

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land at Syreford Quarry, Syreford,
Whittington, Gloucestershire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by David Platt

Site Code: SYG12/66

(SP 0250 2080)

Land at Syreford Quarry, Syreford, Whittington, Gloucestershire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Syreford Quarries and Masonry Ltd**

by David Platt
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code SYG12/66

August 2012

Summary

Site name: Land at Syreford Quarry, Syreford, Whittington, Gloucestershire

Grid reference: SP 0250 2080

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 6th – 8th August 2012

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: David Platt

Site code: SYG 12/66

Area of site: 3.8ha

Summary of results: The evaluation has revealed only a very limited range of items of archaeological interest comprising a few small sherds of Late Bronze Age or Iron Age pottery recovered from a colluvial deposit and a possible but doubtful shallow linear feature. The locations of geophysical anomalies were examined by several trenches but no archaeological origin for these could be determined. It is considered that the site has low archaeological potential.

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

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

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	Steve Preston✓ 15.08.12

Land at Syreford Quarry, Syreford, Whittington, Gloucestershire An Archaeological Evaluation

by David Platt

Report 12/66

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Syreford Quarry, Syreford, Whittington, Gloucestershire (SP 0250 2080) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Lucy Binnie of Land and Mineral Management Ltd, Suite 1, Security House, 82c Chesterton Lane, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1YD on behalf Syreford Quarries and Masonry Ltd, Syreford, Whittington, Gloucestershire.

An application to extract stone is proposed for land at Syreford Quarry, Syreford, Whittington, Gloucestershire. The proposed site comprises an area of c.3.8ha of farmland including a zone for bund storage. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by development, field observation has been proposed as detailed in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012, para 128) and Gloucestershire County Council's policies on archaeology. This was to inform the planning process and provide sufficient information to determine the appropriate mitigation of the effects of extraction that may be required. Two components of work were proposed at this stage; geophysical survey and field evaluation by means of machine trenching. The geophysical survey has already been conducted (Smalley 2012) and the results of this geophysical survey have been used to inform this trenching phase.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Charles Parry, Senior Archaeological Officer for Gloucestershire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Jackie Pitt and David Platt between 6th and 8th August 2012 and was monitored by Ms Jan Wills of Gloucestershire County Council. The site code is SYG 12/66 and the archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Corinium Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located west of the settlement of Syreford which is located to the east of Cheltenham and north of Cirencester in the Cotswold Hills. The site itself lies to the north-west of Syreford village and borders the existing limestone quarry to the south (Fig. 1). The site slopes from approximately 230m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at the western edge down to 190m aOD at the eastern extent. The underlying geology is oolitic limestone

(BGS 1981) and this was observed in the trenches as a mid greyish limestone with reddish brown limestone marl patches.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment for the site (Walsh 2011). In summary there are a moderate range of sites and finds of archaeological interest within the environs of the site but none immediately close to or on the site. Excavations at Syreford Mill to the south-east revealed Mesolithic flintwork, along with Iron Age and Roman occupation and Roman burials. Elsewhere a Neolithic flint axe is recorded along with three possible (levelled) round barrows. Various areas around the site have evidence of medieval ridge and furrow along with post-medieval and modern quarrying with two shrunken medieval villages of Whittington (to the south) and Sennington (to the north) lie within a km of the site.

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the evaluation will be to determine the presence/ absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development.

The specific research aims of this project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present' and
- to determine if geophysical anomalies are of archaeological interest.

A total of 21 trenches were to be dug 25m long and 2m wide using an excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were positioned partly in order to investigate some of the anomalies identified in the geophysical survey (Fig. 4). All trenches were dug under constant archaeological supervision and all spoil heaps were monitored for finds. Any possible archaeological features were to be cleaned and excavated or sampled with appropriate hand tools.

Results

The twenty one trenches were dug in the positions intended (Fig. 2). They were all 1.6m wide but were longer than intended in order to maintain the agreed sample size. This change was agreed by the archaeological monitor. The trenches ranged from 26.20m to 31.50m in length and between 0.28m and 1.10m in depth. A

complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned W–E and was 30.70m long and 0.44m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil and 0.10m of mid reddish brown sandy clay subsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned N - S and was 29.10m long and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.13m of topsoil and 0.07m subsoil overlying natural geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned W - E and was 29.20m long and 0.98m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.28m subsoil overlying 0.23m of mid brownish grey sandy clay colluvium, which in turn overlay the natural geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded. The origin of two parallel geophysical anomalies was not determined.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was aligned W - E and was 28.30m long and 1.07m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.21m of topsoil and 0.37m subsoil overlying 0.38m of mid brownish grey sandy clay colluvium, this in turn overlay the natural geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded. The origin of two parallel geophysical anomalies was not determined.

Trench 5 (Fig. 3)

Trench 5 was aligned S - N and was 31.10m long and 0.28m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.23m of topsoil directly overlaying the natural limestone geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded. The origin of a geophysical anomaly was not determined.

Trench 6

Trench 6 was aligned W - E and was 30.50m long and 0.46m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of topsoil and 0.18m of subsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded.

Trench 7

Trench 7 was aligned W - E and was 30.0m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.11m of subsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded. The origin of a geophysical anomaly was not determined.

Trench 8

Trench 8 was aligned SSW - NNE and was 26.20m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil and 0.30m of subsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded. The origin of a geophysical anomaly was not determined.

Trench 9

Trench 9 was aligned SW - NE and was 31.0m long and 0.75m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil and 0.47m of subsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded. The origin of a geophysical anomaly was not determined.

Trench 10 (Fig 3; Pls 1 and 2)

Trench 10 was aligned NW - SE and was 29.30m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.32m of topsoil directly overlaying the natural limestone geology. A single feature (1) was discovered, this was 3.50m wide but only 0.22m deep and consisted of a single dark greyish brown sandy silt fill (53) with frequent poorly sorted limestone inclusions. It extended as a linear feature for the full width of the trench. It corresponded with the position of a geophysical anomaly, but not the orientation and this juxtaposition might be a coincidence. The origin of this feature is not obvious. It bears some similarities to that of a negative lynchet but the profile, being slightly hollowed and not petering out on the downhill side is not quite as expected. It is entirely possible that it is a natural geological or biological feature.

Trench 11

Trench 11 was aligned NW - SE and was 31.10m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil directly overlaying the natural limestone geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded. The origin of a geophysical anomalies was not determined.

Trench 12

Trench 12 was aligned NW - SE and was 30.50m long and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil directly overlaying the natural limestone geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded.

Trench 13

Trench 13 was aligned SW - NE and was 30.0m long and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.27m of topsoil directly overlaying the natural limestone geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded. The origin of a geophysical anomaly was not determined.

Trench 14

Trench 14 was aligned NW - SE and was 29.30m long and 0.24m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.24m of topsoil directly overlaying the natural limestone geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded.

Trench 15 (Fig. 3; Pl. 3)

Trench 15 was aligned SW - NE and was 28.40m long and between 0.35m and 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil directly overlaying the natural limestone geology at the SW end and at the NE end the topsoil overlay 0.15m of subsoil, which overlay 0.30m of mid brownish grey sandy clay colluvium (52), this in turn overlay the natural geology. Seven sherds of slightly abraded late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery were found within this colluvium (52). The origin of a geophysical anomaly was not determined.

Trench 16

Trench 16 was aligned SW - NE and was 30.40m long and between 0.23m and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.23m of topsoil directly overlaying the natural limestone geology at the SW end and at the NE end the topsoil overlay 0.25m of subsoil, which overlay the natural geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded.

Trench 17)

Trench 17 was aligned NW - SE and was 27.50m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil directly overlaying the natural limestone geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded.

Trench 18

Trench 18 was aligned NW - SE and was 29.80m long and between 0.45m and 0.62m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil overlying 0.30m of subsoil which in turn overlay the natural limestone geology at

the NW end and at the SE end the topsoil overlay 0.15m of subsoil, which overlay the natural geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded. The origin of a geophysical anomaly was not determined.

Trench 19 (Pl. 4)

Trench 19 was aligned NW - SE and was 28.50m long and 0.70m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil and 0.30m subsoil overlying 0.10m of mid brownish grey sandy clay colluvium, this in turn overlay the natural geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded. The origin of a geophysical anomaly was not determined.

Trench 20

Trench 20 was aligned NW - SE and was 31.50m long and between 0.40m and 1.10m deep. At the NW end the stratigraphy consisted of 0.23m of topsoil overlying 0.30m of subsoil, this overlay 0.57m of pale brownish grey clayey silt colluvium which in turn overlay the natural limestone geology. At the SE end the stratigraphy consisted of 0.38m of topsoil which directly overlay the natural geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded.

Trench 21

Trench 21 was aligned NW - SE and was 30.20m long and 0.27m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.27m of topsoil directly overlaying the natural limestone geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded.

Finds

Pottery by Frances Raymond

Seven lightly abraded sherds (weighing 17g) from a single vessel in a coarse shell tempered fabric are from the colluvium in Trench 15 (Deposit 52). These do not refit, but the fractures are fresh suggesting that they are part of a rim fragmented during excavation. Although there is no evidence of vessel style, the rim is a simple, rounded and everted form characteristic of the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age. The fabric is similarly typical of the shell tempered wares favoured within this time frame in the Cotswolds and Upper Thames.

Conclusion

Very little of archaeological interest was recorded during the evaluation, comprising certainly, only of seven small sherds of Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age from a colluvial deposit in Trench 15. One possible subsoil

feature was investigated in Trench 10 but was not confirmed as of archaeological interest and could be of agricultural, geological or biological origin. Eleven of the twenty one trenches examined the locations of linear and curvilinear geophysical anomalies but no archaeological origin for these could be determined. The one subsoil feature which corresponded with an anomaly was not obviously its source.

It is considered that from this absence of definitive archaeological features and paucity of artefactual finds that the site has low archaeological potential.

References

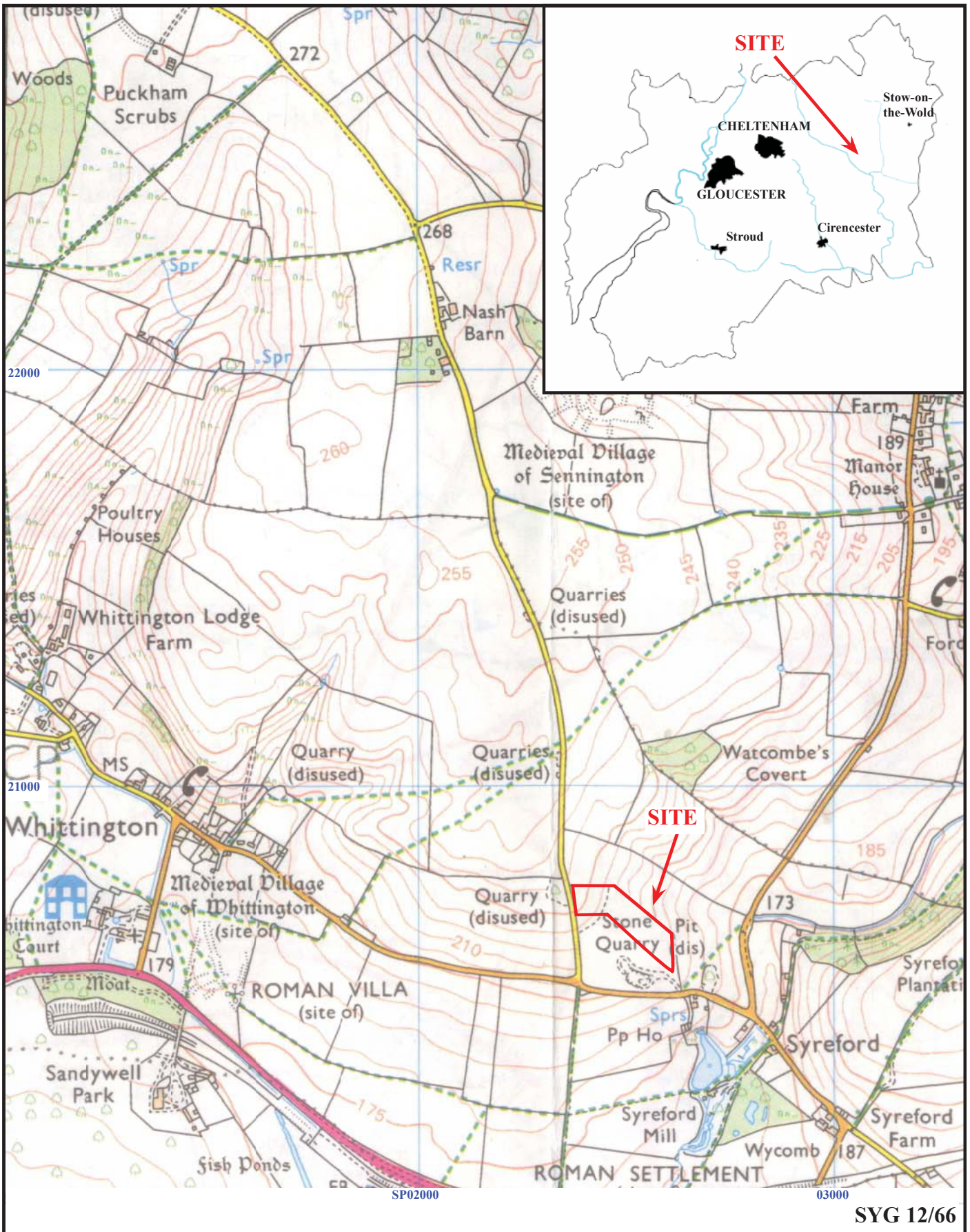
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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	30.70	1.6	0.44	0-0.26m topsoil, 0.26-0.36m subsoil 0.36m+ natural limestone geology.
2	29.10	1.6	0.30	0-0.13m topsoil, 0.13-0.20m subsoil 0.20m+ natural geology.
3	29.20	1.6	0.98	0-0.25m topsoil, 0.25-0.53m subsoil. 0.53-0.76m mid brownish grey colluvium, 0.76m+ natural geology.
4	28.30	1.6	1.07	0-0.21m topsoil, 0.21-0.58m subsoil. 0.58-0.97m mid brownish grey colluvium, 0.97m+ natural geology.
5	31.10	1.6	0.28	0-0.28m topsoil, 0.28m+ natural geology.
6	30.50	1.6	0.46	0-0.22m topsoil, 0.22-0.40m subsoil 0.40m+ natural geology.
7	30.40	1.6	0.40	0-0.20m topsoil, 0.20-0.31m subsoil 0.31m+ natural geology
8	26.20	1.6	0.60	0-0.30m topsoil, 0.30-0.60m subsoil 0.60m+ natural geology
9	31.0	1.6	0.75	0-0.28m topsoil, 0.28-0.75m subsoil 0.75m+ natural geology
10	29.30	1.6	0.35	0-0.32m topsoil, 0.32m+ natural geology. Lynchet 1. [PIs 1 and 2]
11	31.30	1.6	0.40	0-0.30m topsoil, 0.30m+ natural geology
12	30.50	1.6	0.30	0-0.28m topsoil, 0.28m+ natural geology
13	30.0	1.6	0.30	0-0.27m topsoil, 0.27m+ natural geology
14	29.30	1.6	0.24	0-0.24m topsoil, 0.24m+ natural geology
15	28.40	1.6	0.35-0.80	SW 0-0.35m topsoil, 0.35m+ natural geology. NE 0-0.35m topsoil, 0.35-0.50m subsoil, 0.50-0.80m colluvium (52), 0.80m+ natural geology. [PI 3]
16	30.40	1.6	0.23-0.50	SW 0-0.23m topsoil, 0.23m+ natural geology. NE 0-0.25m topsoil, 0.25-0.50m subsoil, 0.50m+ natural geology
17	27.50	1.6	0.40	0-0.30m topsoil, 0.30m+ natural geology
18	29.80	1.6	0.45-0.62	NW 0-0.30m topsoil, 0.30- 0.60m subsoil, 0.60m+ natural geology. SE 0-0.30m topsoil, 0.30-0.45m subsoil, 0.45m+ natural geology
19	28.50	1.6	0.70	0-0.30m topsoil, 0.30-0.60m subsoil. 0.60-0.70m mid brownish grey colluvium, 0.70m+ natural geology. [PI 4]
20	31.50	1.6	0.40-1.10	NW 0-0.23m topsoil, 0.23- 0.53m subsoil, 0.53-1.10m colluvium, 1.10m+ natural geology. SE 0-0.38m topsoil, 0.38m+ natural geology
21	30.20	1.6	0.27	0-0.27m topsoil, 0.27m+ natural geology

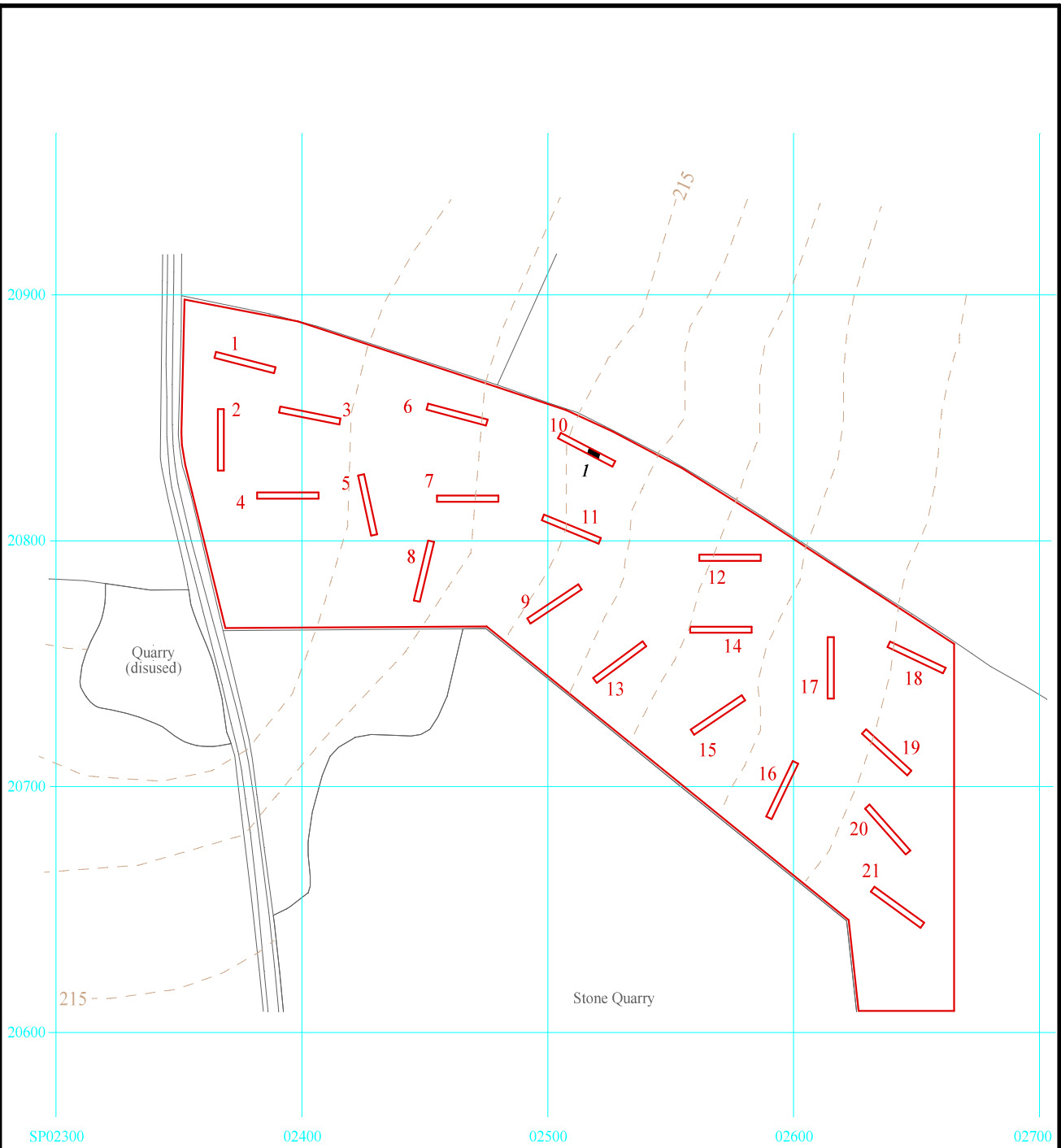
APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
10	1	53	Linear feature?	Unknown	None
15		52	Colluvium deposit	LBA/EIA	Pottery



**Land at Syreford Quarry, Syreford, Whittington
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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Syreford and Gloucestershire.
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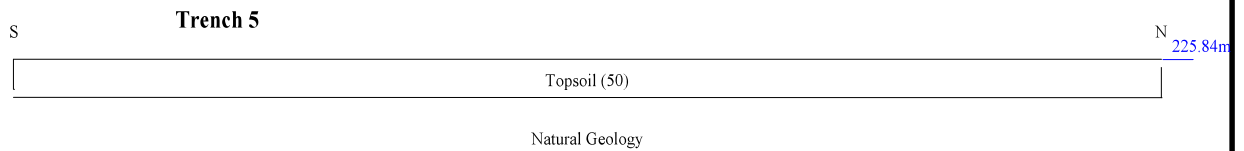
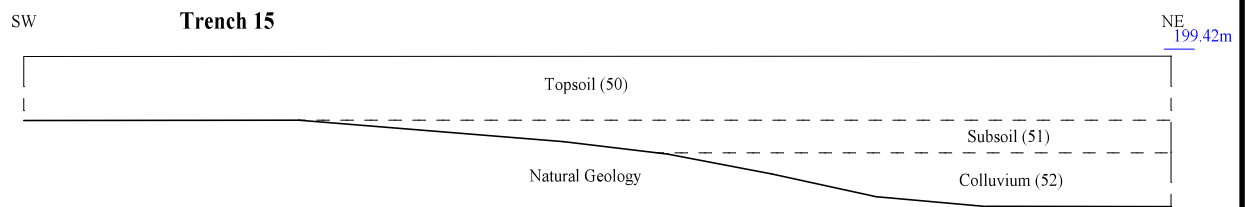
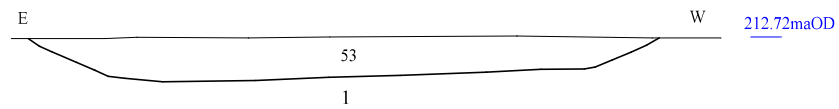
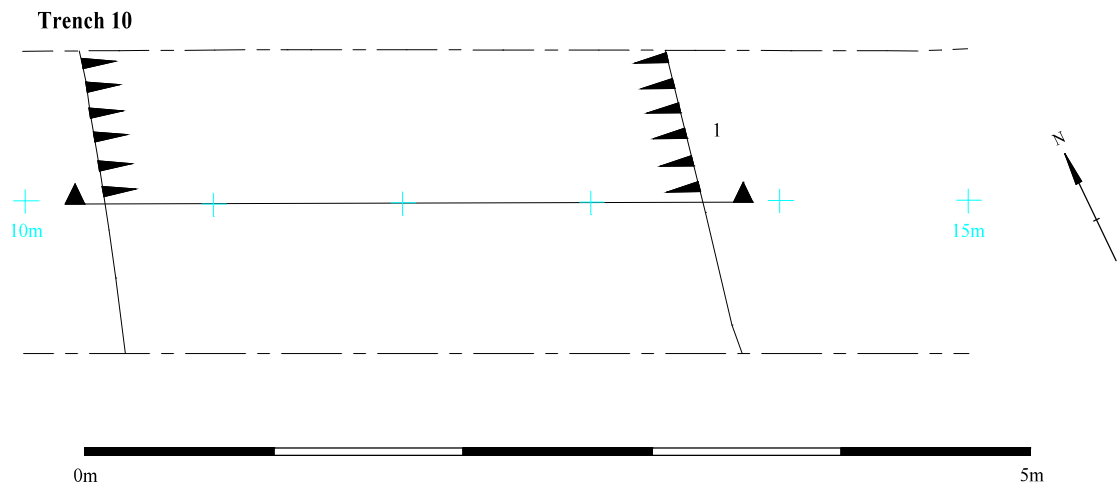


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Figure 2. Plan of trenches.



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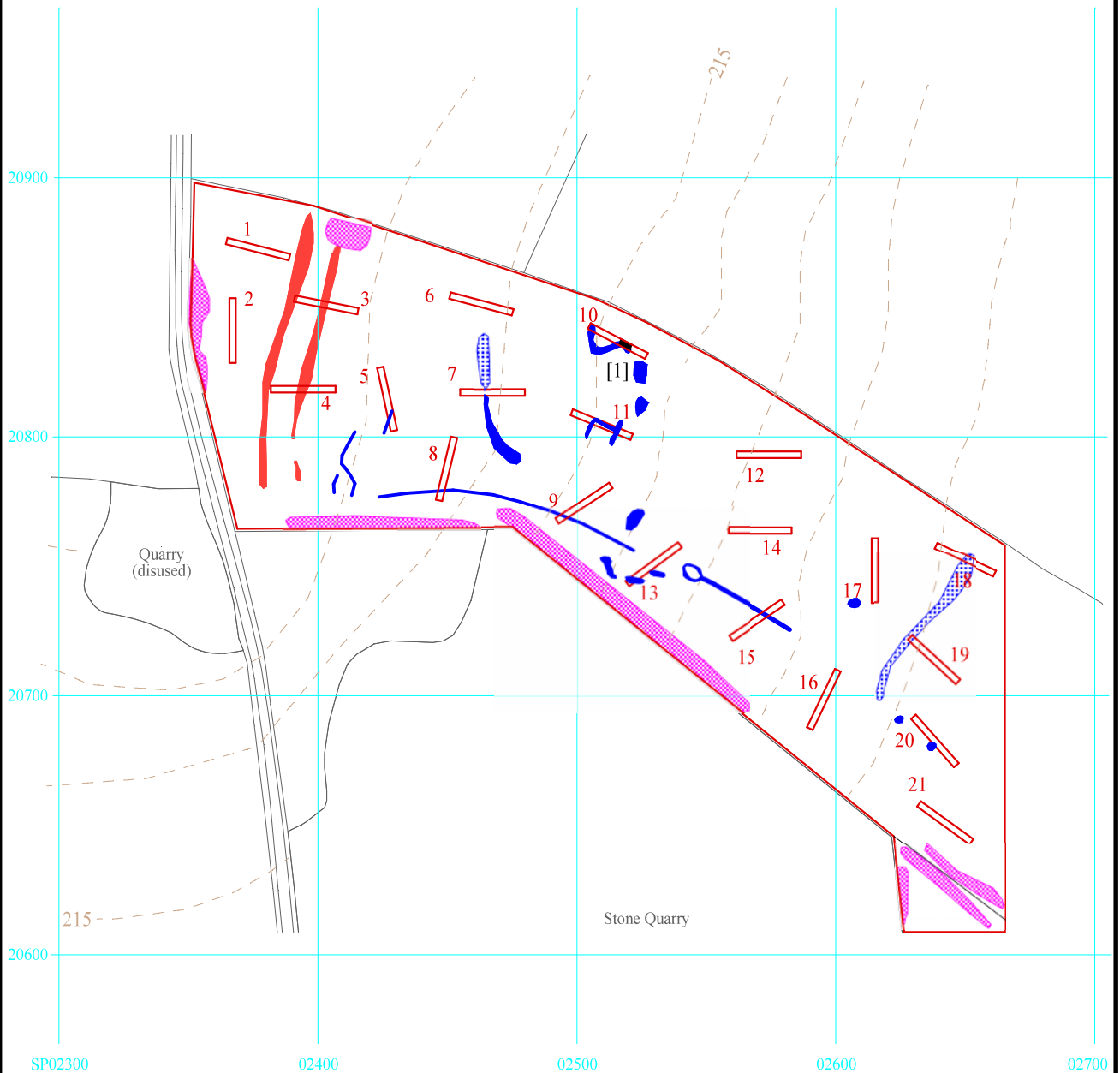


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Figure 3. Plan and Section of Lynchet [1]
and Representative Sections of Trenches 5 and 15.

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Key

-  probable positive anomaly
-  possible positive anomaly
-  magnetic disturbance

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Figure 4. Plan of trenches relating to magnetic anomalies.



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Plate 1. Trench 10, looking southeast, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 10, possible feature 1, looking south, Scales: 2m and 0.1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 15, looking north, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Trench 19 looking east, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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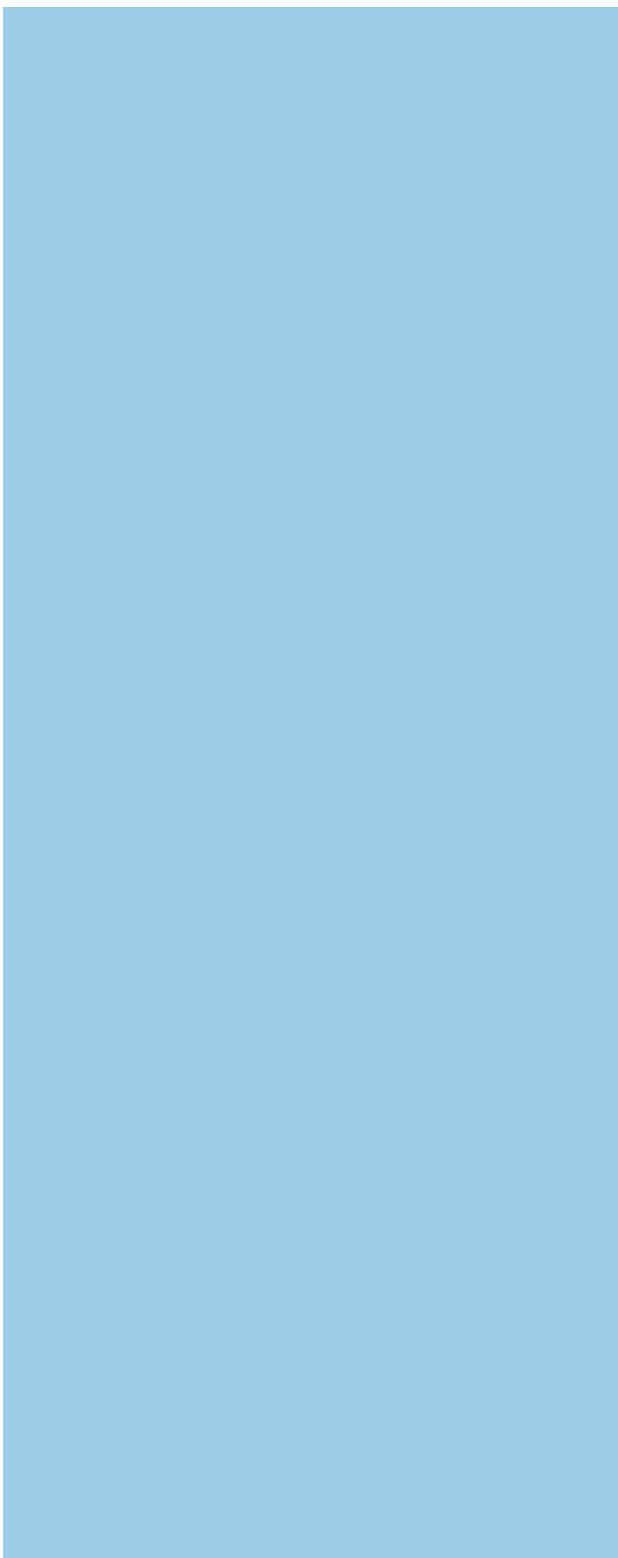
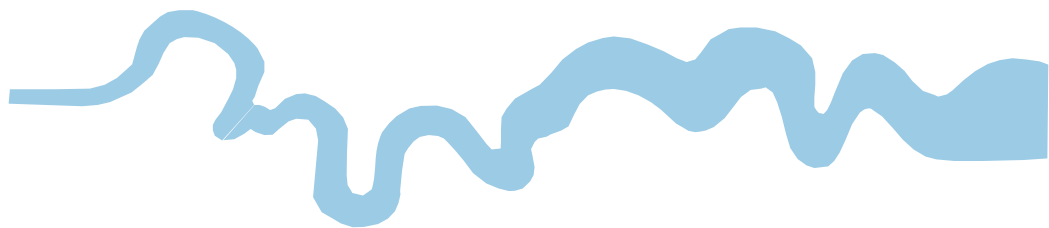
Plates 3 and 4.

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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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