

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Bowling Green Farm Quarry,
Faringdon, Oxfordshire**

Phase 4

An archaeological Recording Action

By Andy Muddin

CFF07/01

(SU 3152 9491)

Chinham Farm Extension, Bowling Green Farm Quarry, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

(Phase 4 extraction area)

An Archaeological Recording Action

For Hills Quarry Products

by Andrew Muddin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CFF 07/01

July 2017

Summary

Site name: Bowling Green Farm Quarry, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 3152 9491

Site activity: Recording Action

Date and duration of project: 31st May to 26th June 2017

Project manager: Joanna Pine

Site supervisor: Lizzi Lewins, Andrew MUNDIN

Site code: CFF 07/01

Area of site: c. 0.84ha

Summary of results: This phase of work revealed a small group pits, one containing Iron Age pottery, a short length of gully, and at the south of the site, the continuation of a ditch identified in a previous phase of work. The recovery of a small but consistent assemblage of Iron Age pottery confirms the dating previously assigned to this ditch.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course, with accession code OXCMS:2008.62

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**Chinham Farm Extension, Bowling Green Farm Quarry,
Faringdon, Oxfordshire, Phase 4 Extraction
An Archaeological Recording Action**

by Andrew Munding

Report 07/01d

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action a parcel of land covering *c.*0.8ha at the Chinham Farm Extension of Bowling Green Farm Quarry, Faringdon, Oxfordshire (SU 3152 9491).

Planning permission (MW.0124/16) has been granted by Oxfordshire County Council to extract sand and limestone from the site. The consent is subject to a condition requiring that a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording be undertaken prior to extraction. The investigation followed a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) based on a brief prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Coddington 2016). This phase of work follows three earlier phases (Phases 1, 2 and 3; Fig. 2); the excavation of a parcel of land of *c.*4ha immediately to the west that contained a small causewayed ring ditch and two ditches of Iron Age and Roman date (Pine 2008); a parcel of land *c.* 1.5ha to the north west that contained two Bronze Age pits, and a sequence of squared Iron Age and Roman enclosure ditches (Weale 2011); and 1.6ha to the south-west which revealed two ditches, including the continuation of one from Phase 1, and a cremation burial (Elliott 2017).

This phase was excavated between 31st May and 25th June 2017. The project was managed by Joanna Pine, with assistance from Lizzi Lewins and Andrew Munding. The site code is CFF 07/01. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course with accession code OXCMS:2008.62.

Location, topography and geology

The site lies between the towns of Faringdon and Stanford-in-the-Vale in south-west Oxfordshire, on the northern side of the A417 (Fig. 1). The site is located on the Corallian Ridge which runs east-west and divides the Oxford Clay basin, and the topography from the ridge at *c.* 103m above Ordnance Datum slopes gently down from south to north over 200m to the Frogmore Brook at 98m AOD. The geology is Jurassic Corallian Beds (clays, sands and limestones) (BGS 1971). The site sloped gradually from at its high point in the south downhill to the north. The limestone gave way to calcareous silts and clays. The current excavation area is to the east of the previous phases of work (Fig. 2).

Archaeological background

An archaeological survey of the Corallian Ridge was undertaken by Hingley in 1980 with fieldwalking and air photographic survey of the Upper Thames Valley (OA 2003). It was concluded that the Corallian ridge was just as densely occupied as the gravels of the Thames Valley in the Bronze Age and identified over 21 ring ditches and several flint scatters at the eastern end of the ridge. This and other work was summarized that the time by Bradley (1986).

Archaeological investigations immediately to the north of the site in the 1980s and early 1990s (by Oxford Archaeological Unit and Oxford University Archaeological Society) revealed a substantial middle to late Iron Age and Roman settlement (HER ref 9237). Stone buildings, ovens, kilns and wells were found and the site was originally considered as a small market town (Chambers 1988; 1989; 1990), though it seems more likely to have been a villa with a temple: over 1500 coins recovered were mainly of very late Roman date but there was also 2nd-century pottery. Evaluation on Bowling Green Farm Quarry to the west of the new extraction area (HER 15822) revealed further Roman ditches, presumably part of outlying field boundaries associated with the settlement to the north (OAU 1994). Cropmarks representing a double-ditched driveway with adjoining rectangular enclosure were visible on an aerial photograph (HER 12002) to the west of the site.

Observation and later excavation before mineral extraction in 2007 (Phase 1), *c.* 200m to the west of the present site, revealed a small causewayed ring ditch and two ditches of Iron Age and Roman date (Pine 2008). The ring ditch was probably dug at the end of the Early Bronze Age. Middle Bronze Age re-use of the monument took place with a crouched inhumation. Finds included Early and Middle Bronze Age pottery and a deliberately broken bronze rapier blade. A residual later Mesolithic microlith was also recovered pointing to some earlier use of the landscape.

Excavation before mineral extraction in 2011 (Phase 3), immediately to the west of the present site, revealed a range of archaeological finds and deposits of prehistoric and Roman date. The earlier periods were represented by Mesolithic flintwork, probably residual, and two pits of Bronze Age date. In the early Iron Age a probable rectangular ditched enclosure was constructed. A series of pits of this date were also present. Final use of the site took place in mid- Roman times and was represented by a rectangular ditched enclosure with both double and triple elements (Weale 2011).

Excavation before mineral extraction in 2014 (Phase 2), immediately to the south west of the current site uncovered a continuation and a more defined trace of the Iron Age ditch found in the eastern side of Phase 1 works (Elliott 2017) . A single cremation was also found. This major boundary ditch (102) traversed the width of

the phase 2 extraction, with a second ditch (124) parallel to, and to the north of it, containing Roman pottery. This terminated before it reached the limits of the extraction. Any continuation eastwards of ditch 102 would be expected to be found in this phase of works.

Description of the excavations

Excavation

The excavation comprised an area of *c.*0.8ha (Fig .3; Pl.1). Topsoil and subsoil, typically 0.25–0.3m deep, were stripped from the full area using a 360⁰ machine fitted with a ditching bucket under continuous archaeological supervision, to expose the archaeologically relevant horizon, limestone to the south and sand or sandy clay geology towards the north (Pl. 1).

In contrast to previous work on the site, only one phase of datable features was identified, with a small collection of undated features which include a shallow linear gully and a small selection of post holes.

Results

Phase 1: Iron Age

Ditch 102 continues from the phase 2 excavation across the full width of the phase 4 area (Pl. 2), adding an additional 62m in length, giving a total of 260m observed. The ditch was aligned approximately east-west with a slight meander in its length tracing its way slightly more towards east-north-east. No terminus was found and the ditch continued to the site boundary. Six slots were excavated in this phase of work, adding to the thirteen excavated in phase 2 (Elliott 2017).

The phase 1 excavation dated the ditch to the Iron Age based on the pottery assemblage (29 sherds of undiagnostic sandy wares). Phase 2 found an additional three sherds with a suggested the date can be narrowed slightly to the middle–late Iron Age. This phase found 22 further sherds, though many are in poor condition or fragmentary and while confirming the Iron Age date, do nothing to refine it more closely.

The ditch was between 2.03m and 2.50m wide and 0.45–0.82m deep (Fig. 3; Pl. 2) and was continuous in nature unlike sections of the ditch to the west where it was segmented (in Phase 1). It is unclear if this represents differential survival but it is not uncommon for Iron Age ditches to be discontinuous. It generally contained multiple fills (Fig. 4; Pls 3, 4 and 6), though no more than four.

A small collection of post-holes were present all to the north of the ditch and no more than 0.3m from the ditch's northern edge. A line of four were present in one group (513 - 516) then a group of two (517 and 518)

with a sixth (509) in isolation 28m to the east of this grouping. All are undatable, but are grouped by association, as other examples of fences or palisades by the side of large ditches in the Middle-Late Iron Age are known elsewhere in the Upper Thames (Lambrick with Robinson 2009, 57–62).

A single pit (500), which was part of a cluster, contained eight sherds of Iron Age pottery. This was c.40m to the north of the main ditch, and the cluster contained three other undated pits. It has not been uncommon in these works to locate isolated datable pits, such as the Bronze Age pits in Phase 3 (Weale 2011). Pit 500 was 0.54m in diameter and 0.2m deep (Pl. 5). It contained a reddish brown sandy silt with moderate small and medium limestone inclusions. Pits 501, 502 and 503 were of similar size and depth, but contained no finds.

Phase 2: Undated

A short length of shallow, flat bottomed linear gully was located on a SE-NW axis on the eastern edge of the area. Two slots (504 and 505) were excavated through it, and it was found to be filled with a reddish brown sandy silt with occasional small limestone inclusions at its base (854 and 855). It remains undated and while it is not impossible that it is a return of ditch 102 (projecting a right-angled corner roughly 25m east of the edge of excavation) this can be no more than speculation.

Finds

Pottery by Jane Timby

This phase of the archaeological work resulted in the recovery of a very small group of 30 sherds weighing 113g dating to the later prehistoric period. Pottery was recovered from two defined features: a pit and a ditch (102) with a total of seven excavated contexts. The pottery was in poor condition with a number of well fragmented sherds, reflected in a low overall average sherd weight of just 3.8g. Some of the pieces are little more than crumbs. The only featured sherds comprise one base-herd and one very small rim fragment.

The assemblage was sorted into fabrics based on the main inclusions present following the recommendations outlined in PCRG 1997 where letters are used to denote the main fabric constituents. The sherds were quantified by sherd count and weight for each context (Appendix 2).

Iron Age

Although a small group there are at least seven fabrics present which can broadly be divided into calcareous and sandy. The calcareous wares include a mixture of limestone (LI1-3); fossil shell (SH2); and limestone mixed with fossil shell (LISH). One of the limestone fabrics, (LI2), is composed of oolitic limestone. The sandy wares are restricted to ten small sherds and are largely quite fine sandy wares with some mica.

The range of fabrics is quite typical of that to be found in the Iron Age in this area but without diagnostic sherds it is difficult to be more precise. The single small rim-sherd suggests a jar with a simple undifferentiated rim as might be found in the early-mid Iron Age but only 1% of the rim is present. Eight of the sherds came from pit 500 and these comprised a mixture of calcareous and sandy wares. The base-sherd in a sparse shelly ware (SH2) had a leached interior from use. The remaining 22 sherds came from various sections across ditch 102 again with a mixture of mainly calcareous wares accompanied by nine sandy wares.

The assemblage recovered from Phase 4 at Chinham Farm appears to reflect in part that recovered from the earlier phases of work indicating a low level of activity in middle Iron Age. Previous work showed a slightly wider date of activity with both earlier prehistoric and Roman pottery present. The current group is very small with negligible featured pieces has very little potential to extend our knowledge.

Animal Bone by Lizzi Lewins

A single cattle molar weighing 13g was recovered from ditch 102, slot 507 (858). The tooth was heavily eroded and comprises a lower m1/m2 tooth. No further analysis was possible.

Environmental remains by Jo Pine

Bulk soil samples for the recovery of palaeoenvironmental evidence were taken from eight contexts (including three different contexts in the large ditch (slots 506, 510 and 511) and wet sieved using a 0.25mm mesh. No charred plant remains were present in any of the samples and no other environmental materials were recovered.

Conclusion

This phase of works recorded just two datable features: a pit (500) part of a group of four which is of Iron Age date and a boundary ditch recorded in the previous phases of extraction. The boundary (Ditch 102) dates to the middle to late Iron Age, though the pottery and environmental deposits sampled here shed no new insight into their date. This ditch did not terminate and there is no reason a continuation of this ditch should not be uncovered further east. In this area the ditch appears to have been accompanied by a post-fence, although the postholes themselves are undated.

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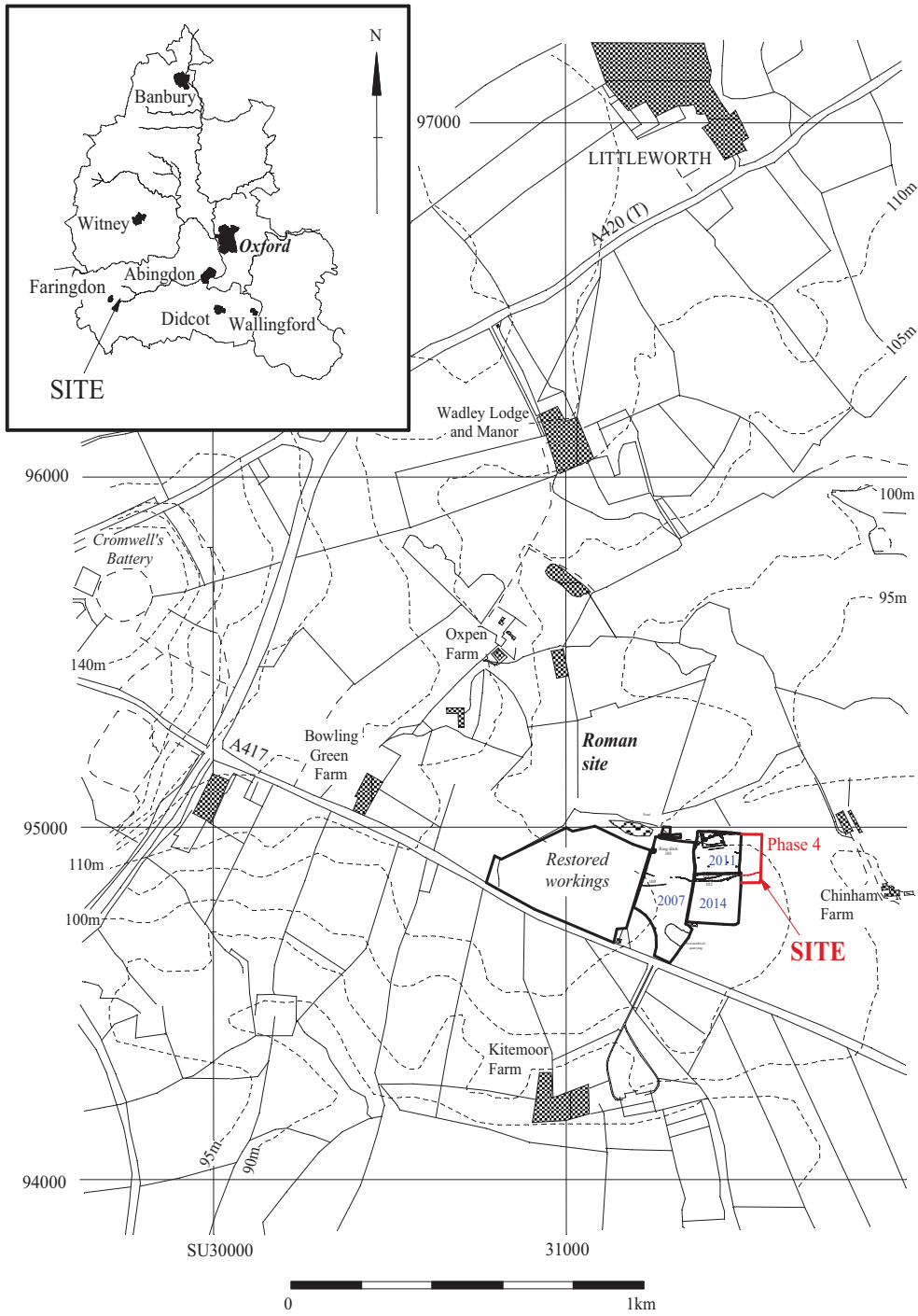
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APPENDIX 1: Feature list

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>Phasing Evidence</i>
500	850		Pit	Iron Age	Pottery
501	851		Pit	Iron Age	associated with 500
502	852		Pit	Iron Age	associated with 500
503	853		Pit	Iron Age	associated with 500
504	855		Ditch	Undated	
505	855		Ditch	Undated	
506	856	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Pottery
	857	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Pottery
507	858	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Pottery
	859	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Pottery
	860	102	Ditch	Iron Age	
508	861	102	Ditch	Iron Age	associated with 102
	862	102	Ditch	Iron Age	
	863	102	Ditch	Iron Age	
	864	102	Ditch	Iron Age	
509	865		Post hole	Iron Age	association
510	871	102	Ditch	Iron Age	
	872	102	Ditch	Iron Age	
	873	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Pottery
511	866	102	Ditch	Iron Age	
	867	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Pottery
	868	102	Ditch	Iron Age	
	869	102	Ditch	Iron Age	
	870	102	Ditch	Iron Age	
512	885	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Pottery
	886	102	Ditch	Iron Age	
	887	102	Ditch	Iron Age	
	888	102	Ditch	Iron Age	
513	884		Post-hole	Iron Age	association
514	882		Post-hole	Iron Age	association
	883		Post-hole	Iron Age	association
515	880		Post-hole	Iron Age	association
	881		Post-hole	Iron Age	association
516	877		Post-hole	Iron Age	association
	878		Post-hole	Iron Age	association
	879		Post-hole	Iron Age	association
517	875		Post-hole	Iron Age	association
	876		Post-hole	Iron Age	association
518	874		Post-hole	Iron Age	association

APPENDIX 2: Pottery catalogue

<i>Group</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>FType</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Rim</i>	<i>Eve</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
	500	850	pit	SH2	base	57	5	-	-	leached interior	IA
	500	850	pit	LI2		0.5	2	-	-	oolitic	IA
	500	850	pit	SAFMIC		0.5	1	-	-		IA
102	506	856	ditch	LI2		8	1	-	-		IA
102	506	856	ditch	SA		2	2	-	-		IA
102	506	856	ditch	LISH	simple rim jar	1	-	1	0.01		IA
102	506	857	ditch	LI3		12	5	-	-	clean matrix	IA
102	506	857	ditch	SA		1	1	-	-	sl. Micaceous	IA
102	507	858	ditch	LI2		2	1	-	-		IA
102	507	858	ditch	LI1		11	1	-	-	decayed limestone	IA
102	510	873	ditch	LI2		10	2	-	-		IA
102	511	867	ditch	LI1?		0.25	2	-	-	?burnt	IA
102	512	885	ditch	SAFMIC		8	6	-	-		IA
	TOTAL					113.25	29	1	0.01		



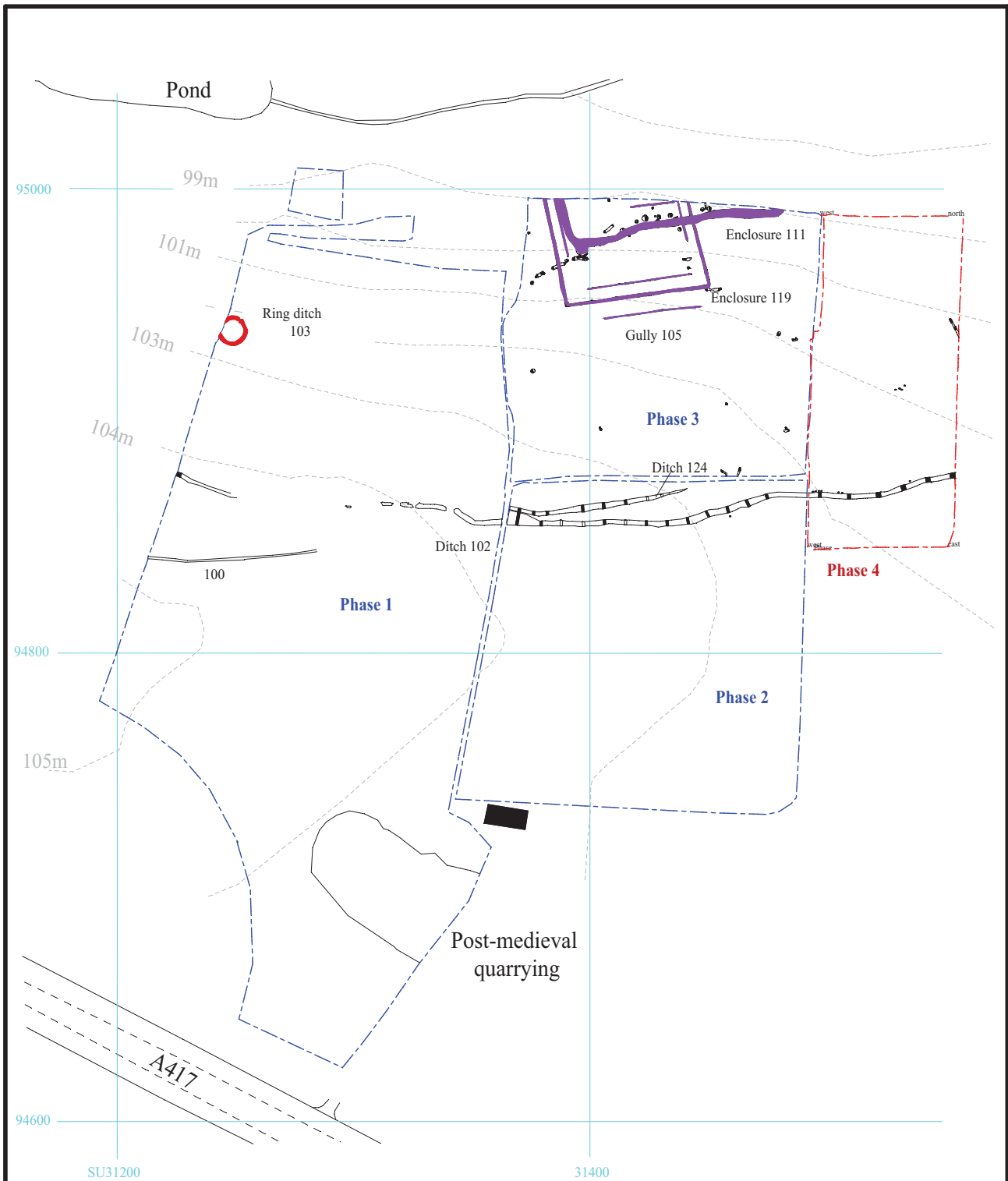
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Faringdon, Oxfordshire, 2017
Archaeological Recording Action - Phase 4**

Figure 1. Location of site, and previous phases 1-3



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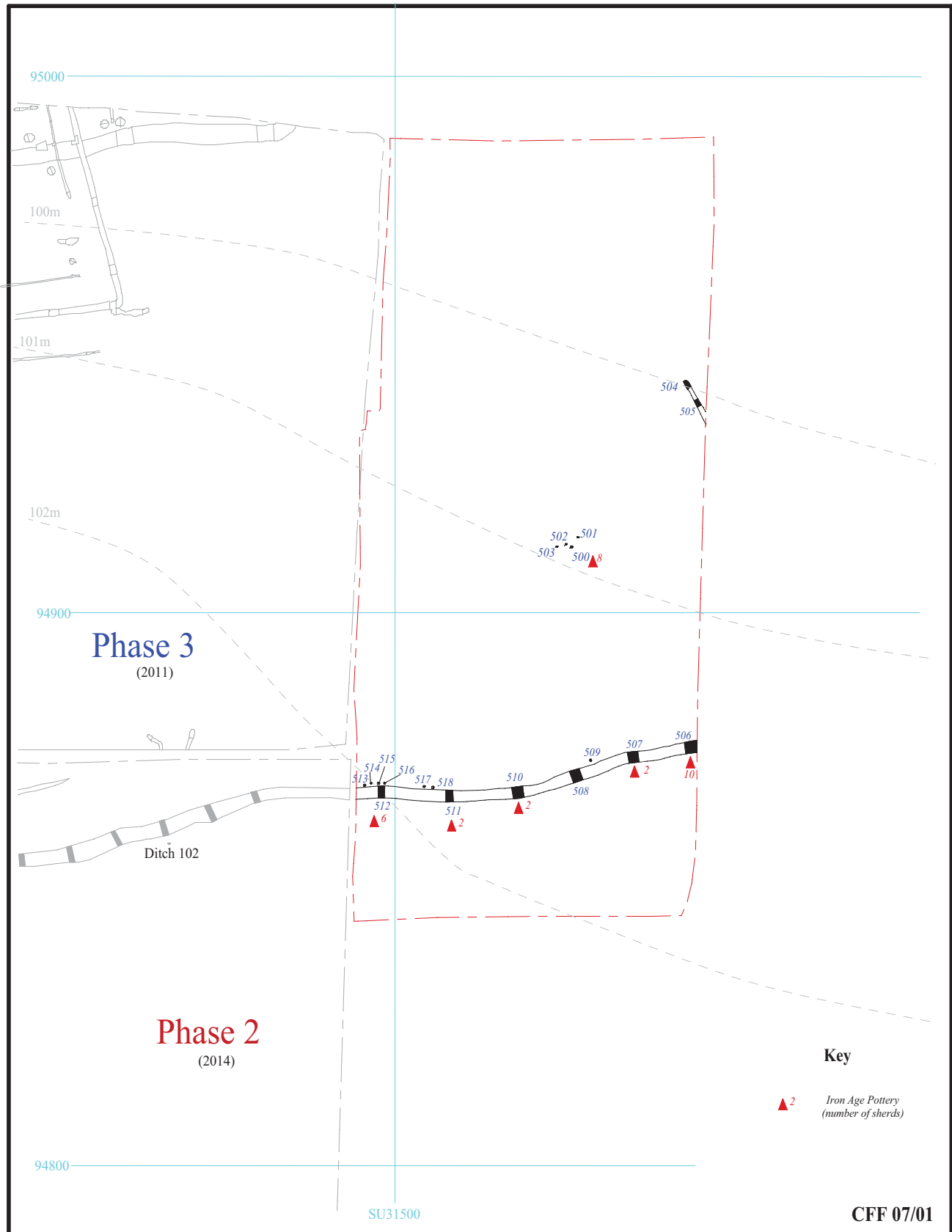
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Figure 2. Phases of excavation since 2007.



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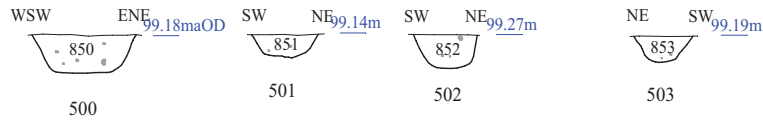


**Chineham Farm Extension, Bowling Green Farm Quarry,
Farington, Oxfordshire, 2017
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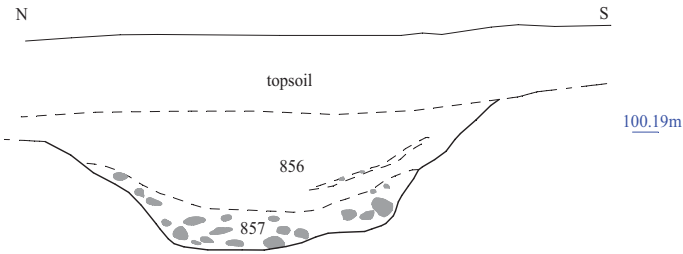
Figure 3. Phase 4: plan of all excavated features.



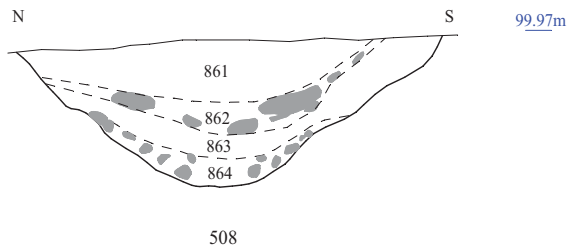
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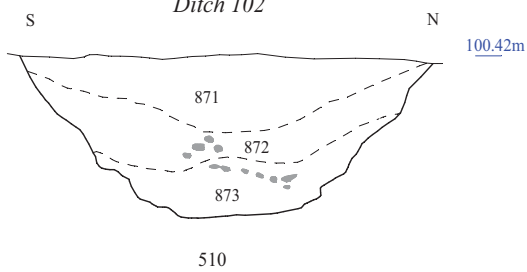
Ditch 102



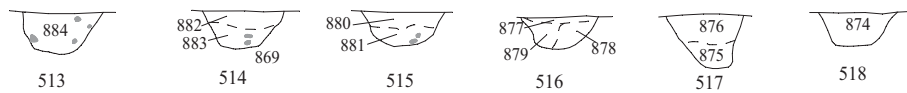
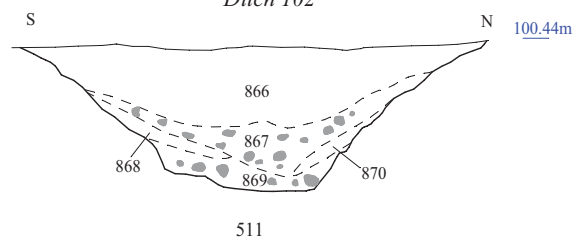
Ditch 102



Ditch 102



Ditch 102



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Figure 4. Sections.



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Plate 1. Phase 4 area, looking north west.



Plate 2. Ditch 102 pre-excavation, looking west.

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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Ditch 102, slot 508, looking east, Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 1m.



Plate 4. Ditch 102, slot 511, looking west, Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 1m.

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Plates 3 and 4.**

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Plate 5. Pit 500, looking north north west, Scales: 0.5m and 0.04m.



Plate 6. Ditch 102, slot 506, looking east, Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 0.1m.

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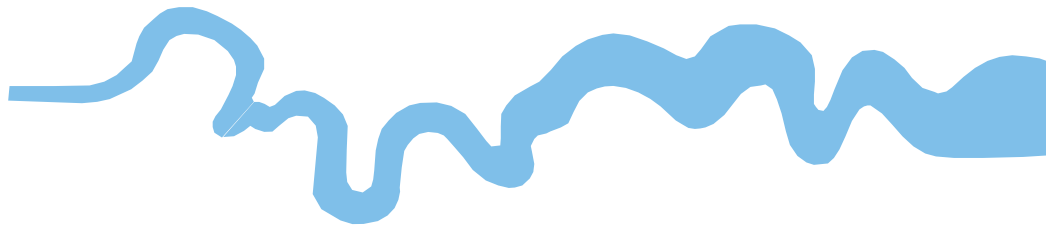
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Plates 5 and 6.**

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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 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	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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