

BRONZE AGE, MEDIEVAL AND POST MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY TO THE REAR OF THE FORMER GEORGE AND DRAGON IN PAVENHAM.

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SUMMARY

Archaeological work was carried out by archaeological Solutions Ltd between November 2004 and May 2005 on land to the rear of the former George and Dragon Public House, High Street, Pavenham, Bedfordshire (NGR SP 9895 5552). The investigation revealed a single (truncated) Bronze Age cremation as well as medieval boundary features and quarry pits, post medieval drystone walls and post medieval to modern rubbish pits.

INTRODUCTION

Archaeological work, comprising a trial trench evaluation followed by an open area excavation was carried out by Archaeological Solutions Ltd between November 2004 and May 2005 on land to the rear of the former George and Dragon Public House, High Street, Pavenham, Bedfordshire (NGR SP 9895 5552) (Fig 1). The archaeological work was funded by Wentbridge Homes, and took place in advance of the residential development of the site.

The village of Pavenham, located *c.* 8.5km north west of Bedford, comprises the historic village, located along the High Street, and the 20th century development of 'the Bury', located east of Church on lands traditionally held by the Bury Estate. The site lies on the northern side of High Street, opposite its junction with Mill Lane and comprises an irregularly shaped 0.6ha area, divided between three plots to the rear (north east) of the former George and Dragon Public House (Fig 1). Prior to development, the western plot was the grassed over carpark and garden of the former Public House, and the eastern plot a former orchard with several of its trees remaining.

The site lies at *c.* 50m AOD on land which slopes downwards to the south east, towards the Great Ouse (*c.* 175m to the south). The underlying geology is of oolitic limestone, which outcrops at several points in the Parish. The site lies on the boundary between Jurassic Clay and Morton Association soils along the Great Ouse, and chalky till and Hanslope Association soils north of the village.

METHODOLOGY

The archaeological investigation was carried out in two stages, a trial trench evaluation (five trenches excavated in November 2004) followed by open excavation of two areas (in February to March and May 2005) (Fig 2). In both stages, a 180° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket was used to remove

topsoil and undifferentiated overburden. Thereafter all excavation was undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Archaeological features and deposits were recorded on *pro-forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed. The site was surveyed using a total station theodolite (Nikon NPL 820). Excavated spoil was checked for finds and metal detector was used to scan the areas of excavation.

RESULTS

Summary

The investigation revealed an isolated Bronze Age cremation, medieval boundary ditches, post medieval features including walls, a cobbled surface and large pits, and modern pits and boundary ditches. Two modern animal burials (a cat and a dog) were also identified, and reinterred at the request of a local resident.

Datable finds were present only in small quantities, and a high degree of residuality was apparent in the pottery assemblage. Several features thus remain undated. The eastern part of the site had been much disturbed by rooting (see Fig 3), probably relating to the use of the site as an orchard. For these reasons, a significant number of features, especially in the eastern part of the site, remain undated and their functions unclear. All excavated features and deposits are fully described in the site evaluation and interim reports (Doyle *et al* 2004; Hallybone and Nicholson 2005).

The cremation

Carina Phillips and Kate Nicholson

A single cremation burial was revealed in the north west corner of the eastern excavation area (Fig 3). The cremation had been truncated from above, so that only the base of the cremation vessel (F2139) remained; this appeared to rest directly in a dip in natural clay deposit L2002, the cut of the burial presumably having been lost to truncation. The base of the vessel measured *c.* 0.3m diameter. No grave goods were recovered.

Cremation deposit L2138 was found within the remains of the vessel, as well as around its edges, the latter distribution resulting from the truncation of the burial. It was dark brown in colour, soft and friable, and contained frequent charcoal along with 30 fragments (5g) of burnt human bone. The cremated weight of an adult individual as indicated through modern experiments and excluding very small fragments (<2mm) ranges from 1001.5g to 2422.5g (McKinley 1993). The cremated bone in L2138 therefore represents only a proportion of the bone expected for one individual. It is likely that, after cremation of the body, a much larger amount of bone than the 5g recovered here was collected for deposition in the cremation vessel and that a large proportion for the bone originally contained in the cremation vessel has been lost by truncation.

The majority of the bone was calcinated, white in colour, with a few fragments ranging grey-white, indicating that the body had been subjected to high temperatures (645-940°C (cf. Shipman *et al* 1984) / 645-1200°C (Mays 1998)) and that the body was at least partially-fleshed when cremated. Fragment size ranged from 3.6mm to

12.7mm. Part of a 2nd hand phalanx, two skull fragments and five long bone fragments were identified. The remaining fragments were too small for identification to skeletal element. No duplication of any bone was noted; however this will be affected by the high number of unidentifiable fragments. It was not possible to estimate age or sex of the cremated bone.

The truncation and fragmentation of the cremation vessel, and the absence of other associated finds, made it difficult to establish the date of the cremation. The Bronze Age date which has been assigned is based on the crumbly, eroded state of the vessel (see Thompson, this report). The burial of an isolated cremation in a rough ceramic vessel would be consistent with known burial practices of the later 1st millennium BC (Taylor 2001, 39).

Medieval activity (c. 12th to 13th/ 14th century)

The medieval pottery assemblage was in poor condition, and much of it is considered to be residual. However, a series of boundary ditches in the east of the site and a series of quarry pits in the west were considered to be of medieval date. The presence of local St Neots Ware in the pottery assemblage indicates that activity from the 11th (or possibly 10th) century (see Thompson, this report). However, no feature is thought to pre-date the 12th century.

Boundary ditches

Three east to west aligned ditches (F2156, F2018 and F2014) in the eastern excavation area are thought to represent a medieval boundary (Figs 3). These features were difficult to discern in plan, but were clearly visible in section (Fig 5). The course of F2156 at its eastern end is unresolved (see Fig 3): the ditch curved slightly either to the north or to the south; if the latter it would have terminated as F1038 (identified during the evaluation), though this feature contained a (very worn) probable post medieval coin (identified by N. Crummy), as well as medieval pottery. Ditch terminus F1038 was positioned in opposition to the western terminus of Ditch F2018, separated by a c. 1.4m gap, which may represent a point of access though the boundary.

All three ditches were shallow (maximum depth: 0.38m; Fig 5), possibly having been truncated in post medieval or modern times, and contained similar fills of dark brownish grey silty clay. The irregularities observed in their profiles, especially that of F2014, may be a result of damage by rooting, which is well attested in the eastern part of the site (see Fig 3); rooting may also account for the breadth of F2014, away from its western terminus, as compared to the other ditches (maximum 3.4m compared to 1.1m).

No continuation of the boundary represented by these ditches is seen in the western excavated area. No early cartographic sources were available for study, but the alignment of this boundary is not consistent with modern (19th century to present day) boundaries attested by later maps of this part of Pavenham. East to west aligned boundaries do, however, exist either side of (north to south aligned) Mill Lane, to the south of the site.

Ditch F2016 (=F1031) shared the alignment of the medieval ditches, and cut F2156 and F2014). It may be a slightly later re-cut of this boundary, but no clear evidence for a medieval date was found and it was judged on site to be a later feature (Hallybone and Nicholson 2005).

Quarry pits

A linear series of medieval quarry pits (F2060 (A, B and C), F2164, F2161 and F2158) were identified in the eastern part of the western excavated area (Fig 4). In this part of the site the natural clay lay at a depth of *c.* 4m below the current land surface, overlain by a natural deposit of orange coloured silty sand (L2093), thought to have been the object of the quarrying. Three late medieval pottery sherds recovered from F2060 (C) may indicate the gradual filling up of the disused feature from the 14th century onwards, but the majority of the pottery from these features dated to the 12th to 13th/14th centuries. A small number of residual Roman sherds were also recovered.

The mid greyish silty clay and sandy silt (upper) fills of these features formed a distinctive grey band on the machined surface. However, owing to the similarity of these fills to one another, combined with the close spacing of the features, the shapes of the individual quarry pits were not clear in plan (See Fig 4 for approximate feature locations). The quarry pits at the southern end of the excavated area were deeper (0.85-1.04m), and thus more securely interpreted, than those at the northern end (0.23-0.35m) (Fig 5).

Post medieval and modern

No feature at the site is securely dated to the period between the 14th and 16th/ 17th centuries. From the 17th century, activity at the site seems to have been more or less continuous until the present day, resulting in an acknowledged overlap between features classed as 'post medieval' (17th to 18th century) and features classed as 'early modern/ modern' (18th century and later).

Post medieval walls

Two drystone walls, M2137 and M2100 (=M1029), ran from south west to north east across the eastern excavation area (Fig 3). Both walls were constructed from roughly dressed/ undressed limestone slabs, with smaller limestone blocks in the gaps between them, though ceramic building material was also present in association with both. No evidence was found for foundation trenches, but shallow, flat based 'steps' (F1035 and F2169) were evident in places (Figs 3 and 5), and may originally have been present along the walls' lengths.

The dating of the walls' construction and use-life is not clear, owing to a lack of *in situ* pottery in associated deposits, and to an ambiguity in the stratigraphic relationship between Wall M2137 and Pit F2140 (Hallybone and Nicholson 2005). However, a 17th to 18th century date seems most likely, and is consistent with the stratigraphic evidence. Wall M2100 stratigraphically post-dated Wall M2137 (Fig 7), but it is thought that only a short amount of time passed between the two constructions.

The walls are thought to represent the rear boundaries of plots fronting High Street (to which they run parallel) to the south east. The slightly later construction of M2137 and the slight offset between the lines of the two walls may indicate that they marked the backs of different plots, with an archaeologically unattested boundary extending south east (and/ or north west) from their junction. The presence of rubble deposits (L2175 and L2142; Fig 5) associated with M2137 but not M2100, except for L1036 at its far north east end may indicate the re-use of stone from the latter, but not the former, when the boundary went out of use. This may suggest that the two walls bounded plots with different owners.

18th century cobbled floor

L1013 was a floor comprised of rough sub angular limestone nodules; it directly overlay the natural clay of the site in Trench 5 (Figs 4 and 6). The dimensions of the floor are not known as it was only partially exposed in the trench (6.9 x 1.4m). The 18th century date for this floor is suggested by three small sherds of pottery, though these are not necessarily in their original depositional context.

Post medieval and modern large pits

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Post medieval and modern features in the western excavation area were primarily large pits (see Fig 4); these are thought to represent continuous activity in this part of the site from the 17th century to the present day. These features varied in dimension and in form (plan and profile), but several of them were deep with steep or vertical sides and flattish bases (Fig 6). They were generally filled by similar deposits of grey or grey brown silty clay, frequently with a sandy component and often containing limestone rubble. The finds recovered from these features suggest that this area was consistently used for dumping waste between the 17th and 20th centuries.

The presence of limestone rubble and ceramic building material may indicate the dumping of demolition debris, though the amount of ceramic building material present was small: a total of 83 fragments (3338g) fragments from the whole site, of which 52 (2052g) came from these pits or nearby contemporary features. The CBM consists nearly entirely of moderately to highly fragmented 17th to 18th century flat roof tile, 12mm thick. Two oxidised fabric types could be identified: the first is very hard fired and manufactured from an abundantly calcareous (1-5mm) clay; the second is hard with a powdery finish and tempered with well-sorted sand (<0.5mm) and sparse flint (<5mm). Both were probably produced locally.

The majority of the small metalwork assemblage recovered at the site came from these features. This comprised a broken fragment of a (probably 17th or 18th century) copper alloy double buckle, 3 iron nails or nail shanks, a broken iron ring headed pin or bolt, and a fragmented iron knife with traces of wooden handle surviving on the tang and a narrow copper-alloy band fixed around the lower end of the handle (SF1). Items similar to the knife have previously been found at Aldgate, London (Grew 1984, 100-5), and slightly earlier scissors from Sandal Castle, Yorkshire, also had a copper-alloy band at the base of the handle (Goodall 1983, fig. 6, 92).

The upper fills of 18th to 20th century Pit F2114 (=F2117, F2149) contained three human bones. L2151 contained the moderately preserved articulating right 1st and 2nd metacarpals from an individual aged less than 13 years (based on bone fusion, Mays 1998). L2118 contained a poorly preserved fragment of an adult sized ulna. Estimation of sex was not possible.

Other finds in these pits included pottery and small amounts of clay pipe, slag and glass. A small assemblage of animal bone, including a partial pig skeleton, was also recovered.

19th century boundary ditches

Ditch F2051 and its shallower recut (F2039) ran approximately north north east to south south west across the eastern corner of the western excavated area (Figs 4 and 6). The small quantities of pottery and clay pipe recovered from these ditches were consistent with an 18th or 19th century date. A boundary on the same alignment as these ditches is shown on a Parish Survey of 1832 and on Ordnance Survey maps of 1883 and 1901, though not on an Estate Plan of 1850.

THE POTTERY

Peter Thompson

Summary

The excavation produced 324 sherds weighing 2.421 kg of which 315 weighing 2.310 kg were stratified. The assemblage is very mixed comprising sherds from the prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post medieval to early modern periods. Over half of the sherds are medieval, although at least 20% of these were residual in later contexts. The stratified sherds are tabulated below by time period (Table 1). The database on which all pottery was recorded is available as part of the site archive.

| Period | Sherd Count | Sherd Weight (g) |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Prehistoric | 24 | 61 |
| Roman (all residual) | 5 | 51 |
| Medieval | 160 | 927 |
| Post medieval - modern | 126 | 1,271 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>315</i> | <i>2,310</i> |

Table 1: the stratified pottery

The prehistoric pottery

The earliest pottery from the site (24 sherds) is from a single context (F2139) and is all from the same vessel, thought to be a cremation urn. The fabric is fragile and comprises dissolved shell temper; it's crumbly, eroded state suggests it is Bronze Age (pers. comm. A. Slowikowski).

The medieval pottery

The medieval sherds span the entire medieval period although earlier shelly wares (fabrics B01, B01A and B07) dated broadly between the 10th and 13th and possibly into the 14th centuries, are predominant comprising approximately 90% of the assemblage. However, as mentioned much of this is residual in later medieval and post medieval contexts; the poor condition of the medieval pottery, many sherds being abraded fragments, is consistent with this.

The presence of local St Neots Ware, including several inturned rims, indicates activity in the 11th (or possibly 10th) century; it is possible that this commencement post-dates the Norman Conquest. A single base sherd from F2053 with patchy yellow glaze is probably Stamford ware, contemporary with the St Neots wares, although it was residual in a modern context. The 12th to 13th/14th century date attributed to medieval features at the site is based on the relative abundance of medieval shelly wares, as well as the presence of other wares of this date range (including medieval sandy ware and Brill ware). Nine Midland Purple and late medieval reduced and oxidised sherds indicate that activity continued in the area in the later part of the medieval period.

The sherd of the greatest intrinsic value is a 'High Medieval' rod handle and rim, probably from a jug, in medieval shelly ware (B07) fabric from Ditch F2014 , L2015 (Fig 7). The handle contains circular stamp decoration which is very unusual for shelly wares (A. Slowikowski, pers. comm.). It is likely that the vessel originated from or near the Harrold kilns located 5km to the north west. Two glazed sherds probably from baluster jugs from Ditch F2057 and Pit F2158 show finer table ware vessels were also imported, from Brill in Buckinghamshire some 60km to the south-west.

The post medieval and modern pottery

A further 40% of the sherds are post medieval to modern generally in a mixed condition with some sherds quite heavily abraded and others in reasonable condition. Post medieval red earthenwares with brown or black glaze of 17th -18th century date are commonest. Other wares include, Staffordshire slipped and manganese speckled wares and white salt glazed stoneware. White earthenwares of mid 18th -19th centuries date including cream ware and pearl ware, and a single sherd of porcelain are also present.

Illustration

Fig 7: F2014, L2015 – B07 – Highly decorated jug handle in B07 fabric with incised lines/ impressed circle decoration

THE ANIMAL BONE

Carina Phillips

Introduction

The animal bone assemblage consisted of only 117 fragments, coming from 29 contexts. Contexts dated to medieval, post medieval and modern periods; seven fragments remained undated. The bone was of moderate preservation. Some fragments had extreme surface erosion resulting in a scaled appearance of the bone; a small number of bones had retained a greasy texture, caused by the amount of collagen remaining in the bone. Surface erosion may have obliterated evidence of butchery, particularly cut marks. The hand recovery technique used could result in a bias of large bones.

Method

When possible the bones were identified and recorded to species and element. The category sheep/goat has been used unless it was possible to clearly identify the species sheep (*Ovis sp.*) or goat (*Capra sp.*) using the features stated by Bosseneck (1969). Tooth wear for cattle (*Bos sp.*), sheep and pig (*Sus sp.*) were recorded using the method of Grant (1982), it was not possible to estimate ages using tooth wear for any species in this assemblage. When available the fusion state of identifiable bones was also recorded and ages were assessed following Silver (1969). Measurements were taken when viable following the methods of Jones *et al* (1976) and von den Driesch (1976), and are contained in the site archive. Withers heights were calculated for horses following Kiesewalter (in von den Driesch and Bosseneck 1974). Fragments unidentifiable to a particular species were recorded under the categories of 'large size', consisting of cattle, deer and horse, sized fragments and 'small size' consisting of sheep/goat, pig and dog (*Canis familiaris*) sized bone fragments. The unidentifiable bone fragments were recorded as such. Evidence of burning, sawing, chopping, knife-cutting and gnawing was also recorded, as was smashed bone. The minimum number of individuals (MNI) of a species was calculated from most frequent element of a left or right bone.

Results

| | Medieval | Post medieval | Modern | Undated | Total |
|----------------|----------|---------------|--------|---------|-------|
| Sheep/goat | 7 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 23 |
| Cattle | 8 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 22 |
| Pig | 2 | 6 | 9 (*8) | 0 | 17 |
| Horse | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Dog | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Cat | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Rabbit | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Hedgehog | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Large sized | 10 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 20 |
| Small sized | 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| Unidentifiable | 2 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 16 |
| Total | 42 | 40 | 28 | 7 | 117 |

Table 2: Number of identified specimens/fragments (NISP) for each species in each phase (*n= number belonging to one skeleton)

| | Medieval | Post medieval | Modern | Undated | Total |
|------|----------|---------------|--------|---------|-------|
| Chop | 1 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 9 |

| | | | | | |
|---------|----|----|---|---|----|
| Cut | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Smashed | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 7 |
| Gnawed | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 9 |
| Total | 10 | 10 | 3 | 5 | 28 |

Table 3: Counts of butchered and gnawed bone for each phase

The small size of the assemblages in all phases restricted analysis. The medieval and post medieval assemblages were of similar sizes (42 and 40 fragments respectively). The modern assemblage was smaller consisting of only 28 fragments. Domestic species sheep/goat, cattle, pig and dog were present in all phases. Horse was identified in only the medieval and post medieval assemblages. Two of the three medieval horse bones and the only post medieval bone were complete enabling height estimations to be made. These were calculated as 126cm (post medieval), 136 cm, and 144 cm; following Clutton-Brock (1974, 96), this is the equivalent to 12.4, 13.4, 14.2 hands. The medieval assemblage also included cat (*Felis cattus*), rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) and hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*). Rabbit and hedgehog were the only wild species to be identified in the entire assemblage. The modern assemblage included a partial pig skeleton (L2116) aged less than one year. The skeleton consisted of the radii, ulna, metacarpal, phalanx and carpal; there was no evidence of butchery on any of these bones.

The small amount of bone exhibiting butchery marks hinders detailed analysis (Table 3). Gnawed bone was present in all phases in small numbers indicating the presence of carnivores probably dogs/foxes.

Discussion

The main meat supplying species, cattle, sheep/goat and pig were identified in all phases. The medieval assemblage had the most varied species present including the only wild species; rabbit and hedgehog. Both species are likely to have been present in high numbers in this period, although the number of hedgehogs may have been significantly reduced in the 16th century when the predator of the 1566 'Act for the Preservation of Grayne [grain]' paid parishioners to kill hedgehogs and a number of other listed species due to their proposed treat to grain (Yalden 1999). Rather than threaten grain however most of these species are likely to have helped protected grain from vermin (*ibid*). The act was not repealed until 1863 (Buczaci 2002). It is possible that hedgehog meat may have been utilised as well as the skins and spines of the animal (*ibid*).

The medieval and post medieval assemblage provided withers heights for three horse bones, ranging from 12-14 hands (hh), this is as would be expected for the period; most medieval horses having been under 14.5 hh (Rackham 1995). For comparison a modern pony is classified as under 14.2 hh in height (Hambilton-Dyer 2003). Differences in the processing of horses carcasses to cattle, sheep/goat and pig carcasses, is likely to have resulted in the survival of more complete horse bones. The bones of the main meat producing species are more likely to be broken in butchery and cooking. Whereas horse meat is unlikely to have consumed by humans during this period, following the ban on the consumption of horsemeat in the 8th century by Pope Gregory III (Thomas and Locock 2000:89), a tradition that continues to this day.

The small size of the assemblages in all phases has limited analysis of the animal bone: it is not possible to explore the husbandry of the area or to gain any more insight into the utilisation of animals before and after death.

DISCUSSION

The cremation

The cremation found in the north of the site was heavily truncated, but was considered to be of Bronze Age date. Cremation was common burial practice in England between c. 1500 and just after 1000 BC, with larger and cruder urns being used during the later part of this period (Taylor 2001, 39).

The truncation damage to the cremation is severe, with all but the base of the cremation vessel and much of the cremation deposit having been lost; the feature cut was indiscernible and the absence of associated grave goods is as likely to be due to truncation as to burial practice. The presence of the cremation at this site therefore tells us little except that people were present in the area during the Bronze Age; it is too incomplete for comparison of the burial practice represented with the norms of the time.

A survey of the Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record has shown that the known archaeology of the site's vicinity includes very little of prehistoric date. A series of cropmarks on higher ground c. 800m north west of the site (Fig 7) indicate the presence of cropmark enclosures of probable Iron Age or Bronze Age date. Even limited evidence of human activity on the relatively low lying land immediately north of the Great Ouse is thus a significant addition to our knowledge of the area in the prehistoric era.

Residual Roman pottery

The few residual Roman pot sherds recovered are likely to relate to the presence of a Roman villa site just c. 300m to the north west of the site (Fig 8). The absence of further Roman remains suggests that activity associated with the villa did not extend this far to the south east.

The medieval site in context

The chronology and location of the medieval village

Pavenham's Parish Church, St Peter's, dates to at least the early 13th century (Rickards 1912, 79; Bedfordshire HER 5390); it is located to the north east of the historic village, on the northern edge of 'the Bury' (Fig 8). Although the histories of the estates at Pavenham are documented from the time of the Domesday survey, the medieval settlement is not attested archaeologically, and its location is unknown.

The pottery assemblage recovered by the archaeological investigation of the site suggests activity between the 10th/ 11th and the 13th/ 14th centuries, though features are not thought to pre-date the 12th century; there was no definite evidence of activity

prior to the Norman Conquest. Late medieval pottery sherds were also recovered, but these are not thought to be indicative of the dates of features at the site, though they do attest continuing human presence in the vicinity. A hamlet west of the village is also known to have been deserted in the later medieval period (HER 8124; Fig 8).

It is possible that the settlement at Pavenham originally grew up around the Parish Church of St Peter (see Fig 8), and only shifted to its historically known location along High Street following a sharp decrease in its population in the 14th century (Taddy 1855, cited by Gadd 1977). The nature of the medieval features revealed by the excavation (boundary ditches and quarry pits), along with the small size of the finds assemblage, is consistent with the site having been located outside of the settlement; however, this could merely mean that they lay to the north of settlement located along High Street. The abandonment of the site in the 14th century is consistent with decline in the village's population, as recorded in the Bedfordshire Subsidies of the early 14th century, and subsequent near complete depopulation by the Black Death (Gadd 1977).

Quarrying

The object of medieval quarrying in the western part of the site was silty sand deposit L2093. Sand has several uses, many of them associated with construction (cf. Clifton Taylor 1972, 266; 51, 353). The construction of buildings in medieval Pavenham is not known, but it is possible that sand quarried at the site was used in them. If timber was in short supply in the area (deforestation by the late 11th century is implied in the Domesday survey, though an area of ancient woodland survives north-west of the village (Fig 8)) but limestone plentiful, it is possible that medieval Pavenham was largely stone built, and sand would thus have been required for mortar and plaster. Building stone (oolitic limestone) was readily available locally, and local chalk could have been used to produce lime for mortar and plaster, as it was in the 19th century (Fig 8). Another possible use for sand would have been in the manufacture of tiles, though the area around the Osier Holts to the south of the site (Fig 8), was highly suitable for growing osiers and bulrushes which could be used for thatching, and so roof tiles may not have been used.

The post medieval to modern site in context

Although post medieval features were present across the site, the nature of activity seems to have varied, with large, deep pits representing the dumping of waste in the western excavation area, and archaeologically empty plots separated by drystone walls in the eastern excavation area.

The dumping in the western part of the site between the 17th and 20th centuries may have been associated with the construction, use and demolition of buildings on the plot to the south and west of the site, as attested by 19th century cartographic sources (see Doyle *et al* 2004). However, a greater quantity of ceramic building material than was present would be expected if this dumping related to any serious episodes of demolition, such as that prior to the construction of the Methodist Chapel to the west in 1859.

The presence of (probably residual) human bone in the upper, rubble, fills of Pit F2114 (=F2117, F2149) is anomalous, as no human bone should have been present in this part of the village. The only cemetery/ graveyard in Pavenham is that at St Peter's Church, where restoration work is known to have been carried out in the 19th century. The presence of human bone would be legitimately explained if it was disturbed during restoration work at the church, and dumped along with building rubble in pits at the site. There is, however, no evidence to support this theory, and any debris generated by restoration work is likely to have been dumped closer to the church.

Although they are of earlier date, the alignments of the excavated walls suggest that they formed part of the same overall system of boundaries which is present in the area today. They were of near identical construction to extant roughly constructed drystone walls observed to mark plot boundaries in the area around the site (C. Hallybone pers. comm.).

CONCLUSIONS

Prior to this investigation there was no recorded evidence of prehistoric activity within the village of Pavenham; the presence of a Bronze Age cremation at the site thus adds significantly to our knowledge of prehistoric activity in the Pavenham area and raises the possibility that other, perhaps more extensive, prehistoric remains may be revealed by any future archaeological investigations in Pavenham.

The medieval (c. 12th to 14th century) boundary features and quarry pits are unlikely to have been located in the core of the village, but their presence does not contribute to resolving the controversy over the location of medieval Pavenham. The cessation of activity at the site in the 14th century was probably a result of the documented decline in Pavenham's population in the early 14th century and/ or the devastating effects of the Black Death on the parish.

The difference in orientation between the medieval and post medieval boundaries is likely to result from the complete abandonment of this site for c. 300 years, so that no trace or record of previous land divisions remained when it came back into use. The division of the site into western and eastern plots seems likely to have been in place by the 17th century, judging by the differing natures of the post medieval/ modern archaeology in the two parts of the site.

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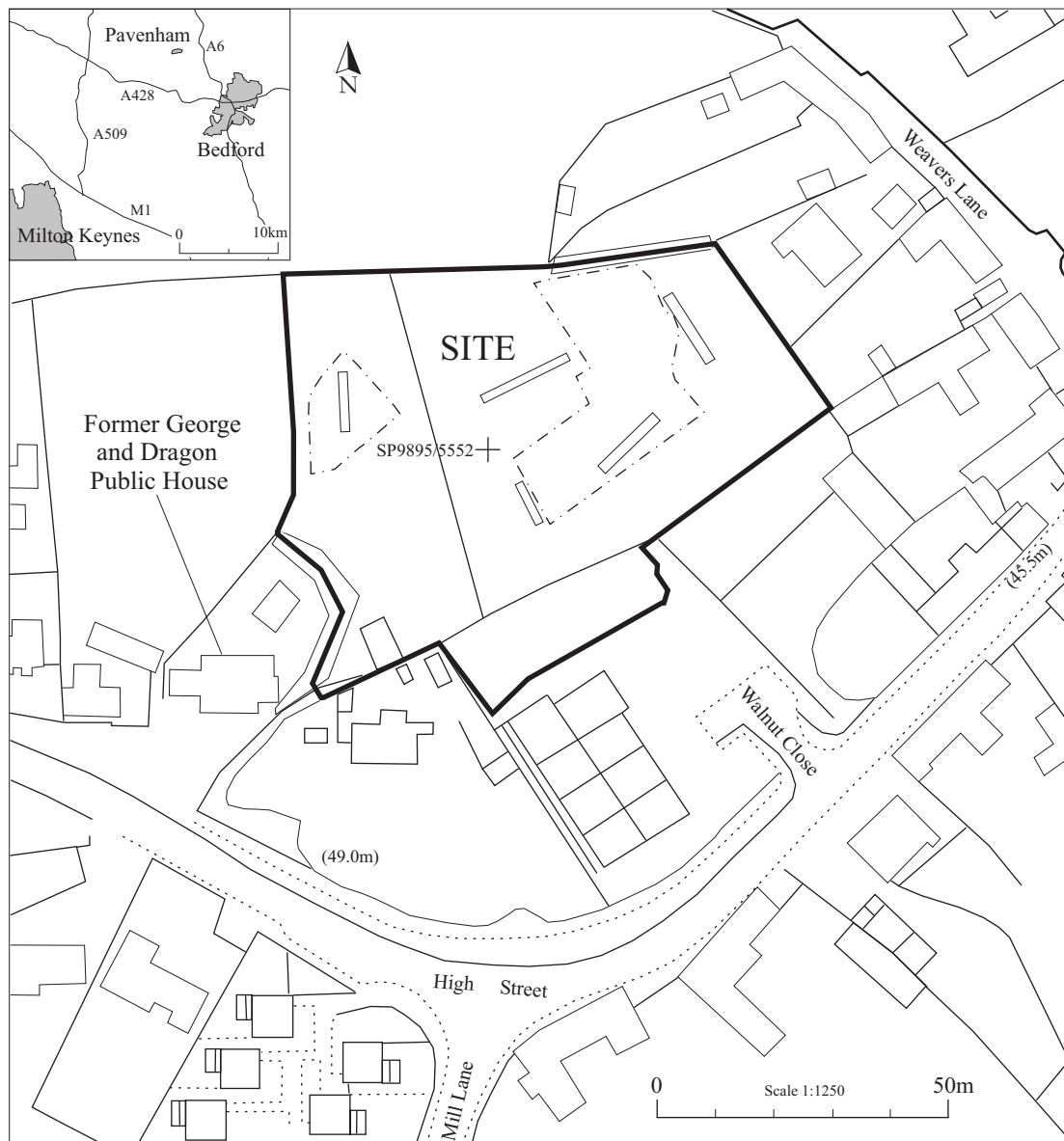


Figure 1: Site location and detailed site location

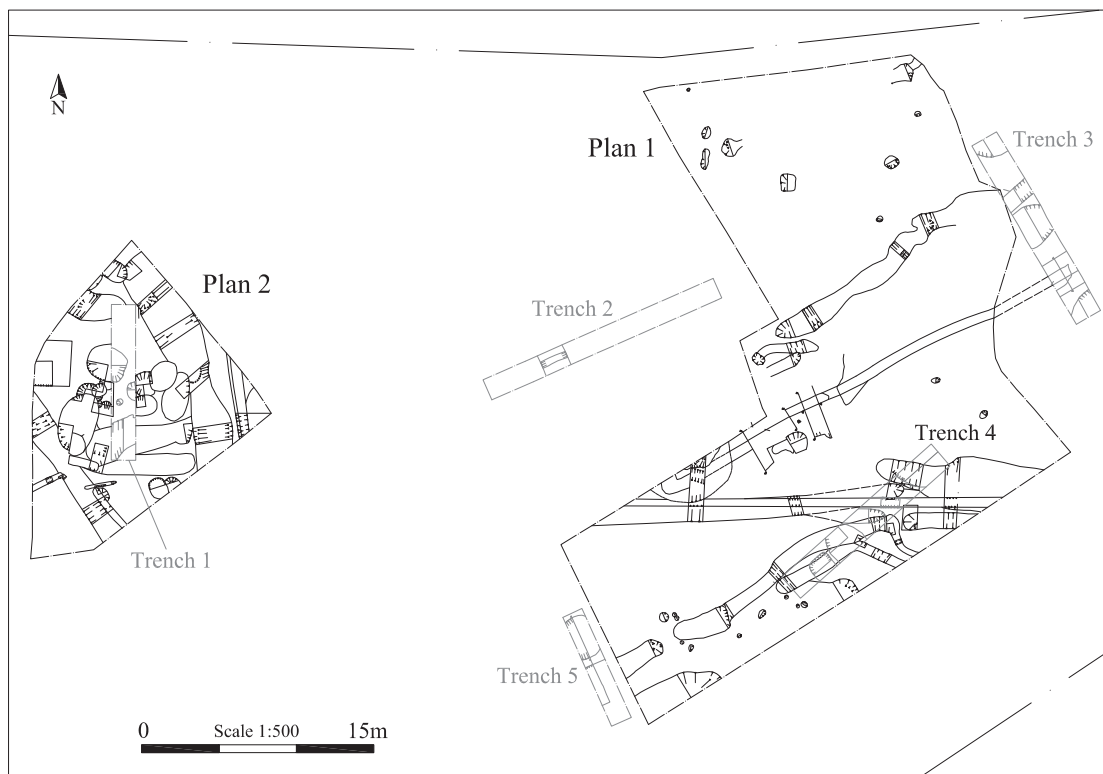


Figure 2: Plan of whole site

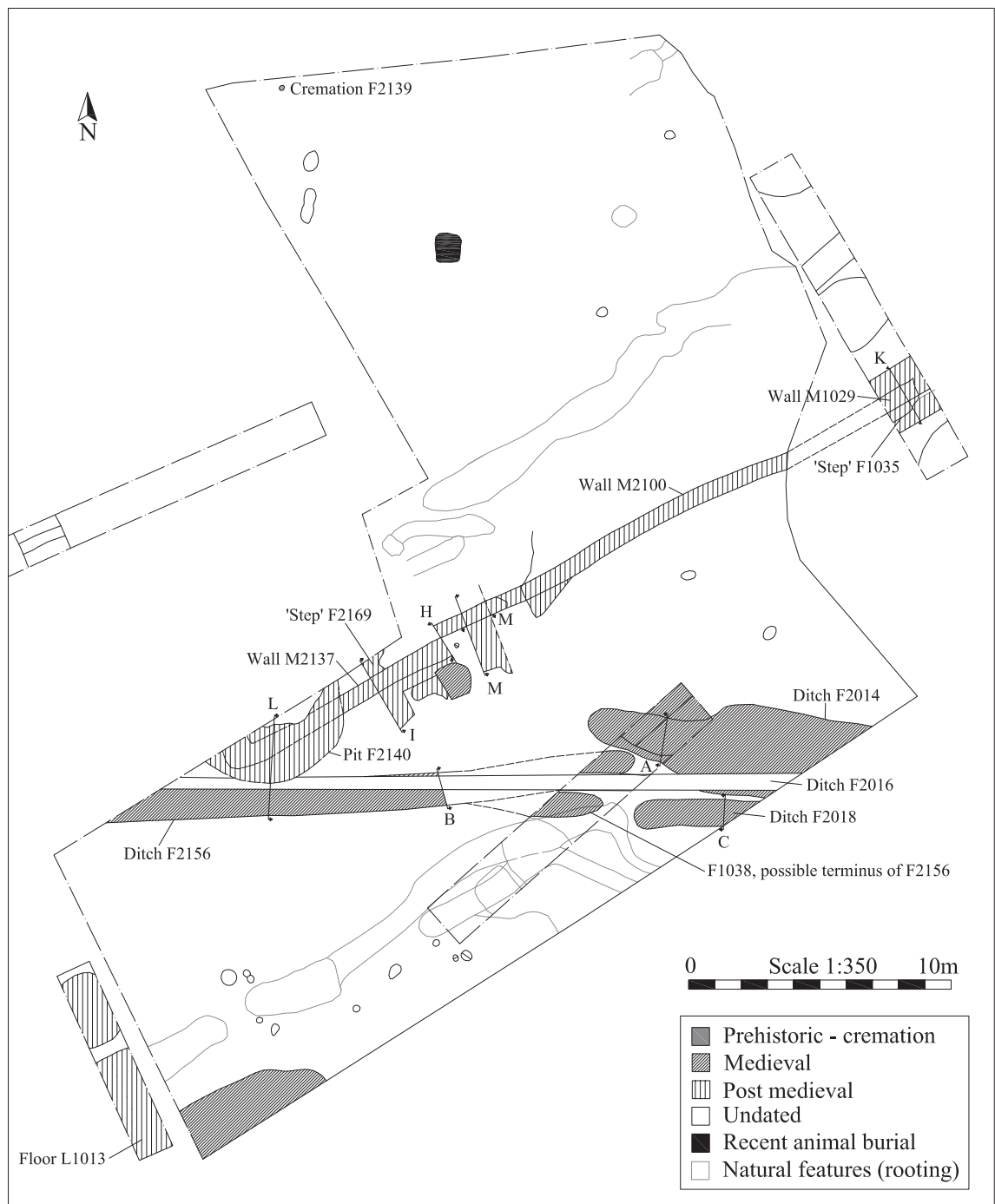


Figure 3: Phase plan (east)

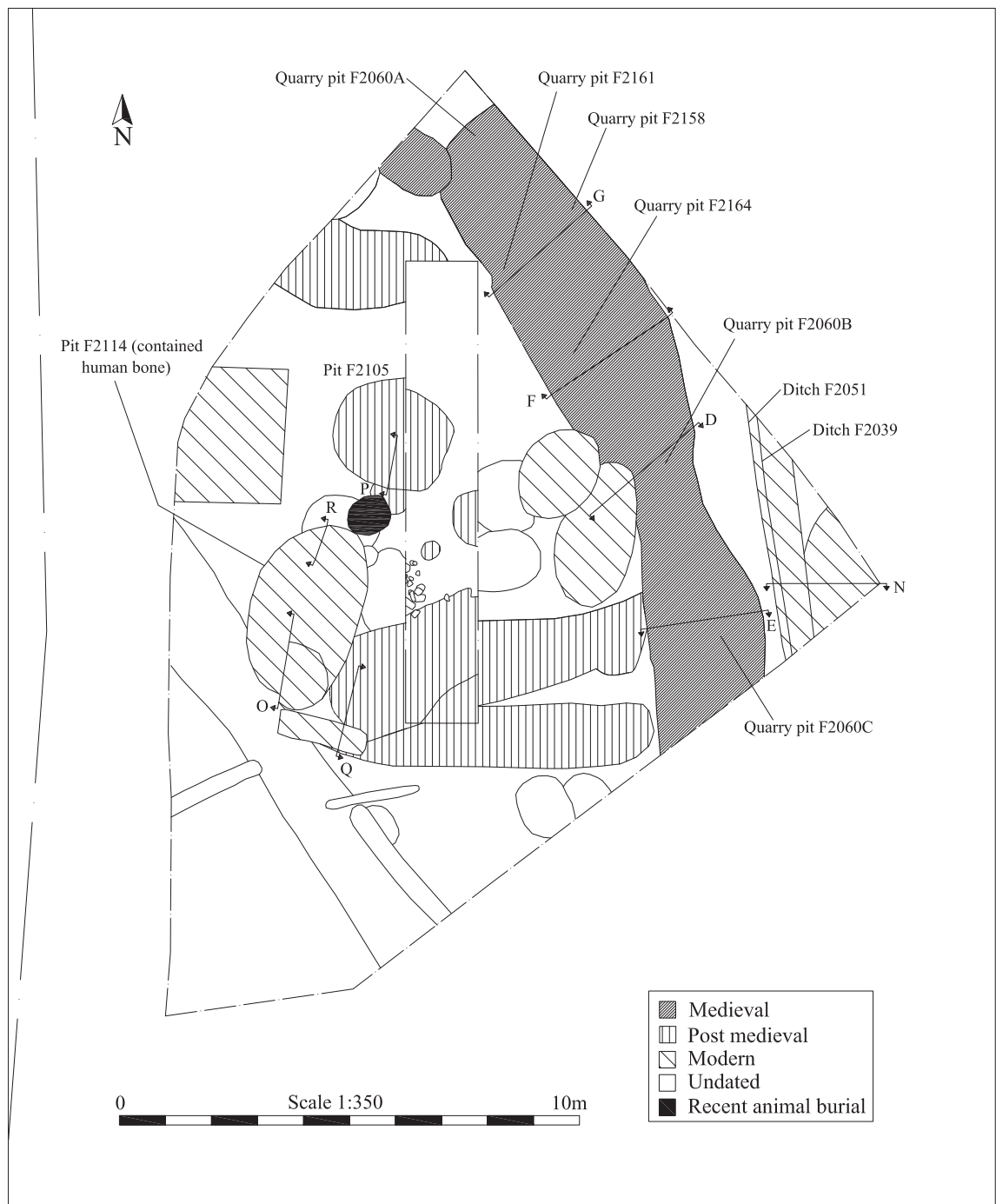


Figure 4: Phase plan (west)

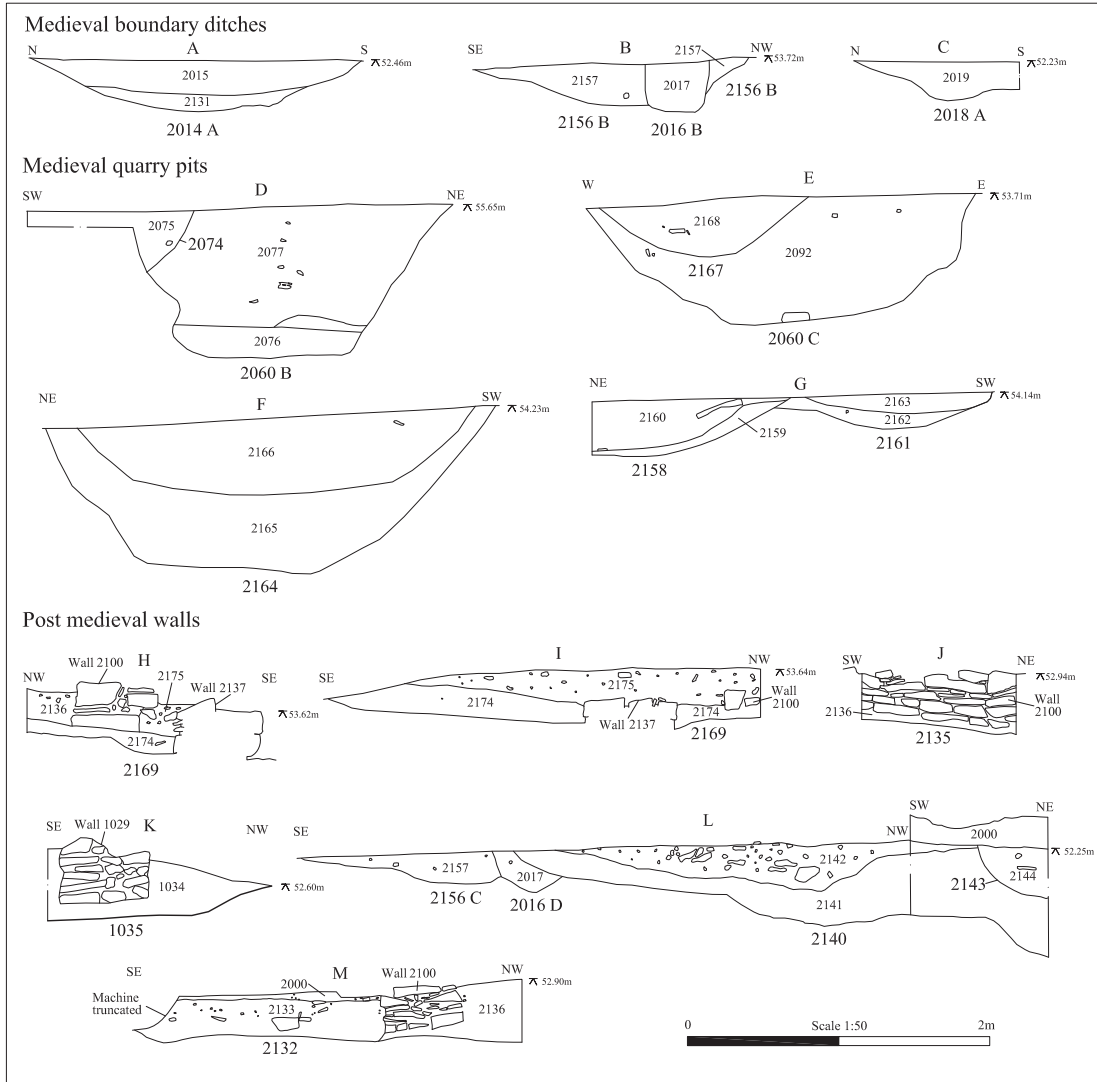


Figure 5: Sections

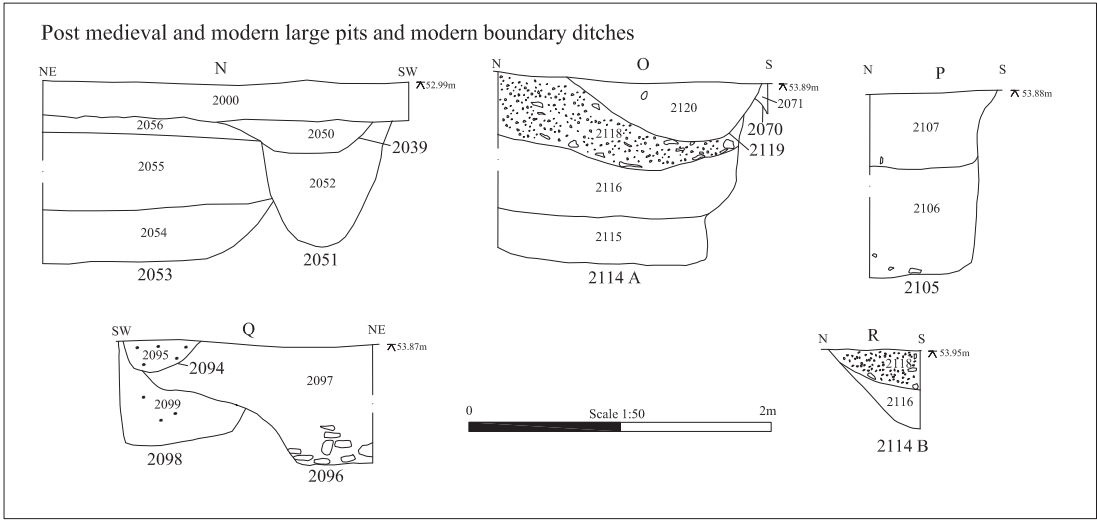


Figure 6: Sections

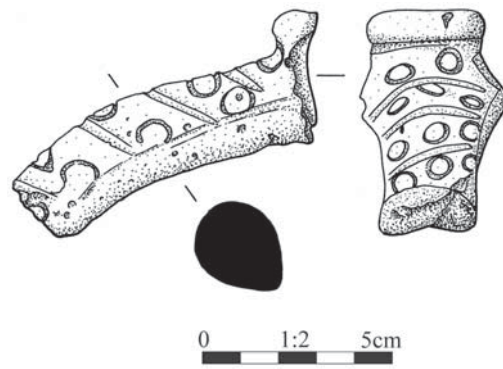


Fig. 7 Pottery illustration. Scale 1:2.

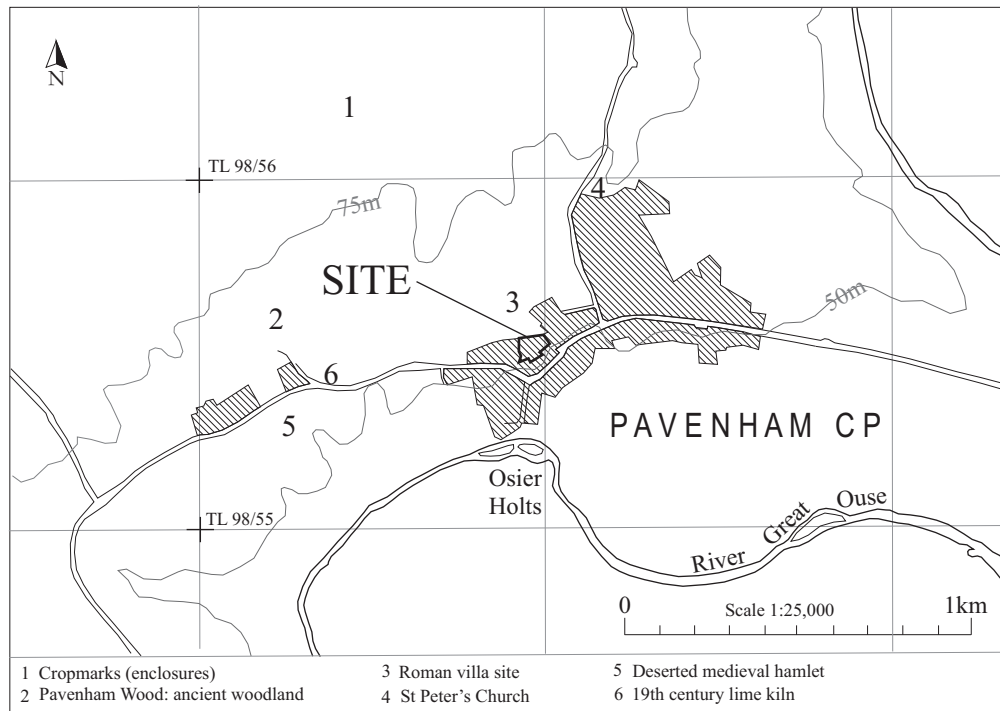


Figure 8: The village of Pavenham, showing historic/archaeological sites