

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Camel Hill Farm, Queen Camel,
Sparkford, Somerset**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Weale

Site Code: CHS10/106

(ST 5816 2559)

Camel Hill Farm, Queen Camel, Sparkford, Somerset

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Ashen Cross Quarry**

by Andrew Weale
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code CHS10/106

August 2011

Summary

Site name: Camel Hill Farm, Queen Camel, Sparkford, Somerset

Grid reference: ST 5816 2559

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 9th - 10th August 2011

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andrew Weale

Site code: CHS 10/106

Area of site: c. 2.78ha

Summary of results:

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Somerset County Museum Service in due course

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 22.08.11 Steve Preston ✓ 22.08.11
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Camel Hill Farm, Queen Camel, Sparkford, Somerset An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Weale

Report 10/106

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Camel Hill Farm, Sparkford, Somerset (ST 558160 25590) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Nick Dunn of Land and Minerals Management Ltd, The Roundhouse Cottages, Bridge Street, Frome, Somerset BA11 1BE on behalf of Ashen Cross Quarry, Somerston, Somerset, TA11 7JW.

Planning permission is to be sought from Somerset Country Council to extract mineral from the site. The results of an archaeological field evaluation have been requested to determine if the site has archaeological potential and if so produce information to mitigate the impact of the proposed development. The evaluation consisted of two components of work, a geophysical survey and trial trenching.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the County Council's Mineral Plan policies. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Steven Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer for Somerset Country Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Weale, Aiji Castle, Kyle Beaverstock and James Earley from the 9th to the 10th of August 2011 and the site code is CHS10/106. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Somerset County Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on Camel Hill north of the A303, with the village of Sparkford to the east, Queen Camel to the south-east, West Camel to the south-west and the town of Ilchester on the River Yeo lies 6.5km to the south-west (Fig. 1). The site straddles an east-west ridge, and rises from approximately 66m above Ordnance Datum in the south to 75m AOD in the centre before dropping back down to 69m AOD to the north of the site. The site is bounded to the south by the A303, to the west by a house, gardens and woodland and to the north and east by farmland. It is itself currently under arable cultivation. A derelict building lies on the western part of the site on top of the ridge. The underlying geology is shown as Triassic Keuper Clay at the southern edge of the site with

Jurassic Lower Lias Clay with some Limestone across the majority of the site (BGS 1973). A mixture of clay with limestone fragments and bedded limestone was observed within the trenches.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location just to the north-west of the site of a Roman settlement with earlier, Iron Age finds and deposits also recorded within the county Historic Environment Record. Investigations in advance of a proposed road improvement scheme (A303) revealed a substantial late Roman building made of stone along with a cremation burial, now a scheduled monument (33061). An early Iron Age ditch and late Iron Age pottery were also found along with medieval pottery (the latter presumably from manuring of farmland). The A303 is thought to be the course of a putative Roman road that heads north-east from Ilchester (*Lindinis*) towards Andover. Another section of Iron Age ditch was recorded to the south of the road though this area had largely been quarried away. To the east of the site a geophysical survey during the proposed road improvement scheme revealed the presence of three circular features thought to be ring ditches. To the west of the site a scatter of struck flints has been recorded pointing to earlier prehistoric (Neolithic/Bronze Age) activity in the area. To the north and down slope of the site lie the remains of a deserted medieval village of Patell and another possible deserted medieval settlement called Hazelgrove. There are also two moated sites to the north of the ridge, one thought to be a hunting lodge associated with 'Coages Park' the second enclosing a building with associated fish pond.

Queen Camel is mentioned in Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002), where it is noted the manor was held by the King and Gytha had held it before the conquest. It was assessed at 15 hides and it paid geld for 7. There was land for 15 ploughs. On the manor there were 6 slaves, 38 villagers, 2 mills, 100 acres of meadow, 100 acres of pasture and 100 acres of woodland which rendered £23 of blanch silver.

Objectives and methodology

This report refers to the evaluation by trial trenching which was undertaken after the geophysical survey (Fig. 4) (Austrums 2010) to target anomalies found in that survey and blank areas within the survey area. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development.

The specific research aims of this project were:

to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;

- to determine if any Iron Age or Roman deposits are present which represent further occupation remains of the nearby site;
- to determine if any Iron Age or Roman deposits representing ancillary settlement features such as enclosures, field systems or cemeteries are present;
- to determine if there is any post (sub) Roman occupation in the area; and
- to determine the impact of the development on the archaeological resource.

It was proposed to excavate twelve trenches each 25m long and 1.6m wide (c. 2% of site area). The trenching was located to combine an examination of geophysical anomalies thought to be of archaeological origin, with an otherwise 'stratified random' layout across the site. A contingency of 25m of trench was included should this be required to clarify the nature of the initial findings.

Topsoil, and any other overburden was removed by a 360⁰ tracked machine. A toothless ditching bucket was used to expose archaeologically sensitive levels, under constant archaeological supervision. The trenches were hand cleaned to expose features in areas of limestone bedrock. Where archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits were exposed or thought to be exposed, they were investigated, recorded and sampled. Excavation of exposed archaeological features were carried out by hand, stratigraphically, and fully recorded by context by IFA guidelines and in accordance with Somerset County Council's *Heritage Service Archaeological Handbook* (SCC2009). Where archaeological features were exposed, then as a minimum: small discrete features were to be fully excavated; larger discrete features half sectioned; long linear features excavated to sample 20% of their length. All spoil heaps were monitored by eye and with a metal detector for the recovery of artefacts.

Results

All the trenches were excavated as intended. They ranged from 22–34.7m in length and from 0.35–0.7m in depth. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. A summary of excavated features forms Appendix 2.

Trench 1 (Fig. 2)

Trench 1 was aligned west–east and was 23.2m long and 0.62m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.35m subsoil overlying natural clay with limestone geology. A test pit was dug by machine to confirm the natural geology. No archaeological features were noted nor finds were recovered.

Trench 2 (Fig. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned south–north and was 22m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.14m subsoil overlying natural limestone geology. No archaeological features were noted or finds were recovered.

Trench 3 (Fig 3 and 7; Pls 1 and 2)

Trench 3 was aligned west–east and was 34.7m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.10m subsoil overlying natural limestone geology. An extension was excavated at the eastern end of the trench to fully expose a ditch. Ditch 1 was 2.09m wide and 0.56m deep and filled with a light white brown clayey silt (52) up to 0.30m deep. Beneath this was dark re brown clayey silt (53) up to 0.22m thick. Beneath 53 was mid brownish yellow silty clay (54) up to 0.08m thick. No finds were recovered from any of these fills.

Trench 4 (Fig. 2)

Trench 4 was aligned SE–NW and was 28.7m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.25m subsoil overlying natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered.

Trench 5 (Fig. 2)

Trench 5 was aligned south–north and was 26.4m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.25m subsoil overlying natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered.

Trench 6 (Fig. 2)

Trench 6 was aligned ESE–WNW and was 27.4m long and 0.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.20m subsoil overlying natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered.

Trench 7 (Fig. 2)

Trench 7 was aligned south–north and was 26.2m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.10m subsoil overlying natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered.

Trench 8 (Fig. 2)

Trench 8 was aligned south - north and was 26.4m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil and 0.15m subsoil overlying natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered.

Trench 9 (Fig. 2)

Trench 9 was aligned SSE–NNW and was 26.4m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.40m subsoil overlying natural limestone geology. Three fragments of ceramic building material were recovered from the topsoil.

Trench 10 (Fig. 2)

Trench 10 was aligned south–north and was 27.4m long and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.10m subsoil overlying natural geology. A large area of limestone had been removed and was thought to be a quarry pit (2). This was over 1.6m wide and 11.25m long and filled with mid red brown silty clay (55) that contained post-medieval pottery, brick or tile, clinker and an iron nail. Quarry pit 2 was not bottomed

and was thought to be post medieval or modern. It could be seen as a depression within the field extending over 15m.

Trench 11 (Fig. 2)

Trench 11 was aligned ENE–WSW and was 24.7m long and 0.70m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.22m subsoil overlying natural limestone geology. A quarry pit (3) was 1.6m wide and 9.5m long and filled with mid grey brown silty clay (56) with post medieval/modern pottery and building material. Quarry pit 3 was not bottomed and could be seen in the field as a depression that continued up slope to trench 12.

Trench 12 (Fig. 2)

Trench 12 was aligned SW–NE and was 27.4m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of topsoil and 0.30m subsoil overlying natural limestone geology. A quarry pit (4) was recorded which was 1.6m wide and 2.4m long and filled with mid grey brown silty clay 57 with charcoal and brick. Quarry pit 4 was not bottomed and continued down slope into Trench 11.

Finds

Pottery by Andrew Weale

A small assemblage of four sherds of pottery weighing a total of 40g was recovered from two features (Appendix 3). Three sherds were of heavily abraded English Stoneware (AD1700–1900) from quarry pits 2 and 3 and the fourth was a slightly abraded Tin-Glazed Ware with a date range of AD1570–1800 from quarry pit 2.

Ceramic Building Material by Andrew Weale

A small assemblage of nineteen fragments of ceramic building material weighing a total of 258g was recovered from the topsoil of trench 9 and from quarry pits 2, 3 and 4 (appendix 4). All the fragments were small and unfeatured: it was not possible to distinguish between brick or tile.

Metalwork by Andrew Weale

A single hand-made nail weighing 12g was recovered from quarry pit 2.

Clinker by Andrew Weale

Two small fragments of clinker weighing a total of 1g were recovered from quarry pit 2.

Conclusion

The only archaeological feature present within any of the trenches was the ditch in Trench 3, which although it appears to be the negative linear anomaly picked up in the geophysical survey, contained no artefacts and is thus undated. The anomaly although fragmentary appears to head up slope in a NNW direction but it was not present within Trenches 6, 7 or 12, nor down-slope in Trench 2. This ditch appears to be on a different alignment to the current field boundaries and may represent a former land division, or may be an area of small scale quarrying for the natural limestone slabs in this part of the field. The other positive and negative linear anomalies on the geophysical survey appear to refer to outcrops of natural limestone bedrock and areas of weathering within the bedrock that was filled with clay and limestone. The areas of geological anomalies in the areas of Trenches 10 and 11 may in fact refer to previous quarrying and back filling in this part of the field. No artefacts earlier than post medieval/modern were recovered from any of the trenches and the artefacts that were recovered were from large quarry pits or the topsoil in the areas of Trenches 9 to 12 which may reflect this quarrying or the construction of the radio building at the top of the ridge. The modern farming methods on the site have been the use of a disc cultivator due to the lack of depth of topsoil and the presence of large fragments of limestone within it, instead of ploughing, thus if archaeological features were present on site they would have survived the plough. No prehistoric Roman or medieval artefacts were present within the top- or sub-soils. The absence of Roman or medieval artefacts, given the proximity of sites of those periods to the site may indicate that no activity of those periods occurred in the area of the trenching, thus the archaeological potential of the site may be considered to be low, despite the proximity to the scheduled Roman settlement.

References

- Austrums, R, 2010, 'Camel Hill Farm, Yeovil, Somerset, Geophysical Survey report', Stratascan report No. J2791, Upton upon Severn
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- PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, The Stationery Office, Norwich
- SCC, 2009, *Heritage Service Archaeological Handbook*, Somerset County Council, Taunton
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- Williams, A and Martin, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book, a complete translation*, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at south or west end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	23.2	1.6	0.62	0–0.15m topsoil; 0.15-0.50m subsoil; 0.50m+ Clay and Limestone natural geology.
2	22.0	1.6	0.40	0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.34m subsoil; 0.34m+ Clay and Limestone natural geology.
3	34.7	1.6	0.50	0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.30m subsoil; 0.30m+ Clay and Limestone natural geology. Ditch 1. [PIs 1 and 2]
4	28.7	1.6	0.50	0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.45m subsoil; 0.45m+ Clay and Limestone natural geology.
5	26.4	1.6	0.50	0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.45m subsoil; 0.45m+ Clay and Limestone natural geology.
6	27.4	1.6	0.40	0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.40m subsoil; 0.40m+ Clay and Limestone natural geology.
7	26.2	1.6	0.35	0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.30m subsoil; 0.30m+ Clay and Limestone natural geology.
8	26.4	1.6	0.50	0–0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.43m subsoil; 0.43m+ Clay and Limestone natural geology.
9	26.4	1.6	0.40	0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.40m subsoil; 0.40m+ Clay and Limestone natural geology.
10	27.4	1.6	0.55	0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.30m subsoil; 0.30m+ Clay and Limestone natural geology. Quarry Pit 2
11	24.7	1.6	0.70	0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.40m subsoil; 0.40m+ Clay and Limestone natural geology. Quarry Pit 3
12	27.4	1.6	0.60	0–0.22m topsoil; 0.22-0.52m subsoil; 0.52m+ Clay and Limestone natural geology. Quarry Pit 4

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

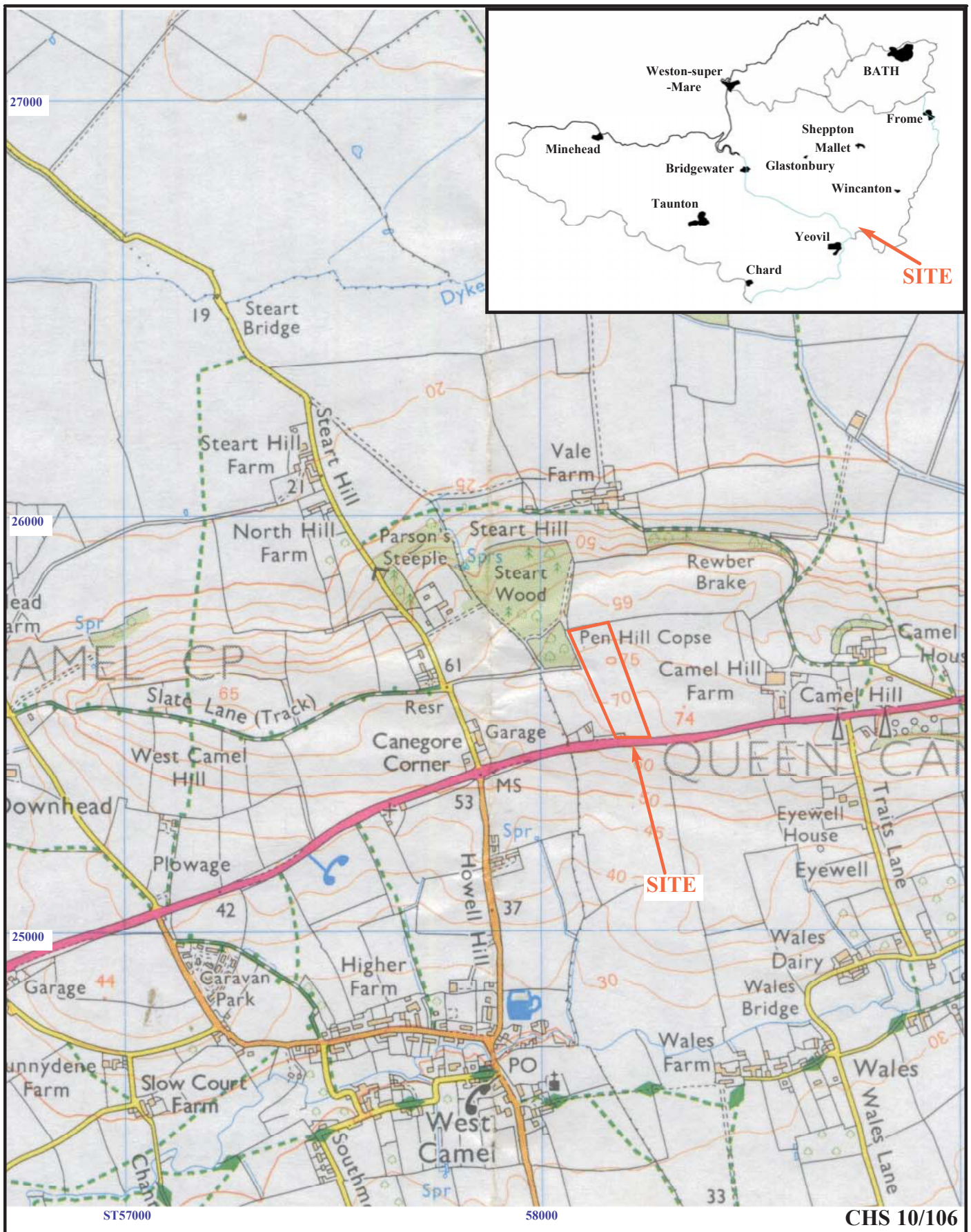
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
3	1	52, 52, 54	Ditch	undated	none
10	2	55	Quarry Pit	Post Medieval/Modern	Pottery
11	3	56	Quarry Pit	Post Medieval/Modern	Pottery
12	4	57	Quarry Pit	Post Medieval/Modern	Landscape

APPENDIX 3: Catalogue of Pottery

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>English Stoneware</i>		<i>Tin Glazed Ware</i>	
		<i>No. Sherds</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>No. Sherds</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>
2	55	2	30	1	6
3	56	1	4	-	-
	Total	3	34	1	6

APPENDIX 4: Catalogue of ceramic building material

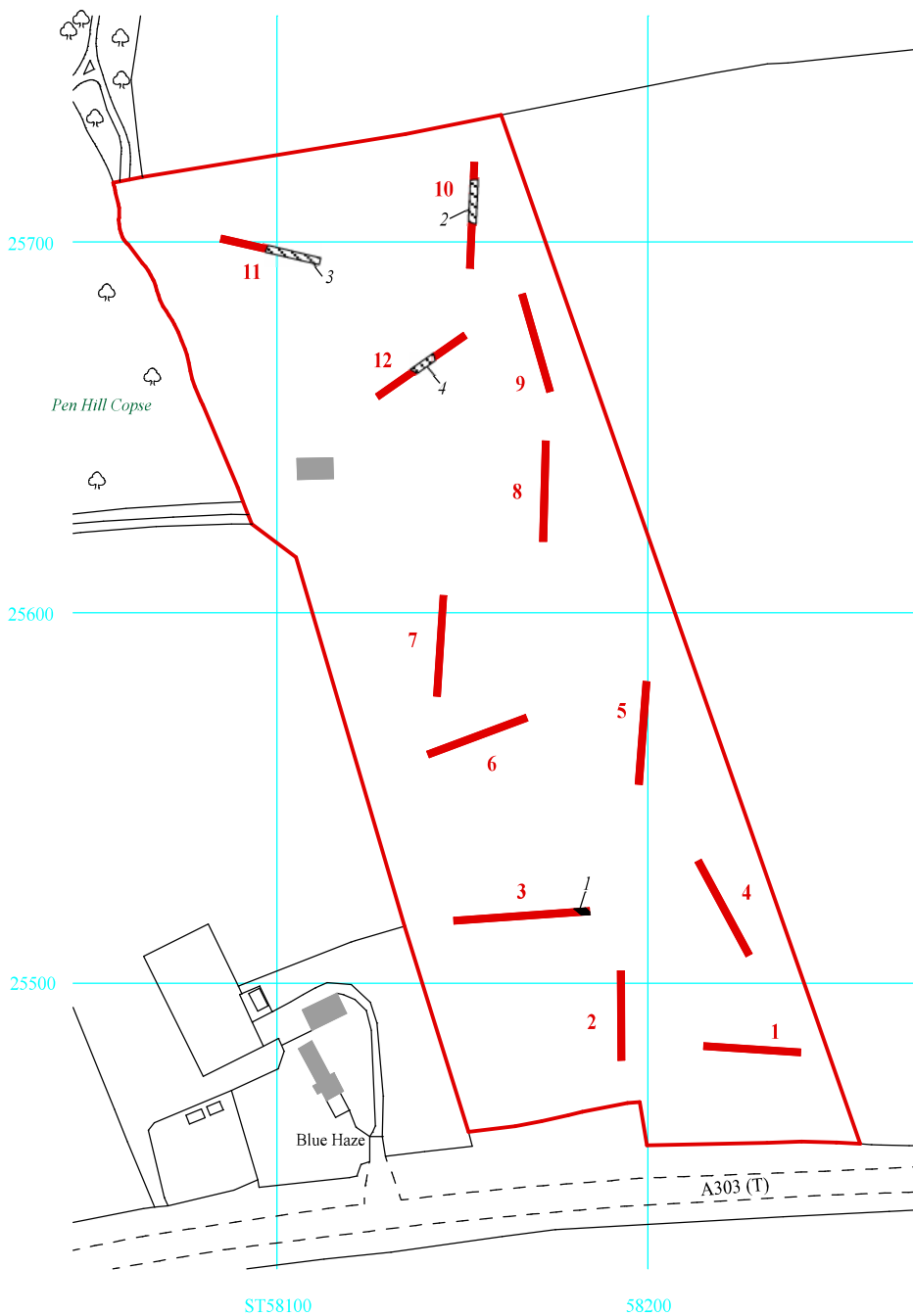
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>
9		50	3	50
10	2	55	7	98
11	3	56	7	76
12	4	57	2	34
		Total	19	258




**Land at Camel Hill Farm, Queen Camel, Sparkford,
Somerset, 2011
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site in relation to West Camel and within Somerset.

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Key

 post medieval quarry disturbance

CHS 10/106

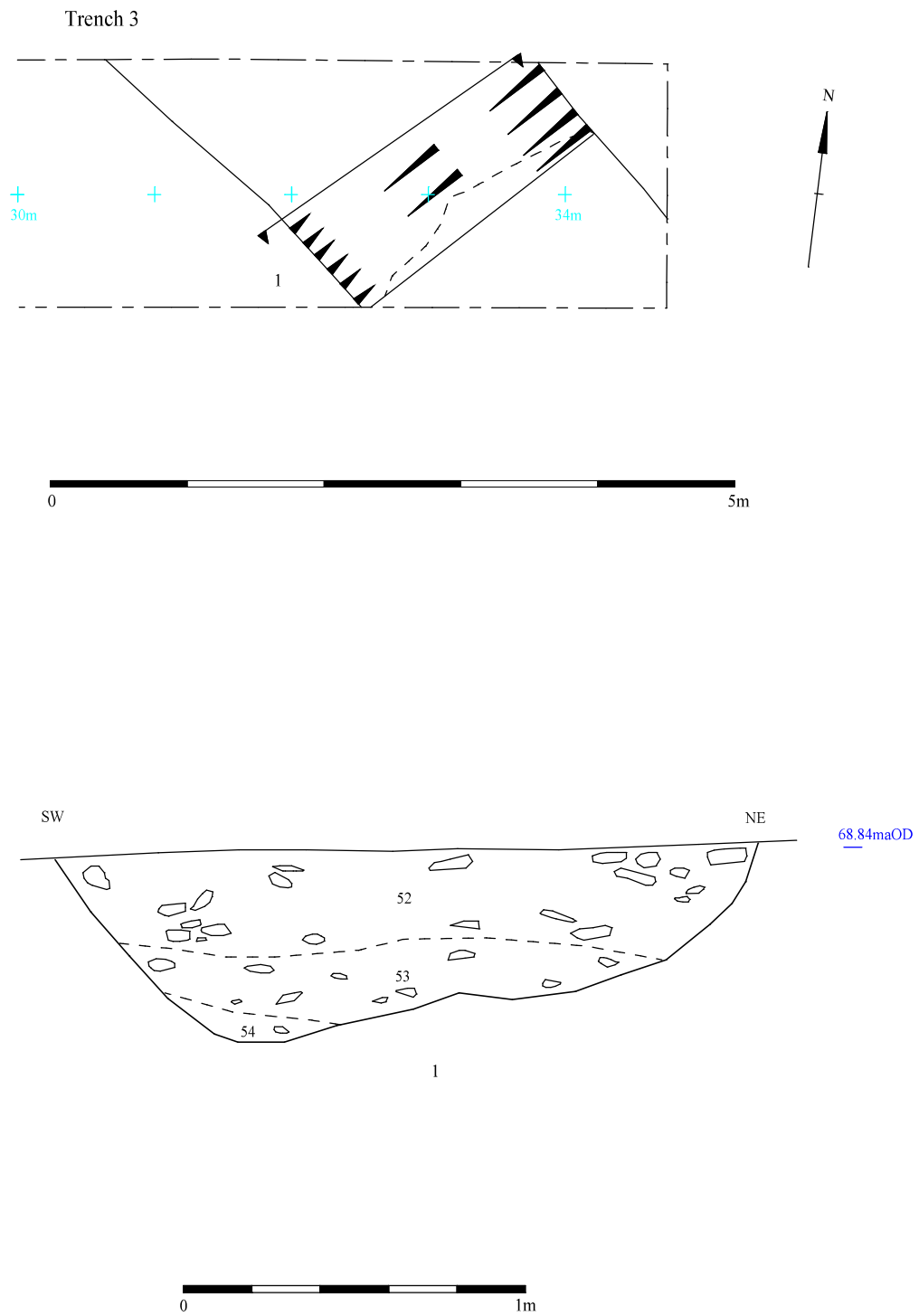


**Land at Camel Hill Farm, Queen Camel, Sparkford,
Somerset, 2011
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 2. Location of trenches.

0 100m

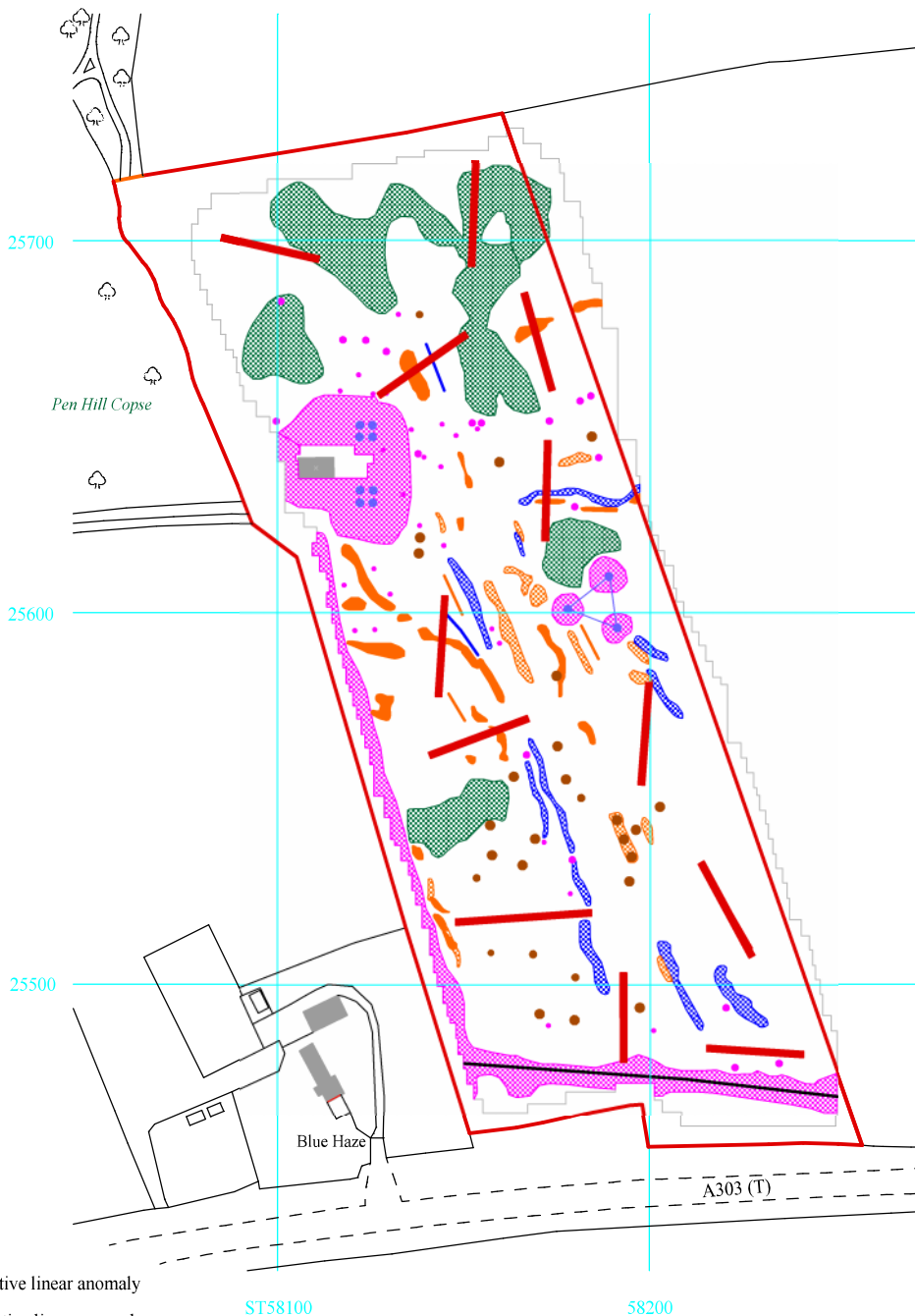
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Figure 3. Detail plan and section from Trench 3.



Key

- positive linear anomaly
- negative linear anomaly
- positive area anomaly
- negative area anomaly
- magnetic disturbance
- geological anomaly
- discrete positive anomaly
- discrete ferrous point anomaly

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Figure 4. Geophysical anomalies, with evaluation trenches.



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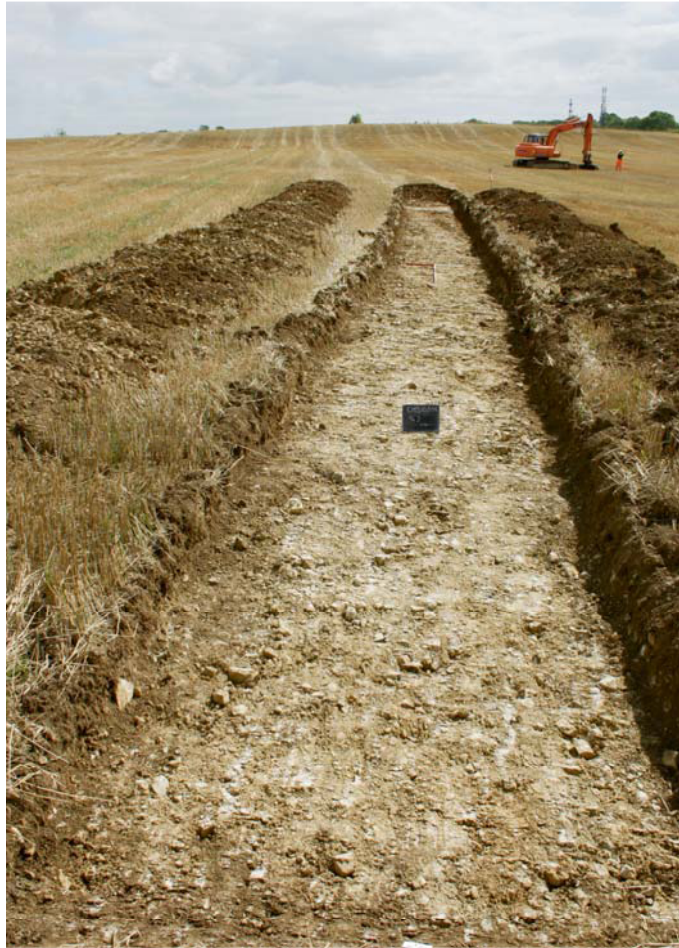


Plate 1. Trench 3, looking east. Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 3, ditch 1, looking north-west, Scales: 2m and 0.5m.

CHS 10/106

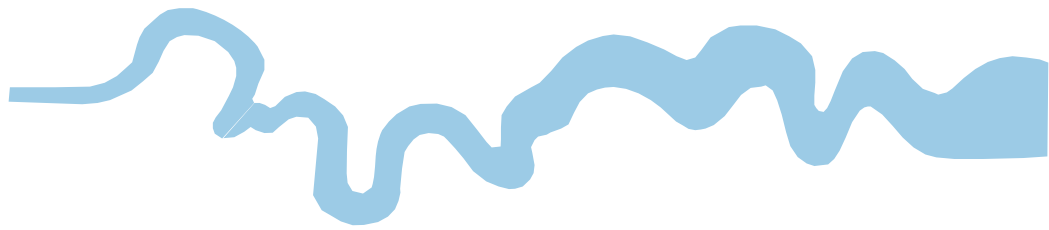
**Land at Camel Farm, Queen Camel, Sparkford,
Somerset, 2011**
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 and 2.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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