

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land at Manor Farm,
Grittleton, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Luis Esteves

Site Code: MFG17/203

(ST 8509 7996)

Land at Manor Farm, Grittleton, Wiltshire

An Archaeological Evaluation for Armour Heritage

by Luis Esteves

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MFG17/203

October 2017

Summary

Site name: Land at Manor Farm, Grittleton, Wiltshire

Grid reference: ST 8509 7996

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 9th to 13th October 2017

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Luis Esteves

Site code: MFG 17/203

Area of site: 4.5ha

Summary of results: The evaluation was carried out as intended and in total, twenty two trenches were excavated covering the area of proposed development and the geophysical anomalies. Two pits and one ditch were recorded and investigated, however only ten small pottery sherds of probable middle or late Iron Age date (or conceivably Saxon) were recovered, all from one ditch.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 25.10.17
	Steve Preston✓ 25.10.17

Land at Manor Farm, Grittleton, Wiltshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Luis Esteves

Report 17/203

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land near Manor Farm, Grittleton, Wiltshire (ST 8509 7996) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mrs Sue Farr of Armour Heritage Limited, Foghamshire Lane, Trudoxhill, Frome, Somerset, BA11 5DG.

Planning application (16/10204/FUL) has been submitted to Wiltshire Council for the construction of a new farmstead on the site, comprising agricultural storage and livestock buildings, farmhouse and tourism accommodation. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by the development, a field evaluation has been requested in order to inform the planning process. 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 approved by Mrs Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, County Archaeologist at Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Luis Esteves and Ashley Kruger on 9th to 13th October 2017 and the site code is MFG17/203. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Wiltshire Museums Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in Grittleton, 7km north-west of Chippenham and north of the M4 motorway (Fig. 1). The site itself lies at the west of the village on agricultural land currently under arable cultivation. The site is bounded to the south by an unnamed road and to the east and north by further arable land. Limekiln Cottage and its grounds form the western border of the site. The site is broadly level and lies at an elevation of *c.* 122m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The underlying geology is recorded as Forest Marble Formation - Mudstone (BGS 1990). In the north of the site a red/brown silty clay was observed and in the south the geology encountered in the trenches comprised mudstone.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site was highlighted in a desk-based assessment (HPS 2016). The only prehistoric remains recorded by the Historic Environment Record (HER) within the area around the site comprise two findspots of Neolithic struck flints: a flint fabricator to the east of the village; and a number of worked flints recorded during a programme of systematic field walking *c.* 500m to the west of the site.

Evidence for Roman activity is more extensive in the vicinity of the site. An earthwork interpreted as a possible signal station has been located along a section of the Fosse Way Roman road 580m to the west of the site. The Roman road itself has been subject to a number of interventions, including the recording of the roadside ditches during a watching brief. A lead coffin containing an inhumation with a small number of Roman coins was recorded in 1852 in North Field. Although there are two *North Fields* in Grittleton, it is considered likely the discovery was located within the core of the village, approximately 260m to the north-east of Manor Farm, and 900m to the north-east of the site.

A geophysical survey was carried out on the site (LG 2017). A number of potentially archaeological features were identified including mapped and unmapped field boundaries, possible industrial activity, a linear feature running perpendicular to a nearby Roman road and isolated pits and short ditch sections, in addition to agricultural features (ridge and furrow, drainage features and plough scars) of more recent likely date.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. All works were to be carried out in such a manner as would not compromise the integrity of the archaeological features or deposits that would be best suited for investigation under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

Specific aims of the evaluation were:

- to ground truth the results of the geophysical survey;
- to clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains on site; and
- to identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the site.

Twenty two trenches were to be dug, each 2m wide and 25m long (Fig. 2). The trenches were to be dug using a 360-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Any features uncovered were to be cleaned, excavated and recorded using the appropriate hand tools.

Results

All twenty-two trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 2) and ranged between 24m and 28m long, and 0.27m to 0.6m deep. Trench 7 was extended by 12m at the north-east as a request of the County Archaeologist. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The excavated features are summarized as Appendix 2.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned SW - NE and was 28m long and 0.44m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.19m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a mid yellowish brown silty clay natural geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 7)

Trench 2 was aligned S - N and was 25m long and 0.6m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil and 0.25m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a mid yellowish brown silty clay natural geology. The southern end from 1.5m to 7m was occupied by a irregular feature, possible a former post-med quarry pit backfilled with lime kiln waste, through which slot (6) was dug measuring 1.34m wide and 0.53m deep. It had two fills (59 and 60) with 60, a light red brown silty clay and 59 a firm mid reddish brown silty clay with moderate lime kiln waste and burned stone.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned W - E and was 25m long and 0.48m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.28m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay natural geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was aligned SW - NE and was 25m long and 0.52m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of topsoil and 0.3m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay natural geology. A gully terminus was noted at 18m into which a slot (7) was dug measuring 0.58m wide and 0.23m deep. It had one fill (61) a mid black brown silty clay with occasional rooting and manganese but this did not produce any dating evidence.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was aligned SE - NW and was 25m long and 0.46m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of topsoil and 0.29m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay natural geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 6 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 2 and 5)

Trench 6 was aligned W - E and was 25m long and 0.43m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of topsoil and 0.26m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay natural geology. A pit was noted at 4m and a ditch at 17m. The pit was half sectioned (2) measuring 1.2m diameter and 0.43m deep. It had two fills (54 and 55) with 54, a mid reddish brown silty clay, and 55 a dark reddish brown clay silt but this did not produce any dating evidence. The ditch slot (1) was dug measuring 1.5m wide and 0.42m deep. It had two fills (52 and 53) with 52, a light yellow brown silty clay, producing 10 small sherds of pottery. Its primary fill (53) was a dark reddish brown clay silt and did not produce any dating evidence.

Trench 7 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 3 and 8)

Trench 7 was aligned SW-NE and was originally 25m long but it was extended to 37m and 0.43m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of topsoil and 0.1m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light reddish brown clay silt with frequent mudstone natural geology. A ditch was noted at 34m (on the same alignment as ditch from trench 6) and was excavated as slot 9, measuring 1.3m wide and 0.35m deep. It had one fill (63) with a mid reddish brown silty clay and did not produce any dating evidence.

Trench 8

Trench 8 was aligned SW-NE and was 25m long and 0.43m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.24m of topsoil and 0.19m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay natural geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 9

Trench 9 was aligned SW-NE and was 25m long and 0.41m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.23m of topsoil and 0.18m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay natural geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 10

Trench 10 was aligned SE-NW and was 25m long and 0.28m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.23m of topsoil and 0.05m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay with mudstone natural geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 11 (Figs 3 and 4)

Trench 11 was aligned SE-NW and was 25m long and 0.27m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of topsoil and 0.09m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay with mudstone natural geology. A gully (probably representing a post-medieval drainage feature) was noted at 14m into which a slot (3) was dug measuring 0.8m wide and 0.34m deep with stone base. It had one fill (56) a mid reddish brown silty clay which produced a piece of clay pipe.

Trench 12 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 4)

Trench 12 was aligned SW - NE and was 25m long and 0.41m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.24m of topsoil and 0.17m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay with mudstone natural geology. A ditch was noted at 23m (a possible modern drainage) into which a slot (4) was dug measuring 1.1m wide and 0.3m deep with stone base and sides. It had one fill (57) a dark reddish brown clay silt and did not produce any dating evidence.

Trench 13 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 6)

Trench 13 was aligned S - N and was 25m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil and 0.12m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay with mudstone natural geology. A ditch was noted at 7m (a possible modern drainage feature) into which a slot (5) was dug measuring 0.8m wide and 0.29m deep with stone base and sides. It had one fill (58) a mid reddish brown silty clay and did not produce any dating evidence.

Trench 14

Trench 14 was aligned SW-NE and was 25m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.21m of topsoil and 0.14m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay with mudstone natural geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 15

Trench 15 was aligned N-S and was 25m long and 0.46m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.31m of topsoil and 0.15m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay with mudstone natural geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 16

Trench 16 was aligned SW-NE and was 25m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.23m of topsoil and 0.15m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay with mudstone natural geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 17

Trench 17 was aligned N-S and was 24m long and 0.36m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.24m of topsoil and 0.12m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay with mudstone natural geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 18

Trench 18 was aligned E-W and was 24m long and 0.41m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.27m of topsoil and 0.14m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay with mudstone natural geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 19

Trench 19 was aligned SE - NW and was 25m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil and 0.12m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay with mudstone natural geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 20

Trench 20 was aligned SW - NE and was 25m long and 0.46m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.21m of topsoil and 0.25m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay with mudstone natural geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 21

Trench 21 was aligned SW - NE and was 25m long and 0.53m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.29m of topsoil and 0.22m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay with mudstone natural geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 22

Trench 22 was aligned SE - NW and was 25m long and 0.43m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil and 0.13m of mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying a light brown yellow silty clay with mudstone natural geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Finds

Pottery by Jane Timby

The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of ten small sherds of pottery weighing 12g, all from ditch 1 (fill 52). The sherds are probably from a single, handmade, closed vessel fired in a reducing atmosphere to a black colour. The surface has been smoothed. The fabric contains sparse fragments of fossil shell fragments up to 2 mm and occasional limestone. A slight thickening on the edge of one fragment may suggest a handle springing.

Whilst it is not possible to be categorical with such a small assemblage the nature of the material would suggest that it probably dates to the later prehistoric period (middle-later Iron Age) although a Saxon possibility cannot be completely discounted.

Conclusion

The evaluation identified three archaeological deposits in the centre of the site (trenches 6 and 7) and a possible post-med quarry pit in Trench 2. Features identified in the geophysical survey (Fig 5) were encountered in Trench 6 and consisted of a small undated pit, and a ditch containing a small quantity of (probably) later prehistoric pottery. Trench 7 was extended 12m to northeast to locate the same linear feature excavated in trench 6, however no pottery or dating evidence was recovered here. The majority of the area evaluated contained no archaeological deposits and the majority of possible linear features identified in the geophysical survey represent post-medieval and modern boundaries, field drains and changes in the natural geology.

References

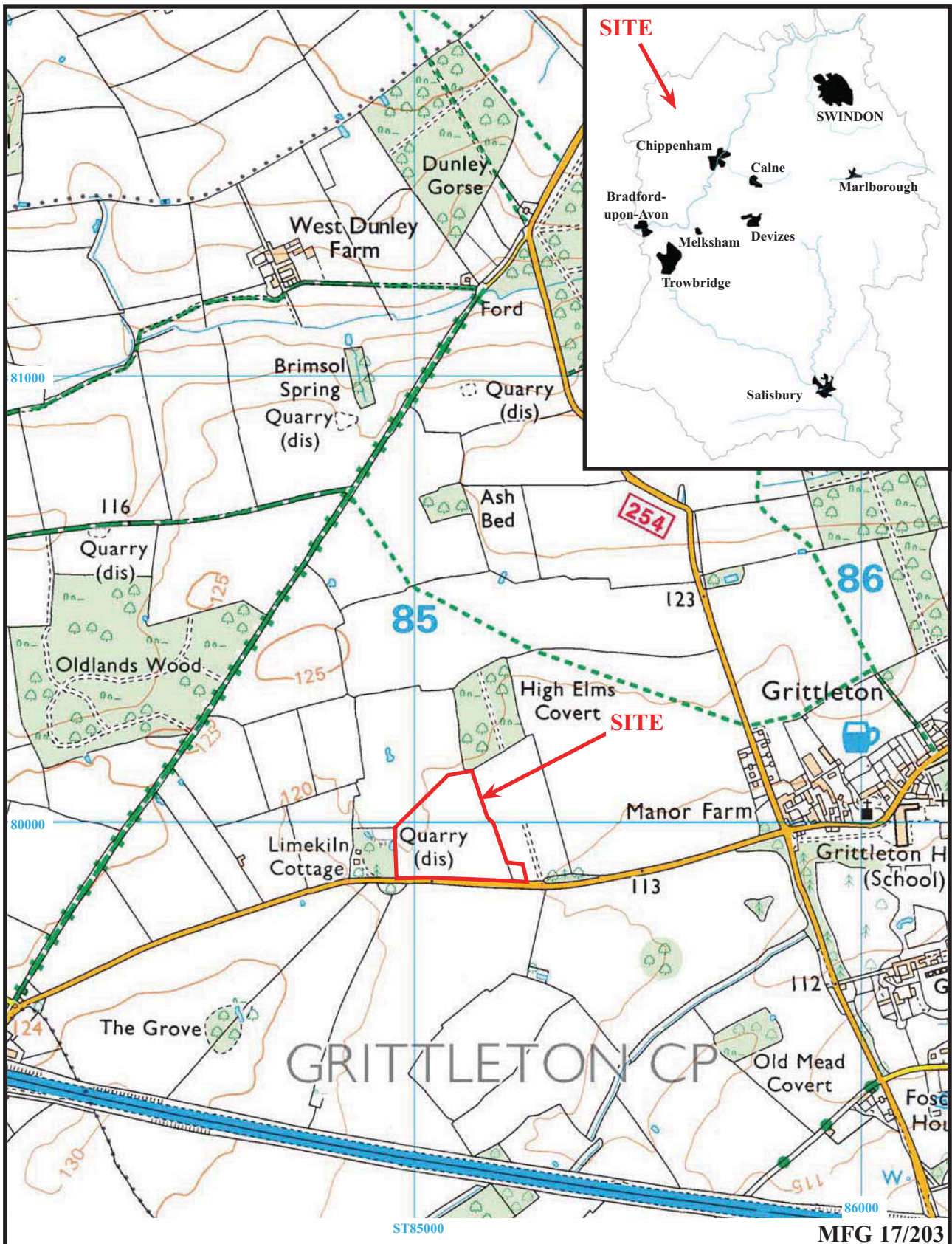
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APPENDIX 1: Trench details
0m at S or W end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	28	2	0.44	0–0.25m topsoil, 0.25m-0.44m subsoil, 0.44m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology.
2	25	2	0.6	0–0.3m topsoil, 0.3m-0.55m subsoil, 0.55m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology. Pit 6, [Pls 1 and 6]
3	25	2	0.48	0–0.2m topsoil, 0.2m-0.48m subsoil, 0.48m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology.
4	25	2	0.52	0–0.22m topsoil, 0.22m-0.52m subsoil, 0.52m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology. Gully 7
5	25	2	0.46	0–0.17m topsoil, 0.17m-0.46m subsoil, 0.46m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology.
6	25	2	0.43	0–0.17m topsoil, 0.17m-0.43m subsoil, 0.43m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology. Ditch 1, Pit 2. [Pls 2 and 5]
7	37	2	0.32	0–0.22m topsoil, 0.22m-0.32m subsoil, 0.32m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology. Ditch 9. [Pls 3 and 8]
8	25	2	0.43	0–0.24m topsoil, 0.24m-0.43m subsoil, 0.43m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology
9	25.3	2	0.41	0–0.23m topsoil, 0.23m-0.28m subsoil, 0.28m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology
10	25	2	0.28	0–0.23m topsoil, 0.23m-0.28m subsoil, 0.28m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology
11	25	2	0.27	0–0.18m topsoil, 0.18m-0.27m subsoil, 0.27m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology. Gully 3.
12	25	2	0.41	0–0.24m topsoil, 0.24m-0.41m subsoil, 0.41m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology. Gully 4. [Pl. 4]
13	25.3	2	0.38	0–0.26m topsoil, 0.26m-0.38m subsoil, 0.38m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology. Gully 5. [Pl. 6]
14	25	2	0.35	0–0.21m topsoil, 0.21m-0.35m subsoil, 0.35m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology.
15	25	2	0.46	0–0.31m topsoil, 0.31m-0.46m subsoil, 0.46m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology.
16	25	2	0.38	0–0.23m topsoil, 0.23m-0.38m subsoil, 0.38m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology.
17	24	2	0.36	0–0.24m topsoil, 0.24m-0.34m subsoil, 0.34m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology.
18	24	2	0.41	0–0.27m topsoil, 0.27m-0.41m subsoil, 0.41m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology.
19	25	2	0.38	0–0.26m topsoil, 0.26m-0.38m subsoil, 0.38m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology.
20	25	2	0.46	0–0.21m topsoil, 0.21m-0.46m subsoil, 0.46m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology.
21	25	2	0.53	0–0.29m topsoil, 0.29m-0.53m subsoil, 0.53m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology.
22	25	2	0.43	0–0.30m topsoil, 0.30m-0.43m subsoil, 0.43m+ light reddish brown silty clay with mudstone natural geology.

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
6	1	52, 53	Ditch	Prehistoric (mid/late Iron Age)	Pottery
6	2	54, 55	Pit	Undated	
11	3	56	Gully	Undated	
12	4	57	Ditch	Undated	
13	5	58	Ditch	Undated	
2	6	59, 60	Possible pit	Undated	
4	7	61	Gully	Undated	
7	9	63	Ditch	Undated	

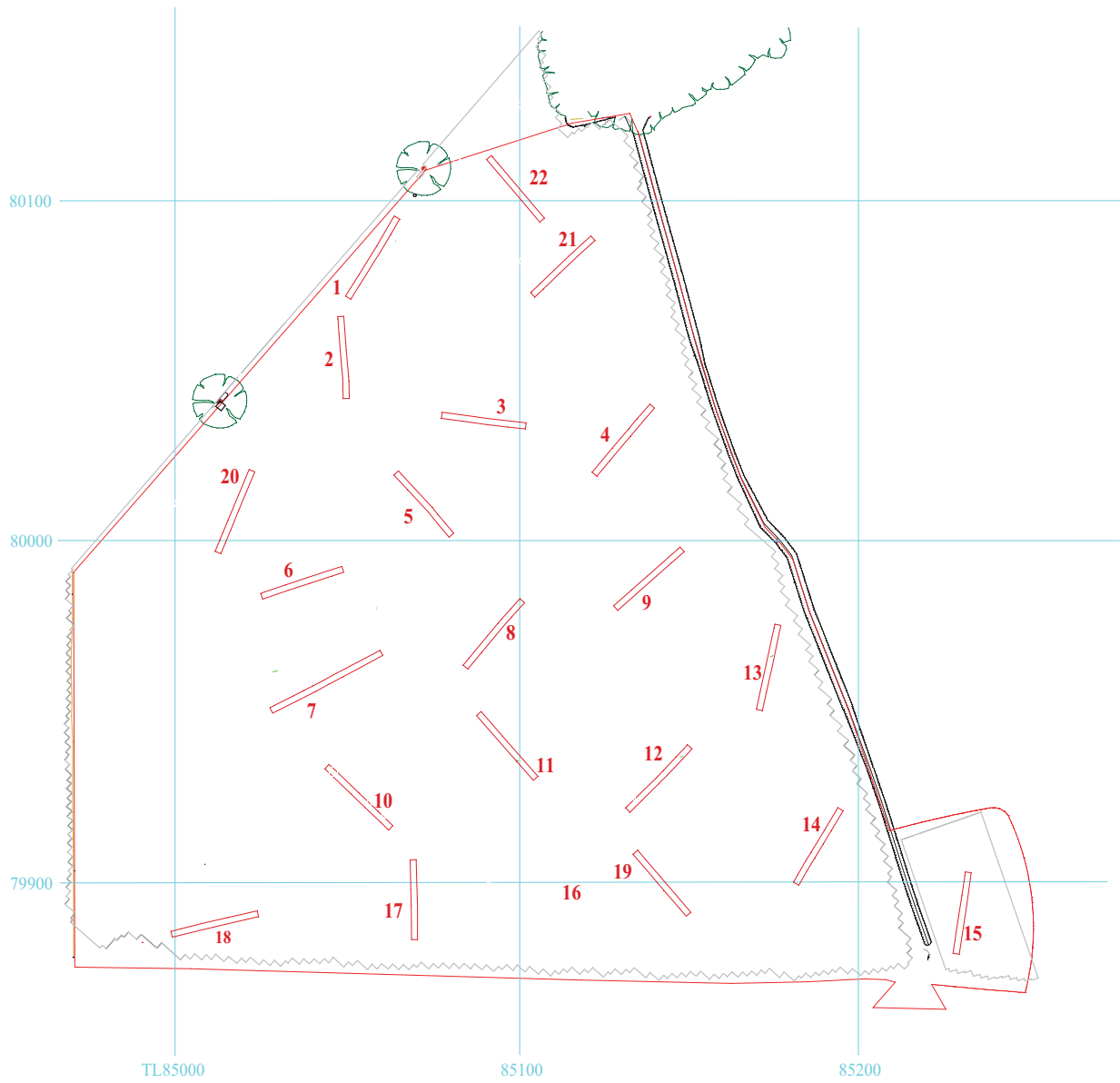


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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Grittleton and within Wiltshire.

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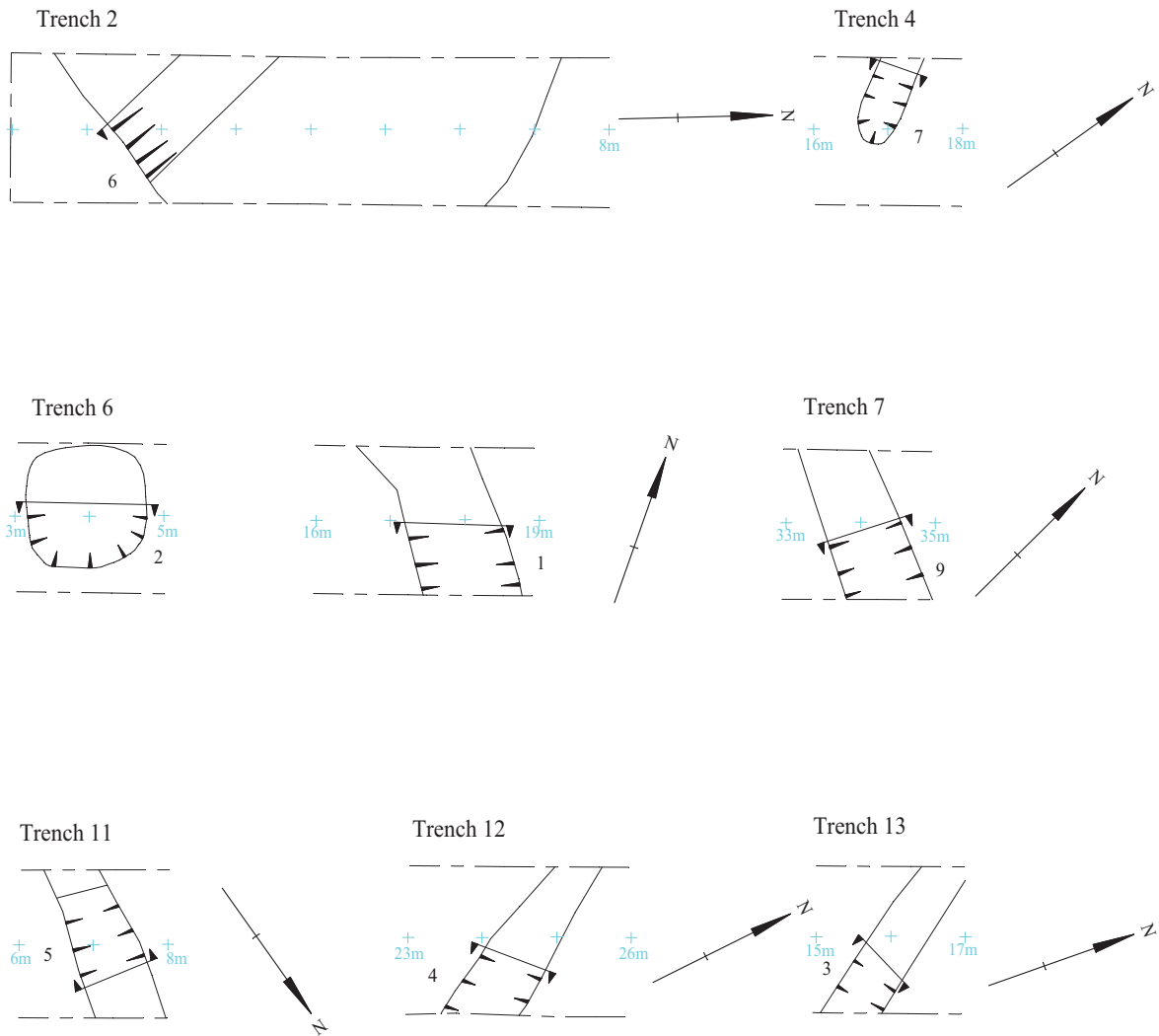


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Figure 2. Location of trenches.



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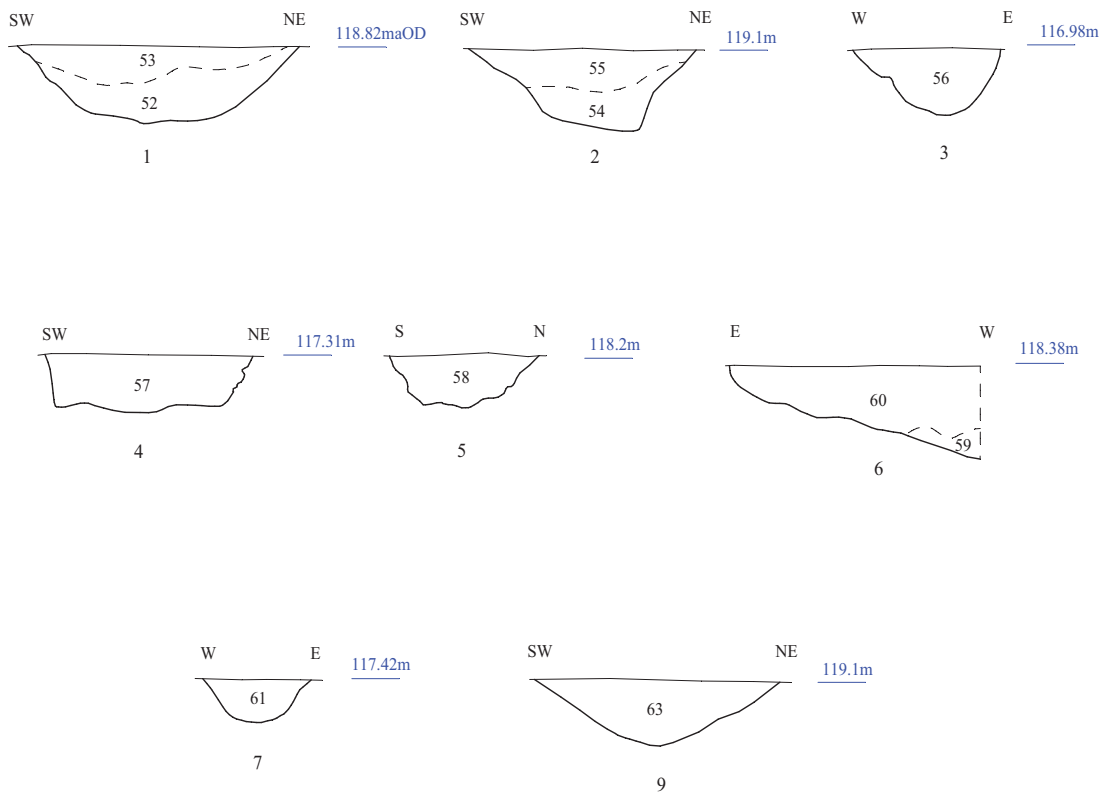
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Figure 3. Detail of trenches.



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Figure 4. Sections.



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Figure 5. Location of features related to geophysical anomalies.



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Plate 1. Trench 2, looking north west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 6, looking east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

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**Land at Manor Farm
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 7, looking north east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 4. Trench 12, looking north east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.

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**Land at Manor Farm,
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Plates 3 and 4.

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Plate 5. Trench 6, ditch 1, looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 6. Trench 13, looking west, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.

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Land at Manor Farm,
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Plates 5 and 6.

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Plate 7. Trench 2, pit 6, looking south, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 8. Trench 7, ditch 9, looking north west, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.

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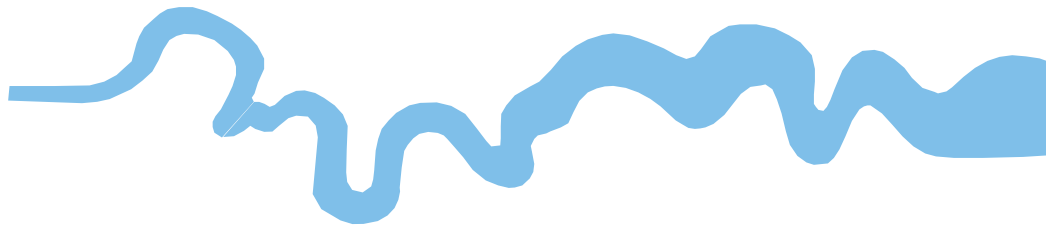
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Plates 7 and 8.

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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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