

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**South Oxfordshire Crematorium,
Wantage Road, Garford, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Recording Action

by Susan Porter

Site Code: WRG 11/23

(SU 4320 9516)

**South Oxford Crematorium,
Wantage Road, Garford, Oxfordshire**

An Archaeological Recording Action

For Memoria Ltd

by Susan Porter

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WRG 11/23

December 2014

Summary

Site name: South Oxfordshire Crematorium, Wantage Road, Garford, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 4320 9516

Site activity: Recording Action

Date and duration of project: 3rd – 27th February 2014

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Susan Porter

Site code: WRG 11/23

Area of site: 3100 sq m

Summary of results:

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course, with accession code OXCMS:2011.77

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South Oxfordshire Crematorium, Wantage Road, Garford, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Recording Action

by Susan Porter

Report 11/23b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action carried out at the site of South Oxfordshire Crematorium, off the east side of the A338 Wantage Road, Garford, Oxfordshire SU 4320 9516 (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 (app 11/02453/FUL) has been gained from the Vale of White Horse District Council to construct a new crematorium along with car parking, highway works, a garden of remembrance and an area for natural burials at Wantage Road (A338), Garford, Oxfordshire. The consent has been gained with a condition (4) requiring a programme of archaeological works to excavate and record archaeological deposits prior to their damage or destruction by the development. A desk-based assessment (Richmond 2011) concluded that the site had a moderate potential for the recovery of archaeological remains, as it is located within a landscape of presumed archaeological origin, thought to range in date from Bronze Age to Roman times. This potential was confirmed by field evaluation (Mundin 2011).

The excavation was required in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Hugh Coddington of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, advisers to the district on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Porter, Jo Pine, Steve Crabb and Tom Stewart between 3rd–27th February 2014 and the site code is WRG 11/23.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course, with accession code OXCMS:2011.77.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the south-western portion of a land parcel, bounded by the A338 (Wantage Road) on its western side (Figs 1 and 2). There is a slight fall to the south-west across the central part of the site and the site has been previously under crop. The southern boundary of the site, made by the course of the Nor Brook, is *c.*

57m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), and the northern part is at *c.* 60m aOD. The main road to the west is higher than the field, at a height of 61m aOD (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is recorded as limestone of the Corallian Beds (BGS 1971).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been detailed in a brief for the project prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Coddington 2011) drawing on the results of an earlier desk-based assessment and evaluation for the site (Richmond 2011; Muddin 2011). In summary the site lies in an archaeologically rich area, much of which has been recorded from the air. To the north-east and east, are concentrations of crop marks thought to represent a Roman villa site known as Garford Villa, which is thought to include a stone building within a large enclosure (Henig and Booth 2000). Further to the north *c.* 1km from the site, the locality of the former Noah's Ark Inn is known archaeologically for the presence of a large Roman temple complex including an amphitheatre and extensive Saxon cemetery (Kamash *et al.* 2010). To the west is a large ring ditch (levelled round barrow) cemetery of Bronze Age date with at least ten monuments present. Various other enclosures have been recorded to the north-east and south east.

For the site itself, the western boundary is formed by the A338, which follows the course of the Roman road from *Cunetio* (Marlborough) to Alchester (Bicester) (Margary 1973 route 164). Within the field two cropmark ditches have been recorded from the air and these were thought likely to be of pre-Roman date as they continue on either side of the Roman road. Archaeological evaluation of the site (Muddin 2011) examined the crop mark ditches which were found to contain mixed assemblages of prehistoric pottery and also recorded a number of features in addition to those recorded from the air and which were of prehistoric, Roman and medieval date.

Objectives and methodology

The scheme of works was drawn up in consultation with a number of national and regional research agendas (English Heritage 2005, James and Millet 2001; Hey and Hind 2014). The purpose of the recording action was:

- to excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the areas threatened by the proposed development;
- to produce relative and absolute dating and phasing for deposits and features recorded on the site;
- to establish the character of these deposits in attempt to define functional areas on the site such as industrial, domestic, etc.; and
- to produce information on the economy and local environment and compare and contrast this with the results of other excavations in the region.

More specific research objectives were:

- to determine when the site was first utilised and when it was abandoned;
- to determine the nature and structure of pre-historic and Roman landscape features on the site;
- to determine if there were any contemporary occupation deposits associated with landscape features; and
- to determine the nature of the medieval activity on the site.

The area of excavation corresponds to the footprints of the main structures, car parking and access road on the site. The topsoil and subsoil layers were removed under continuous archaeological supervision by a small 360° type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket to expose the uppermost surface of archaeological deposits. Hand cleaning of the stripped surface then took place. Guidelines for soil conservation and protection (Morris 2014) were adhered to in order to preserve the integrity of the topsoil across the site.

All archaeological features were planned and sectioned as a minimum objective with isolated discrete features such as pits and postholes being excavated in half-section with full excavation taking place if sufficient archaeological dating evidence was not recovered. Sampling of linear features was undertaken up to 10% of their length in slots varying between 1-3m in extent, and all termini and intersections were examined. Where features proved to be of post-medieval date they were sampled at 1% of their length. In areas under examination that proved to be more complex sampling was increased to 20% and a proportion of treeboles were examined in order to confirm this interpretation.

Results

The geology of the excavated area was found predominantly to comprise limestone but became sandy to the south-west. A total of 66 features excavated in 101 slots were excavated revealing five ditches, five gullies, three intercutting pit clusters, 14 isolated pits, 26 isolated postholes, eight natural treeboles, two geological features and three furrows of late medieval/ post-medieval date, to which can be added the features observed in the evaluation phase of works (Figs 2 and 3).

Phase by phase summary

A summary of all excavated features, with the basis for their phasing, forms Appendix 1. The following phases are discussed (Fig. 5):

Phase 1: Bronze Age

Phase 2: Late Bronze Age

Phase 3: Iron Age

Phase 4: Early Roman

Phase 5: Roman

Phase 6: Medieval

There is some degree of confidence that that the deposits assigned to a particular phase are broadly correct. Features have been assigned to phases based primarily on their pottery finds, as there was very little stratigraphy.

Phase 1: Earlier Bronze Age (Fig. 5)

The earlier part of the Bronze Age is possibly represented on site by several features, comprising a single oval pit (1) recorded during the evaluation containing a single sherd of pottery, and six postholes. An isolated posthole (211) containing a single sherd of early prehistoric pottery in the area of the access road (Fig. 3) was heavily truncated by large Iron Age ditch (405).

A cluster of five postholes (240-244) of similar size (0.30-0.45m diameter and depth 0.11-0.15m) and with single fills all comprising friable mid brown grey silty sand, were observed in the south-western corner of the site (Fig. 3). A single sherd of Bronze Age pottery was recovered from posthole (242) and it seems reasonable that the cluster should be of similar date, suggestive of a small structure (whose ground plan however is not obvious) or a fence line.

A ditch slot (11) yielding a single sherd of Bronze Age pottery was also recorded in trench 1 of the evaluation: dating this feature based on a single sherd is clearly only tentative.

Table :, Bronze Age pits and postholes

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fills</i>	<i>Diameter/</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	52	1.60m	0.14m	Pit, oval in plan, recorded in evaluation, contained pottery of early pre-historic date
211	261	0.40m	0.30m	Isolated posthole, truncated by Iron Age ditch (405)
240	298	0.45m	0.11m	Posthole, possible fence line
241	299	0.20m	0.07m	Posthole, possible fence line
242	350	0.45m	0.11m	Posthole, possible fence line, contained pottery of Bronze Age date
243	351	0.35m	0.15m	Posthole, possible fence line
244	352	0.30m	0.13m	Posthole, possible fence line

Phase 2: Later Bronze Age (Fig. 5)

The later Bronze Age comprises two linear features (406 and 408) which lie on the same East - West alignment (Fig. 3) and as such may represent an intermittent field boundary or land division. The ditches were broadly similar in width and depth, ranging between 0.65m-1.05m wide and between 0.15m-0.30m in depth, with 408 tending to be narrower and more shallow than 406. Ditch 406, which contained 6 sherds of Late Bronze Age

pottery was present for a short distance, 13.5m, before terminating at either end, its relationship with gully 402 was unclear in section, although pottery of Iron Age date was recovered from the gully. The ditch was also slightly truncated to the north by pit 142. Ditch 408 was truncated by a furrow (248) as it entered the site from the west, terminating 12.5m to the east. It contained four Bronze Age sherds. Both ditches had a single fill broadly comprising friable/soft brown grey sandy clay.

Phase 3: Iron Age (Fig. 5)

Gullies

Three segments of narrow gully (401, 402 and 403) were observed to cross the site on a broadly NE–SW alignment and are considered to form a field boundary with two possible entrances (Fig. 3).

The westernmost segment (401) of the long narrow gully crossed the site and was truncated by furrows. It extended to the west beyond the area of excavation and terminated in slot (148) in the centre of the site. It contained only one undated small sherd of pottery. The segment varied in width between 0.25m and 0.45m with near vertical sides and a flat base, the depth of which varied between 0.04m and 0.14m.

The central segment (402) terminated at its western extent and to its east it terminated in an unclear relationship with posthole 128, perhaps contemporary. This central segment varied in width between 0.20m and 0.30m with near vertical sides and a flat base varying in depth from 0.04m to 0.20m. A single sherd of later prehistoric pottery was recovered from slot 129 within this segment.

The easternmost segment (403) terminated at its western extent in an unclear relationship with posthole 143, again perhaps contemporary, and extended to the east beyond the area of excavation, it ranged in width between 0.20–0.35m again with vertical sides and a flat base between 0.07m and 0.17m in depth. A single fill was observed in all three segments, comprising firm/ friable mid brown grey silty clay darkening in colour to the east. No dating evidence was recovered. It is possible that postholes 128 and 143 on either gully terminal may be forming a gateway.

Ditches

The two largest ditches (404) and (405) visible as crop marks in aerial photographs were located at the northern end of the site, in the area of the new access road, and although the two intersect no relationship could be discerned and it may be considered that the ditches form part of the same enclosure or boundary.

Both ditches were wide, with 404 varying in width between 2.60 and 2.90m and 405 being narrower at only 1.80m in width. Ditch 404 did narrow slightly after the intersection point close to the limit of the excavated area and it seems possible that splits and continues partially on its east–west alignment, where it was encountered during the evaluation as features 16 and 19, but it may also turn to the north, becoming ditch 405, also encountered in the evaluation as 7 and 18.

Ditch 405 was excavated to a depth of 0.40m, however, due to the presence of heavy groundwater it seems unlikely that this was the base, as ditch 404 varied in depth from 0.55m to 0.70m, though a section excavated in the evaluation phase (7) was recorded to have a depth of 1.10m. The fill deposits were similar in both ditches with 404 comprising 0.30m mid red brown sandy silt overlying 0.25m firm mid grey brown silty sand with limestone inclusions; the fill deposits of 405 were a little darker comprising 0.20m firm mid grey brown sandy silt overlying 0.16m mid brown grey sandy silt with limestone fragments which in turn overlay 0.08m firm dark grey brown sandy silt with occasional limestone. Pottery was recovered from both ditches, with 12 sherds of Iron Age/ later prehistoric pottery from 404, with 11 sherds of later prehistoric and a single sherd of early Roman date from ditch 405.

Pit Cluster

Three groups of intercutting pits were observed at the north-western extent of the access road, of which the southernmost cluster was predominantly Iron Age, whilst the other two clusters are considered to have an early Roman/ transitional date (see below).

The Iron Age cluster contained three sub-circular steep sided pits (215, 216 and 217), of which 216 was the latest feature cutting into both pits 215 and 217. No relationship was visible between the earlier two. The pits measured between 0.77-1.20m in diameter and varying between 0.30-0.62m in depth, with slightly concave bases. Pit 215 contained two fill deposits comprising 0.32m soft light brown grey sandy clay overlying 0.30m soft dark brown grey sandy clay. Pits 216 and 217 had single fill deposits broadly comprising soft reddish brown sandy clay (slightly darker in pit 216). Pottery of later prehistoric date was recovered from pits 215 and 216 whilst 217 was assigned to this phase on the basis of stratigraphy, and while it could be earlier, the similarity of fill with 215 suggests they were broadly contemporary. A single sherd of Roman pottery from the upper fill of 215 is likely to have been intrusive.

Pit 229 formed the earliest phase of the northernmost pit cluster, the rest of which appears early Roman in date. The pit was circular in plan with a slightly concave base and contained two deposits 0.15m friable mid red

brown silty sand overlying friable dark grey brown clayey sand, the uppermost of which contained two sherds of Iron Age pottery and was truncated by pit (230).

Isolated Pits and Postholes

Four isolated features were assigned to this phase on the basis of finds recovered, two pits and two postholes, summarised in table 2 below, all had a single fill broadly comprising friable mid/dark red brown (or grey (246)) sandy clay.

Table 2: Iron Age pits and postholes

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fills</i>	<i>Diameter</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comment</i>
113	163	0.90m	0.18m	Single sherd later prehistoric pottery
206	256	0.32m	0.06m	Single sherd Iron Age pottery
208	258	0.35m	0.11m	Five sherds later prehistoric pottery
246	354	1.80m	0.35	Twelve sherds later prehistoric pottery

Phase 4: Late Iron Age/ Early Roman (Transitional). (Fig. 5

Pit Clusters

The northernmost pit cluster comprised five circular /sub-circular pits (225, 228-231) ranging in diameter between 0.82m and 2.63m, the sides were gently sloping and the depths varied between 0.15-0.34m. The cluster was excavated in two separate sections, with 225 and 228 visible in one section and 229, 230 and 231 in another. On the basis of pottery, pit 229 containing two sherds of Iron Age pottery is the earliest of the cluster (see above) and 231 is the latest with a single sherd of Roman pottery. The remaining pits contain a substantial mix of prehistoric and Roman pottery.

In the first section (Fig. 4) it could be seen that pit 228 truncated pit 225. In the second section Iron Age pit 229 was cut by pit 230 which was in turn truncated by pit 231. A single fill deposit broadly comprising soft/friable mid-light grey brown sandy silt or dark reddish brown/ grey sandy silt was attested for all pits.

The central pit cluster contained four sub circular pits (220, 221, 222, and 223) ranging in width between 0.59-1.30m in diameter with steep sides and flattish, slightly concave bases at depths between 0.28-0.30m. Pit 222 is the latest feature (although containing six sherds of Iron Age pottery) cutting into both pits 221 and 223, with pit 221 cutting into the earliest pit 220: no relationship can be postulated between pits 220 and 223. A single fill deposit is attested for each pit, broadly comprising either soft light grey brown sandy silt (220 and 223), or soft light reddish brown sandy silt with occasional pea gravel and chalky flecks (221 and 222). Pottery of later prehistoric/ Roman date was recovered from pits 220, and 221, whilst pit 222 produced six sherds of Iron Age pottery.

A further pit in this vicinity (226) was assigned to this phase on the basis of finds recovery comprising 2 sherds of prehistoric/ Roman pottery. The pit was circular in plan with a diameter of 1.50m, with steep sides sloping to a concave base 0.25m in depth and contained a single fill comprising friable mid grey brown silty sand with fragmented limestone inclusions.

Phase 5: Roman (Fig. 5)

The Roman period is represented by a single ditch and three pits (Fig. 3). Ditch 400 lay on a roughly east–west alignment at the southern extent of the site and had previously been observed during the evaluation (4). Likely to be a form of boundary ditch it was excavated in four slots which varied in width between 1.20–1.30m and were of shallow depth ranging from 0.10–0.13m with a flat base containing a single soft dark grey brown clayey silt deposit from which 14 sherds of pottery of Roman date were recovered, alongside 8 sherds of prehistoric pottery all from slot (215). The ditch was truncated by furrows (248, 249 and 409) considered to be medieval or post-medieval.

A total of three pits dating to the Roman period were present on site, including the one (8) recorded in trench 5 of the evaluation, to the north of the area under excavation. Two pits were excavated within the area of the access road. Pit 214 was irregularly circular in plan, 1.50m in diameter, with a concave base at a depth of 0.28m. It had a single fill comprising firm mid reddish brown silty sand with limestone inclusions and contained 12 sherds of Roman pottery. Pit 203, located on the curving part of the access road (Fig. 3), was oval in plan with a diameter of 0.80m, the base was 0.17m deep and concave with gently sloping sides containing moderate mid grey brown silty sand with occasional gravel inclusions and contained a single sherd of Roman pottery.

Phase 6: Medieval

The medieval period was represented primarily by three irregular linear features (248), (249) and (409) which crossed the site on a broadly north south (NNW-SSE) alignment. These were always found in conjunction with a ceramic field drain on one side and an older stone culvert on the other and it was noted during the excavation works that these three linear features retained water more than any other feature on site. It seems likely therefore that these long irregular features were associated with drainage, or are perhaps the disturbed remains of medieval ridge and furrow. They ranged in width from 0.80–2.00m and in depth from 0.08–0.12 with very shallow sides and a flat base containing a single fill broadly comprising soft light grey brown sandy clay or soft light yellow

brown silty sand with heavy water retention. A single sherd of residual Roman pottery was recovered from slot 122 through furrow (409).

Feature 103 formed an irregular circle in plan and produced a single sherd of 13th-15th century medieval pottery. It was 1.20m in diameter, with shallow sloping sides to an undulating base at a depth of 0.09m. It contained a single fill (153) comprising sticky light brown grey sandy clay with infrequent gravel inclusions. Due to its irregular shape the feature is considered to be of natural origin, most likely a tree hollow.

Three further features of medieval date were recorded during the evaluation phase of works but were not further encountered within the area of excavation. A soil layer (57) containing two sherds of medieval pottery was observed at the eastern end of trench 8 and evaluation trench 5 recorded intercutting features (pit 9 and possible ditch 10) which both yielded sherds of Medieval pottery. Ditch 10 was considered to correspond with a short linear crop mark (Mundin 2011).

Undated Features

Undated Gullies

Gully 100=101 was located at the south-western end of the site and was truncated by furrow 409 and may be the same as square ended feature (5) recorded in the evaluation although this is not certain. The gully was oriented roughly east–west and must have terminated within the cut of furrow 409 to the west, extending to the east beyond the limit of excavation. The gully was 0.55m wide with gently sloping sides to a flat base 0.06m deep containing a single fill comprising friable mid red brown sandy clay, no finds were recovered.

Gully 407 was initially recorded during the evaluation when slot (2) was excavated through the centre. Two terminal ends were uncovered during the excavation phase, revealing a very short 5m long gully terminating either side of the evaluation trench. It was between 0.40–0.50m in width and 0.05–0.14m deep with shallow sides and a flattish base, a single friable mid red brown sandy silt fill, and no finds were recovered.

Gully 14, alongside ditches 12 and 13 observed in trench 1 of the evaluation (Fig. 3) remain undated as this area was not subjected to further investigation during this phase of works.

Pits

Of the 14 pits recorded for the site, 10 (including evaluation features) remain undated. Undated pits were recorded across the site, ranging in diameter from 0.36–1.50m and depth from 0.06–0.28m. All these pits contained a single deposit broadly comprising either moderate mid red brown silty sand or friable dark-mid grey brown clayey (silty) sand. Pits 149 and 200 were intercutting, however no relationship could be discerned in

section or plan, likewise pit 238 was truncated by posthole 237 but as neither produced any datable finds it has not proved possible to fit them into the phasing of the site. Table 3 gives a summary for all undated pits on site.

Table 3; Undated Pits

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fills</i>	<i>Diameter</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comment</i>
15	73	0.36m	0.06m	Recorded in Evaluation
17	77	-	0.10m	Recorded in Evaluation
121	171	0.60m	0.07m	
142	192	0.45m	0.11m	Truncates late Bronze Age ditch (406)
149	250	0.90m	0.15m	Relationship with Pit (200) unknown
200	251	1.10m	0.15m	Relationship with Pit (149) unknown
202	252	0.60m	0.15m	
204	254	0.85m	0.19m	
209	259	1.75m	0.18m	
236	294	0.50m	0.14m	
238	296	0.90m	0.17m	Cut by posthole (237)

Postholes

Of the 26 postholes recorded on the site, 18 remain undated. In general they were circular in plan although two (128 and 134) were more ovoid in shape, with diameters ranging between 0.20m and 0.67m. In profile sides tended to be steeply sloping with concave bases between 0.05m and 0.30m in depth. A flatter base was recorded for posthole 224. Each posthole contained a single fill broadly comprising mid reddish brown silty sand or dark-mid brown grey clayey sand. Undated postholes are summarized in table 4, with those in closer proximity indicating possible structures discussed below.

A cluster of four postholes of similar size and depth (106, 108, 109 and 110) could possibly form a rectangular building, with a slightly larger posthole (124) in close proximity. These postholes were circular in plan between 0.25-0.30m in diameter with steeply sloping sides and concave bases between 0.08-0.12m with a single fill comprising friable mid red brown sandy silt. Posthole 124 was located in close proximity to this cluster, however its dark grey brown deposit and larger size 0.35m and depth 0.30m suggest that it was not part of the cluster.

Table 4; Undated Postholes

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fills</i>	<i>Diameter</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comment</i>
105	155	0.30m	0.05m	
106	156	0.30m	0.08m	Possibly Structural
108	158	0.25m	0.10m	Possibly Structural
109	159	0.30m	0.12m	Possibly structural
110	160	0.25m	0.07m	Possibly Structural
111	161	0.35m	0.08m	
124	174	0.35m	0.30m	
128	178	0.50m	0.13m	Relationship with Gully (402) unclear
131	181	0.45m	0.07m	
134	184	0.20m	0.06m	
138	188	0.40m	0.16m	
139	189	0.67m	0.14m	
140	190	0.55m	0.09m	
143	193	0.35m	0.11m	Relationship with Gully (403) unclear
145	195	0.60m	0.12m	
207	257	0.42m	0.06m	
224	283	0.60m	0.06m	
237	295	0.30m	0.16m	Cuts Pit (238)

Finds

Pottery by Jane Timby

The archaeological evaluation resulted in the recovery of a small group of 184 sherds of pottery weighing 777.75 g dating to the early prehistoric, later prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods. The assemblage was sorted into fabrics based on the colour, texture and nature of the inclusions present in the clay. The prehistoric material was classified following the recommended nomenclature in PCRG (1997) where the letters denote the main inclusions present. Known named or traded Roman wares were coded using the National Roman fabric reference system (Tomber and Dore 1998); other wares were coded more generically.

The pottery was scanned to assess its likely chronology and quantified by sherd count and weight for each recorded context. The resulting data is summarized in Appendix 2. In general the sherds were poorly preserved with partially surviving surface finishes, abraded edges and an overall average sherd size of just 4g. There is a single decorated sherd and only nine rim sherds most of which are of Roman date. Pottery was recovered from 36 features. Only three contexts yielded in excess of 10 sherds; the maximum being 24 sherds from cut 228. Most of the groups appear to comprise sherds of different date suggesting a complex and long history of activity in the area and ongoing disturbance of earlier deposits through time causing a significant level of redeposition.

Prehistoric

Several sherds, 33g in total, had a calcined flint temper with a further 11 sherds with a predominantly sandy fabric with sparse flint which suggest a date from the later Bronze Age and probably earlier in the Bronze Age for some pieces. The character of these sherds varied greatly but at least two particularly coarse tempered sherds with thick walls from feature 104 are probably from Bronze Age urn. Similarly three sherds from feature 233 are likely to be Bronze Age. One of these sherds has incised infilled zonal decoration possibly from a collared urn. The remaining finer flint-tempered sherds are probably later Bronze Age.

The remaining prehistoric material could be broadly divided into five wares groups: shelly (SH); limestone-tempered (LI); sandy (SA); sandy with sparse flint (SAFL) and sandy with sparse shell (SASH). Very small crumbs particularly from sieved residues could not be identified. This latter group accounts for 18% of the total sherd count. Much of this material probably dates to the later Bronze Age – Iron Age period. There are at least two sharply angulated sherds from carinated vessels from cut 246 probably of early Iron Age date. The coarse

fossil-shell tempered wares also from cut 246 and cuts 215, 208 and 206 are likely to be either later Bronze Age or early Iron Age.

Roman

Thirty-eight sherds appear to be of Roman date, to which can be added five grog-tempered sherds which may be of later Iron Age or early Roman date. These include six sherds from a later 3rd-early 4th century flanged-rim, conical bowl in Dorset black burnished ware (DOR BB1) from cut 114; a rim from a Central Gaulish samian (Lezoux) cup (Dragendorff type 27) from 225 and local Oxfordshire wares. Other featured sherds include a plain-rimmed dish and everted rim jars. In total 12 features appears to Roman in that this is the latest material present although in many cases there are more residual prehistoric pieces present.

Medieval

A single sherd of glazed Brill-Boarstall-type jug came from cut 103.

Summary

The assemblage is very diverse chronologically suggesting a long history of use of the area from early prehistoric times on. Despite the proximity to the Roman villa, Roman wares are poorly represented with most of the pottery suggesting activity in the later Bronze or early Iron Age periods. The few sherds that are present suggest both an early and a late Roman presence but the material is too sparse to address questions of continuity of use. Previous work also intimated slightly more medieval activity.

Struck Flint by Steve Ford

A collection comprising just 3 struck flints was recovered during the course of this phase of fieldwork. One, from feature 220, was a bluish white patinated narrow flake possibly of Mesolithic or Early Neolithic date. A second was a broken flake from feature 215, which was unpatinated. The third piece, from the sample from feature 219 (fill 276) was a spall (a flake less than 20x20mm) which was patinated. The latter two pieces are not closely datable but are probably of Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from 19 separate contexts within the excavated area. A total of 126 fragments of bone were present for analysis, weighing 1698g (Appendix 3). Overall the bone was poorly preserved, with moderate amounts of cortical exfoliation and more frequent evidence of surface etching by root activity. The majority of pieces were highly fragmented, rendering the small fragments non-descript in appearance, making identification to species and skeletal element of origin not possible in the majority of cases.

Initial analyses roughly sorted elements into categories based on size, not by species: “large”, “medium”, and “small”. Horse and cow are represented by the large size category, sheep/goat and pigs are represented in the medium size category, and any smaller animal (e.g. dog, cat etc.) were designated to the “small” category. Wherever possible, a more specific identification to species was made. The determination of the minimum number of individuals (MNI) both within and between the species was investigated based on the duplication of elements, and differences in skeletal development (i.e., age categories).

A minimum of four animal individuals were present within the assemblage: two large (cows), one medium (sheep/goat) and one small sized animal. Two cows were identified in pit 354, based on differing stages of skeletal development of two metacarpals (one fully fused, one with unfused epiphyses). Evidence of cattle was also present in ditch 164, in the form of two loose teeth, and an ulnar trochlear notch. A loose tooth and mandibular condyle were also recovered from ditch 260. A single sheep/goat individual was identified by the distal half a left humerus in ditch 197, with additional evidence of sheep/goat sized elements in posthole 258 (a right tibia shaft) and left and right portions of mandible and in situ teeth in pit 354. Finally, the femur of a small animal, likely an intrusive rodent, was present in posthole 258.

Evidence of butchery practices was identified in pit 354. The anterior surface of a young cow’s distal metacarpal (i.e. unfused distal epiphysis) displayed two transverse cut marks), which were located just superior to the unfused joint surface. Two much abraded chop-marks were also present on a small portion of a large-sized innominate.

Due to the small assemblage sizes when separated into phase, with the exception of the fact that the animal bone from Iron Age contexts were most frequently sufficiently preserved for element identification, it was not possible to undertake assessment of patterns within time periods. No further information could be retrieved from these poorly preserved skeletal remains.

Burnt Bone by Ceri Falys

A single fragment of burnt bone was recovered from ditch slot 164. Weighing just 1.5g, this fragment was blue-grey in colour and measured 10.0mm by 7.5mm. It was not possible to identify the species of origin.

Human Bone by Ceri Falys

Two fragments of human bone were recovered from an Iron Age context (ditch 197). The pieces were found within a small assemblage of animal bone, primarily comprising cow elements. The two pieces, weighing 78g, were refit into a single portion of left femur representing approximately half of the length of the shaft, from the area immediately inferior to the lesser trochanter extending to the midshaft region. The length of the refit fragments is 182.4mm, with diameters taken at the approximate midshaft location: 23.3mm (anterior-posterior) and 26.2mm (medial-lateral). The overall preservation of the remains was good, with occasional surface etching by root activity noted on the anterior surface.

The shaft was generally small in size and displayed a gracile appearance, with a prominent *linea aspera* and strong muscle attachments towards the superior end of the posterior surface. It was not possible to estimate an age at death or confidently determine the sex of the originating individual from this midshaft fragment, and no pathological alterations were observed. No further information could be retrieved from this femoral shaft.

Charred plant remains by Ros McKenna

A programme of soil sampling was implemented during the excavation, which included the collection of soil samples from 28 sealed contexts. Details of methodology are in the archive. A single charred plant macrofossil was present in a single sample in the form of an indeterminate cereal grain, and just two charcoal fragments, from separate contexts, both of *Salix / Populus*. This poor assemblage provides little of interpretable value.

Brick and tile by Susan Porter

Just three fragments of ceramic building material were recovered, all from undated pit 229. Two fragments were recovered from a wet sieved sample and were very small, weighing <1g each. The third fragment was larger 37mm long 13mm wide and weighing 14g. The fragments appear to be post-medieval in date, a more exact date cannot be given although it is possible, due to large inclusions that the fragment may be of earlier rather than later post-medieval date.

Conclusion

The two phases of fieldwork here, the earlier evaluation and now this recording action, have revealed a relative density of archaeological deposits spanning several periods.

The earliest activity, apart from a few earlier prehistoric struck flints, commences in the earlier part of the Bronze Age with six features assigned to this period, though only dated on the basis of a few sherds of pottery. Even assuming the chronology is correct, it is unclear what these deposits represent in terms of the local settlement pattern, as the features are dispersed across the site, and seem unlikely to represent the core of an occupied area. The later Bronze Age is also represented, but also not extensively. Two lengths of gully are aligned on each other and perhaps formed a part of a much wider pattern of land division.

The Iron Age is better represented, and more securely dated. Again it is land division that is prevalent. One small sinuous gully complex (401-3) seems to be typical of a type of Iron Age boundary encountered within the Upper Thames Valley, which rarely form complexes of enclosures which can be called field systems, but clearly do divide the landscape in some way. The other boundaries are constructed of more substantial ditches and form a more regular rectilinear layout (insofar as the evidence of a T-shaped arrangement can be extrapolated). They were already recorded on aerial photographs and can be traced well beyond the site boundaries. The impression that they predate the Roman road can also be confirmed. Other Iron Age activity on the site is limited to a small number of isolated pits and a pit cluster, probably more specifically Late Iron Age, though this is not at all clear. Most of the site cannot be considered as being part of an Iron Age occupation site, but the cluster of pits to the north-west, close to Wantage Road, may lie close to a more dense area of settlement.

This pattern is also observed in the Roman period. A single boundary is present to the south of the site (400) with isolated pits elsewhere. The area of the pit cluster, considered to originate in the Iron Age, seems to have been reused (or continued in use) in early Roman times, while the ditch appears to be later Roman.

Finally the area was farmed in medieval times with the presence of ridge and furrow, but also a ditch and a small pit were present.

The quantity of deposits discovered and investigated is relatively high, but overall the character of the material for all periods seems better described as being activity within an agricultural landscape setting, at best only near to and not coincident with, intensively occupied areas. In general the site lies within an area that is considered to be archaeologically rich with the relatively well researched Roman temple and amphitheatre complex with Saxon cemetery at Frilford (Henig and Booth 2000, Kamash *et al.* 2010), being supplemented by later fieldwork as at Milletts Farm (Cass and Ford 2007) and observations made during pipeline laying (Hart *et*

al. 2012). The fieldwork carried out here has not only added another zone of interest to this area, but one which has examined a component of landscape away from settlement clusters.

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APPENDIX 1: Catalogue of all excavated features

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>Dating Evidence</i>
Evaluation	50				
1	52		Pit	Early Prehistoric?	Pottery
2	53	407	Gully	-	-
3	54	409	Furrow	Medieval	
4	55	400	Ditch	Roman	pottery
5	56		Square-ended feature	-	-
	57		Soil Layer	Medieval	pottery
6	58	409	Furrow	Medieval	By Association
7	59-61	405	Cropmark ditch	Iron Age	pottery
8	62		Pit	Roman	pottery
9	63,64		Pit?	Medieval	pottery
10	63		Ditch	Medieval	pottery
11	69		Ditch	Bronze Age	pottery
12	66, 70		Ditch	-	-
13	67,71-2		Ditch	-	-
14	68		Gully	-	-
15	75		Shallow pit	-	-
16	74-6	404	Cropmark ditch	Iron Age	pottery
17	77		Pit	-	-
18	78	405	Cropmark ditch (unexc)	Iron Age	Same as 7
19	79	404	Cropmark ditch (unexc)	Iron Age	Same as 16
Excavation					
100	150		Gully Slot		
101	151		Gully Slot		
102	152	409	Furrow	Medieval	By association
103	153		Treebole	Medieval	C13th-15th Pot
104	154	406	Ditch Terminus	Late Bronze Age	BA/LBA Pot
105	155		Posthole		
106	156		Posthole		
107	157	402	Gully Slot	Iron Age	By Association
108	158		Posthole		
109	159		Posthole		
110	160		Posthole		
111	161		Posthole		
112	162	403	Gully Slot	Iron Age	By Association
113	163		Pit	Iron Age	Late Prehistoric Pot
114	164	400	Ditch Slot	Roman	Late C3/4 pot
115	165	400	Ditch Slot	Roman	By Association
116	166	409	Furrow	Medieval	By Association
117	167	407	Gully Terminus		
118	168	402	Gully Slot	Iron Age	By Association
119	169		Geological Feature		
120	170	407	Gully Terminus		
121	171		Pit		
122	172	409	Furrow	Medieval	Roman Pot/ assoc
123	173	401	Gully Slot	Iron Age	By Association
124	174		Posthole		
125	175	402	Gully Slot	Iron Age	By Association
126	176	406	Ditch Slot	Late Bronze age	By Association
127	177	406	Ditch Terminus	Late Bronze Age	BA Pot/ association
128	178		Posthole		
129	179	402	Gully Slot	Iron Age	Later prehist pot/ assoc
130	180	403	Gully Slot	Iron Age	By Association
131	181		Posthole		
132	182		Treebole		
133	183	400	Ditch Slot	Roman	By Association
134	184		Posthole		
135	185		Treebole		

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>Dating Evidence</i>
136	186		Geological Feature		
137	187	400	Ditch Slot	Roman	By Association
138	188		Posthole		
139	189		Posthole		
140	190		Posthole		
141	191	406	Ditch Slot	Late Bronze Age	Late BA Pot/ assoc
142	192		Pit		
143	193		Posthole		
144	194	403	Gully Slot	Iron Age	By Association
145	195		Posthole		
146	196-7	404	Ditch Slot	Iron Age	Later Prehist Pot
147	198	402	Gully Terminus	Iron Age	By Association
148	199	401	Gully Terminus	Iron Age	By Association
149	250		Pit		
200	251		Pit		
202	252		Pit		
203	253		Pit	Roman	Roman Pottery
204	254		Pit		
201	255	409	Furrow	Medieval	By Association
206	256		Posthole	Iron Age	IA Pot
207	257		Posthole		
208	258		Posthole	Iron Age	Later Prehist Pot
209	259		Pit		
210	260, 262-3	405	Ditch Slot	Iron Age	Prehist/Roman Pot/ assoc
211	261		Posthole	Bronze Age	Prehistoric pot
212	264, 268	405	Ditch Slot	Iron Age	Later Prehist Pot/ assoc
213	265, 267	404	Ditch Slot	Iron Age	Later prehist pot/ assoc
214	266		Pit	Roman	Roman Pot
215	269-70		Pit	Iron Age	Prehist/L prehist/Roman Pot/ Strat
216	271		Pit	Iron Age	Later prehist Pot
217	272		Pit	Iron Age	Strat/ assoc
218	273-4	404	Ditch Slot	Iron Age	Iron Age Pot
205	275		Treebole		
219	276		Treebole	Early Roman	Prehistoric/ Roman Pot
226	277		Pit	Early Roman	IA./Roman Pot
227	278		Treebole	Early Roman	Early Roman Pot
220	279		Pit	Early Roman	L Prehist/Roman Pot
221	280		Pit	Early Roman	L Prehist/Roman Pot
222	281		Pit	Early Roman	Stratigraphy/ IA pot
223	282		Pit	Early Roman	Stratigraphy
224	283		Posthole		
229	284-5		Pit	Iron Age	IA pot
230	286		Pit	Early Roman	Prehist/Roman Pot
231	287		Pit	Roman	Roman Pot
225	288		Pit	Early Roman	Prehist/ C2nd Pot
228	289		Pit	Early Roman	Prehist/ Roman Pot
232		Not used			
234	291	400	Ditch Slot	Roman	By Association
233	292	408	Ditch Terminus	Late Bronze Age	LBA Pottery/ Assoc
235	293	408	Ditch Slot	Late Bronze Age	By Association
236	294		Pit	Late Bronze Age	Stratigraphy
237	295		Posthole		
238	296		Pit		
239	297	401	Gully Slot	Iron Age	By Association
240	298		Posthole	Bronze Age	By Assoc
241	299		Posthole	Bronze Age	By Assoc
242	350		Posthole	Bronze Age	BA Pottery
243	351		Posthole	Bronze Age	By Assoc
244	352		Posthole	Bronze Age	By Assoc
245	353	401	Gully Slot	Iron Age	By Association

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>Dating Evidence</i>
246	354		Pit	Iron Age	Later Prehist Pot
247	355		Treebole		
248	356		Furrow	Medieval	By Association
249	357		Furrow	Medieval	By Association
300	358		Treebole	Early Roman	Prehist/ Roman Pot

Appendix 2: Pottery Catalogue

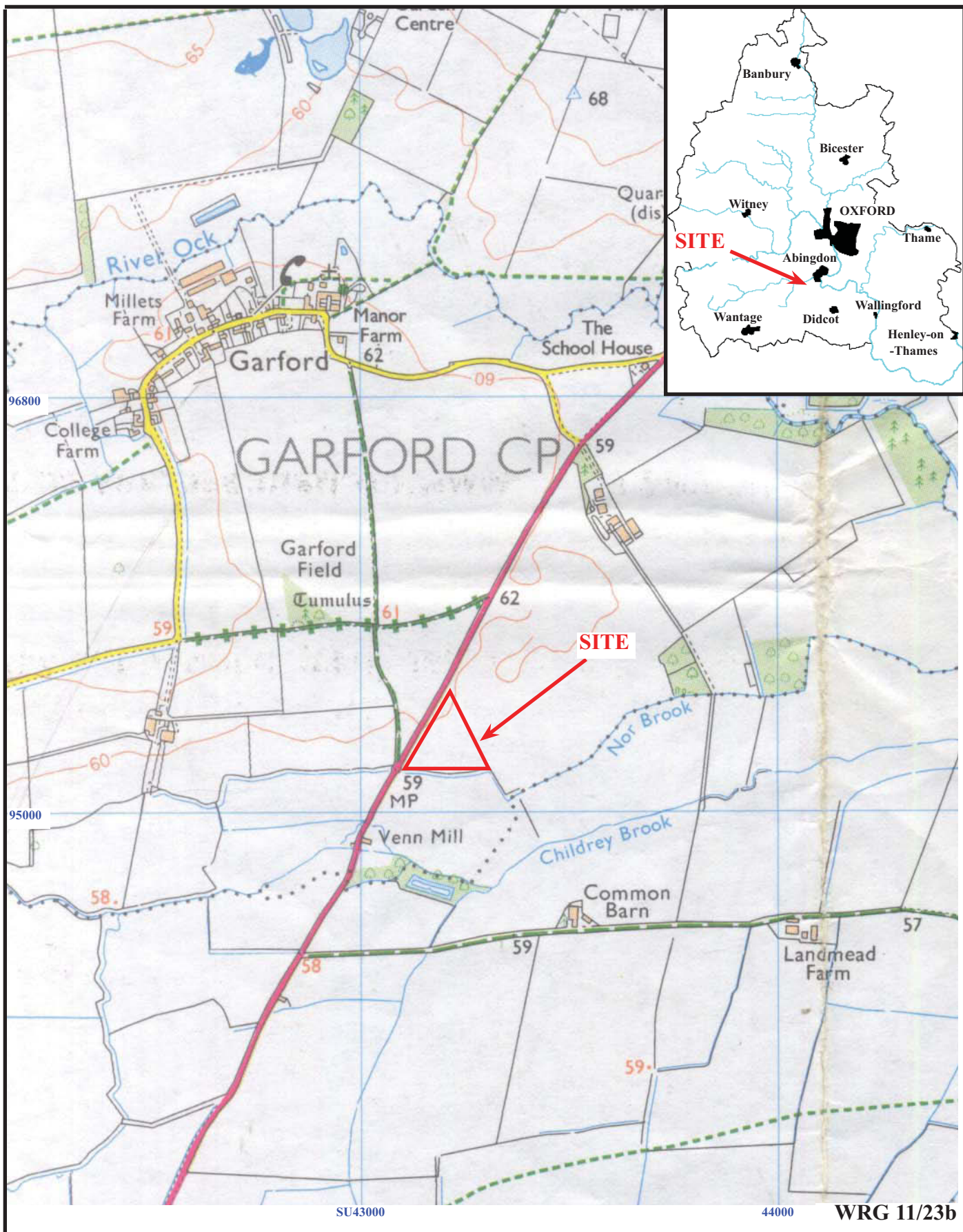
Cut	deposit	Flint	Shell	Limest	Sand	SAFL	SALI	crumbs	Grog	OXFRE	Samian	Other	Med	Tot No	Tot Wt
103	153												1	1	7
104	154	6												6	29
113	183					1								1	4
114	164							7	1			7		15	90
122	172											1		1	4
127	177													1	11
129	179				1									1	8
141	191	1												1	8
146	197				4		1							5	21
148	199							1						1	0.25
203	253													1	1
206	256		1											1	6
208	258	2			1			2						5	8.5
210	260											1		1	2
210	260	1					2							3	8
211	261	1												1	1
212	264				1	1		6						8	7.5
213	265				3	1	3	2						9	22.5
214	266									1		11		12	24
215	269		1		4	2						1		8	71
215	270		1		1		2							4	8
216	271							3						2	3
218	273							2						2	0.5
218	273				1									1	4
219	276	1	1		2	1		3				1		9	41.5
220	279											2		3	16
221	280				1	2	1	4	2	1		2		13	40
222	281				1		5							6	21
225	288	1			1	1	1				1			5	23
226	277		1									1		2	19
227	278								1			2		3	33
228	289	3	4		16				1			2		24	108
229	285		2						1					2	8
230	286				1					1				3	7
231	287											1		1	7
233	292	7												7	32
242	350	1												1	8
246	354	8	1	1		1	1							13	57
300	358					1				1				2	8
TOTAL		33	12	1	38	11	17	30	5	4	1	33	1	184	777.75

Appendix 3: Inventory of animal bone

Context		Phase	Number of Fragments	Weight (g)	Identified fragments – by animal size			Unidentified
Cut	Deposit				Large	Medium	Small	
104	154	LBA	6	4	-	-	-	6
114	164	Roman	10	376	8 (cow)	-	-	2
133	183	-	1	1	-	-	-	1
141	191	LBA	2	6.5	-	2	-	-
146	197	IA	18	164.5	10	1 (sheep/goat)	-	7
208	258	IA	3	26	-	1 (sheep/goat)	2 (intrusive rodent)	-
210	260	IA	13	209	12 (cow)	-	-	1
211	261	IA	1	1.5	-	-	-	1
212	264	IA	6	5.5	-	-	-	6
213	265	Roman	5	4.5	-	-	-	5
215	270	IA	1	1.5	-	-	-	1
216	271	-	1	2	-	-	-	1
219	276	E Roman	2	3	-	-	-	2
220	279	E Roman	1	2.5	-	-	-	1
221	280	E Roman	2	2	-	-	-	2
229	285	E Roman	3	2	-	-	-	3
228	289	Roman	6	2	-	-	-	6
233	292	LBA	8	6.5	-	-	-	8
246	354	IA	38	878	25 (cow)	5 (sheep/goat)	-	8
Total / MNI		-	127	1698	2 cows	1 sheep/goat	1 probable rodent	-

Appendix 4: Charcoal and Charred plant remains- Complete list of taxa recovered
 Taxonomy and nomenclature follow Schweingruber (1978) and Stace (1997).

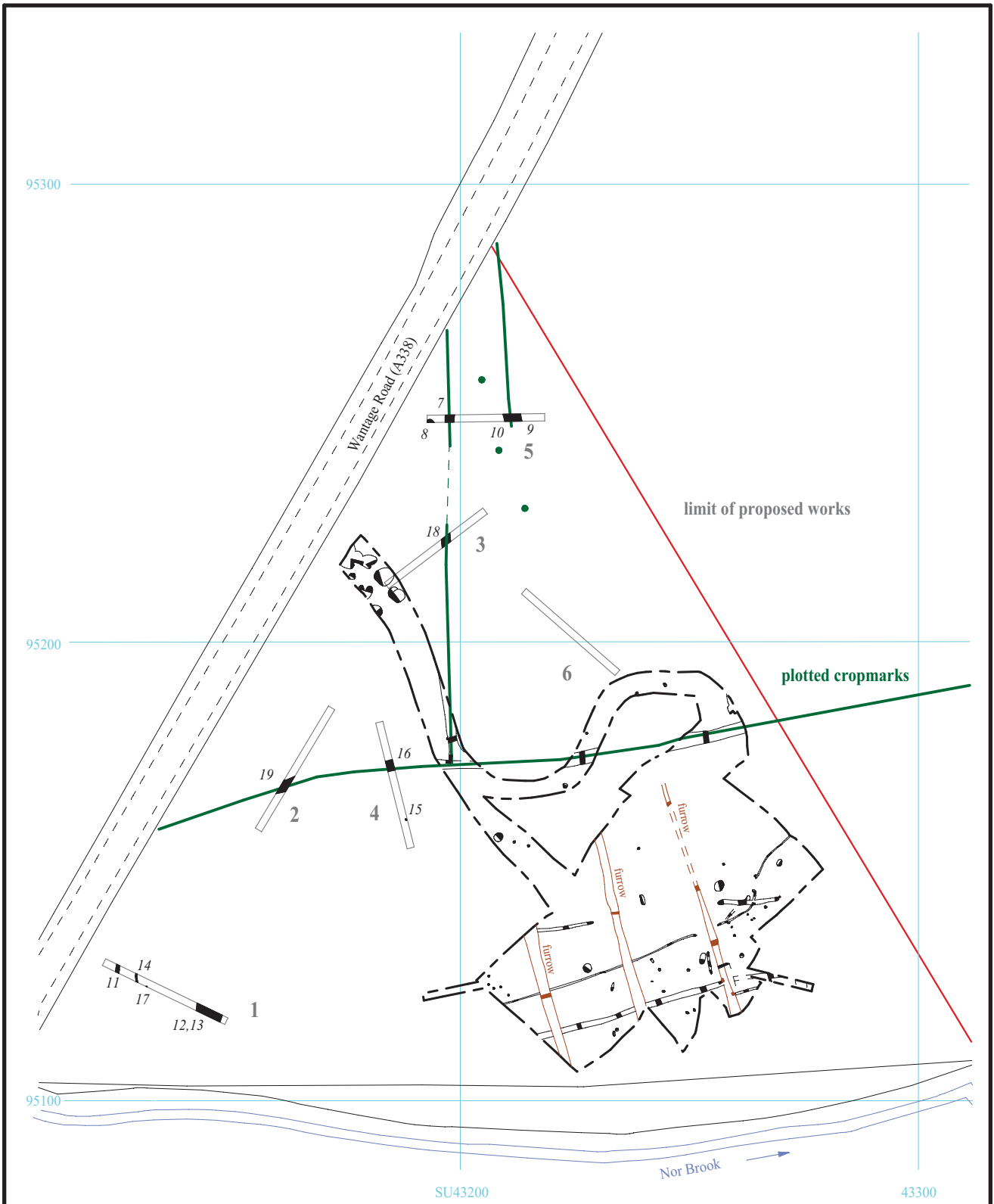
<i>Sample</i>		<i>123</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>115</i>
<i>Cut</i>		<i>233</i>	<i>246</i>	<i>215</i>
<i>Deposit</i>		<i>292</i>	<i>354</i>	<i>270</i>
<i>Feature type</i>		<i>Ditch terminus</i>	<i>Pit</i>	<i>Pit</i>
<i>Phase</i>		<i>Late Bronze Age</i>	<i>Iron Age</i>	<i>Iron Age</i>
<i>No fragments</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	
<i>Max size (mm)</i>		<i>10</i>	<i>12</i>	
<i>Charcoal</i>				
<i>Salix / Populus</i>	Willow / Poplar	1	1	
<i>Other charred remains</i>				
Indeterminate cereal				1



**Vale of White Horse Crematorium, Wantage Road,
Garford, Oxfordshire, 2014
Archaeological Recording Action**

Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Garford and within Oxfordshire.

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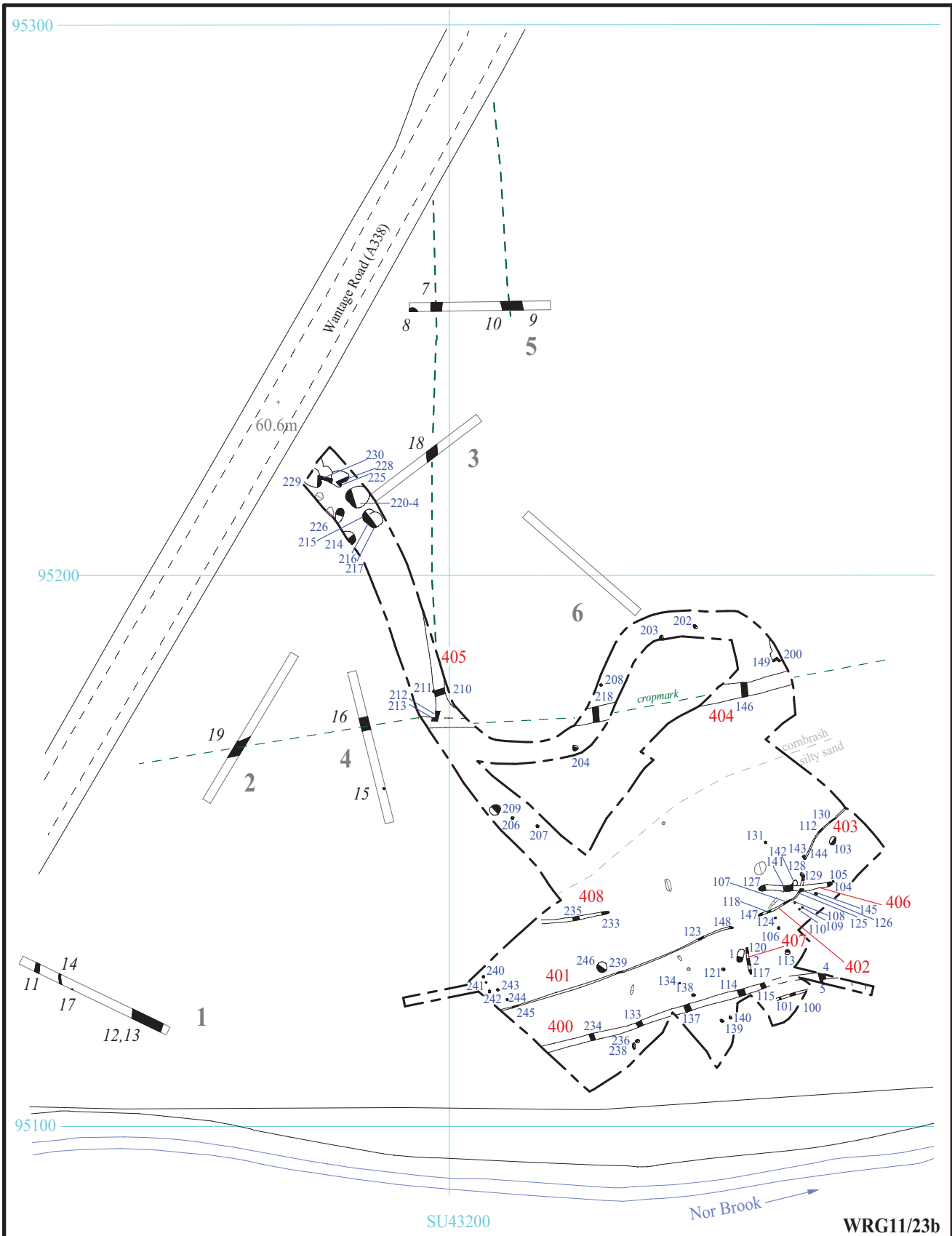


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Vale of White Horse Crematoria, Wantage Road,
Garford, Oxfordshire, 2014
Archaeological Recording Action

Figure 2. Location of trenches and features.



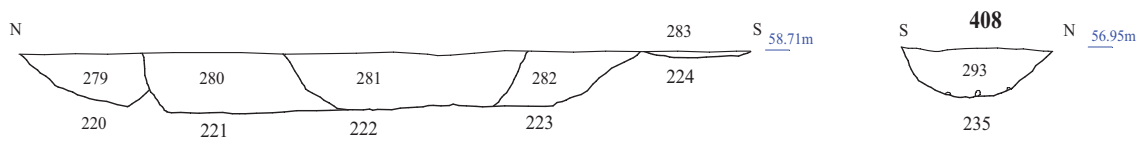
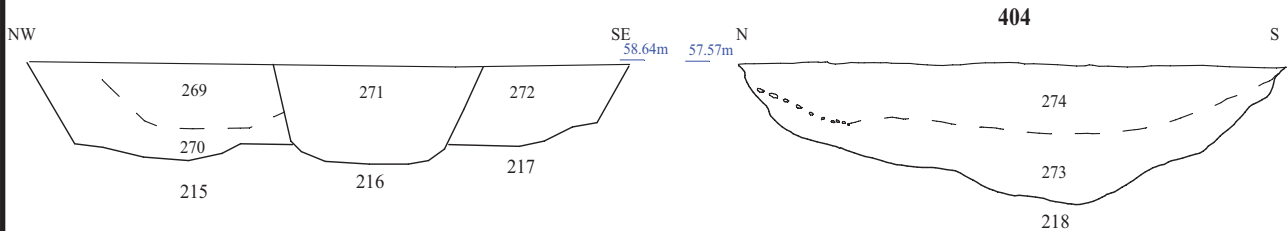
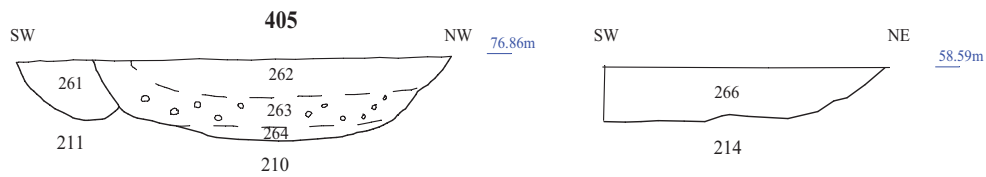
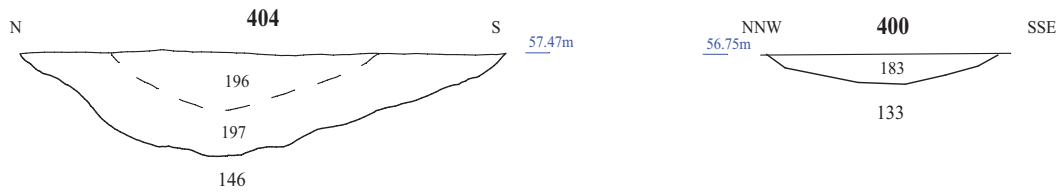
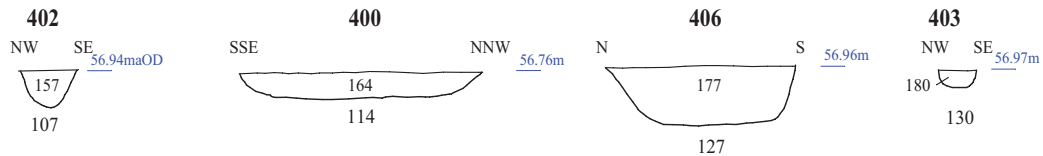


Vale of White Horse Crematoria, Wantage Road,
Garford, Oxfordshire, 2014
Archaeological Recording Action

Figure 3. Detailed plan of excavated features.



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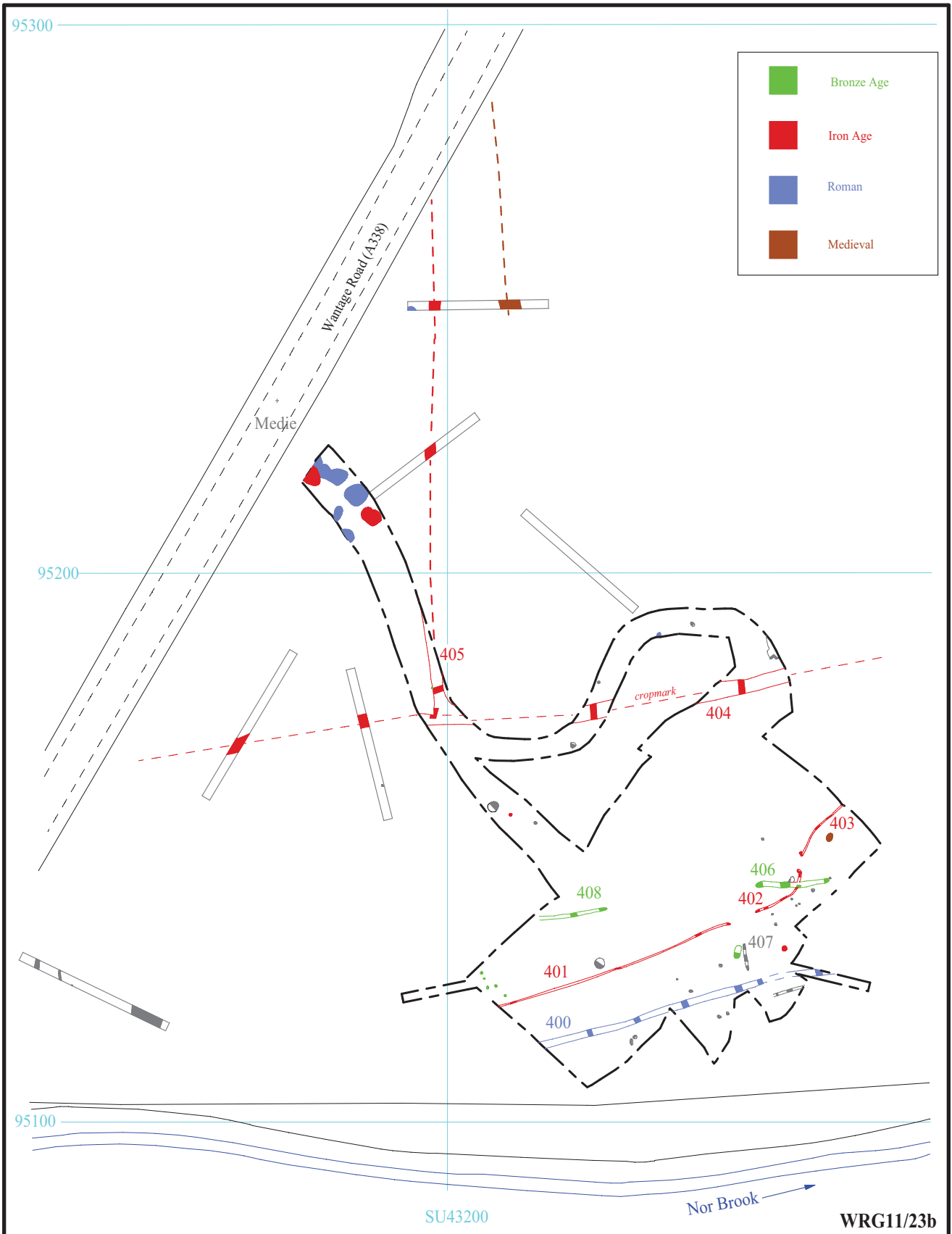
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Figure 4. Sections.



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- Bronze Age
- Iron Age
- Roman
- Medieval

Vale of White Horse Crematoria, Wantage Road,
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Figure 5. Phasing



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Plate 1: General view of site looking east



Plate 2: Bronze Age gully, looking west, Scales 1m and 0.1m

WRG 11/23b

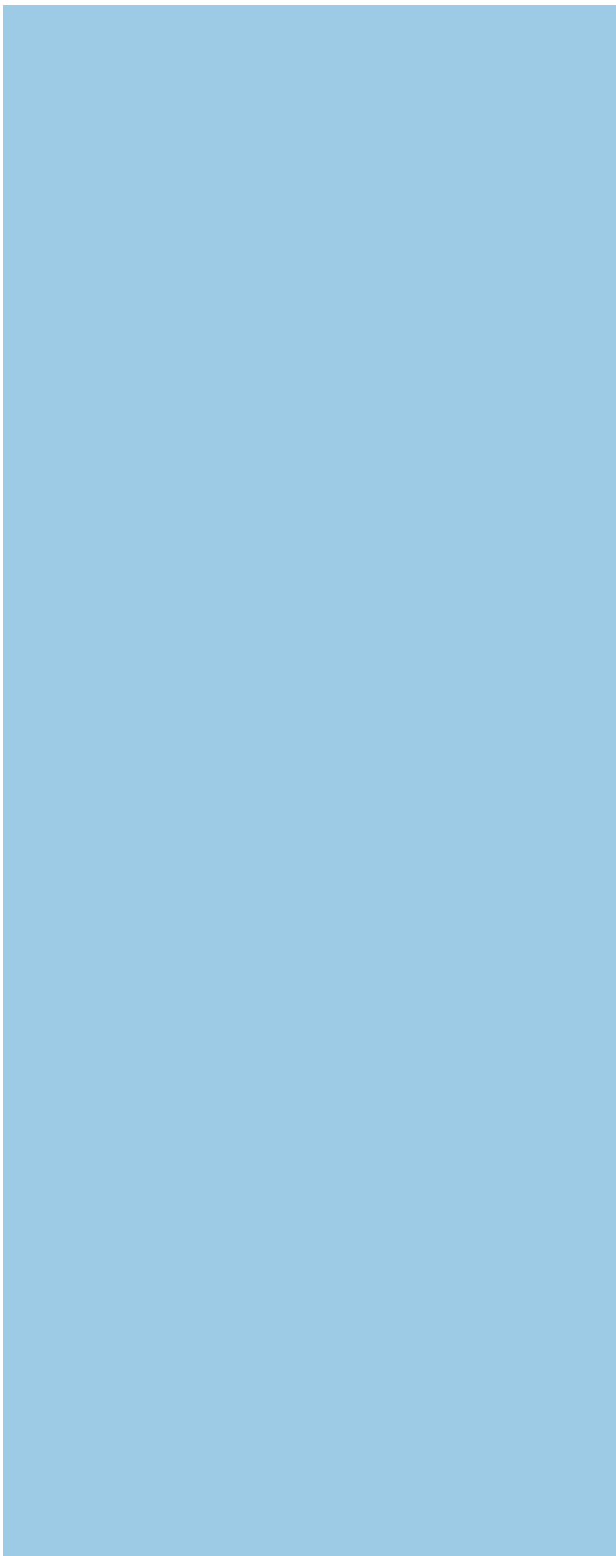
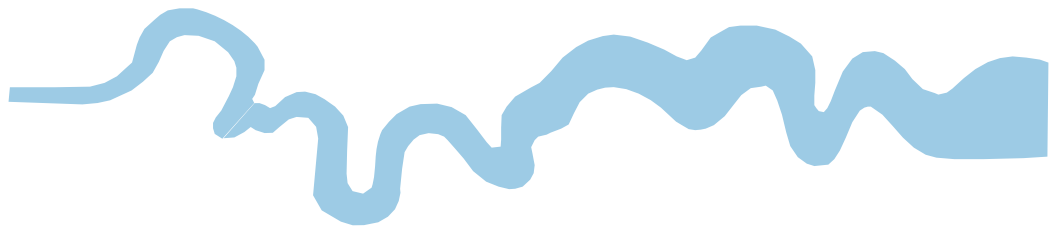
Vale of White Horse Crematorium, Wantage Road,
Garford, Oxfordshire, 2014
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Plates 1 and 2

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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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