THAMES VALLEY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

SERVICES

SOUTH WEST

Great Hele Barton, South Molton, Devon

Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Weale

Site Code: GHB14/93

(SS 7219 2431)

Great Hele Barton, South Molton, Devon

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Cornwall Geo-environmental Ltd

by Andrew Weale

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code GHB14/93

July 2014

Summary

Site name: Great Hele Barton, South Molton, Devon

Grid reference: SS 7219 2431

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 5th–11th June 2014

Project manager: Andrew Weale

Site supervisor: Andrew Weale

Site code: GHB 14/93

Area of site: 2.9 ha

Summary of results: The evaluation has revealed the presence of a number of archaeological deposits mainly comprising linear features but with a few postholes also. Most of the geophysical anomalies were confirmed as being of archaeological origin possibly indicating an enclosure being of medieval date. A single struck flint might be indicative of some slight prehistoric activity in the area.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Taunton and the digital archive will be deposited with ADS and the material archive at The Museum of Barnstable and North Devon with accession code NDDMS:2014.41 in due course.

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 09.07.14 Steve Preston✓ 09.07.14

TVAS (South West),Unit 21, Apple Business Centre, Frobisher Way, Taunton TA2 6BB

Tel. (01823) 288 284; Fax (01823) 272 462; email: southwest@tvas.co.uk; website : www.tvas.co.uk

Great Hele Barton, South Molton, Devon
An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Weale

Report 14/93

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Great Hele Barton, South Molton, Devon (NGR SS 7229 2431) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Rob Armour Chelu of Armour Heritage Limited, Greystone Cottage, Trudoxhill, Frome, Somerset BA11 5DP on behalf of Cornwall Geo-environmental Ltd, Tremough Innovation Centre, Tremough Campus, Penryn, Cornwall TR10 9TA.

A planning application is to be made from North Devon Council for the construction of an anaerobic digester and associated infrastructure at Great Hele Barton, South Molton, Devon. In light of the results of a geophysical survey the Devon County Historic Environment Team has asked for an evaluation by trial trench to inform the planning process with regard to potential archaeological implications and to provide sufficient information on which to base a mitigation strategy if appropriate.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification (CG-e 2014) approved by Mr Stephen Reed of Devon County Historic Environment Team and based on a brief prepared by him. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Weale, Richard Tabor, and Steven Crabb from 5th–11th June 2014 and the site code is GHB14/93. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, South West in Taunton and the digital archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) and the material archive with The Museum of Barnstable and North Devon with accession code NDDMS:2014.41.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located 1.5km to the south of the centre of South Molton, with the River Mole 500m to the east of the site(Fig. 1). The site lies at approximately 140m above OD, sloping down from about 145m in the north-east to around 133m in the south-west. The site is currently two areas of arable farm land under cereal crop divided by a trackway, to the south of the current farmyard of Great Hele Barton (Fig. 2) The underlying geology is shown as a mixture of Carboniferous Mudstone and Siltstone of the Bude Formation and Sandstone of the same formation.

A mixture of crushed sandstones were observed within the trenches, along with patches of mudstone (BGS 1980).

Archaeological background

Great Hele Barton lies within an area of known archaeological potential, mainly represented by cropmarks visible in aerial photographs. A large sub-circular single ditched enclosure lies 350m to the east of the site. Although not dated it is likely that the enclosure is of prehistoric date. A rectangular enclosure lies 800m to the north of the site and a group of enclosures which appear superimposed lies 625m to the north-west of the site; again although these are undated a prehistoric date is likely. Two Iron Age hillforts lie within the wider area, with one 2km to the southwest of the site at Woodhouse and the other 3.9km to the northeast on Whitechapel Moor.

The origins of South Molton appear to lie within the early medieval period as it is recorded as being occupied around AD650. The settlement itself is recorded twice in Domesday Book of 1086 (Williams and Martin 2002). The manor was held by the King where there was 1½ virgates of land which covered enough arable for 40 ploughs, 10 acres of meadow, 30 acres of pasture and a large expanse of woodland. The population numbered 12 villans and 4 borders with 20 ploughs, with a further plough and two slaves in the king's demesne. The whole was valued for tax at £10. Half a virgate of land had recently been added to the manor and was called Ringdone which was worth 5s. One further virgate of land was held by four priests in alms worth 20s which may be an indication of a minster church within the settlement (Higham 2008).

One the site itself, a geophysical survey (ArchaeoPhysica 2014) revealed anomalies suggesting an enclosure, overlying an earlier field system, a possible former building and potentially other features. While none of these can be dated by geophysics, the results suggested they were potentially of archaeological origin. The evaluation was designed in part to investigate these anomalies.

Objectives and methodology

In general terms, the aims of the archaeological fieldwork were:

to clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the site that may be impacted by the development;

to identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the site; and

to assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits.

It was proposed to dig 9 trenches of various lengths between 9m and 25m, and 1.6m wide. The trenching was to be located to examine the geophysical anomalies thought to be of archaeological origin. Topsoil, and any other overburden were removed by a JCB- type backhoe machine. A toothless ditching bucket was to be used to expose archaeologically sensitive levels, under constant archaeological supervision.

Where archaeological features were exposed, these were to be investigated. A programme of environmental sampling was to take place should sufficient well stratified subsoil deposits be located. A metal detector was to be used to enhance the recovery of metal finds. Stripped areas and the spoilheaps were to be scanned for the retrieval of artefacts

Results

Eight of the trenches (1-8) were dug as intended (Fig. 3). Trench 9 was sub-divided into two halves (9a and 9b) to preserve a stock-proof fence that ran though the centre of the trench's planned location. The trenches ranged from 9m to 21.90m in length and in depth from 0.37m to 0.75m. All trenches were 1.6m wide. Topsoil varied from 0.27m to 0.45m deep across the site and subsoil varied from 0.04m to 0.18m deep.

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

Trench 1 (Figs 4 and 6; Pls 1 and 8)

Trench 1 was aligned SSE to NNW, 12.80m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.33m of topsoil above 0.09m of brown clayey sand subsoil above sandstone natural geology. Trench 1 contained a ditch 21 that was aligned south-west to north-east which was 0.92m wide and 0.50m deep. It contained a single fill (55) a friable red brown sandy silt that contained one sherd of 12th–14th century pottery. Ditch 21 appeared to correspond to an anomaly located by the geophysical survey.

Trench 2 (Figs. 4 and 5; Pls 2 and 5)

Trench 2 was aligned SSW to NNE, 15.60m long and 0.66m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.33m of topsoil above 0.31m of subsoil above natural geology. Trench 2 contained two ditches 1 and 2. Ditch 1 was aligned south-east to north-west, was 1.60m wide and 0.64m deep. It contained a friable red brown sandy silt (52) that contained seventeen sherds of 12th–14th century pottery and a single piece of riveted copper alloy. Beneath deposit

52 was a friable red brown clayey silt (54) that contained three sherds of 12th–14th century pottery. Ditch 1 cut ditch 2 that appeared to be aligned roughly north to south with a return to the north-west, and was 0.76m wide and 0.46m deep. It contained a yellow red clayey sand (53) that contained no artefacts. Ditch 1 appeared to correspond to an anomaly located by the geophysical survey which forms part of a rectangular enclosure. The topsoil of Trench 2 contained three sherds of 12th–14th century pottery.

Trench 3 (Figs 3, 4 and 5)

Trench 3 was aligned WSW to ENE, 9m long and 0.49m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.32m of topsoil above 0.17m of subsoil above natural geology. Trench 3 contained a single post hole (3) which was circular in plan 0.28m in diameter and 0.07m deep and filled with a yellow brown sandy silt (56) that contained no artefacts.

Trench 4 (Figs 3, 4 and 5; Pl. 6)

Trench 4 was aligned SE to NW, 18.60m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.27m of topsoil above 0.12m of subsoil above natural geology. Trench 4 contained a ditch, 6 and a gully, 7. Ditch 6 was aligned south–west to north–east, was 1.73m wide and 0.52m deep. Its upper fill (63) of loose grey blue course silty sand overlay a yellow brown course silty sandy (65). Neither fill contained artefacts. Gully 7 was 0.31m wide and 0.12m deep. It contained a red brown course sandy silt (64) that contained no artefacts. Ditch 6 appeared to correspond to an anomaly located by the geophysical survey which forms part of a rectangular enclosure. The much shallower gully 7 did not appear on the geophysical survey.

Trench 5 (Figs 3, 4 and 6)

Trench 5 was aligned SE to NW, 11.9m long and 0.44m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.30m of topsoil above 0.14m of subsoil above natural geology. Trench 5 contained a single gully (19) that was aligned roughly west to east, 0.40m wide and 0.15m deep. It contained a red brown silty sand (61) that contained no artefacts. Gully 19 appeared to be cut through the subsoil and corresponded with a geophysical anomaly.

Trench 6 (Fig. 3)

Trench 6 was aligned roughly south to north, 12.9m long and 0.37m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.33m of topsoil above 0.04m of subsoil above natural geology. The topsoil of Trench 6 contained one sherd of modern pottery. No archaeological deposits were observed and the geophysical survey anomaly appeared to be of geological origin.

Trench 7 (Figs 3, 4 and 6)

Trench 7 was aligned SSW east to NNE, 10.60m long and 0.48m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.34m of topsoil above 0.14m of subsoil above natural geology. Trench 7 contained Gully 18 that was aligned south–east to north–west 0.50m wide and 0.10m deep. It's single fill of yellow red silty sand (62) contained no artefacts. Gully 18 appears to be within an area of anomalies located by the geophysical survey, but can not be reliably identified with any one anomaly.

Trench 8 (Figs 3, 4, 5 and 6; Pls 3,4,7 and 8)

Trench 8 was aligned SSW to NNE, 21.9m long and 0.44m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.33m of topsoil above 0.08m of subsoil above natural geology. Trench 8 contained five ditches, a gully and a posthole. Ditch 9 was aligned north-west to south-east, 0.90m wide and 0.58m deep and its fill (58) was a yellow brown silty sand that contained no artefacts. Ditch 9 cut Ditch 8 which was aligned south-west to north-east, 0.53m wide and 0.32m deep. Ditch 8 contained a yellow brown clayey sand (57) that contained no artefacts. 1m to the north of ditch 9 was ditch 11 which was aligned south-west to north-east, 0.56m wide and 0.37m deep. Ditch 11 contained a yellow brown sandy silt (59) that contained no artefacts. Post hole 12 was 0.32m in diameter and 0.11m deep. It contained a red brown sandy silt (60) with no artefacts.

Gully 13 was aligned south-west to north-east and was 0.24m wide and 0.12m deep. It contained a yellow brown silty sand silt (66) but no artefacts. Ditch 14 was aligned south-west to north-east, 0.96m wide and 0.36m deep and filled with a yellow brown clayey sand (67) that contained no artefacts. Ditch 15 was aligned east to west, and was 0.69m wide and 0.25m deep. Ditch 15 contained a yellow brown silty sand (68) but no artefacts. Several of the ditches within Trench 8 appear to correspond to anomalies located by the geophysical survey.

Trench 9a (Figs 3, 4 and 6)

Trench 9a was aligned SW to NE, 9.40m long and 0.75m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.45m of topsoil above 0.10m of subsoil above natural geology. Trench 9a contained ditch 22 that was aligned north-west to south-east and was 0.69m wide and 0.11m deep. It contained a red brown clay silt (69) but no artefacts. The northern 4m of the trench was heavily disturbed by a modern truncation that contained modern plastic and ceramic building material.

Trench 9b (Fig. 3)

Trench 9a was aligned SW east to NE, 12.0m long and 068m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.15m of topsoil above natural geology. The whole length of trench 9b was heavily disturbed by a series of modern trackways containing plastic, Tarmac and concrete. A sherd of 12th-14th century pottery was recovered from the topsoil.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 28 sherds with a total weight of 123g. It was nearly all medieval, other than a single modern sherd. The following fabric types were noted:

NDMC: North Devon Medieval Coarseware, 12th – 14th century (Allan 1994). Coarse quartz-tempered wares of the type made in the Bideford and Barnstaple area. 26 sherds, 120g.
HGW: Ham Green Ware, 12th–mid 13th century (Vince 1984, 255). Mainly glazed jugs, produced at Ham Green near Bristol. 1 sherd, 1g.
MOD: Miscellaneous 19th and 20th century wares. 1 sherd, 2g.

All the fabrics are common finds in the region. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 3. All the sherds of NDMC were from unglazed jars, including a high, everted and curved rimsherd of a form typical of the tradition (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, fig. 212). All the medieval sherds showed evidence of surface attrition, perhaps due to the soil conditions and the relative softness of the fabric.

Struck flint by Steve Ford

A single cortical struck flint was recovered from the topsoil from trench 5. It is not closely datable and is likely to be of Neolithic or Bronze Age date but could possibly be plough struck in more recent times.

Charred plant remains by Joanna Pine

Two samples of 20L each were floated and wet sieved using a 0.25mm mesh to recover charred plant remains. Sample 1 from ditch 1 (52) contained a small amount of wood charcoal, with a few pieces over 5mm across. Sample 2 from ditch 2 (53) contained a very few very small fragments of charcoal.

Copper Alloy object by Andy Weale

A small unidentified fragment of copper alloy weighing less than 1g was recovered from ditch 1 (52).

Conclusion

The evaluation has shown that the majority of the anomalies located by the geophysical survey correspond to archaeological features within the trenches (Fig. 7). The only real exception to this was the anomaly in Trench 6 which appeared to be geological. In addition the trenching also revealed shallower features which were not represented by geophysical anomalies.

The majority of the features excavated within the trenches remain undated but where dating evidence was recovered, this suggested a medieval date. In particular ditch 1 in Trench 2 which appears to be reliably Medieval in date may form a part of a rectangular enclosure identified by the geophysical survey. Similarly ditch 21 in trench 1 may form a further component of this enclosure. Ditch 2, stratigraphically below ditch 1, must be earlier, but not necessarily by any great time span.

The evaluation trenching has confirmed that the site has archaeological potential as suggested by the geophysical survey and this is likely to be represent medieval deposits.

References

Allan, J P, 1994, 'Medieval pottery and the dating of deserted settlements on Dartmoor', *Proc Devon Archaeol Soc* **52**, 141–7

ArchaeoPhysica, 2014, Great Hele Barton, South Molton, Devon, Geophysical Survey Report, Archaeophysica, proejct GHD141, Hereford

BGS, 1980, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 309, Solid and Draft Edition, Keyworth

CG-e, 2014, 'Written Scheme of Investigation, Archaeological Field Evaluation, Great Hele Barton, South Molton, Devon, Cornwall Geo-environmental Ltd, Penryn

Higham, R, 2008, *Making of Anglo-Saxon Devon,* Exeter

McCarthy, M R and Brooks, C M, 1988, *Medieval Pottery in Britain AD900-1600* Leicester

NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London

Vince, A G, 1984, 'Late Saxon and medieval pottery in Gloucestershire', in A Saville (ed), *Archaeology in Gloucestershire. From the Earliest Hunters to the Industrial Age*, 248–75

Williams, A and Martin, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book, a complete translation,* London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at south or west end

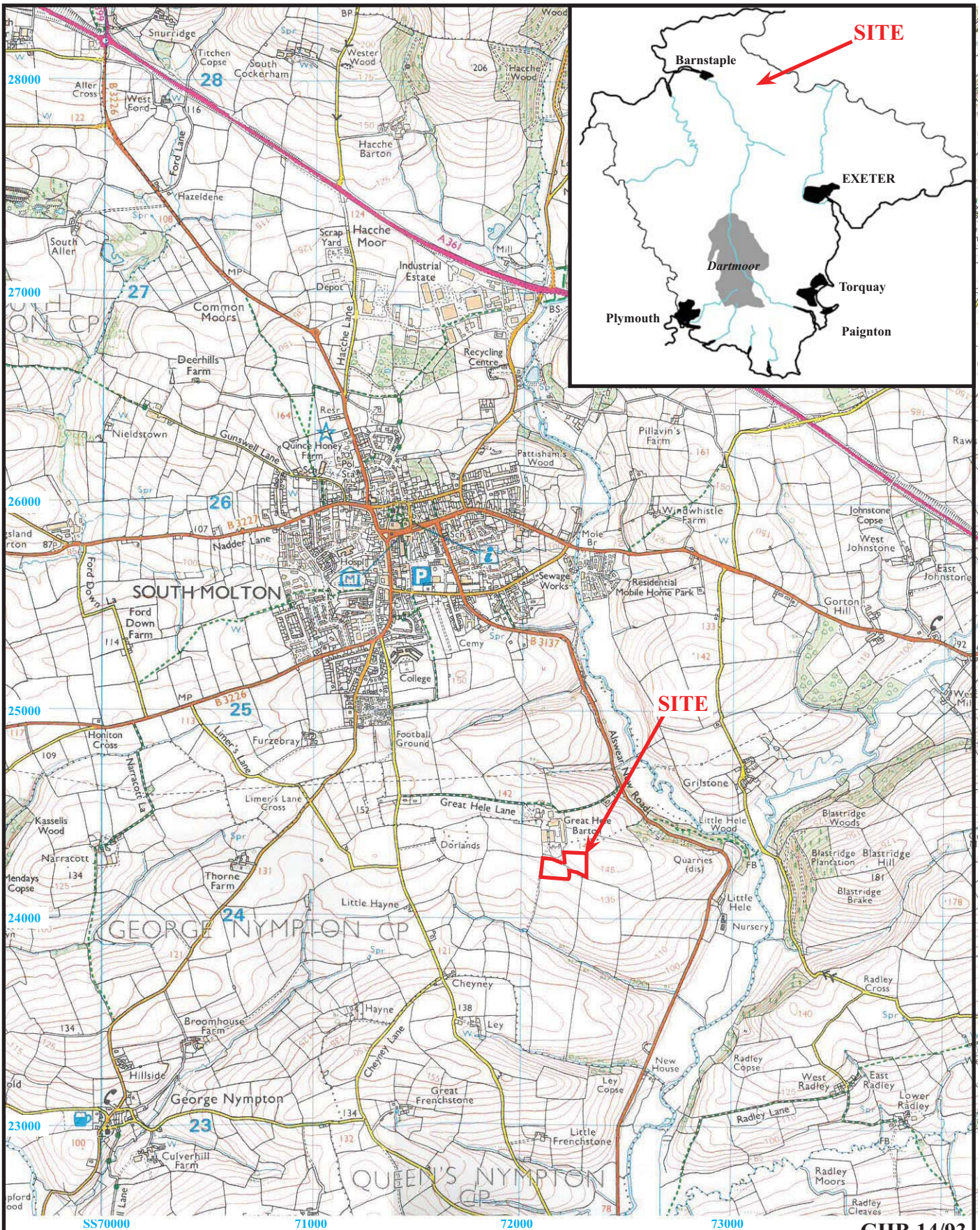
Trench	*Length (m)*	*Breadth (m)*	*Depth (m)*	*Comment*
1	12.80	1.60	0.44	0–0.33m topsoil, subsoil 0.33m to 0.42m sandstone natural geology 0.42m+. Ditch 21. **[Pls 1 and 8]**
2	15.60	1.60	0.66	0–0.33m topsoil, subsoil 0.33m to 0.64m sandstone natural geology 0.64m+. Ditches 1 and 2. **[Pls 2 and 5]**
3	9.0	1.60	0.49	0–0.32m topsoil, subsoil 0.32m to 0.49m sandstone natural geology 0.49m+. Post hole 3
4	18.60	1.60	0.40	0–0.27m topsoil, subsoil 0.27m to 0.39m sandstone natural geology 0.39m+. Ditch 6 Gully 7. **[Pl. 6]**
5	11.90	1.60	0.44	0–0.30m topsoil, subsoil 0.30m to 0.44m sandstone natural geology 0.44m+. Ditch 19
6	12.90	1.60	0.37	0–0.33m topsoil, subsoil 0.33m to 0.37m sandstone natural geology 0.37m+.
7	10.60	1.60	0.48	0–0.34m topsoil, subsoil 0.34m to 0.48m sandstone natural geology 0.48m+. Gully 18
8	21.90	1.60	0.41	0–0.33m topsoil, subsoil 0.33m to 0.41m sandstone natural geology 0.41m+. Ditch 8, Ditch 9, Ditch 11, Post hole12, Gully 13, Ditches 14, and 15. [**Pls 3,4 and 7,8]**
9a	9.40	1.60	0.75	0–0.45m topsoil, subsoil 0.45m to 0.55m sandstone natural geology 0.55m+. Ditch 22
9b	12.0	1.60	0.68	0–0.15m topsoil, natural geology 0.68m+. Modern track ways

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

Trench	*Cut*	*Fill (s)*	*Type*	*Date*	*Dating evidence*
All		50	Topsoil	Modern	Pottery
All		51	Subsoil	Unknown	None
2	1	52, 54	Ditch	12th-14th century	Pottery
2	2	53	Ditch	Medieval or earlier	Stratigraphy
3	3	56	Post Hole	Unknown	None
4	6	63	Ditch	12th-14th century	Landscape
4	7	64	Gully	Unknown	None
8	8	57	Ditch	Unknown	None
8	9	58	Ditch	Unknown	None
8	11	59	Ditch	Unknown	None
8	12	60	Post Hole	Unknown	None
8	13	66	Gully	Unknown	None
8	14	67	Ditch	Unknown	None
8	15	68	Ditch	Unknown	None
7	18	62	Gully	Unknown	None
5	19	61	Gully	Unknown	None
1	21	55	Ditch	12th-14th century	Pottery
9a	22	69	Ditch	Unknown	None

APPENDIX 3: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

			NDMC		HGW		MOD	
Trench	*Cut*	*Deposit*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*
2	1	52	16	73	1	1		
2	1	54	3	8				
1	21	55	1	1				
2		50	3	33				
6		50					1	2
9B		50	3	5				
		Total	26	120	1	1	1	2

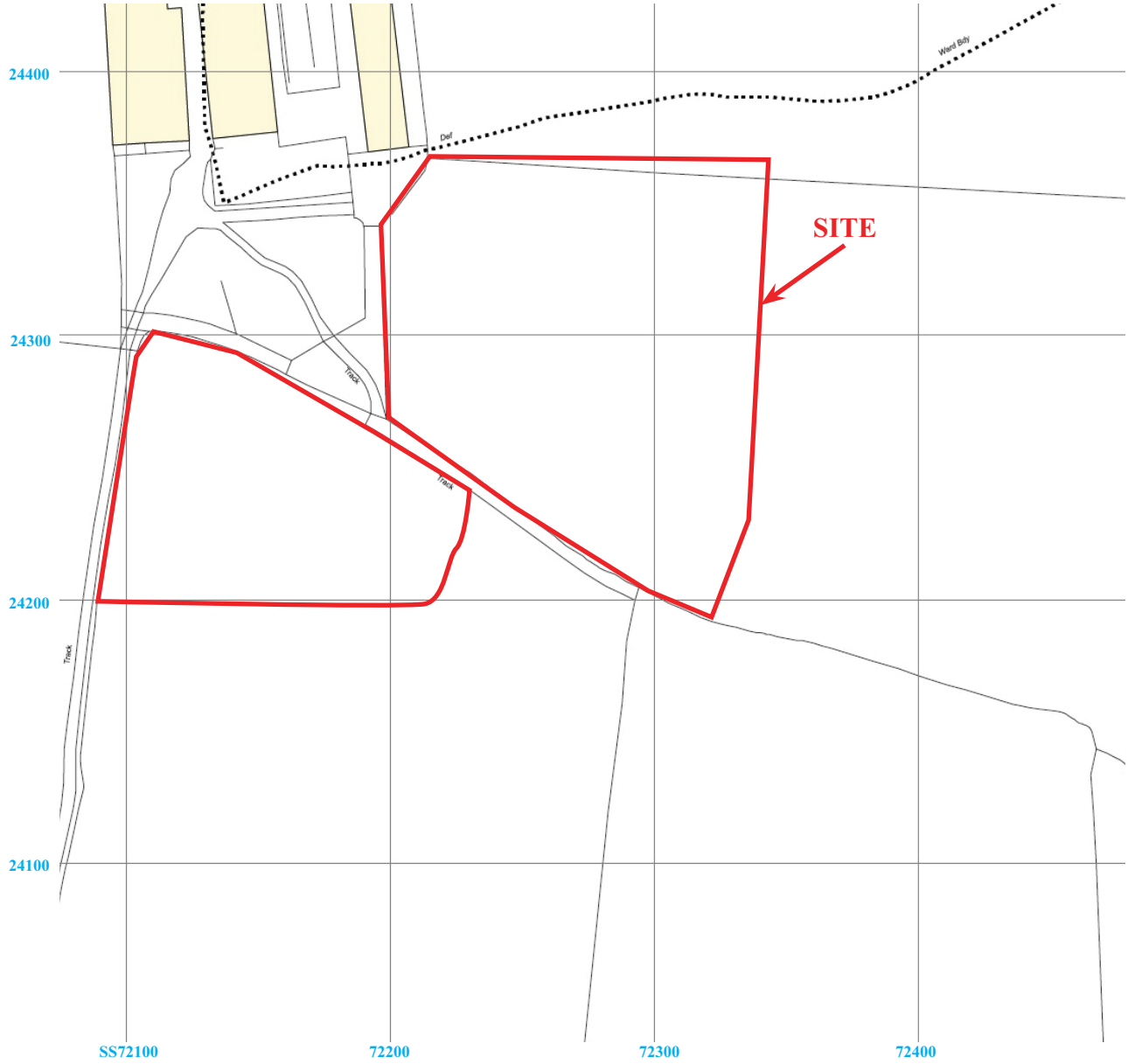


GHB 14/93

Great Hele Barton,
South Moulton, Devon, 2014
Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 1. Location of site at Great Hele Barton and in relation to its relative location in South Moulton and Devon.

THAMES VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES SOUTH WEST



GHB 14/93

N

Great Hele Barton, South Molton,
Devon, 2014
Archaeological Evaluation
Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

THAMES VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES SOUTH WEST

GHB 14/93

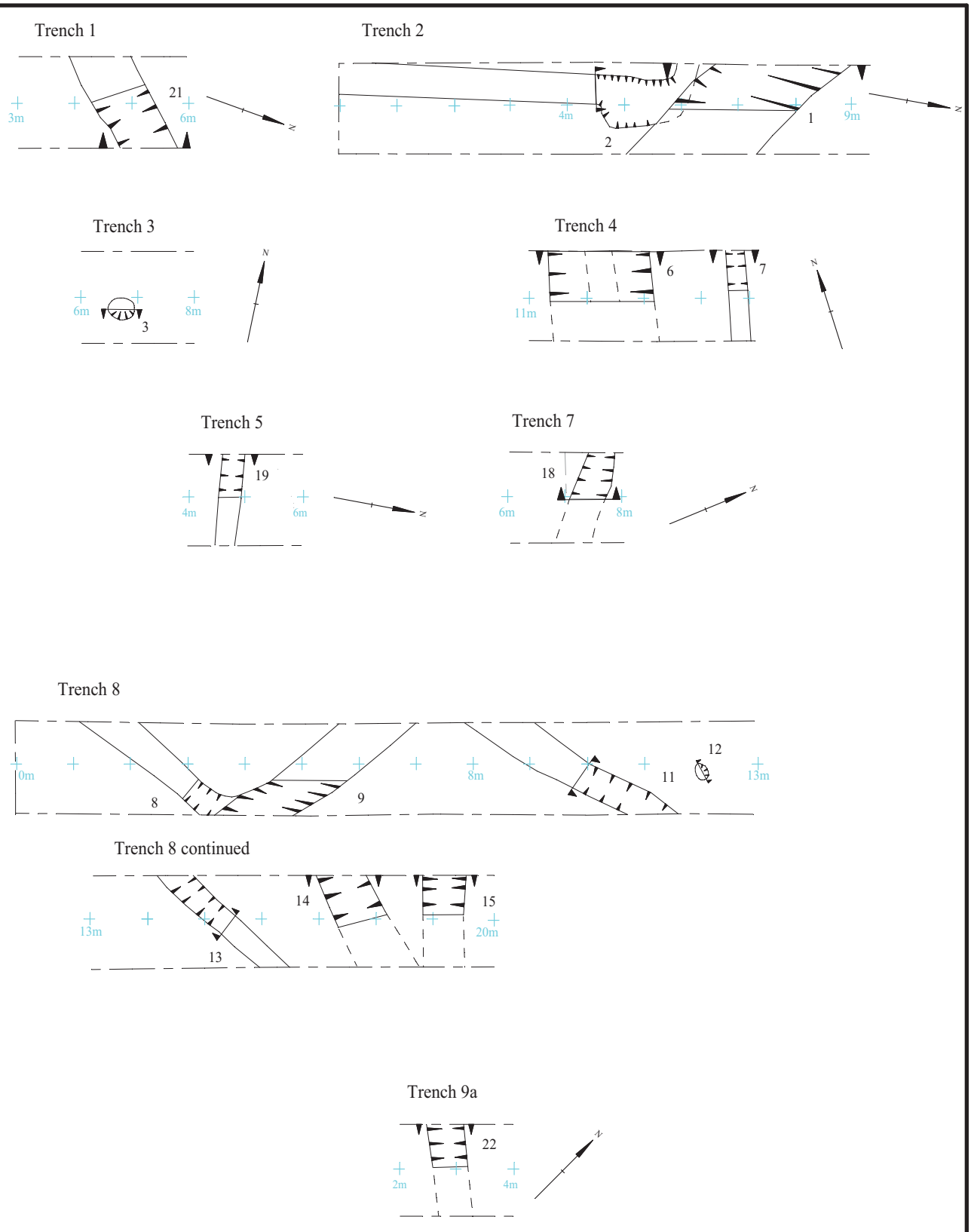
N

Great Hele Barton, South Moulton, Devon, 2014 Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 3. Location of trenches

0 100m

THAMES VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES SOUTH WEST



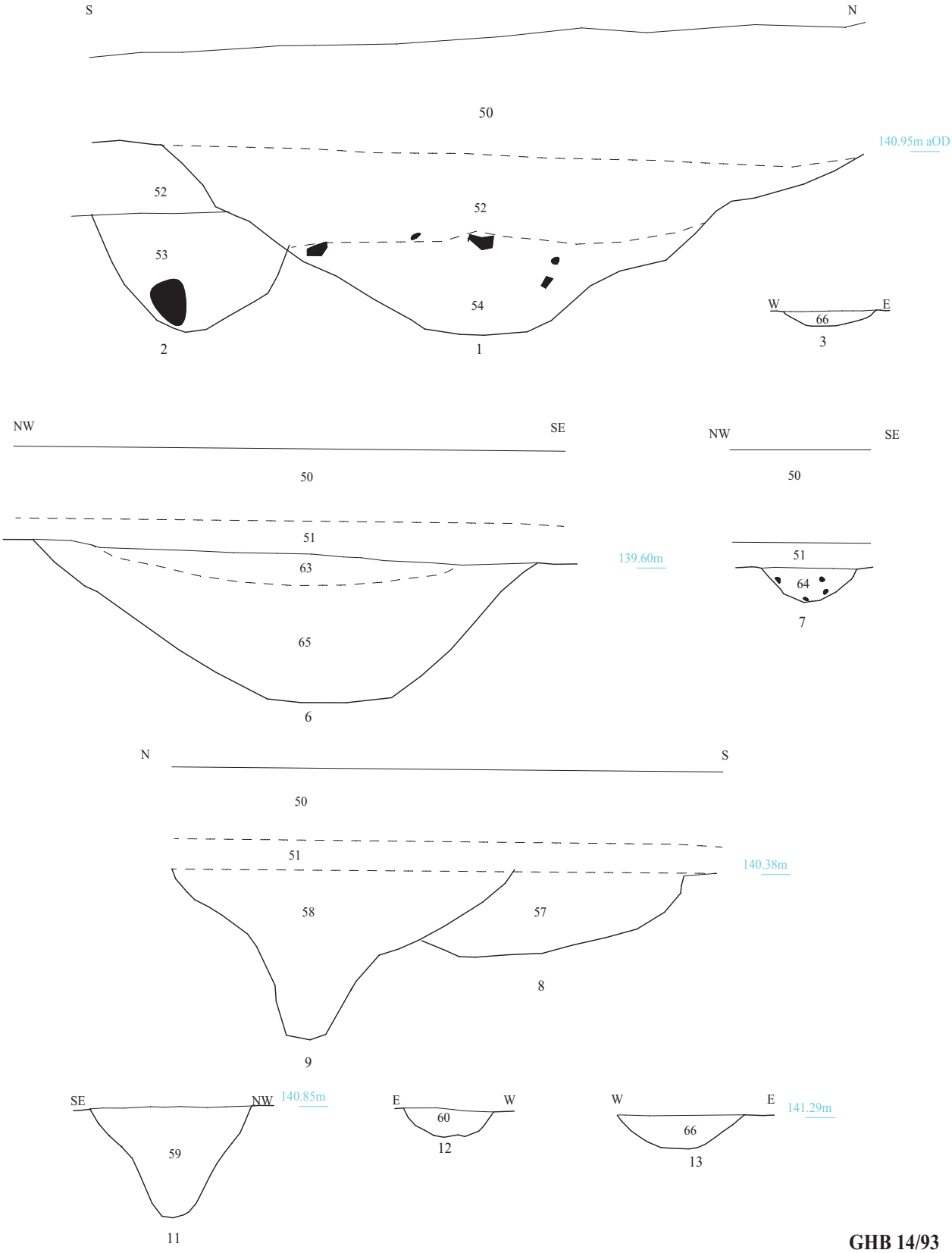
GHB 14/93

Great Hele Barton, South Moulton, Devon, 2014
Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 4. Detail of trenches.

0 5m

THAMES VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES SOUTH WEST



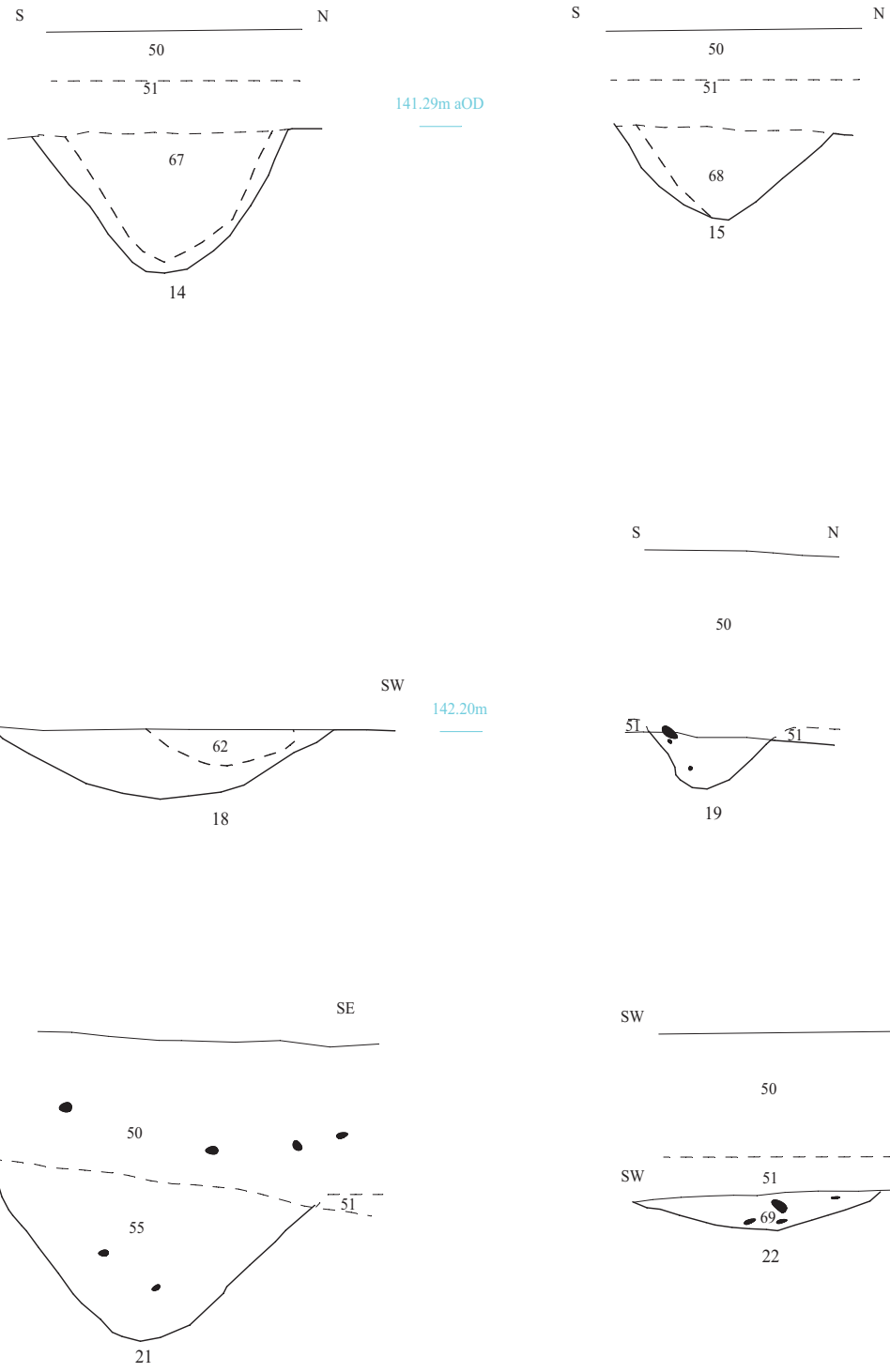
GHB 14/93

Great Hele Barton, South Moulton, Devon, 2014
Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 5. Sections

0 1m

THAMES VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES SOUTH WEST



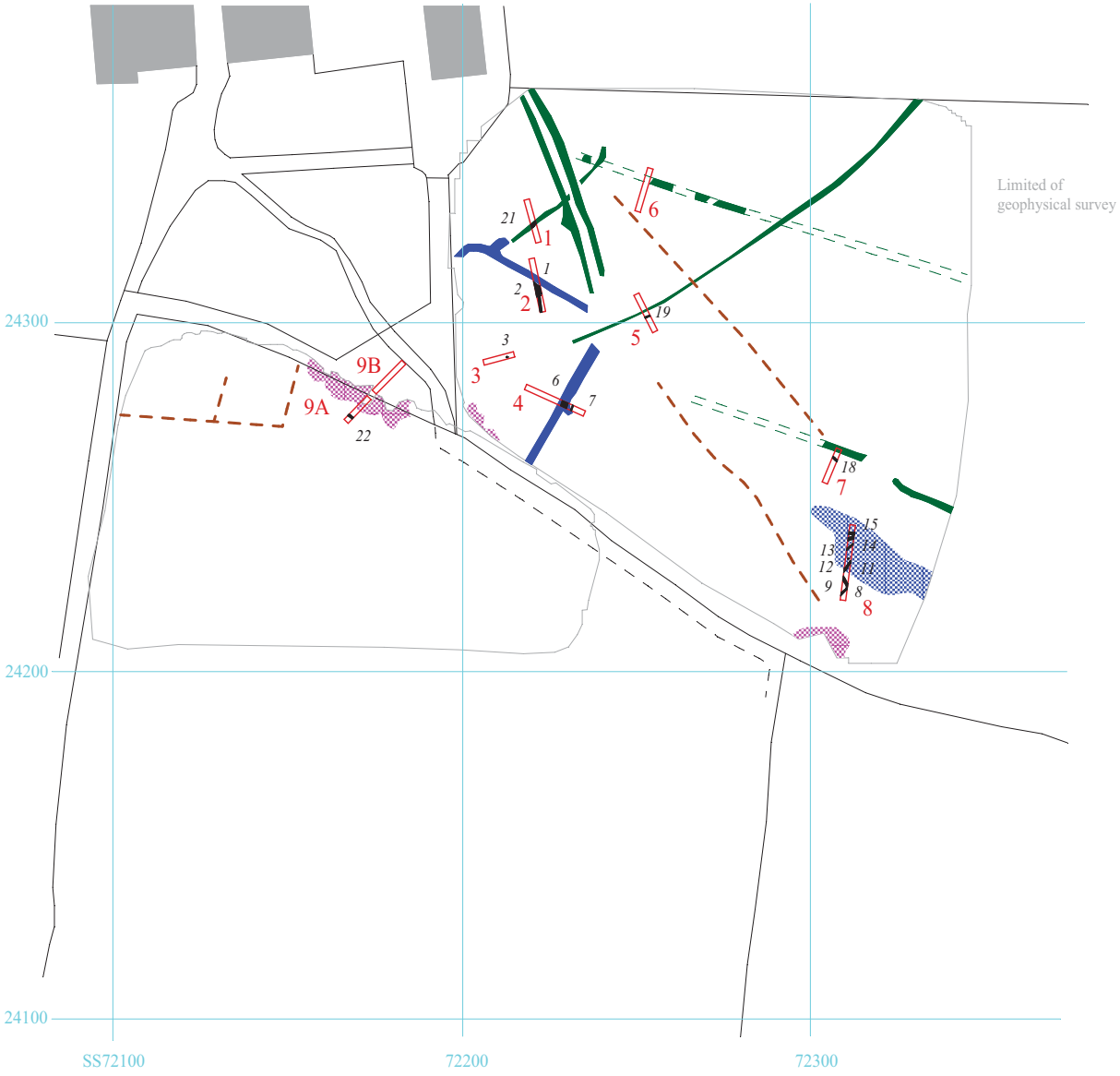
GHB 14/93

Great Hele Barton, South Moulton, Devon, 2014
Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 6. Sections

0 1m

THAMES VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES SOUTH WEST



Key

Positive anomaly (agricultural origin)

Positive anomaly (archaeological origin)

Area anomaly of archaeological origin

Probable field drainage

Area of magnetic interference

GHB 14/93

N

Great Hele Barton, South Moulton, Devon, 2014 Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 7. Location of trenches, in relation to geophysical anomalies

0 100m

THAMES VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES SOUTH WEST

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

Plate 2. Trench 2, looking north, Scales 2m and 1m.

Plate 3. Trench 8, looking north, Scales 2m and 1m.

Plate 4. Trench 8 looking north east (post excavation), Scales:2m and 1m.

Plate 5. Trench 2, Cuts 1 and 2 looking north west,
Scales: 2m and 1m

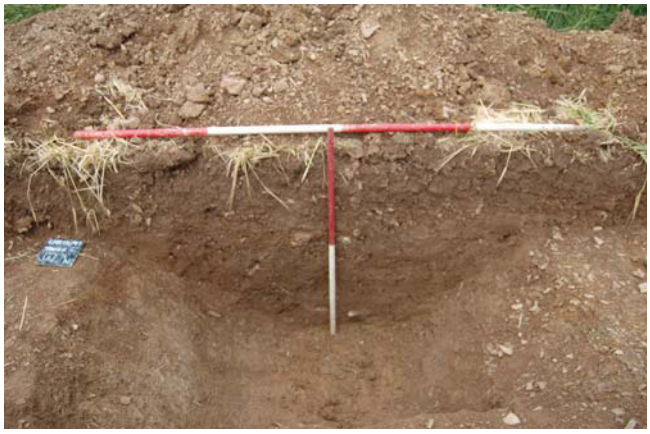


Plate 6. Trench 4, Cut 6 looking south west,
Scales: 2m and 1m.

Plate 7. Trench 8, Cuts 8 and 9 looking south east,
Scales: 2m and 1m..

Plate 8. Trench 1, Cut 21 looking north east,
Scale: 1m.

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

TVAS (South West),
Unit 21 Apple Business Centre,
Frobisher Way, Taunton,
Somerset, TA2 6BB

Tel: 01823 288 284
Fax: 01823 272 462
Email: southwest@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk