

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

S O U T H

**Land north of Old Guildford Road, Broadbridge Heath,
Horsham, West Sussex**

An archaeological excavation

By Andy Taylor

**BHH12/173
(TQ 1527 3167)**

**Land north of Old Guildford Road, Broadbridge Heath,
Horsham, West Sussex**

**An Archaeological Excavation
For Bellway Homes-South London**

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BHH 12/173

July 2016

Summary

Site name: Land north of Old Guildford Road, Broadbridge Heath, Horsham, West Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 1527 3167

Site activity: Archaeological Excavation

Date and duration of project: 5th-9th May 2016

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: BHH 12/173

Area of site: c. 900 sq m

Summary of results: A ring gully of early Iron Age date, five pits and two postholes were revealed.

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

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Land north of Old Guildford Road, Broadbridge Heath, Horsham, West Sussex An Archaeological Excavation

by Andy Taylor

Report 12/173d

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological excavation carried out on land north of Old Guildford Road, Broadbridge Heath, Horsham, West Sussex (TQ 1527 3167). The work was commissioned by Mr Chris Jasper, of Bellway Homes-South London, Bellway House, London Road North, Merstham, Surrey, RH1 3YU.

Planning permission (DC/13/2408) has been gained on appeal (APP/Z3825/A/14/2224668) from Horsham District Council to construct new housing and a care home on the site, along with associated access and car parking. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site, which may be damaged or destroyed by the proposed development, the consent was subject to a condition (6) relating to archaeology.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Martin Brown, Principal Archaeologist with WYG Environment Planning Transport Ltd, advisers to the District on matters relating to archaeology.

The fieldwork was undertaken by the author between 5th and 9th May 2016 and the site code is BHH 12/173. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Horsham Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

Broadbridge Heath lies just west of Horsham, on the edge of the High Weald in northern West Sussex (Fig. 1). The overall development site occupied c. 9h on the northern fringe of the build up area, west of the A24. Within this, the excavation area measured c.900 sq m on part of an arable field that is bounded by housing to the south and further farmland and woodland in all other directions. The field slopes from down from south-east to north-west towards the steep narrow valley of a stream that feeds the river Arun, and the excavation area lies at a height of between c.40m and 41m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is mapped as Wealden Clay (Horsham Stone Formation) (BGS 1972), which was observed across the stripped area.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site had been initially highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Wallis 2012). In summary, the site lies on the Weald Clay, a geological outcrop not noted for its wealth of archaeological deposits, at least until medieval times (Brandon 1978). The Roman road Stane Street passes some 4km to the west. Recent fieldwork in other parts of the Weald is beginning to show that the area is not quite so archaeologically barren as had previously been thought (e.g., Wallis 2016). The desk-based assessment concluded that although there had only been a few stray finds in the surrounding area in the past, this might merely be due to the paucity of archaeological fieldwork in the region. This theory was confirmed during the recent geophysical survey (Constable and Dawson 2015) and subsequent trial-trench evaluation (Wallis 2015), which revealed a number of linear features, the majority of which were related to field boundaries shown on historic maps from the 1840s onwards, and/or contained post-medieval finds. However, a possible late Iron Age ring gully (roundhouse) was recorded in the centre of the site along with a number of other features which may be associated. As a result, this area was selected for full excavation.

Objectives and methodology

General objectives of the project were:

- to excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the proposed excavation area;
- 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.

Specific research aims of the project were to retrieve evidence designed to answer the following questions:

- What is the nature of the late Iron Age activity on the site and what is its extent? How do these relate to the geoarchaeological/topographical features on the site?
- What use was made of floral and faunal resources and can these be identified and assessed from a programme of environmental sampling?
- What is the palaeoenvironmental setting of the various episodes of activity on the site?

All archaeological features were to be planned and sectioned as a minimum objective, with linear features to be sampled to an agreed fraction and all other features fully excavated.

Results (Figs 3 and 4)

The stripped area measured *c.*900 sq m and had topsoil and subsoil removed by a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket under constant archaeological supervision. This revealed the majority of a ring gully, partly identified in the evaluation as well as five pits and two postholes. These are tentatively dated as

contemporary with each other, although the paucity of finds makes it difficult to be certain. All features were initially sectioned then fully excavated. The excavated features are summarized in Appendix 1.

Roundhouse (Pls 1–3)

The roundhouse consisted of a ring gully in four separate parts forming *c.*75% of a circle, with an internal diameter of 11m, open to the north-west. Including the two slots dug in the evaluation, twelve slots were dug around its length (1 and 114–17 in the north, 3 and 105–8 in the south, with 102 and 103 being short intermittent stretches in the east), measuring between 0.27m and 0.81m wide and between 0.06m and 0.17m. These produced 19 sherds of pottery from both the evaluation and excavation, a piece of fired clay and a flint flake.

Within the ring gully were four discrete features (2, 109, 110 and 111), although it was unclear if these represented structural features, as is assumed to be the case with posthole 100 and pit 101 which lie between sections of ring gully.

Posthole 2, from the evaluation, measured 0.43m wide and 0.10m deep. Its light yellow brown sandy clay fill (53) produced nine small sherds of late Iron Age pottery.

Posthole 100 measured 0.36m wide and 0.07m deep. Its mid yellow brown sandy clay fill (150) did not produce any dating evidence.

Posthole 110 measured 0.20m wide and 0.08m deep. Its mid yellow brown sandy clay fill (160) did not produce any dating evidence.

Pit 101 measured 0.78m wide and 0.12m deep. Its mid yellow brown sandy clay fill (151) did not produce any dating evidence.

Pit 109 measured 0.63m wide and 0.22m deep. Its light yellow brown sandy clay fill (159) did not produce any dating evidence.

Pit 111 measured 0.32m wide and 0.14m deep. Its light yellow brown sandy clay fill (161) did not produce any dating evidence.

Discrete Features

Just to the south-east of the ring gully, pit 112 was cut through the uppermost fill of pit 113 (Pl. 4), measured 0.96m wide and 0.19m deep, and had two fills (162 and 163). Upper fill 162 was an orange sandy clay and 163 was a light grey brown sandy clay. Neither of these contained any finds. Pit 113 was 0.56m deep and had three fills (164–166). 164 was a light grey yellow sandy clay, 165 was a yellow black sandy silt and 166 was light brown grey silty sand. None of these produced any dating evidence.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The excavation pottery assemblage comprised 4 sherds with a total weight of 11g. It is all prehistoric. To this can be added the 15 very abraded sherds, totalling just 26g sherds from the evaluation. The following fabric types were noted in the excavation material:

F1: Flint. Fine sandy matrix, moderate angular calcined flint up to 2mm. 2 sherds, 6g.

F2: Shelly. Fine sandy matrix, moderate to dense shell up to 4mm, most represented by voids left from the leaching of the calcareous inclusions. 2 sherds, 5g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 2. The fabrics are fairly typical of the prehistoric pottery of the region. All the sherds are plain bodysherds, and quite small and abraded. Calcined flint and shelly fabrics occur as early as the Neolithic in Sussex (Seager Thomas 2008, 47), but were relatively scarce in the early Bronze Age (Seager Thomas 2008, 25), becoming common again in the Late Bronze Age (Seager Thomas 2008, 27). They then continued in use into the late Iron Age, and sherds are very difficult to date precisely when form or decorative information is not present (Seager Thomas 2008, 47). Given the small and somewhat abraded nature of the material from this site, an exact date cannot be ascribed to the pottery itself other than to place it within the prehistoric period. The understandably tentative late Iron Age date assigned to the evaluation material is clearly revised by the radiocarbon dates here.

Struck Flint by Steve Ford

A single broken struck flint was recovered from gully slot 105 (155). It is not closely datable and could be of later Neolithic or Bronze Age date, though the Iron Age context of its discovery could also indicate it was made and used then.

Fired Clay by Andy Taylor

One piece of fired clay was recovered from ring gully terminus 117. It has no distinguishing features and so its purpose is unclear but it may be a piece of daub or loomweight.

Radiocarbon dating

Two samples (both of oak charcoal) were submitted to the Chrono radiocarbon dating laboratory at the Queen's University of Belfast. The results were calibrated using Calib rev 7.0 with data from INTCAL 13 (Reimer *et al.* 2013) and are detailed in Table 1. All results are quoted at 2-sigma (95.4% probability).

Table 1 Radiocarbon dates

<i>Lab ID</i>	<i>Feature</i>		<i>Radiocarbon Age (BP)</i>	<i>Calibrated date BC</i>	<i>Area under curve at 2-sigma</i>
UBA32240	108 (158))	Ring gully	2350 ± 29	509-379	100%
UBA32241	115 (168)	Ring gully	2957 ± 29	1260-1073	98.4%
				1065-1057	1.6%

Environmental remains

Bulk soil samples were taken for environmental evidence from twelve features and processed using standard water flotation techniques. No charred seeds were present in any of the samples, but nine samples contained charcoal (in significant quantities in only three samples, from features 112, 115 and 117). All the identifiable charcoal was of oak (*Quercus*).

Conclusion

The excavation revealed a modest amount of archaeological deposits in the stripped area. These contained very few finds, but all appear to be closely associated. The chief feature is an intermittent curving gully forming approximately three-quarters of a circle, presumed to be a roundhouse gully. The discontinuous nature other the eastern side might reflect erosion and differential survival but the presence of at least one post hole in this part of the circuit suggests it may be intended. The larger gap in the north-west may also be ‘real’ rather than a reflection of preservation.

The pottery from all features combined could not be assigned to a date any closer than ‘prehistoric’, so the provision of two radiocarbon dates supplies the site’s chronology. Unfortunately, the two dates are seven centuries apart. This need not involve any contradiction, however, as the earlier date must simply be derived from charcoal belonging to an earlier phase of activity (not represented by cut features) and the roundhouse was in use in the 4th century BC. This early to middle Iron Age date is especially significant as it appears to the first evidence of Iron Age settlement from this area. The exclusively oak charcoal might indicate the structural timber employed, or it may reflect conscious selection of oak for use as firewood; at the very least it indicates the availability a local supply of oak, though that need not necessarily have been the only tree cover in the area. The paucity of finds means that the economy of the site cannot be reconstructed, but it is possible in this case that some of what is absent might be significant: there is no trace of any indication of iron-working, which is the dominant activity in the Weald in later periods.

The Bronze Age radiocarbon date, even though no features appear to belong to this period here, is also significant, as it must derive from some activity in this period (perhaps no more than tree clearance?). Again, there is no comparably dated evidence in the vicinity, but a Middle Bronze Age date has recently been obtained

from a site at Burgess Hill to the south-east (Wallis 2016). There, the remains essentially consisted of a middle-late Bronze Age roundhouse, built over earlier occupation, radiocarbon dated to the middle Bronze Age.

Both sites add to the growing impression that the Weald's reputation as an archaeological blank area for many periods may be unwarranted. It is possible, though not demonstrated here specifically, that the site represents short-lived expansion of settlement onto 'marginal' agricultural areas. It could equally represent only a seasonal occupation. Further evidence would be required to begin to explore the range of possibilities.

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APPENDIX 1: Feature Details

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>
100	150	Posthole
101	151	Pit
102	152	Ring Gully Terminus
103	153	Ring Gully Terminus
104	154	Ring Gully Terminus
105	155	Ring Gully Terminus
106	156	Ring Gully
107	157	Ring Gully Terminus
108	158	Ring Gully
109	159	Pit
110	160	Posthole
111	161	Pit
112	162	Pit/Hearth
112	163	Pit/Hearth
113	164	Pit
113	165	Pit
113	166	Pit
114	167	Ring Gully Terminus
115	168	Ring Gully
116	169	Ring Gully
117	170	Ring Gully Terminus

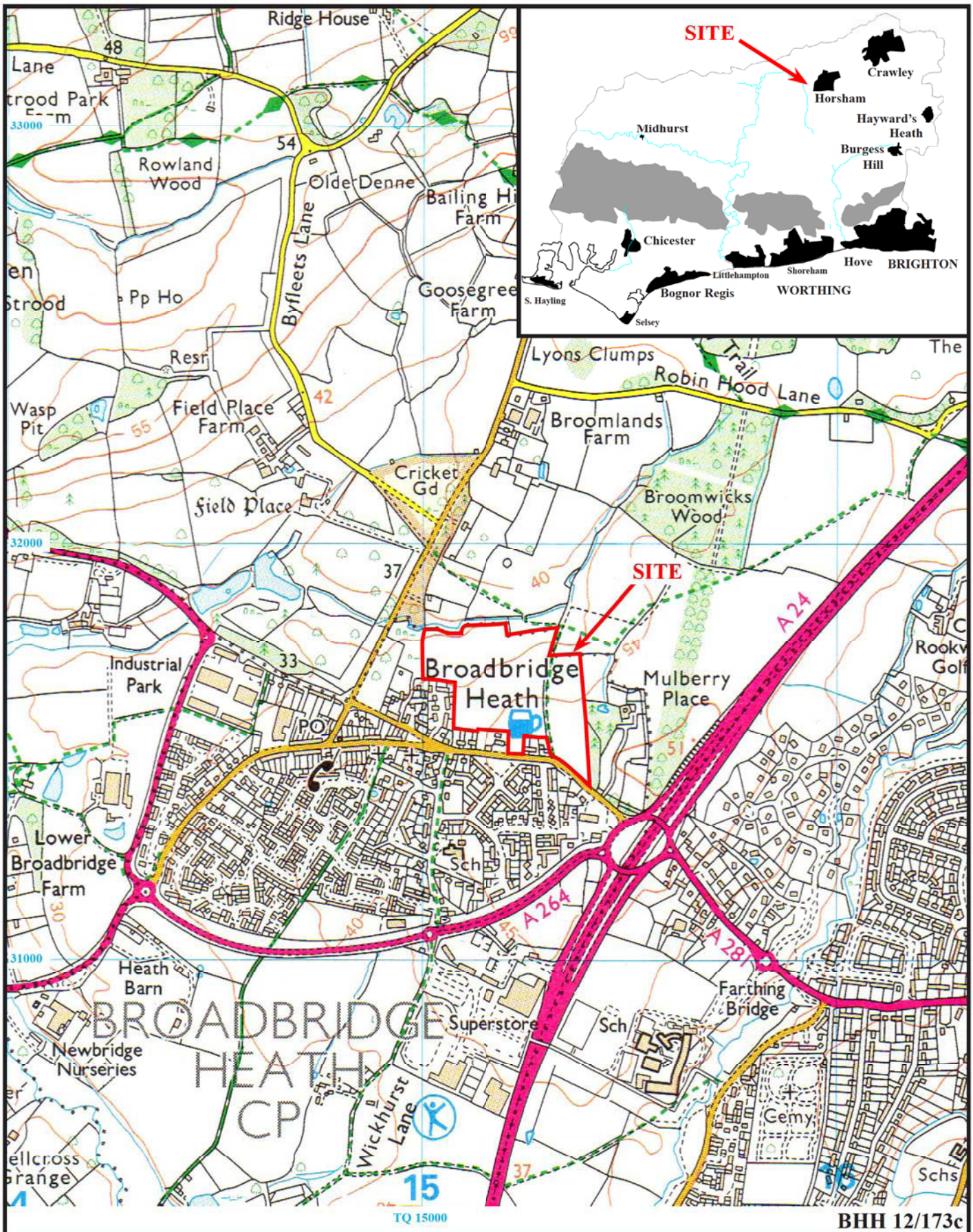
APPENDIX 2: Pottery Fabrics

F	Cntxt	F1		F2		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	
106	156	1	5			P/HIST
114	167	1	1			P/HIST
116	169			1	4	P/HIST
117	170			1	1	P/HIST
	Total	2	6	2	5	

Table 1: **Charcoal** - Complete list of taxa recovered from excavations at land north of Old Guildford Road, Broadbridge Heath, Horsham, West Sussex (BHH 12/173)
Taxonomy and nomenclature follow Schweingruber (1978). Numbers are identified charcoal fragment for each sample.

Sample		1	2	3	5	6	7
Feature		103	104	105	107	108	109
Context		153	154	155	157	158	159
Feature Type							
No. fgts.		20+	20+	12	2	30+	30+
Max. size (mm)		12	10	8	10	17	9
Latin	Vernacular						
<i>Quercus</i>	Oak	3	8	3	1	19	7
Indeterminate	Indeterminate	17	12	9	1	11	23

Sample		9	11	12
Feature		112	115	117
Context		162	168	170
Feature Type				
No. fgts.		300+	300+	300+
Max. size (mm)		21	19	23
Latin	Vernacular			
<i>Quercus</i>	Oak	100	100	100

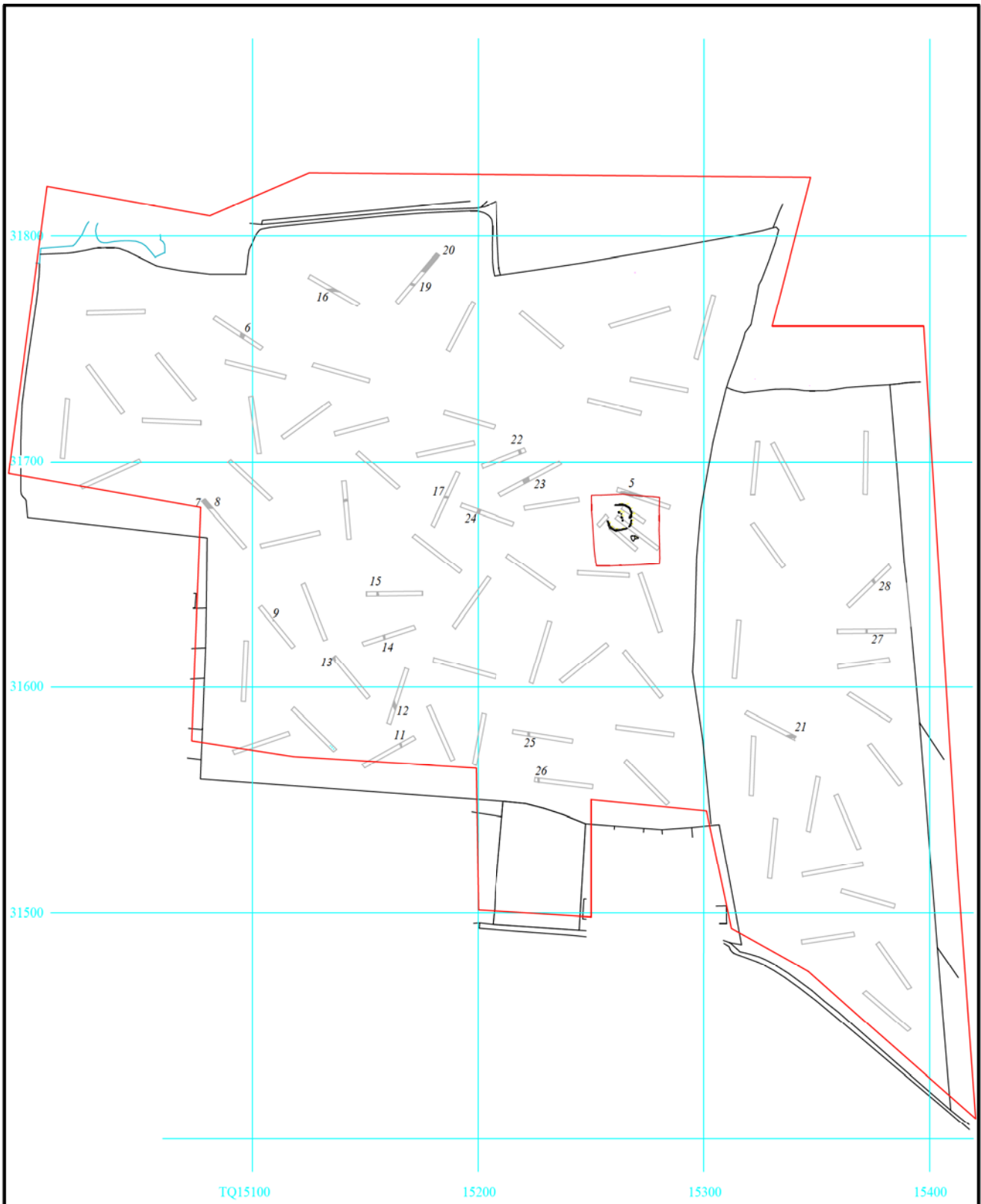


**Land north of Old Guildford Road,
Broadbridge Heath, West Sussex, 2016
Archaeological Excavation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Broadbridge Heath and West Sussex.

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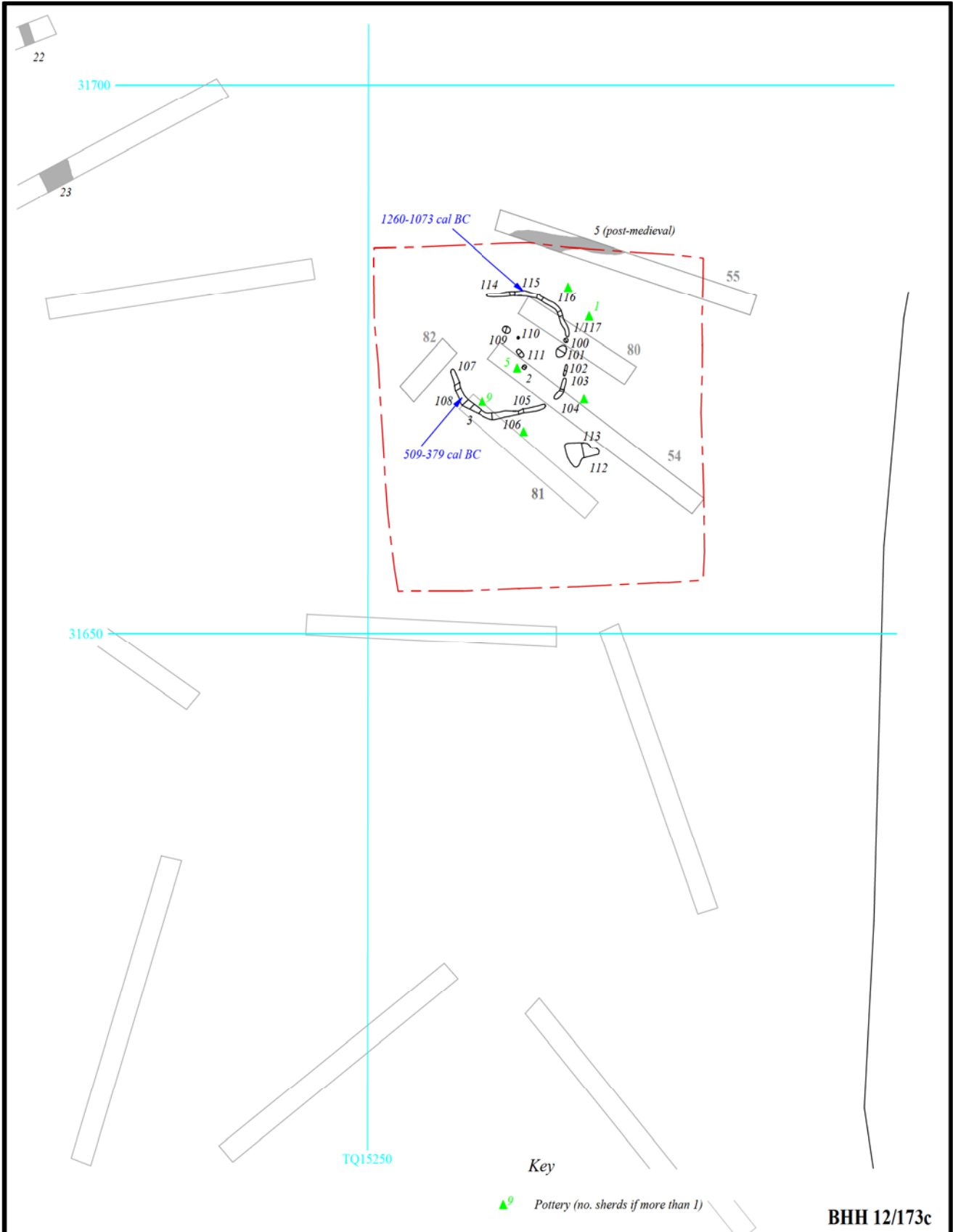
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Figure 3. Location of area of excavation in relation to previous trenches.

0 125m

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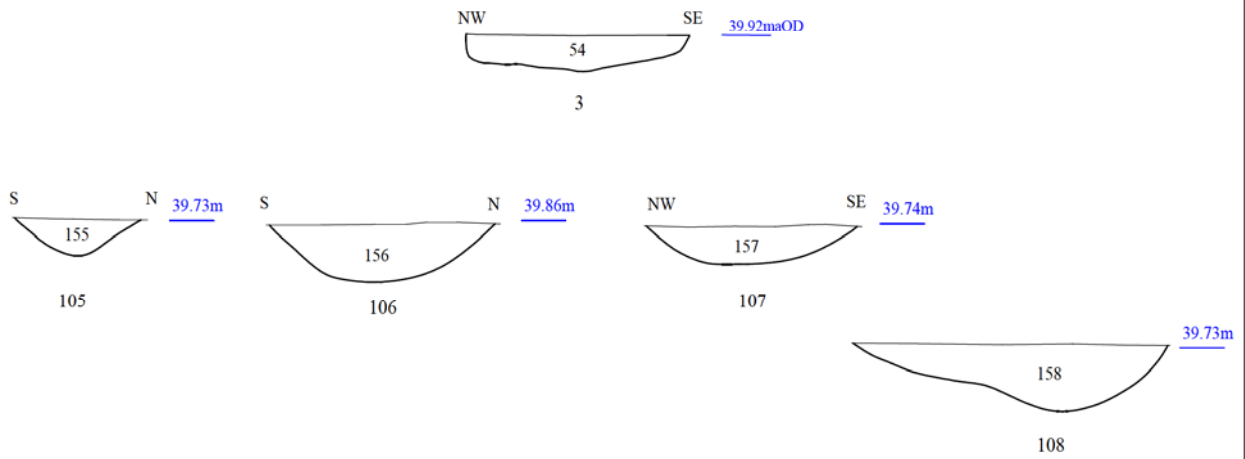
Figure 3. Detail of area of excavation.

0 25m

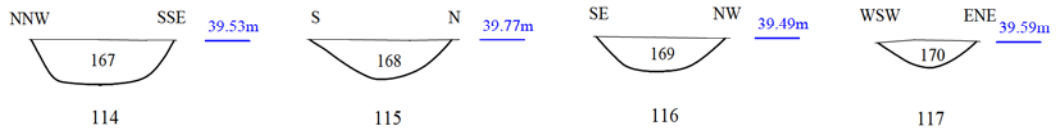
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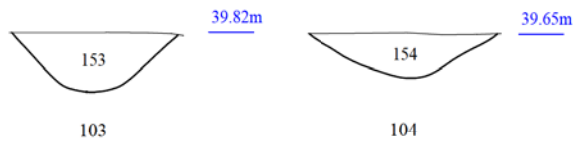
Southern segment



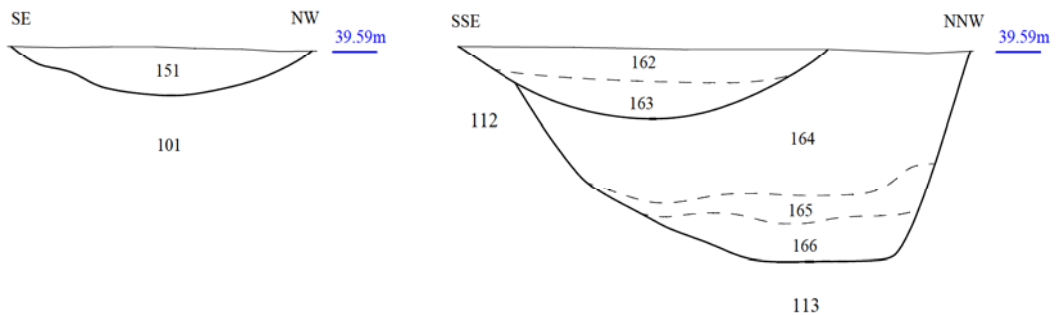
Northern segment



Eastern segment



Pits



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Land north of Old Guildford Road,
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Figure 4. Sections.



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Plate 1. Ring gully slot 106, looking west, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.



Plate 2. Ring gully, looking east, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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**Land north of Old Guildford Road,
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Plates 1 - 2.**

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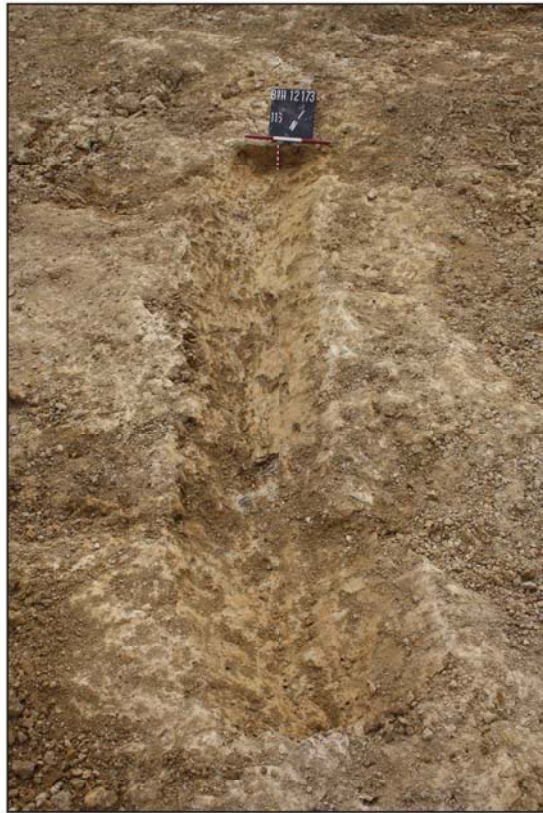


Plate 3. Ring gully slot 116, looking south east, Scales: 0.3m and 0.1m.

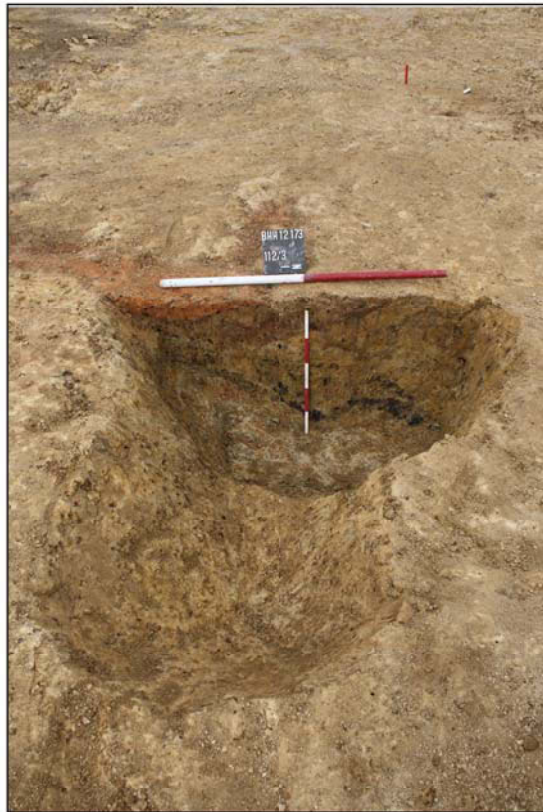


Plate 4. Pit 112 and 113, looking west, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

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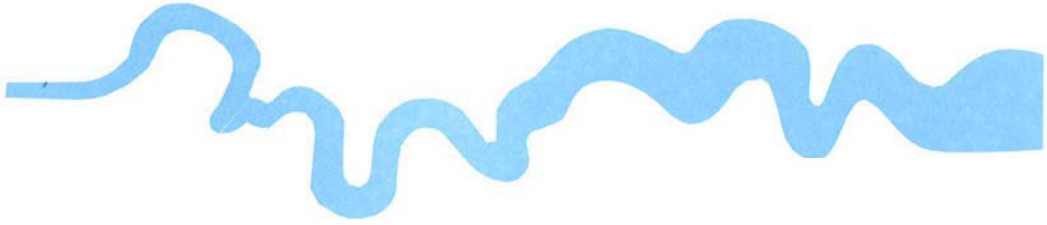
Land north of Old Guildford Road,
Broadbridge Heath, West Sussex, 2016
Archaeological Excavation
Plates 3 - 4.

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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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