which yielded no finds and may also have been of natural origin (F2015 and F2021) and two parallel north to south ditches in Area 2 (F2030 and F2034).

## **Excavation results**

### *Phase 1: late Bronze Age (Figs. 6-9)*

Five copper-alloy objects, comprising two axe heads, a fragment of a third axe, a scabbard chape and a small piece of slag, were recovered from the topsoil of Area 2 using a metal detector (Crummy, this report; illustrated in Fig. 6). Two of the items were identified during the excavation of Area 2 (Small Finds (SFs) 5 and 6); three (SFs 1 - 3) were recovered from the Area 2 spoilheap by metal detector following the stripping of the topsoil. The assemblage is assigned a late Bronze Age date on stylistic grounds. The items all appear to have been in either damaged or heavily-worn condition prior to their deposition (Crummy, this report).

Ten other items of late Bronze Age metalwork had been found in the ploughsoil in this corner of the site by a metal detector enthusiast prior to the present archaeological investigations (SFs 8-17; illustrated in Figs. 7-9 and described by Crummy, this report). These were found in a tight cluster, approximately 15m north-east of the objects found during the excavation. It seems highly likely that they originally formed part of the same deposit, removed from its original context by ploughing. Fragments of undated 'gritty' pottery and struck flints were found in close proximity to the ten copper-alloy objects found earlier in Area 2, suggesting that the deposition of the metalwork took place in the context of other prehistoric activity (HER 16938; Everill and Hall 2002, 8).

No features dating to Phase 1 were present, but this may well be the result of recent plough damage.

*Phase 2: early Iron Age (8<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century BC) (Figs. 3 & 4)*

Phase 2 was dominated by a large ditch running across the centre of Area 1. Ditch F2003 (=F1003) ran for more than 50m on a south-east to north-west alignment, in both cases extending beyond the limits of the excavation area. It corresponded with part of a linear cropmark identified in the aerial photographic assessment of the site (Palmer 2002, 1; Fig. 1). The ditch was a sizeable feature, measuring up to 2.58m in width by up to 0.61m deep (Fig. 4, Seg. D). Given the damage from ploughing which had reduced other features in the vicinity to shallow depths, it seems probable that Ditch F2003 would originally have been larger.

A moderately large assemblage of Iron Age pottery was recovered from the feature during both stages of intrusive investigation of the site. The smaller assemblage recovered during the excavation was tentatively assigned an early Iron Age date (8<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century BC; Percival, this report). The assemblage recovered from the ditch (F2003 (=F1003)) during the trial trenching was originally dated to the middle to late Iron Age (Thompson 2003), but was later re-evaluated in the light of Percival's analysis. Based on the presence of a similar mixture of fine wares and flint-gritted coarse wares and the presence of similar vessel forms, it was felt that the pottery recovered during the evaluation was also likely to be of early Iron Age date (Thompson, *pers. comm.*).

Around 2.70m south of F2003 was a line of three postholes on a parallel alignment to the ditch (F2025, F2007 and F2005). All had been reduced to a shallow depth by ploughing. Two yielded sherds of early Iron Age pottery. Three metres north of the ditch, a fourth posthole, F2009, was thought to be contemporary based on its similar profile and fill to the postholes to the south. A further isolated posthole (F2032) was located on the west side of Ditch F2034 in Area 2. Several of the postholes contained quantities of charcoal and had red staining at their edges, suggesting that the posts had burnt in-situ. It is unclear whether this burning was the result of accidental damage, deliberate removal or violent destruction.

*Comment on undated features*

The colluvial layer (L2041) identified in the westernmost 5m of Area 2 appears to indicate the former presence of a stream running southwards down the slight valley in this area (Figs. 1 & 2). It is tentatively suggested that this stream had dried up by the early Iron Age, as Posthole F2032, which shared a similar profile and 'scorched' appearance to the early Iron Age postholes in Area 1, was cut into the colluvial layer. It is thus possible that the stream was a feature of the landscape in which the bronze metalwork was deposited during Phase 1.

Several irregular hollows (F1005, F1007, F1009 and F1015) were identified across the site during the trial trenching, corresponding to anomalies noted in the aerial photographic assessment. Based on their irregular profiles and the charcoal in their fills, they are thought to represent tree boles. None contained diagnostic finds, but the

regular occurrence of struck and burnt flint in their fills suggests that the tree clearance occurred at the site at some point in prehistory.

## SPECIALIST REPORTS

### Struck flint

Dr Martin Tingle

#### *Introduction*

The assemblage is composed of 21 pieces of flint weighing 293g. The whole assemblage was recovered from seven contexts, five of which formed components within a small group of Iron Age features.

#### *Raw materials*

The flint is unpatinated and appears to derive at least in part from secondary deposits.

#### *Composition and technology*

<b>Find</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Weight (g)</b>	<b>Mean weight (g)</b>
Primary Flake	2	18	9
Tertiary Flake	10	212	21.2
Uncorticated Flake	7	44	6.28
Retouched	1	10	10
Scraper	1	9	9
<i>Total</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>293</i>	

*Table 1: Composition of the struck flint assemblage*

#### *Distribution*

The worked flint derived from seven contexts, with the greatest concentration being ten pieces from the subsoil, while a further eight pieces were found within four contexts which made up the fill of a ditch (F2003).

<b>Context</b>	<b>Find</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Comment</b>
L2001	Retouched	1	10	Possible Scraper
L2001	Tertiary Flake	6	120	
L2001	Uncorticated Flake	4	38	
L2001	Tertiary Flake	2	40	
L2004	Uncorticated Flake	1	0.5	
L2008	Uncorticated Flake	1	0.5	
L2013	Primary Flake	1	5	
L2027	Scraper	1	9	
L2028	Primary Flake	1	13	
L2029	Tertiary Flake	1	38	
L2029	Tertiary Flake	1	14	
L2029	Uncorticated Flake	1	5	



<i>Total</i>	21	293	
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*Table 2: Catalogue of the struck flint assemblage*

### *Dating*

All of the pieces appear to be finds from Iron Age contexts. These may be residual, although the use of flint in the Iron Age is not unknown (Humphrey 2003). None of them are obviously diagnostic, although they could all have derived from a later prehistoric assemblage.

### *Conclusion*

Very little can be said of an assemblage composed of so few pieces, other than that it probably dates from a period between the later Neolithic and the Iron Age and that it indicates some level of prehistoric activity at the site.

### *Terminology*

Throughout this analysis the term ‘cortex’ refers to the natural weathered exterior surface of a piece of flint while ‘patination’ denotes the colouration of the flaked surfaces exposed by human or natural agency. Following Andrefsky (1998, 104), dorsal cortex is divided into four categories; the term primary flake refers to those with cortex covering 100% of the dorsal face, while secondary flakes have cortex on between 50% to 99% of the dorsal face. Tertiary flakes have cortex on 1% to 49% of the dorsal face, while flakes with no dorsal cortex are referred to as non cortical.

### **Pottery** (Fig. 5)

Sarah Percival (Norfolk Archaeological Unit)

Forty-nine sherds weighing 339g were recovered from five contexts at Lodge Farm, Costessey. With the exception of one sherd, which may be Bronze Age, all the sherds are of Iron Age date. The sherds are fragmentary and in a poor condition.

### *Bronze Age*

A single sherd in heavily-grogged fabric characteristic of Bronze Age pottery was recovered from the fill of Ditch F2003 (L2028). The sherd is heavily-abraded, with the interior surface missing. The fabric, colour and thickness of the sherd suggest that it may be from a Bronze Age urn; however, the poor condition prohibits exact identification. Little Bronze Age pottery has been found in the parish. A few isolated sherds, which may be contemporary with that from the present site, were recovered during evaluation work prior to the construction of the Park and Ride (HER 33842).

### *Iron Age*

The Iron Age assemblage comprises 48 sherds weighing 332g recovered from the subsoil, the fill of Ditch F2003, and two postholes (F2007 & F2025) (Table 3). The majority of the sherds are tempered with crushed burnt flint, which may be either abundant (fabric F1, four sherds) or common (F2, 26 sherds). The remaining sherds

have abundant quartz sand inclusions (fabric Q1, 14 sherds), occasionally with possible grog or organic inclusions (Q2, four sherds).

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Weight (g)</b>
Subsoil	2001	6	61
Ditch F2003	2004	3	7
	2028	37	260
PH F2025	2026	1	1
PH F2007	2008	1	3
<i>Total</i>		<i>48</i>	<i>332</i>

*Table 3: Quantity and weight of sherds by feature*

The assemblage contains at least three small carinated cups or jars with thin burnished walls and simple flat rims and perhaps two medium jars, also with carinations high on the body and simple everted flat-topped rims. Four sherds have shallow incised bands around the neck and shoulder. A simple base sherd has single shallow fingernail impressions and two body sherds are fingertip-impressed.

An earlier Iron Age date is suggested for the assemblage, perhaps the 8<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. The mix of flint-tempered ‘coarse wares’ with sand-tempered ‘fine wares’ is characteristic of this period, as is the presence of small fine cups (Barrett’s class V) alongside carinated bowls or jars (Barrett’s class II). Similar incised or furrowed decoration can be seen within the assemblage from Orsett Causewayed Enclosure, Essex (Brown 1988, fig. 16, 68), while the fingertip-impressed decoration finds a parallel within 7<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century BC sherds from Longham (Percival 1999). Within Costessey, little Iron Age material has been recovered; however, a few sherds of indeterminate Iron Age date were recovered at Long Lane on the site of what is now the Park and Ride (HER 33842).

Context	Fabric	Dsc	Quantity	Weight	Decoration	Spot Date	Description	Rim Type	Base Type	Feature
2001	Q1	D	1	2	shallow incised bands	Iron Age	burnished			Topsoil
2001	F1	U	2	21		Iron Age				Topsoil
2001	F2	U	2	18		Iron Age				Topsoil
2001	F2	B	1	20	finger nail impressed	Iron Age			simple	Topsoil
2004	F1	U	1	4		Iron Age				Ditch
2004	Q1	U	2	3		Iron Age	abraded			Ditch
2008	F1	U	1	3		Iron Age	abraded			Posthole
2026	Q1	R	1	1		Iron Age	small jar or cup	flat		Posthole
2028	Q1	D	2	41	shallow incised bands	Iron Age	burnished			Ditch
2028	Q1	R	1	9	shallow incised bands	Iron Age	small carinated jar	rounded everted		Ditch
2028	Q1	D	1	7	shallow incised bands	Iron Age				Ditch
2028	F2	R	1	5		Iron Age	jar	flat topped upright		Ditch
2028	F2	R	1	2		Iron Age	small jar or cup	rounded everted		Ditch
2028	F2	D	2	26	finger tip impressed	Iron Age				Ditch
2028	F2	U	19	128		Iron Age				Ditch
2028	Q2	U	4	24		Iron Age				Ditch
2028	Q1	B	1	9		Iron Age			lipped base	Ditch
2028	Q1	U	4	4		Iron Age				Ditch
2028	Q1	U	1	5		Iron Age	small jar or cup			Ditch
2028	G1	U	1	7		Bronze Age	Heavily-grogged sherd, possibly urn or similar			Ditch

Table 4: Description of pottery sherds

## **Ceramic building materials**

Andrew Peachey

A single highly-abraded fragment (2g) of CBM was recovered from Posthole F2007 L2008. The fabric is in an oxidised (fired) sand-tempered fabric and is too small and abraded to assign either a form type or date.

## **Small Finds, metalwork and miscellaneous finds (Figs. 6-9)**

Nina Crummy

Nine objects were found during the evaluation and excavation, of which only three were stratified in features. These comprise a fragment of iron wire, possibly a brooch pin, and an amber bead (SF 7), both recovered from Ditch F1003 (=F2003), and a small fragment of worked slate recovered from a probable animal burrow (F2012). The other items all came from the topsoil (L2000) and one, a decayed lead-alloy object (SF 4), is probably of post-medieval or later date.

The remaining five pieces, comprising two socketed axes (SFs 1 and 5), a fragment of a third axe (SF 3), a chape (SF 2) and small fragment of slag (SF 6) are all copper-alloy and probably come from a dispersed late Bronze Age (Ewart Park phase) hoard disturbed during ploughing. Ten copper-alloy finds of similar date were found in this corner of the site in the 1980s and undoubtedly originally formed part of the same hoard; these finds are discussed further below.

One of the axes found during the excavation is small and lacks the side loop. The chipped edge and bands of striations from sharpening attest to considerable wear during its period of use. A similar small axe with no loop was among the objects forming the Reach Fen hoard from Cambridgeshire, and there is a second from Mildenhall Fen (Prigg 1880, no. 3; Pendleton 1999, fig. 66, 299). The second axe appears to be a failed casting. One side is much thinner than the other and the base has sheared off neatly apart from a ragged-edged patch on the thin side, which seems to have been the location of at least one air bubble. With its three ridges on each side and mouldings close to the mouth it is close in form to examples from Icklingham and Lakenheath, Suffolk, and Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, although the type in general is widespread across the region (Pendleton 1999, 125-6, fig. 4, H5.2, figs. 8-9, fig. 37, 121; Farley 1979, figs. 6.2 - 6.3). The wear on the small axe and the condition of the second point to their belonging to a founder's hoard of scrap metal collected for reuse. This is supported by the very small fragment representing the third axe and the damaged condition of the chape, which lacks its rivet holes on one side and could not be re-affixed to a scabbard.

Ten copper-alloy objects from the south-east of the site were recovered by a metal detectorist in the 1980s and are in private ownership. Illustrations of the objects drawn by Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service were consulted for this report, but in consequence it has not been possible to identify use-wear marks or to scrutinise the quality of either the metal or the casting. Two of the objects are not positively identifiable as Bronze Age: one because it is too small, the other because it is of unusual form. In these cases, the quality of the alloy and its patina would have been invaluable guides to the antiquity of the pieces.

The metal-detected group consists of three complete socketed axes (SFs 8, 9 and 13) and fragments of two others (SFs 11 and 14), two ingot fragments (SFs 15 and 17), a fragment of a tanged knife (SF 12), a small fragment that may come from a chape (SF 16), and a cast perforated and socketed disc (SF 10).

Two of the socketed axes (SFs 8 and 9) are matched by two from the excavation (SFs 1 and 5). All four are of the south-east group that is widespread across the region (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, 212). The other three axes are all of Yorkshire type, which occurs sporadically in the region (*ibid.*, 233). The cast and socketed disc (SF 10) is unusual and, without personal examination, there must remain some doubt as to its antiquity. Assuming it is Bronze Age, it can be best compared to cast perforated discs, and in particular to one from Heathrow (O'Connor 1980, 538, list 143, 5, fig. 69, 8). These discs generally have a low flange rather than a socket around the central hole; some have been described as risers from the casting of socketed tools, although this identification is far from certain (*ibid.*, 181). The Lodge Farm object may alternatively be a form of socketed ferrule with expanded base, such as one from Marston St Lawrence, Northamptonshire (Inv. Arch., GB.12 3(3), no. 7), but these ferrules usually have a solid unperforated base.

Plain amber beads can generally only be dated by association and are very rare in any period except the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, when discoid beads occur in considerable numbers in Migration Period graves and occasionally on settlement sites (e.g. Evison and Cooper 1985, 72, table 7; Green *et al.* 1987, table 2). However, the Lodge Farm bead need not necessarily belong to this period. Amber beads of similar form were among the Wessex culture grave goods in the Bronze Age barrow at Little Cressingham, Norfolk (Clarke *et al.* 1985, 276, figs. 4.29b, 7.27).

Migration Period beads are usually considered to be imports from the Baltic region, but raw blocks of amber are occasionally washed up onto the Norfolk coast and may have been locally utilised (Shepherd 1985, 204-5). While there is no positive evidence for this, it has been pointed out that it may be no coincidence that the amber beads in the Little Cressingham barrow make it one of the richest outlying Wessex culture burials (Piggott 1938, 93), while the Wimblington (Cambridgeshire) Wessex culture barrow also contained amber beads and would have lain close to the contemporary coastline (Taylor 1981, 115-16, fig. 46).

### *Finds catalogue*

1. SF 1. (L2000). Topsoil. Small copper-alloy socketed axe with thickened rim. The crescentic blade edge is worn and notched from use and has a band of many small striations, made by a sharpening stone, across the width. Length 59mm, socket 22 by 24mm, blade width 37mm.
2. SF 2. (L2000). Topsoil. Copper-alloy scabbard chape, damaged on one side but retaining part of a rivet in one of the rivet holes on the other. Both faces are decorated with transverse groups of cordons emphasised by grooves. Length 28mm, width 37.5mm.
3. SF 3. (L2000). Topsoil. Small fragment from the thickened rim of a copper-alloy socketed axe. Length 18mm, width 18mm.

4. SF 5. (L2000). Topsoil. Upper part of a socketed copper-alloy axe with the blade end broken off. There is a heavy moulding at the mouth of the socket and a small moulding below it, and each face bears three vertical ridges. The inner edge of the mouth is rough and unfettled and the casting seam on the loop side is also unfettled, particularly above, below and inside the loop, although the seam on the opposite side is much neater. The metal on one face is much thinner than on the other and an irregular hole along the break on that side may have been formed by a large air bubble. Length 65mm, socket 38 by 41mm, width above break 33mm.
5. SF 6. (L2000). Topsoil. Copper-alloy slag fragment. 35g.
6. SF 8. (L2000). Topsoil. Complete copper-alloy socketed axe with thickened rim. The blade is crescentic and appears to be notched from use. The side loop is set slightly asymmetrically to the casting seam. Length 72mm, blade width 42mm.
7. SF 9. (L2000). Topsoil. Complete copper-alloy socketed axe with thickened rim and crescentic blade, as SF 8. The socket has been crushed, presumably damage done after use, as the casting seam on the side loop has been fettled and some asymmetry on the blade is probably the result of use-wear. Length 85mm, blade width 50mm.
8. SF 10. (L2000). Topsoil. Cast copper-alloy disc with wide flange and central perforation; an incomplete socket, apparently pierced transversely, rises from the perforation. Diameter 62mm, socket 28mm long.
9. SF 11. (L2000). Topsoil. Fragment from the rim of a copper-alloy Yorkshire-type socketed axe with close-set ribs (*cf.* Schmidt and Burgess 1981, pl. 130). Length 27mm.
10. SF 12. (L2000). Topsoil. Fragment of a copper-alloy tanged knife with a perforation on the tang near the shoulders for attachment of a grip and broken across a second perforation at the upper end. Length 83mm.
11. SF 13. (L2000). Topsoil. Complete copper-alloy socketed axe with thickened rim, side ribs and one central rib. The casting seam and socket appear to be unfettled. The edge of the blade is irregular, perhaps from use-wear. Length 85mm, edge width 43mm.
12. SF 14. (L2000). Topsoil. Fragment of a copper-alloy socketed axe similar to SF 13. The casting seam and the edge appear unfettled. Length 53mm.
13. SF 15. (L2000). Topsoil. Copper-alloy ingot fragment, 43 by 37mm.
14. SF 16. (L2000). Topsoil. Angular copper-alloy fragment, possibly from a chape. Length 17mm, width 6mm.
15. SF 17. (L2000). Topsoil. Copper-alloy ingot fragment, 38 by 28mm.
16. SF 4. (L2000). Topsoil. Lead-alloy irregular polygonal object with flat underside and slightly domed top. There is a shallow sunken circle impressed into the top,

possibly used as a mould. Length 53mm, maximum width 39mm. The use of the alloy and the recovery of this object from the topsoil suggest a date in the later medieval, post-medieval or modern periods.

17. SF 7. (L1004). Fill of Ditch F1003 (=F2003). Most of an amber bead in five fragments. It is roughly discoid, with a central perforation, and of slightly variable thickness. Maximum surviving length 9mm, width 9mm, thickness 5mm. One face is flat, the other has an irregularly-faceted edge, perhaps cut to maximise reflected light.

18. (L2004). F2003. Ditch fill. Short length of iron wire, possibly part of a brooch pin. Length 35mm.

19. (L2013). F2012. Lower fill of probable burrow. Fragment of grey/black slate worked to a plano-convex section with slight facets along the length of the convex side. Probably a fragment of a bead or other ornament, or perhaps a piece of inlay. However, the underside is worked smooth and shows no sign of having been fixed into or onto another object, nor has the fragment broken across a perforation. Length 12mm, width 5.5mm.

### **The animal bone**

Carina Phillips

Fill L2040 of Ditch F2030 contained the only fragment of animal bone to be recovered from excavations at Lodge Farm. The bone was identified as a sheep/goat (*Ovis/Capra sp.*) molar. The tooth is eroded, indicative of poor survival conditions for bone. This may explain the small size of the assemblage.

### **The environmental samples**

Val Fryer

#### *Introduction and method statement*

Excavations at Lodge Farm, Costessey, revealed features of probable early Iron Age date comprising a ditch and five postholes. Samples for the extraction of plant macrofossil assemblages were taken from across the two excavated areas and seven were submitted for assessment.

The samples were bulk floated by Archaeological Solutions and the flots were collected in a 500 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed in Table 5. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (1997). All plant remains were charred. Modern contaminants including fibrous roots, seeds, arthropods and fungal sclerotia were present throughout.

#### *Results*

With the exception of charcoal fragments, which were present or abundant throughout, plant remains were exceedingly scarce. A small number of severely puffed wheat (*Triticum sp.*) grains were noted in Sample 5 (from the fill of Posthole

F2025) and a poorly-preserved seed, possibly of medick/clover/trefoil (*Medicago/Trifolium/Lotus sp.*) type, was found in Sample 2 (from Posthole F2005).

Other material types were equally scarce. The pieces of black porous and tarry material were probable residues of the combustion of organic remains at very high temperatures. The coal fragments within Sample 3 were almost certainly modern contaminants.

### Conclusions

In summary, the assemblages from Posthole F2005 (Sample 2), Posthole F2009 (Sample 4) and Posthole F2032 (Sample 7) are particularly charcoal-rich and may be derived from small deposits of fuel/hearth waste. The remaining assemblages contain such low densities of material that it would appear most likely that all are derived from scattered or wind-blown detritus of unknown origin, which accidentally became incorporated within the feature fills.

As none of the features contain sufficient material for quantification (*i.e.* 100+ specimens), no further analysis is recommended.

Sample No.	1	6	2	3	4	5	7
Context No.	2004	2028	2006	2008	2001	2026	2033
Feature No.	2003	2003	2005	2007	2009	2025	2032
Feature type	Ditch	Ditch	ph	ph	ph	ph	ph
<b>Plant macrofossils</b>							
<i>Triticum sp.</i> (grains)						x	
Cereal indet. (grains)						x	
<i>Medicago/Trifolium/Lotus sp.</i>			xcf				
Charcoal <2mm	x	xx	xxx	xx	xxx	xx	xxx
Charcoal >2mm			xxx	x	xxx		xxx
Charred root/stem	x						x
Indet.bud			x				
Indet.capsule/floret			x				
Indet.seed					x		
<b>Other materials</b>							
Black porous 'cokey' material	x				x		
Black tarry material	x	x		x			
Bone					x	xb	
Small coal frags.				x			
<b>Sample volume (litres)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Volume of flot (litres)</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>0.4</b>
<b>% flot sorted</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>25%</b>

x = 1 – 10 specimens    xx = 10 – 50 specimens    xxx = 50+ specimens    b = burnt

Table 5: contents of the environmental samples

## DISCUSSION

### The late Bronze Age hoard

Although disturbed from their original context by ploughing, it seems highly likely that all the copper-alloy objects found in Area 2 of the site originally belonged to the



same hoard deposit. This includes both the five items found during the excavation and the larger assemblage of ten objects discovered in the south-east corner of the site in the 1980s. Despite being unstratified within the ploughsoil horizon, all the objects (with the exception of the three recovered from the spoilheap following the topsoil stripping) were found fairly close to each other, distributed over an area of not much more than *c.* 20m x 20m. It is tempting to view the items as having been deposited as a group in a single episode. However, they could equally represent a series of temporally-distinct depositions over a period of time, which were nevertheless repeatedly focused on the same point in the landscape (*cf.* Bradley 1990, 6; Roberts and Ottaway 2003, 135).

Although unstratified, the relatively closely-grouped cluster in which the items were found suggests that they had not been moved far from their original point of deposition. The assemblage therefore offers a valuable opportunity to examine the location in the landscape that was selected for the deposition of the metalwork. Detailed analysis of the wider landscape context of such activity on a case by case basis is often impossible as the provenances of ‘hoards’ and individual objects found by metal detectorists are frequently (though not always) poorly-recorded. Where studies have been undertaken, it has been possible to identify patterns with important implications for our understanding of the impetus behind and social and political significance of metalwork deposition. A study of late Bronze Age socketed axes from south-east Scotland and east Yorkshire, for example, has suggested that they were frequently deposited at prominent natural features in the landscape, or at the boundaries of different natural environments, reflecting the growing concerns with territoriality and agricultural intensification that were two of the principal themes of the late Bronze Age (Roberts and Ottaway 2003, 136).

Several observations can be made about the landscape context of the Lodge Farm hoard. It was deposited on fairly high ground, just above the 30m contour, on a south-facing ridge overlooking the river Yare (Figs. 1 & 2). Earlier in the Bronze Age, this low ridge had been used for funerary activity, with several now ploughed-out barrows within *c.* 1.5km of the site occupying similar positions on or just above 30m OD (HER 9290, 9292 and 11431). It is highly likely that these were still visible in the late Bronze Age. The possible cropmark ring ditch at the site itself (see above; Fig. 1) might represent another barrow located approximately 175m north-west of where the hoard was originally buried. Around 450m south-east of the site, also on the 30m contour, a late Bronze Age chisel (HER 29398) has been found close to the early Bronze Age Bowthorpe Barrow (HER 11431; Fig. 2). This close spatial association between a burial mound and a bronze tool deposit could potentially be significant, perhaps indicating the deliberate deposition of metalwork as an offering to the ancestors buried in the mound. The raising of mounds and the deposition of metalwork at similar places in the landscape might suggest common concerns underlying both acts: perhaps a desire to display status through building monuments and carrying out ceremonies in prominent locations. However, given its location nearly 200m away from the nearest burial mound, this does not seem to have been the case with the bronze hoard at Lodge Farm.

Another notable factor in the choice of location for the Lodge Farm hoard is its position at the head of a narrow north to south aligned valley running down to the river Yare (Fig. 2). Although now dry (see *Location, topography and geology,*

above), this small valley could have been wet in the past. It is possible that it was a feature of the landscape in which the hoard was deposited in the late Bronze Age. The deposition of metalwork in this location gives rise to several possible interpretations. The valley forms a convenient natural boundary, which perhaps could have been used in the late Bronze Age to define the limits of land under different ownership. The deliberate deposition of metal objects in such a location might have served to reinforce the demarcation of territory in the way discussed by Roberts and Ottaway (2003, 136). An alternative explanation is that the stream was a focus for ritual activity and that the metalwork was a votive deposit. Deliberate deposition of metal objects in watery contexts is well-attested; in the broadest sense, such deposits often seem to have been offerings, perhaps to deities, natural forces or ancestors (Pryor 2003, 275-7; Bradley 1990, 23-4; Parker Pearson 1993, 117). It might be argued that worn and damaged metalwork such as that from Lodge Farm is unlikely to have been deposited as an offering, but we cannot necessarily apply concepts of quality and value derived from modern consumer society to the treatment of objects in prehistory (Champion 1999, 107). Wear and tear on objects might, for example, have carried important connotations about their owners or the tasks that they had been used for. Similar broken pieces and half-melted fragments of bronze have been found in structured deposits such as burials (Bradley 1990, 26).

Temporarily leaving aside the issue of the position in the landscape that was selected for the hoard, the variety and condition of the metalwork provides an equally valuable line of enquiry as to the reason for its deposition. Based on the high proportion of tools and the presence of damaged items and fragments of raw material, the Lodge Farm group exhibits many of the characteristics of a founder's hoard of scrap metal gathered together for recycling (*cf.* Bradley 1990, 11-12). Many of the objects are in worn or fragmentary condition and it seems likely that some would never have been in a suitable state to use. One of the axes (SF 5), for example, appears to be a failed casting, while the assemblage also includes axes with blades that are notched and irregular from use and frequent sharpening (e.g. SFs 1, 8 and 9) and other items which could not have been reused due to damage (e.g. the scabbard chape, SF 2). The collection also includes fragments of copper alloy ingots (SFs 15 and 17), possibly raw material for metalworking.

However, the sheer number of such 'founders' hoards' that have been identified, that were apparently never recovered by their owners, is highly problematic. The apparent frequency with which such collections were not reclaimed undermines the theory that they represent deliberate accumulations of valuable material that could be recycled. In many cases, possibly including the Lodge Farm hoard, it seems more likely that the metal was never intended to be recovered at all. Instead, it may represent dumped 'rubbish' that was no longer considered to have any value (Pendleton 1999, 91). This interpretation of many 'hoards' and stray finds of bronze metalwork has considerable repercussions for our understanding of late Bronze Age East Anglia. Amongst other considerations, it implies that by this time, bronze was commonplace and possession or conspicuous deposition of it no longer had any of the connotations of status and prestige that have been emphasised by some studies (e.g. Taylor 1993, 99-102).

A further implication of the interpretation of many bronze finds as discarded 'rubbish' is that their distribution is likely to reflect the pattern of late Bronze Age settlements, where the people who owned, used, and subsequently discarded these bronze tools at

the end of their functional lives, would have lived. Settlement sites of this period are still rare in northern East Anglia (Brown and Murphy 1997, 18), but this is likely to be more a matter of poor archaeological visibility rather than genuine absence. The poor survival of the friable pottery of the period in many ploughsoil contexts is one factor. In addition, the unenclosed nature of many settlements and the scarcity of evidence for disposal of the dead following the decline in barrow building around *c.* 1800 cal. BC further exacerbate the difficulties of identifying areas of settlement (Ashwin 1996, 57). Bradley notes that the locations in which ‘utilitarian’ hoards (*i.e.* so-called ‘founders’ hoards’ and ‘merchants’ hoards’) are found have rarely been studied in much detail, but that where they have, they often occur very close to contemporary settlements (1990, 13).

There is indeed some evidence to indicate that the deposition of the bronze objects at Lodge Farm took place in the context of other contemporary activity or occupation, rather than in isolation. Undiagnostic flints and sherds of gritty prehistoric pottery were recovered from the same area as the metalwork found in the 1980s. Although the precise date of this pottery remains unconfirmed (HER 16398; Everill and Hall 2002, 6), the description of the sherds as ‘gritty’ could suggest that they were similar to, and perhaps contemporary with, the heavily flint-tempered pottery recovered during the excavation. Despite the uncertainties over dating, these finds are nevertheless suggestive of other prehistoric activity in the immediate area in which the metalwork was deposited. They could represent settlement debris or rubbish dumped along with the worn bronze tools. It should also be considered that the metalwork might in fact have been contemporary with the Phase 2 boundary ditch *c.* 140m to the north-west (F2003). Although the ditch was dated on the basis of the associated pottery to the early Iron Age (8<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century BC), pottery from Norfolk does not allow a clean division between the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age (Percival in Ashwin and Bates 2000, 178). Late Bronze Age Ewart Park phase metalwork, such as that from the Lodge Farm site, is often assigned a broadly similar date between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC (Ashwin 1996, 56). The division between the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age is perhaps not meaningful at sites of these dates, which instead represent a transitional phase between the two (Ashwin and Bates 2000, 178). It is therefore possible that the metalwork found in Area 2 was in fact contemporary with Ditch F2003 in Area 1, and that it represents material deposited on the periphery of a transitional late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age settlement enclosed by the boundary ditch (see below).

It is in this context of the contemporary human landscape and settlement pattern that the location selected for the deposition of the ‘hoard’ is best understood. The worn and damaged tools were probably deposited on the periphery of a settlement site, whose position on the higher, drier slopes above a river valley conforms to the pattern of habitation observed at other late Bronze Age sites in the region. Approximately 1km south-west of the site, also on the hillside overlooking the river Yare, a Bronze Age chisel has been found in close proximity to Bronze Age struck flints and Bronze and Iron Age pottery (HER 9293). Perhaps here too, the association of Bronze Age metalwork and other occupation ‘debris’ indicates the deposition of material on the edge of another Bronze Age/ Iron Age settlement.

However, the interpretation of deposits of worn or damaged bronze tools as no more than ‘refuse’ from settlements is probably missing an important dimension. In many

societies, metalworking has been seen as a magical process of transformation. Materials such as casting debris and broken items that could potentially be recycled might have been viewed as potent metaphors for transformations in human lives (e.g. birth, coming of age, changes in social status, death) or for points of transition in space and time (Brück 2001). Deliberate deposits of worn or broken objects, which were at a point of transformation in their 'lifecycles', might have served to mark important events or changes in the life of a settlement or its occupants (Brück 2001, 151). At other late Bronze Age sites, deliberate deposition of bronze objects, including worn and damaged items, seems to have served as a means of emphasising particular points in space or drawing attention to the crossing of important boundaries. Bronze mould fragments were placed at the east and west entrances to the late Bronze Age settlement at Springfield Lyons in Essex (Buckley and Hedges 1987). At South Dumpton Down in Kent, a collection of bronze objects, including broken pieces, was carefully arranged in a small pit cut into the side of the enclosure ditch around a middle Bronze Age settlement (Barber 2001, 163). The deposition of worn and damaged bronze tools on the periphery of the possible settlement at Lodge Farm could have been a similar ritual act, perhaps intended to draw attention to the transition/ crossing point between the inside and outside of the settlement.

### **The early Iron Age site**

The small group of early Iron Age features at Lodge Farm was dominated by the large ditch running across the centre of Area 1 (F2003 (=F1003)). As discussed above, it is likely that F2003 was originally even larger, considering the truncation from ploughing and consequent shallow depth of many of the other features on site. It would have been a prominent landscape feature, but its function remains uncertain. Given its scale and the considerable quantity of pottery found in its fills, it seems reasonable to suggest that it could have formed part of an enclosure boundary around a settlement.

In general, early Iron Age settlements in East Anglia appear to have been open (Champion 1994, 131). However, a few examples of enclosed sites are known, notably at Micklemoor Hill, West Harling (Clark and Fell 1953) and at Valley Belt, Trowse (Ashwin and Bates 2000). The roundhouse enclosures at West Harling were demarcated by banked ditches of comparable size to that at Lodge Farm. That around the eastern enclosure varied between approximately 3.00m and 3.60m wide by *c.* 0.60m deep (Clark and Fell 1953, 6), while the ditch around the western enclosure was smaller, measuring around 1.80m – 2.10m wide by *c.* 0.40m deep (Clark and Fell 1953, 11). The largest of the enclosure ditches at Valley Belt was of similar size, measuring around 1.90 – 2.90m wide by up to 1.04m deep at one of its terminals (ditch 406, Ashwin and Bates 2000, 159). At 1.78 – 2.58m wide by up to 0.61m deep (in Seg. D), Ditch F2003 was certainly within the same order of magnitude as the settlement enclosure ditches at either of these sites. In terms of morphology, too, there is no reason to suppose that Ditch F2003 could not have formed part of a settlement enclosure. The surviving portion of the ditch maintained the same south-east to north-west alignment over a distance of at least 50m, while the cropmark of the ditch visible on aerial photographs appeared to continue on the same alignment for up to 150m. This suggests that any enclosure system is likely to have been of rectilinear rather than curving circular or oval form. Rectilinear enclosure boundaries were

excavated at both Valley Belt (Ashwin and Bates 2000, 159) and West Harling (site IV; Clark and Fell 1953, 12-13).

The pottery assemblage recovered from Ditch F2003 also bears similarities to those from other early Iron Age settlement sites in the region. The mix of flint-tempered 'coarse wares' and sand-tempered 'fine wares' mirrors the composition of the assemblages from West Harling (Clark and Fell 1953, 14-15) and Trowse (Percival in Ashwin and Bates 2000, 170). It has been suggested that the larger inclusions in the coarse wares made them capable of withstanding continued reheating and cooling during cooking, while the finer fabrics may have been used for vessels where this quality was not required, such as those for storage or other household use (Ashwin and Bates 2000, 178).

However, the surviving evidence is too limited to be certain that the remains from Lodge Farm represent part of a settlement. The postholes may have been related to structures, possibly dwellings, but there were no obvious spatial configurations to support this. The 'arcs' of pits or postholes identified by the aerial photographic assessment of the site turned out to be largely natural in origin rather than the remains of roundhouses (Fig. 1; Palmer 2002, 1; Grant and Sutherland 2003). Given the shallow depth of the surviving postholes, it is possible that structural remains were once present, but that many of the associated postholes and other structural features had been entirely removed by ploughing. The spatial relationship between the parallel line of three postholes in Area 1 (F2025, F2007 and F2005) and Ditch F2003 suggests an alternative interpretation of the postholes as forming fences. A similar relationship between enclosure ditches and parallel fences was observed at Valley Belt (Ashwin and Bates 2000, 159 & 190), where the ditches and fences were interpreted as parts of the same large-scale system for managing livestock, possibly sheep. Post-built structures straddling the boundary ditches at Valley Belt, but integral to the system of fences, were interpreted as gateways used for corralling sheep in and out of the enclosures (Ashwin and Bates 2000, 190). Although the surviving postholes flanking Ditch F2003 did not appear to form a structure, they might feasibly have represented the remnant of a gateway of this kind. Like Valley Belt, Lodge Farm could have been a site periodically frequented for a variety of agricultural and craft activities, rather than a permanent settlement (Ashwin and Bates 2000, 189).

The few early Iron Age settlements which are currently known in Norfolk are concentrated in the west of the county, particularly in the south-west, on the light soils of the Breckland to the east of Thetford (Davies 1996, 67). However, the excavations at Valley Belt, Trowse, carried out during construction of the Norwich Southern Bypass, have shown that areas of east Norfolk were also settled at this time (Ashwin and Bates 2000, 141). Both Lodge Farm and Valley Belt share similar light sand and gravel soils. Both also occupy slightly raised ground close to large watercourses; Valley Belt lies *c.* 1km south-east of the river Yare-Tas and Lodge Farm is equidistant between the Tud to the north and the Yare to the south-east, each *c.* 1.5km away (Figs. 1 & 2). This reinforces the developing picture that in east Norfolk, as in much of the eastern region as a whole, early Iron Age settlement tended to favour the lighter soils of the river valleys (Bryant 1997, 23-5), but kept to the higher, drier ground slightly further up the valley slopes.

These sites were presumably chosen because they combined relatively easily cultivatable soils with proximity to water, which would have been essential for the rearing of livestock, particularly cattle (Davies 1996, 66-7). However, little evidence has yet been recovered to clarify our rather vague presumptions about the agrarian economies of these early Iron Age communities. The acidic soil at Valley Belt had destroyed any trace of animal bone, which could have shed light on the suggested stock management taking place on the site (Ashwin and Bates 2000, 190). The paucity of animal bone, which one might have expected to find alongside the quantity of pottery in Ditch F2003, at Lodge Farm, may also be a result of the acid soil rather than reflecting a real absence. Given the present gaps in our understanding of their economic bases, it is unsafe to draw firm conclusions about the reasons why certain settlement sites were chosen.

At least one further factor can be identified which might have had a bearing on the decision to settle in the vicinity of the site. As discussed above, the ridge of higher ground between the valleys of the Yare and Tud was a focus for funerary monuments and burials in the early and middle Bronze Age. Several cropmark ring ditches representing ploughed-out round barrows are known close to the site (see above) and one may once have lain within the northern corner of the site itself (Palmer 2002, 1; Fig. 1). These monuments would presumably have still been highly visible features of the landscape in the early Iron Age and might have been a 'pull' factor encouraging settlement. At Harford Farm in Caistor St Edmund, a group of middle Iron Age roundhouses were built in a narrow corridor between and around several Bronze Age barrows, which at the time would probably still have been a 'looming presence' in the landscape (Ashwin and Bates 2000, 135). Although the exact nature of the Iron Age activity at Lodge Farm is uncertain and the spatial relationship between Ditch F2003 and the barrows in the surrounding area is far less direct, it is nevertheless possible that as at Harford Farm, the earlier funerary monuments acted as a focus for later settlement and activity. Exactly how the earlier earthworks were perceived by the Iron Age population is impossible to ascertain, but we can probably assume with some confidence that they were not considered in any way threatening given that the inhabitants of Harford Farm were content to live alongside them. Less utilitarian considerations than the tractability of the soil or the proximity of water may have influenced where the Iron Age inhabitants of East Anglia chose to live.

## CONCLUSION

Fifteen copper-alloy objects including socketed axe heads and ingot fragments were recovered from Lodge Farm, Costessey during a recent archaeological excavation and by metal detecting in the 1980s. The finds were recovered from the ploughsoil horizon over a fairly small area and almost certainly represent parts of the same deposit, disturbed from their original context by ploughing.

The worn, damaged and incomplete condition of many of the objects is consistent with so-called founders' hoards of scrap metal gathered for recycling. However, the fact that so many hoards of this type, including that at Lodge Farm, were never recovered implies that most were probably never intended to be recovered at all. Instead, groups of worn and damaged tools like that at Lodge Farm may represent late Bronze Age 'rubbish' (*cf.* Pendleton 1999, 91-2). If this is the case, they offer a

valuable indicator as to the locations of contemporary settlements, which are often difficult to identify. However, interpreting deposits of worn and damaged objects as no more than discarded rubbish is probably missing an important dimension to the treatment of objects in the late Bronze Age: at other broadly contemporary settlement sites (e.g. Springfield Lyons in Essex and South Dampton Down in Kent), worn and fragmentary bronze items have been found in structured deposits where they had clearly taken on a level of symbolic significance (Brück 2001, 151).

The deposition of the Ewart Park phase (8<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> century BC) metalwork in Area 2 of the site may have been contemporary with the large early Iron Age (8<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century BC) boundary ditch (F2003) excavated 140m to the north-west in Area 1. The ditch is tentatively interpreted as a boundary around a settlement or seasonal encampment: the moderately large quantity of pottery recovered from its fills is suggestive of occupation in the vicinity and its size and morphology are consistent with the boundary ditches surrounding other enclosed early Iron Age settlements in Norfolk (e.g. Micklemoor Hill, West Harling and Valley Belt, Trowse). The ‘hoard’ of worn and damaged copper-alloy objects found in Area 2 is thus thought to represent a deliberate symbolic/ ritual deposit on the periphery of a transitional late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age settlement enclosed by Ditch F2003. It may have marked the boundary of the settlement area, or commemorated an important event in the life of the settlement or its inhabitants. The location of the settlement on light sandy soils, on the higher, drier slopes above a river valley, fits the pattern of contemporary settlements elsewhere in the eastern region.

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Illustrations of the earlier metalwork finds from Lodge Farm were reproduced with kind permission of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service.

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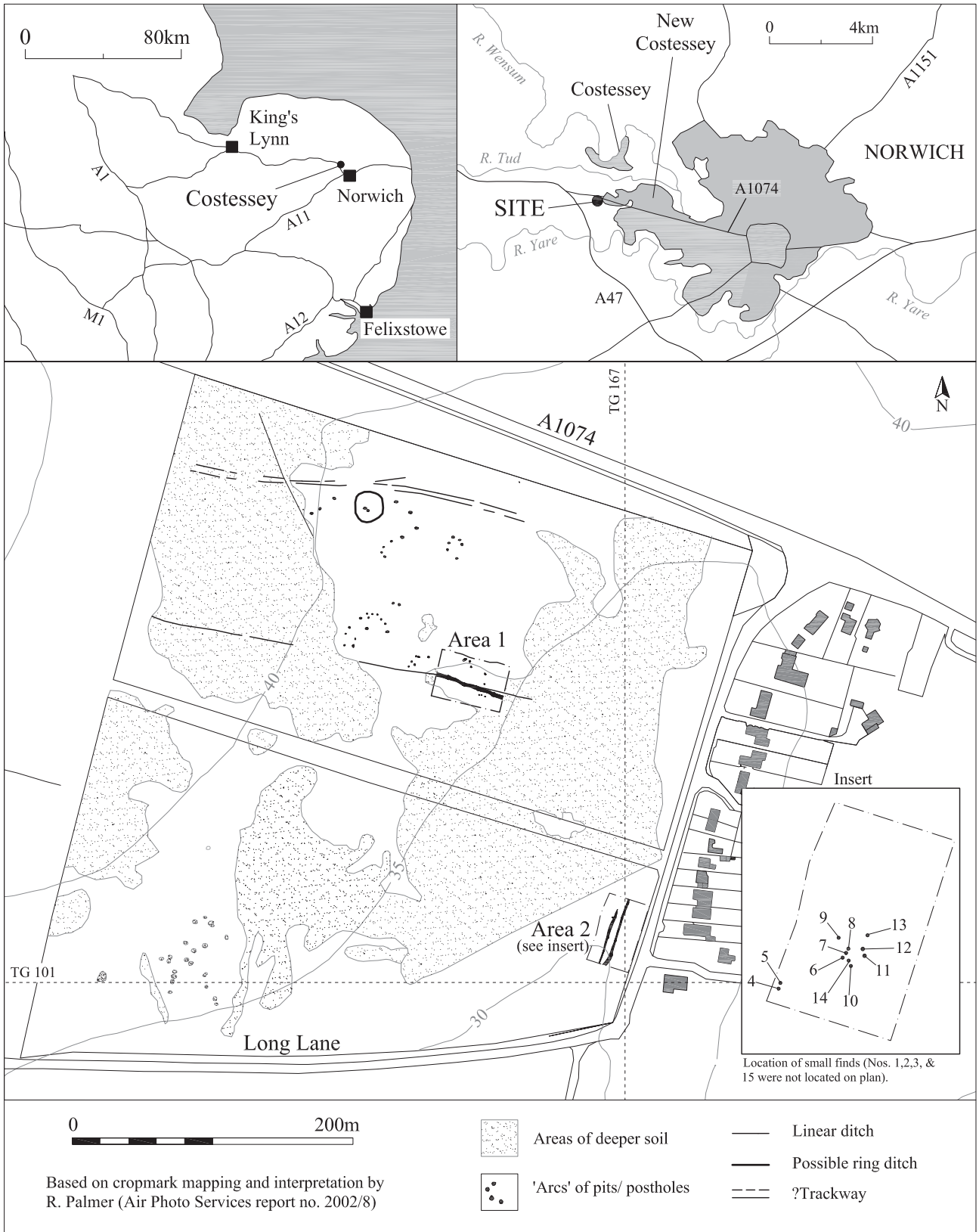


Fig. 1 Site location plan

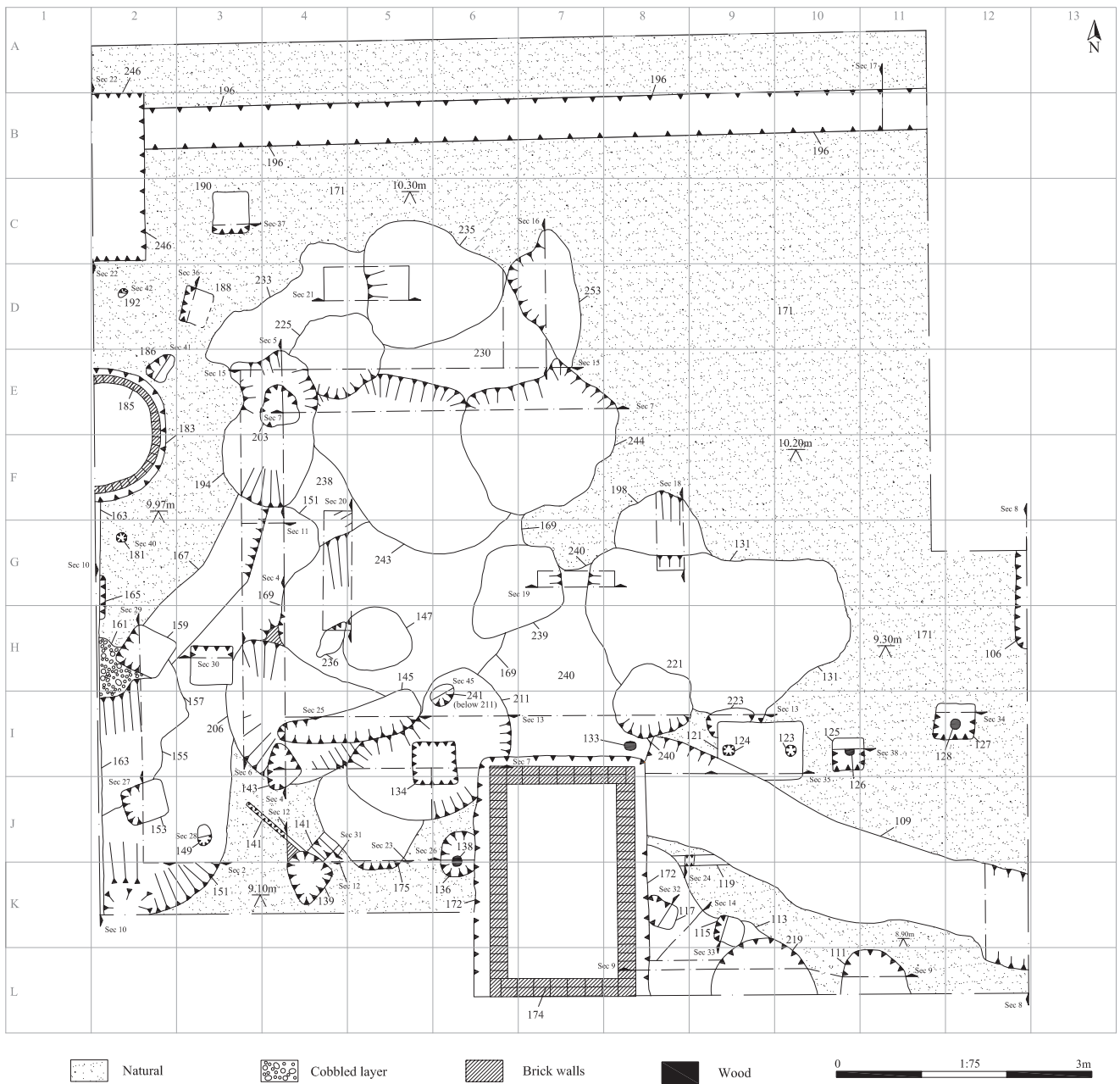


Fig. 2 Site plan

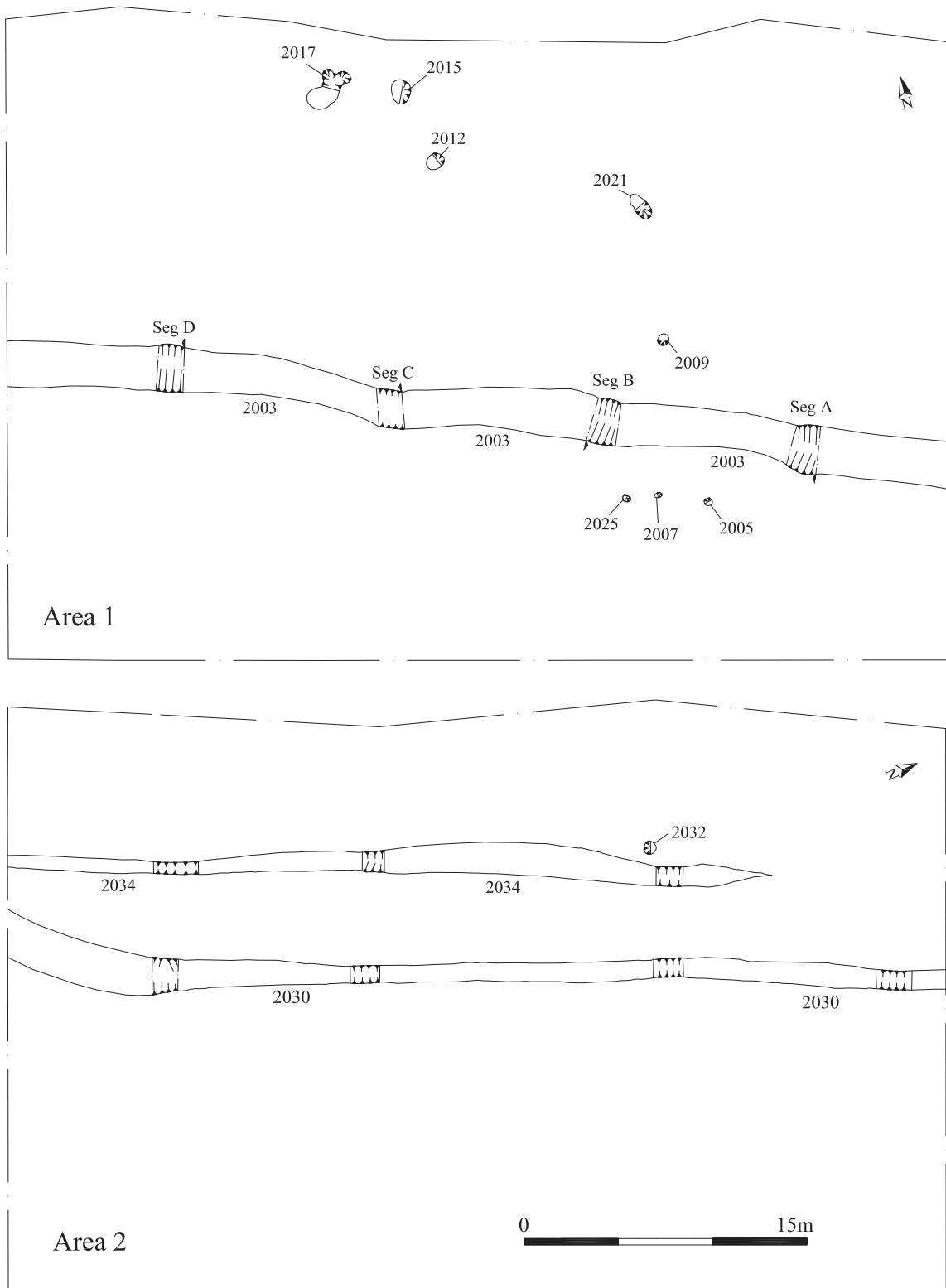


Fig. 3 Plan of archaeological features in Areas 1 and 2

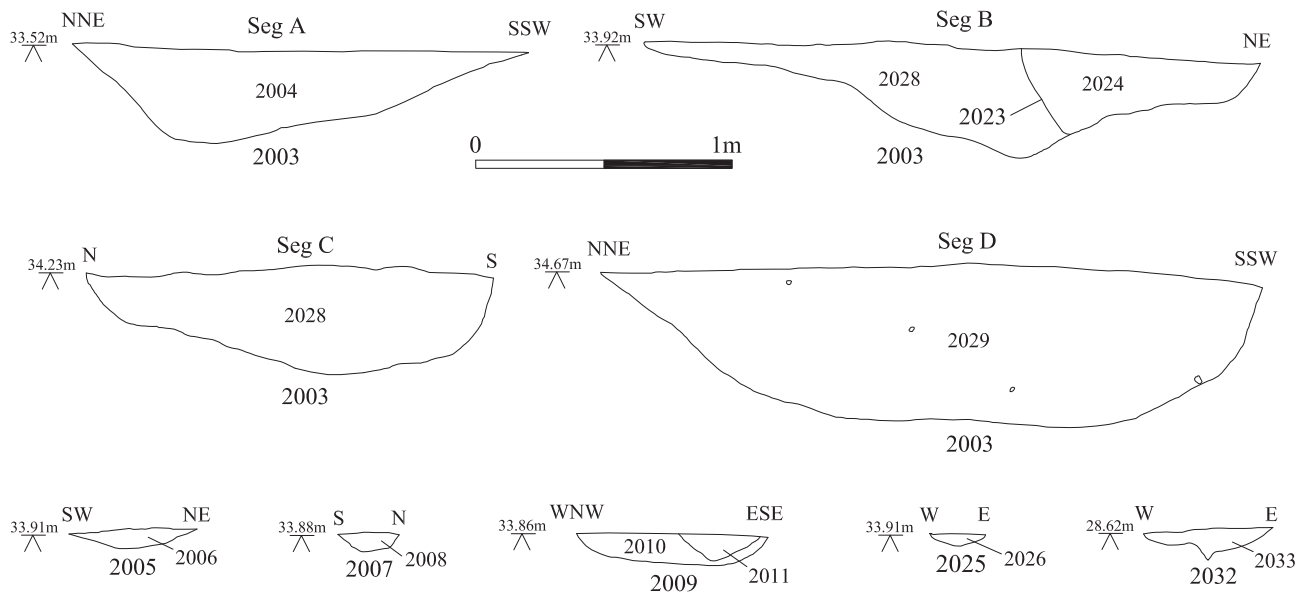


Fig. 4 Sections of early Iron Age features

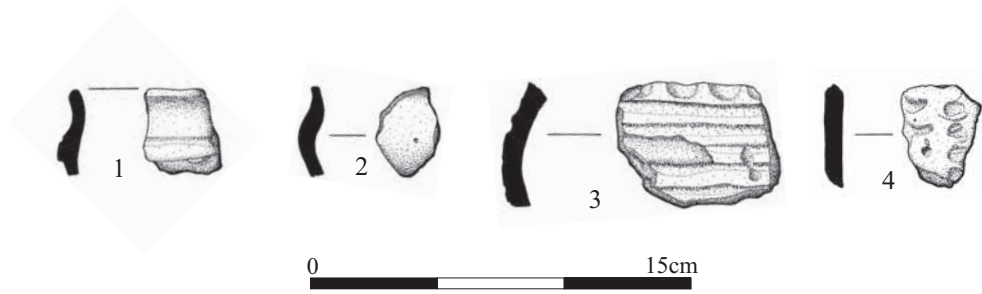


Fig. 5. Pottery illustrations. Scale 1:3