

T H A M E S      V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Countesthorpe Crematorium, Foston Lane,  
Countesthorpe, Leicestershire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by David Platt**

**Site Code: FCL13/68**

**(SP5914 9592)**

# **Countesthorpe Crematorium, Foston Lane, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation**

**for Memoria Ltd**

by David Platt

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code FCL13/68

**April 2014**

## Summary

**Site name:** Countesthorpe Crematorium, Foston Lane, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire

**Grid reference:** SP5918 9592

**Site activity:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 24th – 25th April 2014

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** David Platt

**Site code:** FCL 13/68

**Area of site:** c.1.66 ha

**Summary of results:** A single pit or ditch terminal of unknown date was the only feature that was observed during the field work. No artefacts of archaeological interest were recovered. It is considered that the site has no archaeological potential.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service in due course, with accession number X.A66.2014.

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 29.04.14 Steve Preston✓ 30.04.14
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# **Countesthorpe Crematorium, Foston Lane, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire**

## **An Archaeological Evaluation**

by David Platt

**Report 13/68c**

### **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Foston Lane, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire (SP5918 9592) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Michael Hackney, of Memoria Ltd, The Pool House, Bicester Road, Stratton Audley, Oxfordshire OX27 9BS.

Planning permission (13/0471/1/PX) has been gained on appeal (APP/T2405/A/13/2210523) from Blaby District Council for the construction of a crematorium at Foston Lane, Countesthorpe, Leicester, Leicestershire. The site to be evaluated occupies an area of *c.* 1.66ha within a larger plot of land. The consent includes a condition (8) relating to archaeology. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by groundworks, fieldwork has been requested as detailed in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012, para 128) and the Council's policies on archaeology. This was intended to determine the archaeological potential of the site and if necessary, provide information on which to formulate a mitigation strategy for the development.

This report documents a second stage of a phased programme, the initial stage of which involved geophysical survey. A further stage of fieldwork might be required dependent on the results of the trenching. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Teresa Hawtin, Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council, the archaeological adviser to the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by Dan Strachan and David Platt between 24th and 25th April and the site code is FCL13/68. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Leicestershire Museums Service in due course, with accession number X.A66.2014.

### **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located on the south side of Foston Lane to the south of Countesthorpe village, which is located *c.* 8km south of Leicester (Fig. 1). The site is currently grassland and lies at *c.* 80m above Ordnance Datum but slopes gently to the east and south-east. The underlying geology consisted of both alluvium and terrace gravels (BGS 1969) and these were observed in the trenches as mid brown/grey silty clay and a red brown sandy gravel.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Elliott 2013). In summary the site lies in an area with few archaeological findspots or deposits on or immediately close to the site but with various prehistoric sites in the general area. There is a moderate scatter of prehistoric flintwork and some metalwork from the region, an undated cropmark complex visible from the air to the north-east and Bronze Age burials from the north of the village. Two geophysical surveys (Fig. 4) have been conducted on the site (Smith 2010; Dawson 2014). These surveys identified no anomalies unambiguously of archaeological interest other than medieval ridge and furrow.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The aims of the evaluation was 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 had survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present;
- to provide information in order to draw up an appropriate mitigation strategy if required;
- to examine any geophysical anomalies; and
- to report on the findings of the evaluation.

It was proposed to dig 7 trenches each 25m long and 1.6m wide targeted at the footprint of the new buildings, car parks, access and pond areas of the development (Fig. 2). A contingency for an additional 10m of trenching was included within the proposal should it be needed to clarify the initial findings.

Topsoil and any other overburden was to be removed by a JCB-type or small 360<sup>0</sup> machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels, under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools, and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the project, without compromising the integrity of any which might better be examined under the conditions pertaining to full excavation. Spoilheaps were searched for finds and metal detectors used to enhance the recovery of metal finds.

## **Results**

All trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 2). They ranged in length from 24.30–25.30m and in depth from 0.54–0.68m. 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 WSW–ENE and was 25m long and 0.57m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil and 0.17m subsoil overlying brown silty clay alluvium with grey clay patches natural geology. No features were observed or finds recovered.

### Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned SE–NW and was 25m long and 0.54m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.24m of topsoil and 0.26m subsoil overlying brown silty clay alluvium natural geology. No features were observed or finds recovered.

### Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned SW–NE and was 24.90m long and 0.68m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil and 0.30m subsoil overlying brown silty clay alluvium natural geology. No features were observed or finds recovered.

### Trench 4 (Fig. 3; Pls 1 and 2)

Trench 4 was aligned SE–NW and was 24.30m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.29m subsoil overlying sandy gravel natural geology. A single pit (1) or ditch terminal was observed 4.5m from the south-east end of the trench. This was 0.86m in diameter and 0.27m deep and contained a single fill (52) which consisted of a mid greyish brown silty sand. No finds were recovered.

### Trench 5 (Pl. 3)

Trench 5 was aligned WSW–ENE and was 25.30m long and 0.68m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil and 0.36m subsoil overlying brown silty clay alluvium natural geology. No features were observed or finds recovered. Nothing was observed to correspond with a geophysical anomaly which the trench intercepted.

#### Trench 6 (Pl. 4)

Trench 6 was aligned SE–NW and was 25m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil and 0.18m subsoil overlying sandy gravel natural geology. No features were observed or finds recovered.

#### Trench 7

Trench 7 was aligned WSW–ENE and was 25.20m long and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil and 0.28m subsoil overlying sandy gravel natural geology. No features were observed or finds recovered.

### **Finds**

No finds were recovered.

### **Conclusion**

A single pit or linear feature of unknown date was observed during this phase of fieldwork. It did not correspond with any geophysical anomalies. No finds were observed in the topsoil or subsoil during the works. It is considered that from the results of both the geophysical survey and this evaluation trenching, the site has negligible archaeological potential.

### **References**

- BGS, 1969, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 170, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Cooper, N J, 2006 (ed), *The archaeology of the East Midlands,; an archaeological research assessment and research agenda*, Leicester Archaeological Monographs, 13, Leicester
- Dawson, T, 2014, Countesthorpe Crematorium, Foston Lane, Countesthorpe, Leicester, Leicestershire; Geophysical (magnetic) report, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 13/68b, Reading
- Elliott, G, 2013, Countesthorpe Crematorium, Foston Lane, Countesthorpe, Leicester, Leicestershire, a desk-based heritage assessment, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 13/68, Reading
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Smith, H, 2010, Archaeological geophysical survey of land adjacent to Countesthorpe Cemetery, Foston Lane, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire Northamptonshire Archaeology Report 10/86

## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

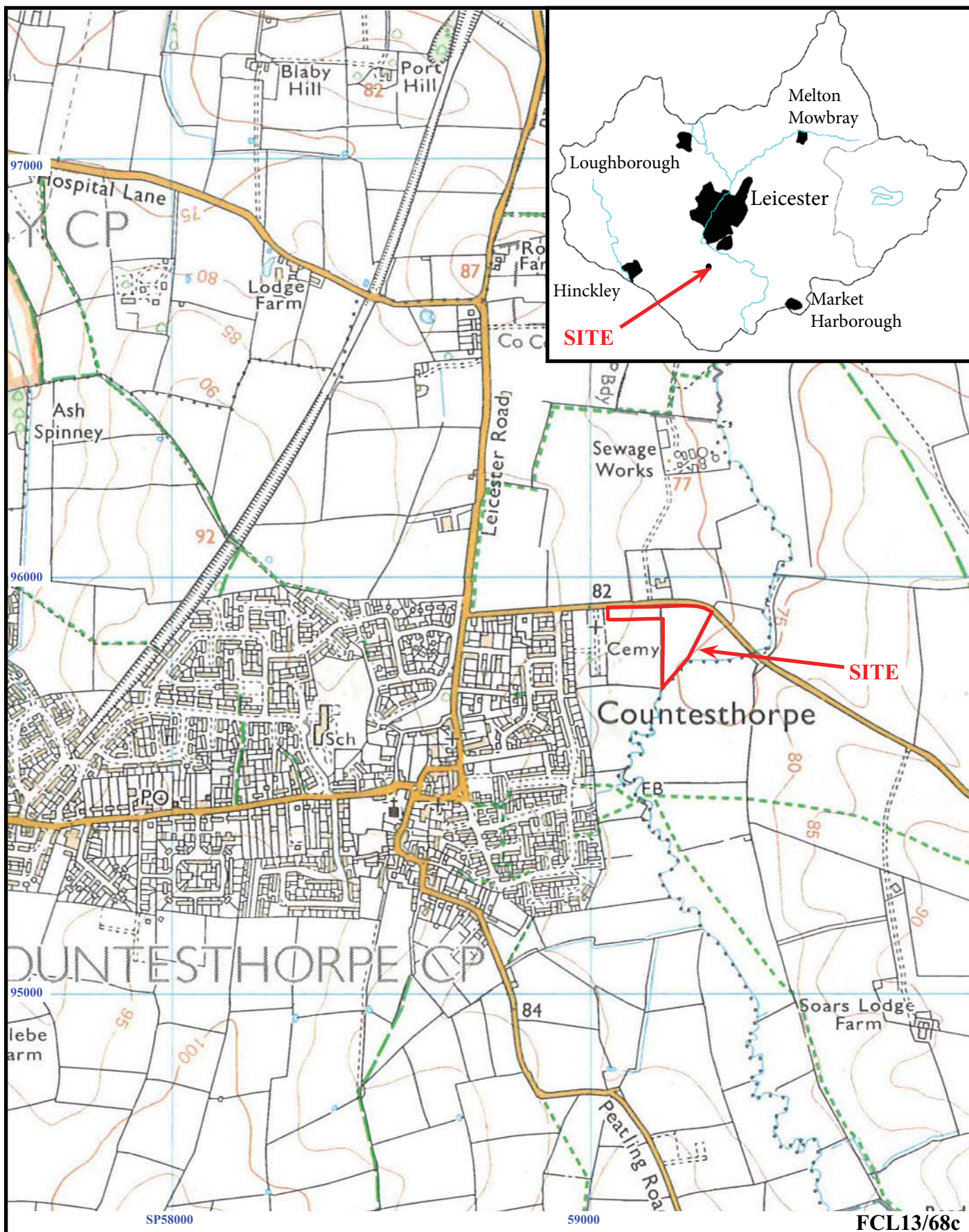
0m at west, SE, or SW end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	25	1.6	0.57	0-0.28m topsoil, 0.28-0.45m mid red brown clayey silt subsoil, 0.45m+ brown silty clay with grey patches alluvium natural geology.
2	25	1.6	0.54	0-0.24m topsoil, 0.24-0.50m subsoil, 0.50m+ brown silty clay alluvium natural geology
3	24.90	1.6	0.68	0-0.30m topsoil, 0.30-0.60m subsoil, 0.60m+ brown silty clay alluvium and gravel natural geology
4	24.30	1.6	0.60	0-0.25m topsoil, 0.25-0.54m subsoil, 0.54m+ sand and gravel natural geology. Pit or terminal (1). <b>[Pls 1 and 2]</b>
5	25.30	1.6	0.68	0-0.28m topsoil, 0.28-0.64m subsoil, 0.64m+ brown silty clay alluvium natural geology. <b>[Pl. 3]</b>
6	25	1.6	0.60	0-0.30m topsoil, 0.30-0.48m subsoil, 0.48m+ sand and gravel natural geology. <b>[Pl. 4]</b>
7	25.20	1.6	0.65	0-0.30m topsoil, 0.30-0.58m subsoil, 0.58m+ sand and gravel 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>
4	1	52	Pit or ditch terminal	unknown	-

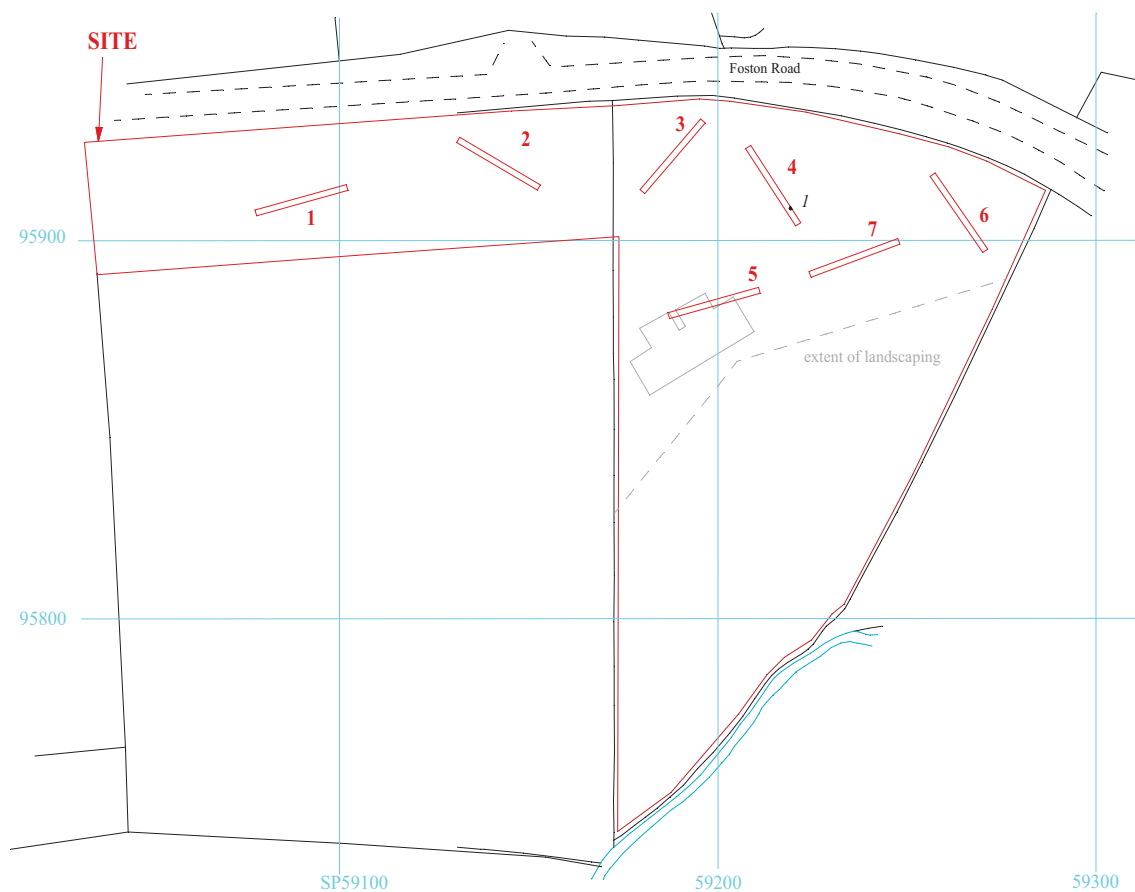


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Figure 1. Location of site within Countesthorpe and  
Leicestershire.

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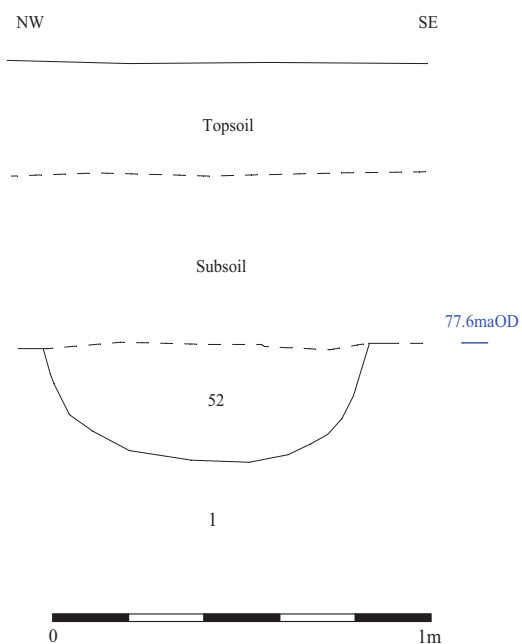
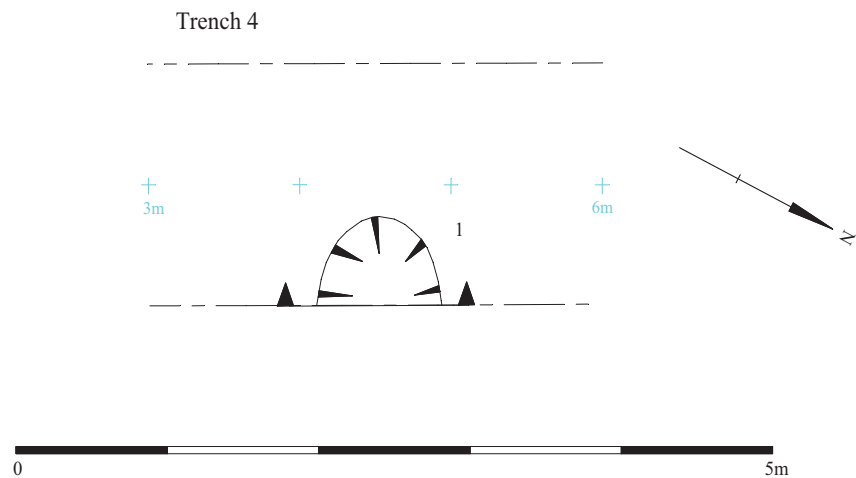
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Figure 2. Location of trenches and feature.

0 100m

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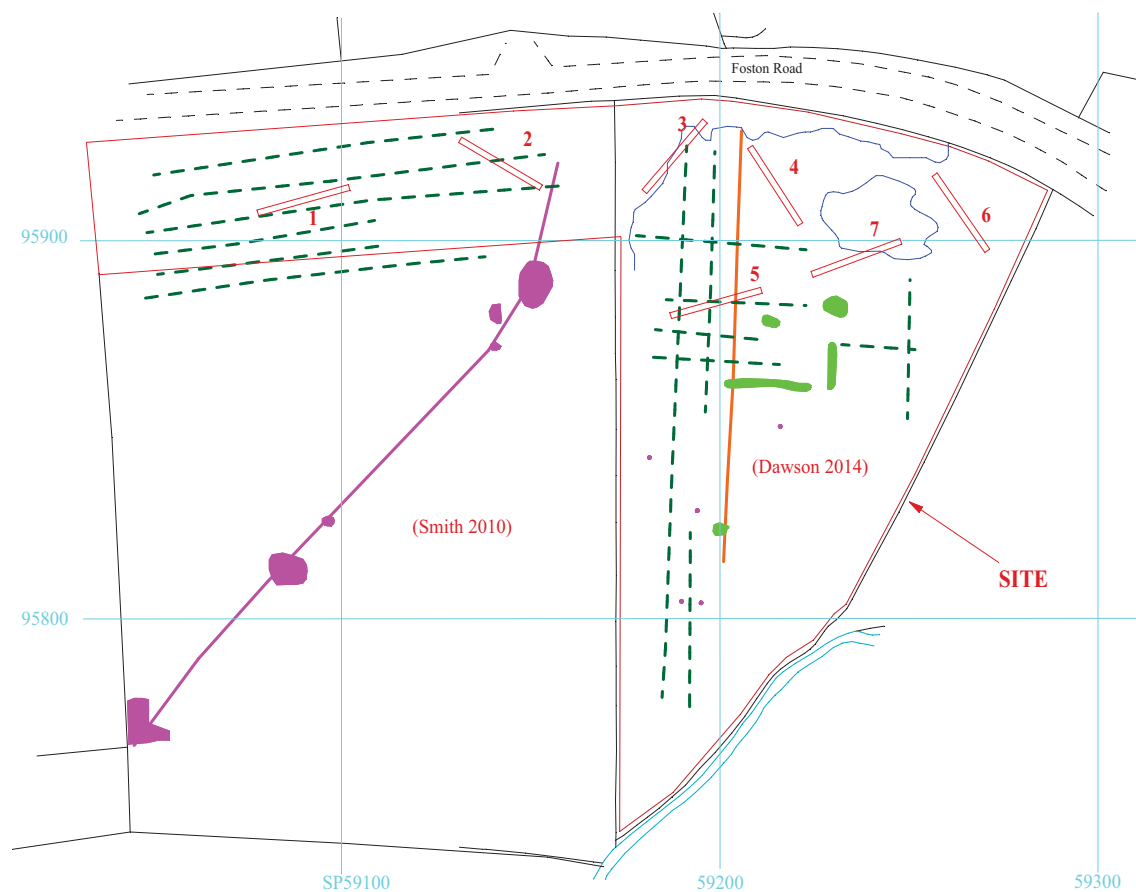


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Figure 3. Detail of Trench 4.

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### Key

- Positive anomaly (possible archaeology)
- Negative anomaly (possible earth feature)
- Magnetic ferrous linear
- - - Agricultural anomaly
- Ferrous area/spike
- Geological anomaly

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Figure 4. Location of trenches, in relation to geophysical anomalies.

0 100m

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Plate 1: Trench 4 looking NW, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m



Plate 2: Trench 4, Feature 1 looking N, Scales: 1m and 0.5m



Plate 3: Trench 5 looking E, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m



Plate 4: Trench 6, looking NW, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m

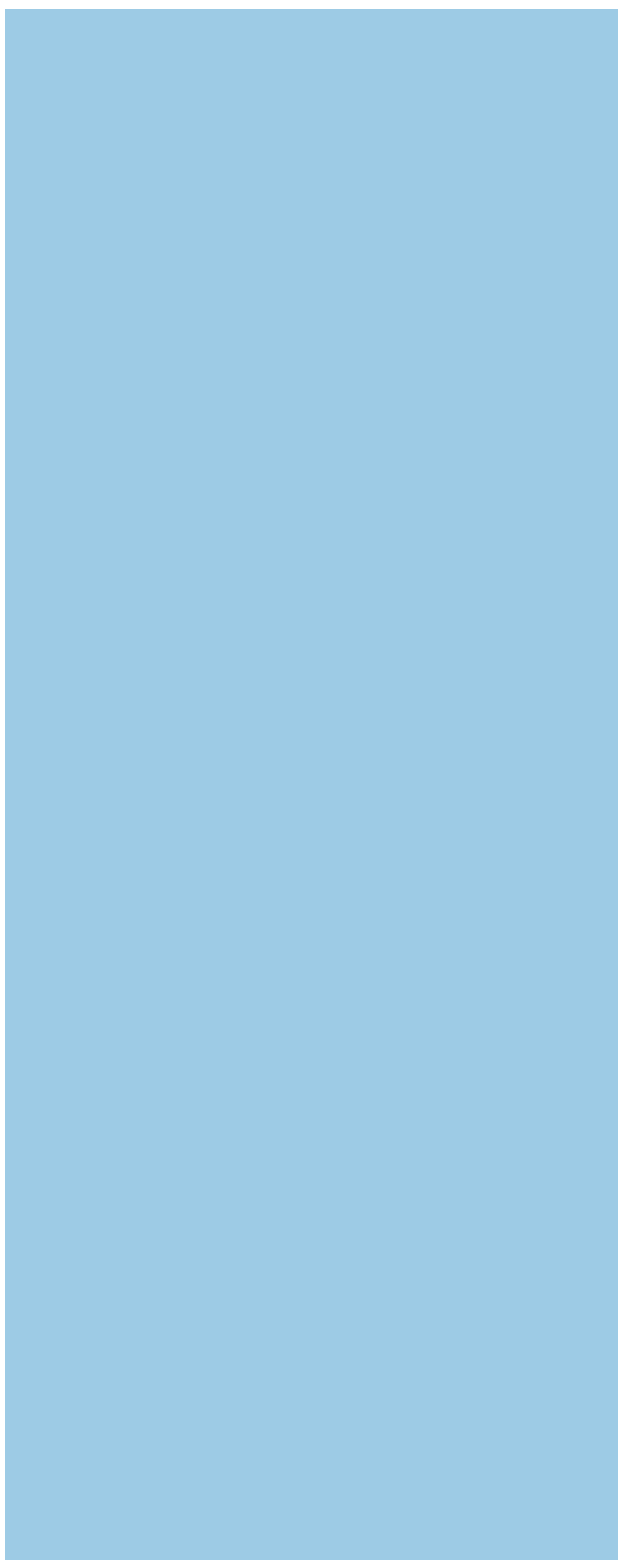
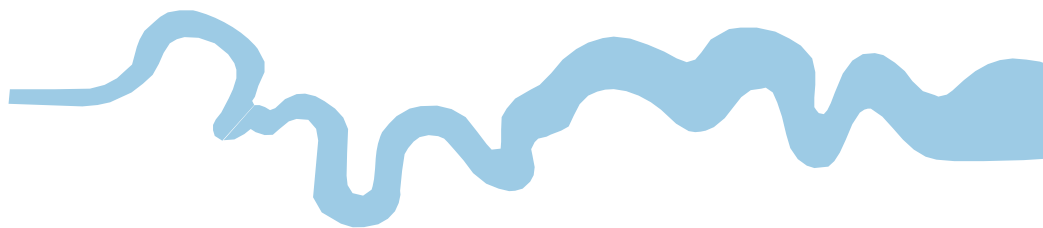
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**Foston Lane, Countesthorpe, Leicester,  
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Plates 1 to 4**

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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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