

Pratt's Quarry Extension, Great Billington, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

For WBB Minerals Ltd UK

By Andrew Mordin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code GBLB 07/99

October 2007

Summary

Site name: Pratt's Quarry Extension, Great Billington, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire

Grid reference: SP 9350 2320

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 14th August – 28th September 2007

Project manager: Joanna Pine

Site supervisor: Andrew Mordin

Site code: GBLB 07/99

Area of site: c. 25ha

Summary of results: A large number of cut features are present in many of the trenches on the site. They are not well dated but where dating evidence is recovered they are no earlier than late medieval or early post medieval times. It is considered that they reflect agricultural activity of those times. A small collection of struck flint points to a very low level of prehistoric activity on the site.

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

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by Andrew Muddin

Report 07/99

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land north of Great Billington, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire (SP 9350 2320) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Andrew Josephs, of Andrew Josephs Ltd, 16 South Terrace, Sowerby, Thirsk, YO7 1RH, on behalf of WBB Minerals Ltd UK, Brookside Hall, Sandbach, Cheshire, CW11 4TF.

Planning permission is to be sought from Bedfordshire County Council for mineral extraction and an extension of the quarry workings at Pratt's Quarry. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological remains surviving on the site which might be affected by the proposed works, an archaeological evaluation has been requested to better inform the planning process.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the County Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Martin Oake, County Archaeological Officer. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Muddin and Simon Cass, with assistance from Steve Crabb, Danielle Milbank, James Haygreen and Marta Buczek, from the 14th August to 28th September 2007. The site code is GBLB 07/99. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Luton Museum in due course.

A desk-based assessment was compiled for the proposed development area (Josephs 2006), the findings of which are summarized below.

Location, topography and geology

The proposed development area lies to the south-east of Leighton Buzzard, and to the north of the village of Great Billington. The site is bounded by the A505 to the north and the A4146 to the south and east, excluding Wayside Farm. The A505 follows the course of the dismantled railway line. The eastern boundary skirts round Green Farm and an area marked as 'village green'. The site comprises two large and parcels to the west and north, with a collection of three smaller fields to the south-east.

The site is dominated by poorly drained, non-calcareous clayey soils with Type A subsoil over gault clay (BGS 1992). Currently the fields are in arable use, and contain extensive subsoil drainage.

Archaeological background

The desk-based assessment in summary, found there to be a low potential for archaeology in the area. Geophysical survey and evaluation carried out on land within the existing Pratt's Quarry immediately to the north of the site (Morris 2003) revealed almost nothing of any archaeological relevance. Another geophysical survey and evaluation on 17ha of land c.300m north-west of the proposed development area was also carried out in the winter of 2005/06. This evaluation found no archaeology on the clays but, on areas of slightly more gravelly clays, evidence of Bronze Age/early Iron Age field systems (AA 2006).

In general, elsewhere other work carried out at Grove Priory between 1973 and 1985 found Mesolithic flint-working, an Anglo-Saxon timber hall, surrounded by a large enclosure ditch and bank, as well as structural evidence of a medieval and post-medieval period (BCAS 1999). Trial trenching for extensions to Grovebury Farm in 1991 and 1995, only identified undated ditch features (BCAS 1991). These areas lay c.1km south-west of this current site.

The earthwork of a supposed Iron Age camp, called Billington Camp lies 800m south-east of the proposed development area. This was bulldozed in 1959 and in 1958 and 1999 work on this site found a large ditch which may have been a defensive feature. Findspots noted from the surrounding areas include a Roman coin to the north-east (HER 10732) and Roman pottery to the north-east (HER 12748, 16279). During a site tour for the desk-based assessment, medieval pottery was found close to the site of an old pond on the field boundary on the eastern side of the site. It was thought this could be the site of a tenement (Josephs 2006). Fieldwalking on the site itself found a small number of prehistoric struck flints along with Roman and medieval pottery (Hayfield 2006).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. The work was to be carried out in such a way that would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation in-situ, or might better be excavated pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of the project were:

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.

To determine if archaeological of any period were present.

Establish whether there is evidence/potential for prehistoric and Roman occupation in the area.

Establish whether there is evidence of Medieval settlement in the area.

It was proposed to excavate 46 trenches over 5 fields, 1.8m wide and 50m long, using a 360° type mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological direction.

The trench were positioned as close as possible to the agreed layout giving a general coverage of the ground in the proposed development area (Fig. 2).

The trenches were to be dug to examine the full depth of stratified deposits above underlying geology. Where archaeological features or deposits are certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools and a portion of the deposits examined or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the project.

Results

All 46 trenches were opened but varied in length between 43m and 59.6m. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and descriptions is given in Appendix 1. The underlying geology varied slightly across the trenches. Most contained the gault clay as expected; a mid to light brown grey clay with occasional flints. Depths were generally uniform with some exceptions; Trench 2 contained a buried clay layer (265) and Trench 9 contained little or no subsoil in places. Most of the trenches contained linear features (Fig. 3).

Trench 1 (Figs 4, 10)

Trench 1 was orientated south west - north east and was 47.2m in length and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy comprised topsoil overlying subsoil which overlay the gault clay natural throughout. Three parallel linear features (48,210,211) were noted in this trench, which all cut the subsoil. Only one of these gullies (48) was investigated. This feature contained a brown silty clay with occasional sub-rounded flints (153). This feature was 0.3m deep and 0.8m wide. One piece of tile was found on the surface of this feature. Sample 10 was taken from the fill but no but no palaeoenvironmental material of note was recorded. These features remains undated.

Trench 2 (Figs 4, 11)

This trench was orientated west-east and was 52.3m in length and up to 0.66m deep. This was the only trench to contain a buried clay layer (265), which overlay natural geology and two linear gullies (49, 109). Both features

were c.0.4m wide and 0.16m deep. Each was filled with a dark greyish brown silty clay (154,165), which contained no finds. Post-Medieval pottery came from topsoil and layer 265.

Trench 3

No features were recorded in this trench though three sherds of tile and two sherds of pottery were recovered from the topsoil.

Trench 4 (Figs 4, 10)

This trench was orientated east - west and was 47.8m in length and 0.55m deep. This trench contained two shallow ditches (43, 44) and a gully (42). The gully, which cut the natural geology was 0.57m wide and 0.14m deep and contained a grey brown silty clay (96). The fill contained a prehistoric worked flint. Ditch 43 contained a grey brown silty clay with very occasional sub-rounded flint pieces from which three sherds of pottery indicate this feature is of Late Medieval (mid 14th-16th century) or later date.

Trench 5

No features were recorded in this trench.

Trench 6 (Figs 4, 10, 11)

Trench 6 was orientated south west - north east and was 50.2m in length and 0.56m deep. This trench contained one gully (47) perpendicular to the trench and probably is the same feature seen in Trench 8 (41). This gully was which was 0.4m wide and 0.2 deep. and was filled with a brown silty clay with occasional sub-rounded flint gravel (152). No dating evidence was recovered.

Trench 7 (Figs 4, 11)

This trench was orientated south east - north west and was 48.15m in length and 0.42m deep. This trench contained one north-south aligned shallow ditch (45), which was 0.74m wide and 0.11 deep. This was filled with a light grey brown clay (99). No dating evidence was recovered. This feature may be the same as the linear (44) in Trench 4.

Trench 8 (Figs 4, 10)

This trench was orientated south west - north east and was 46.4m in length and 0.54m deep. One gully (41) was uncovered. It was 0.44m wide and 0.23m deep. This feature seem to be a continuation of the feature noted in Trench 6, and had a similar fill (95). No dating evidence was recovered.

Trench 9 (Figs 4, 11, Pl. 1)

Trench 9 was orientated east - west and was 51.5m long and 0.34m deep. This trench was noted to have little or no topsoil in places, and in general had a geology consisting of brown silty clay gravel patches to the east. The remains of the trench to the west had gault clay natural. The lack of subsoil on this trench shows that any surviving remains may have been damaged or are not representative of their original depth. Two features were recorded in this trench. A ditch (46) was noted on a south-west to north-east alignment. It was 2.3m wide and 0.45 deep. Its fill (151) was a firm brown grey silty clay, with occasional sub-rounded flint inclusions. This feature contained pottery of 16th century date, tile and animal bone. In the centre of the trench, a patchy (150) spread was noted which was associated with pottery, of a similar date to the ditch.

Trench 10

No features were recorded in this trench.

Trench 11

No features were recorded in this trench; a small irregular clay patch turned out to be a shallow natural hollow.

Trench 12 (Figs 4, 10)

This trench was orientated south west - north east and was 50.2m long and 0.46m deep. Two ditches (27, 28) were noted in this trench. Ditch 27 was 0.76m wide and 0.26 deep and ditch 28 was 0.56m wide and 0.20 deep. Both are filled with dark grey brown silty clay, with occasional sub-rounded flint inclusions (80, 81). One ditch (27) contained two tile fragments. These features seem to be related to the field division noted on the tithe map of 1847.

Trench 13 (Figs 5, 10)

This trench was orientated south west - north east and was 44.1m in length and 0.47m deep. This trench contained a number of land drains as well as linear features. Five linear features (29, 30, 31, 32, 33) were noted, ranging in width from 0.6 to 0.93m and 0.19-0.3m in depth. All features seemed to be located beneath subsoil. Most were filled with the grey brown silty clay (82, 83, 84, 85, 86). Only one of these contained dating evidence with (32) only containing three tile fragments.

Trench 14 (Figs 5, 10; Pl. 3)

Trench 14 was orientated south west - north east and was 49.3m in length and 0.49m deep. A number of features recorded through its length. A shallow ditch (40) was noted in the south-west end of the trench. This was 1.56m wide and 0.1m deep, with a grey brown clay fill (94). It contained one sherd of late Medieval (mid 14th-16th century) pottery. Ditch (39) was 1.8m wide, 0.43m deep and contained a brown grey silty clay (93). No dating

evidence was recovered. Gully (37) aligned north-south was 1.2m wide and 0.4m deep. It was filled with a grey clay which had occasional sub-rounded flint inclusions (90). No dating evidence was recovered. Gully 34 was 2.2m wide but only 0.15m deep with a brown grey clay fill (87). This wide shallow feature was sampled (9) but no dating evidence nor palaeoenvironmental evidence was recovered. Gully (38) was 0.41m wide and 0.16m deep. It contained a brown grey silty clay primary fill (92), with a thin darker band of clay seen at the top of the feature (91). No dating evidence was recovered. Ditch (36) (Plate 3) was filled with a mid grey brown silty clay with occasional rounded flints (89) and contained pottery of late Medieval (mid 14th-16th century) date. This feature was c.1m wide and 0.3m deep. Ditch (35) was 0.8m wide and 0.4m deep with a brown silty clay with occasional sub-rounded flint inclusions (88). No dating evidence was recovered.

Trench 15 (Figs 5, 10)

This trench was orientated south east - north west and was 49.4m in length and 0.4m deep. This trench contained three linear features; two ditches (25, 26). Both were filled with yellowish brown grey clay, with very occasional sub-rounded flint inclusions (78, 79) and neither contained dating evidence. Sample 11 was taken of one of these ditches (26), but no palaeoenvironmental material of note was recorded. It is 0.44m wide and 0.18m deep. The north-south aligned ditch (25) seems to be the same feature noted in Trench 17 (23). It is 0.72m wide and 0.28m deep. The other linear feature (24) is of uncertain size as its edge was masked by the parallel drain running down its south eastern edge. It is 0.58m wide and 0.19m deep. It is filled with grey brown clay fill (77). No dating evidence was recovered.

Trench 16 (Figs 5, 10)

This trench was 53.9m long and 0.57m deep orientated north - south. One feature was present, an undated shallow gully (22), filled with mid grey brown silty clay with occasional to moderate rounded flint inclusions. It was 0.59m wide and 0.13m deep. No dating evidence was recovered.

Trench 17 (Figs 5, 10)

Trench 17 was 51.4m in length and 0.42m deep and was orientated east - west. One undated ditch was present (23) in this trench which probably is a continuation of the feature (25) from Trench 15. This ditch is 0.61m wide and 0.31m deep, filled with a moderate mid grey brown clay (76). Sample 8 was taken from the feature but nothing of note was discovered.

Trench 18 (Figs 5, 11)

This trench was orientated east - west and was 54.1m in length and 0.49m deep. It contained much modern land drainage. Three features were recorded in this trench. A shallow ditch (112) was recorded in the north-east end of the trench. This was filled with a dark brown clay (167), which contained no finds. It is 0.95m wide and 0.13m deep. A small pit (111) was recorded at c. 31m and its profile was straight sides angled inwards to curve down to a flattened base at 0.15m deep from the base of trench. Its fill (166) was a firm dark brown clay, with very occasional flint inclusions. The gully (110) situated at 22m from the west-south-west end of the trench was filled with grey brown yellow clay (164) and was It is 0.46m wide and 0.14m deep. It contained no finds.

Trench 19 (Figs 6, 11)

This trench was 49.4m long and 0.46m deep orientated east - west. One feature was recorded, gully (100) aligned north- south, was filled with dark grey brown silty clay with occasional flint inclusions (155). It is 0.56m wide and 0.23m deep. This feature remains undated.

Trench 20 (Figs 6, 11; Pl. 4)

This trench was orientated south west - north east and was 48.15m in length and is 0.45m deep. This trench contains three gullies. One gully (118) terminates within the trench. just before it intersects with the ditch (119). The gully is filled with brown clay which contains moderate flint inclusions (173). It is 0.93m wide and 0.15m deep The other ditch (119) is angled perpendicular to the terminal, and is filled with dark brown clay with occasional flint inclusions (174). It is 0.53m wide and 0.18m deep Both of these features are undated. At the north-eastern end of this trench is a gully (117) which is 0.69m wide and 0.13m deep and filled with dark brown grey clay fill (172). It contained one sherd of pottery for Late Medieval (mid 14th-16th century) date.

Trench 21 (Figs 6, 11)

This trench was orientated south west - north east and was 43m in length and is 0.45m deep. All of the recorded features in this trench were present in its north-eastern end. Four features were recorded; three gullies and one ditch. Two small parallel gullies (114, 115) were c.7m from the north-eastern end of the trench. These were filled with similar dark brown clay with occasional flint inclusions (169, 170). Gully 114 was 0.43m wide and 0.20m deep and gully 115 was 0.55m wide and 0.20m deep. Both are undated. The other gully (113) terminated in the trench before it could intersect with the twin gullies from the west.. This is filled with a similar fill to the previous gullies (168) and remains undated. It predominantly has a U-shaped profile, which is 0.7m wide and is 0.15m deep.

The final feature in this trench was a ditch (116) at the north-eastern end. This was aligned south-west to north-east and was 0.83m wide and is 0.18m deep. It was filled with a dark brown silty clay with occasional flint inclusions (171). This feature remains undated.

Trench 22 (Fig. 6)

Trench 22 was orientated south west - north east and was 46.4m in length and 0.44m deep. A number of features were present in this trench, but none were investigated further. Four gullies (204, 205, 208, 209) and three ditches (203, 206, 207) were recorded and all seemed to be filled with similar grey brown silty clay fills (255-261).

Trench 23 (Figs 6, 10)

This trench was orientated north-south and was 50.2m long and 0.58m deep. The stratigraphy comprised topsoil overlying subsoil which overlay the gault clay natural throughout. Three linear features were present in this trench. Gully 1 was 0.46m wide and 0.1m deep. It contained no finds. The other two features were parallel with gully 1. Gully (2) was also 0.46m wide and 0.1m deep. Gully 3 was 0.56m wide but unexcavated. All three features had similar fills of a grey brown silty clay with occasional rounded pebbles (50, 51, 52).

Trench 24 (Figs 7, 10)

This trench was orientated east - west and was 50.4m in length and 0.6m deep. This trench contained four linear features (18, 19, 20, 21) none of which provided dating evidence. All had similar profiles. It was unclear if all features cut the subsoil, as most has suffered plough damage. All were filled with dark brown grey with slight grey clay mottling and occasional flint inclusions (71-74). Gully 18 was 0.68m wide and 0.12m deep; gully 19 was 0.65m wide and 0.31m deep; gully 20 was 0.49m wide and 0.18m deep and gully 21 was 0.66m wide and 0.33m deep. Samples 6 and 7 were taken from two of the gullies (18, 19), but no palaeoenvironmental material of note was recorded.

Trench 25 (Figs 7, 10)

This trench was orientated south west - north east and was 51.4m in length and 0.58m deep. This trench contained similar features to the Trench 23, which contained three parallel features, though closer together, all positioned at the north-eastern end of the trench. Two of the three gullies revealed (4, 5, 6), were investigated (4, 5), though all seemed to be similar in character. Gully 4 was 0.61m wide and 0.1m deep and gully 5 was 0.60m wide and 0.1m deep. Both fills (53, 54) were of mid grey brown silty clay with occasional small sub-angular flint

inclusions. No finds were recovered from these features. Two sherds of pottery were recovered from the topsoil which are Late Medieval (mid 14th-16th century) in date.

Trenches 26–29

No features were recorded in these trenches, an undisturbed stratigraphy of topsoil and subsoil; natural gault clay was discovered throughout.

Trench 30 (Figs 7, 10)

This trench was 47.8m long and 0.48m deep and orientated south west - north east. Three parallel features were recorded in this trench. All were gullies (15, 16, 17) were filled with similar mid grey brown silty clay (68, 69, 70). Gully 15 was 0.54m wide and 0.32m deep; gully 16 was 0.48m wide and 0.22m deep and gully 17 was 0.33m wide and 0.11m deep. No pottery was recovered from any of the features. Samples 1 and 2 were taken from two of the three gullies (15, 16), but nothing of palaeoenvironmental interest was recovered from them.

Trench 31 (Figs 7, 10)

This trench was orientated south east - north west and was 49m in length and 0.53m deep. It contained five shallow features throughout its length. Most were linear features apart from one pit (11). Ditch (9) linked two other ditches (8, 10). Most of these three features were filled with similar dark brown grey silty clay which contained no finds. (61, 62, 63). Gully 8 was 0.54m wide and 0.06m deep; gully 9 was 0.52m wide and 0.21m deep and gully 10 was 0.45m wide and 0.08m deep. Two of the other linear features (7, 12) shows signs of mixed natural in their fills (59,60 and 65) and could be plough damaged. Gully 7 was 0.66m wide and 0.14m deep; gully 16 was 0.47m wide and 0.07m deep. Again, these features contained no finds. Samples 3 and 4 were taken from features 8 and 9, but nothing of interest was recovered.

Trench 32 (Figs 7, 10)

Trench 32 was orientated south east - north west and was 52m in length and 0.54m deep. This trench contained few features. One feature investigated was an irregular clay patch. This was revealed to be a brown clay and contained no finds; It is probably natural. The other features is a shallow linear (14), which is filled with a dark grey silty clay. This linear was 0.32m wide and 0.07m deep. Sample 5 was taken from this linear, but no material of interest was recovered from the sample or from the fill.

Trench 33 (Figs 8, 11)

This trench was orientated south west - north east and was 53.3m in length and 0.45m deep. This contained a number of parallel linear features throughout its length. These gullies (101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108) were all of similar character and profile with a fill of mid brown grey clay with occasional sub-rounded flint inclusions (156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163). They are between 0.5m and 0.8m wide, and 0.17m and 0.35m in depth. One of the gullies terminated within the trench (102). None of these features contained finds and remain undated.

Trench 34 (Figs 8, 11; Pl. 2)

This trench was orientated south west - north east and was 51.5m in length and 0.5m deep. This trenches contained a series of parallel gullies (126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, and 133). All of the gullies contained similar fills of brown grey clay with occasional sub-rounded flint inclusions (181-6, 188). They are between 0.5m and 0.83m wide, and 0.09m and 0.33m in depth. Gully 133 terminated within the trench. No features contained finds and remain undated.

Trench 35 (Figs 8, 11)

The trench was 43.5m in length and 0.47m deep orientated south west - north east. Only one feature (132) was recorded in this trench. This feature contained one small sherd of abraded late Medieval (mid 14th-16th century) pottery. The profile was a shallow curved side with a curved base, 0.4m wide and 0.1m deep. This feature was filled with a mid brown grey clay with occasional flint inclusions (187).

Trench 36 (Figs 8, 9, 11, 12)

This trench was orientated east - west and was 43.7m in length and 0.35m deep. Five linear features were recorded in this trench. These gullies (134, 135, 136, 137, 138) were filled with similar fills of mid grey brown clay with occasional sub-rounded flint inclusions (189, 190, 191, 192, 193). They are between 0.34m and 0.53m wide, and 0.1m and 0.19m in depth. 6No finds were recovered from the trenches.

Trench 37 (Figs 9, 11)

Trench 37 was 46.7m in length and 0.6m deep was orientated south east - north west. Five features were recorded in this trench. Two pits (120, 121) were in the south-east end of the trench. These pits were filled with firm brown grey silty clay (175, 176) and both had shallow profiles. Neither contained finds. Gully (122) terminated in the trench. This had a shallow profile and was 0.57m wide and 0.08m deep. It was filled with brown grey clay (177) which contained no finds. The other three features were parallel gullies (123, 124, 125)

and all were filled mid to dark grey brown silty clay (178, 179, 181). Gully 123 was 0.45m wide and 0.25m deep; gully 124 was 0.46m wide and 0.25m deep; and gully 125 was 0.50m wide and 0.09m deep. None of the features in this trench contained finds and remain undated.

Trench 38

No features were recorded in this trench.

Trench 39 (Figs 9, 12)

This trench was orientated south west - north east and was 54.6m in length and 0.58m deep. Four parallel linear features (139, 140, 141, 142) were recorded all perpendicular to the trench. All were filled with similar mid brown grey clay with occasional sub-rounded flint inclusions (194, 195, 196, 197). Gully 139 was 0.37m wide and 0.17m deep; gully 140 was 0.39m wide and 0.11m deep; gully 141 was 0.40m wide and 0.07m deep; and gully 142 was 0.50m wide and 0.05m deep. None of the features in this trench contained finds and remain undated.

Trench 40-44

No features were recorded in these trenches, though Trenches 40, 43 and 44 did contain modern land drains.

Trench 45 (Figs 9, 12)

This trench was orientated east - west and was 59.6m in length and up to 0.7m in depth. Several modern land drains were present in this trench. This trench contained six features, three of which intersected within the trench (146/147, 148/200, 149/201). It was unclear whether two of the small gullies terminated at this joining point (148/200 & 149/201). The larger of the three features (146/147) terminated within the trench c.3m to the west of the intersection. This larger ditch (146/147) cut both gullies, and the outer gully (149/201) cut the central one (148/200). Both gullies were filled with mid grey silty clay (253, 254). The larger ditch was filled with a mid to light brown grey silty clay (251).

The three other features were gullies. Two were termini (143, 144) towards the centre of the trench continuing south-east beyond the limit of the trench. Each was filled with mid brown grey clay with occasional sub-rounded flint inclusions (198, 199). The final feature (145) in this trench was only partially exposed in the trench as it lay under the line of a land drain. It was filled with mid grey silty clay (250). No finds were recovered from these features.

Trench 46 (Figs 9,12)

This trench was orientated east -west and was 48.7m in length and up to 0.5m in depth. Only one feature was recorded. Ditch (202) was 0.63m wide and 0.16m deep and was filled with mid grey brown clay (254). No finds were recovered and the feature remains undated.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 30 sherds with a total weight of 282g. The bulk of the material spanned the late medieval and early post-medieval periods, along with a small quantity of modern, mass-produced wares. Where appropriate, the codings and chronology of the Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service type-series were used, as follows:

E01: Late medieval reduced ware, mid 14th – 16th century. 2 sherds, 10g.

E02: Late medieval Oxidized ware, mid 14th – 16th century. 7 sherds, 61g.

P01: Glazed Red Earthenware, 16th century? 14 sherds, 162g.

P03: Black-glazed Earthenware, late 16th – 19th century. 1 sherd, 15g.

P48: English Stoneware, 1750+. 3 sherds, 34g.

In addition, 3 sherds (23g) of miscellaneous 19th- to 20th-century wares were noted. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A very small amount of animal bone was recovered from two separate locations across the evaluated area. A total of six fragments were available for analysis, weighing 228g (Appendix 4). The preservation of the remains is very poor, with all pieces of bone highly fragmented and surfaces heavily damaged by root activity and cortical erosion. The three fragments recovered from Trench 2 could be refitted into a single, unidentifiable long bone shaft. Trench 9 also contained pieces of bone originating in a distal femur of an unidentified large species of animal (horse or cow). No further information could be obtained from the remains.

Struck Flint by Steve Ford

A small collection comprising just 3 struck flints was recovered during the course of the evaluation. The collection comprises two flakes and a core fragment. All three pieces are lightly patinated but are otherwise in good condition. The raw material was probably obtained relatively locally from glacial outwash deposits or from the site itself as small amounts of unworked flint were noted over the site. Details of the collection are catalogued in Appendix 5. The material is not closely datable in itself but is likely to be later of Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

Metal and slag

Two pieces of metal were recovered from the evaluation trenching. Both are stray topsoil finds. A ferrous bracket from Trench 16 is probably from agricultural use, but a small fragment of lead printing die was somewhat more exotic. It contains English text and appears to come from a large slab, such as an entire page. It is unclear how it has ended up in this context. One piece of tap slag was recovered from Trench 23.

Environmental sampling

Eleven samples were taken from a selection of contexts. A list of contexts sampled can be found in Appendix 6. No charred plant material was recovered from any of the samples and no further finds were recovered.

Conclusion

Despite the number of cut features recorded across the site by this evaluation, no clear cut date or true function of many of the features could be ascertained. It seems that most were for a drainage function or as part of late medieval or post-medieval field divisions. Their relatively narrow widths and deep profiles suggests that most if not all are not to be regarded as furrows from ridge and furrow field systems. Similar parallel features elsewhere have been interpreted as possible vineyard features (Brown and Meadows 2000), and although this seems somewhat less likely in a medieval or later setting, hopfields could also be possible (Hull and Preston 2002). It has been noted from the mapping evidence that most of the fields have had little alteration recently, and where it was known was avoided so to not affect recent drainage improvements. Though late medieval pottery dated from the mid 14th century has been identified in features across the trenching, many of these sherds seem abraded,

and could well be residual or have arrived, as with finds from previous evaluation in the area, from manuring of the fields during this time.

Though struck flint has been identified in Trenches 4 and 33, it is also thought that this flint is only casual loss in the landscape, or has arrived through the same process and could also be residual.

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	47.2	1.8	0.5	0-0.27m mid grey brown topsoil; 0.27-0.49m mid to light grey subsoil; 0.49m+ natural gault clay. Gullies 48, 210-211
2	52.3	1.8	0.66	0-0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.53m subsoil; 0.53-0.66m buried clay; 0.66m+ natural gault clay. Gullies 49, 109
3	46.8	1.8	0.64	0-0.3m topsoil; 0.3-0.64m subsoil; 0.64m+ natural gault clay.
4	47.8	1.8	0.55	0-0.31m topsoil; 0.31-0.55m subsoil; 0.55m+ natural gault clay. Ditches 43, 44, gully 42.
5	48	1.8	0.54	0-0.29m topsoil; 0.29-0.53m subsoil; 0.53m+ natural gault clay.
6	50.2	1.8	0.56	0-0.26m topsoil; 0.26-0.53m subsoil; 0.53m+ natural gault clay. Gully 47.
7	48.15	1.8	0.48	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.42m subsoil; 0.48m+ natural gault clay. Ditch 45.
8	46.4	1.8	0.54	0-0.3m topsoil; 0.3-0.52m subsoil; 0.52m+ natural gault clay. Gully 41.
9	51.5	1.8	0.42	0-0.34m topsoil; 0.42m+ natural clay and patchy brown gravel clay. Ditch 46 and spread 150. [Plate 1]
10	47.4	1.8	0.46	0-0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.46m patchy subsoil; 0.46m+ brown clayey gravel.
11	48.6	1.8	0.37	0-0.23m topsoil; 0.23-0.37m subsoil; 0.37m+ natural gault clay.
12	50.2	1.8	0.46	0-0.27m topsoil; 0.27-0.46m subsoil; 0.46m+ natural gault clay. Ditches 27, 28.
13	44.1	1.8	0.47	0-0.27m topsoil; 0.27-0.47m subsoil; 0.47m+ natural gault clay. Gullies 29-33.
14	49.3	1.8	0.42	0-0.29m topsoil; 0.29-0.42m subsoil; 0.42m+ natural gault clay with some gravel pockets. Gullies 34-40. [Plate 3]
15	49.4	1.8	0.4	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.38m subsoil; 0.38m+ natural gault clay. Gullies 24, 25, 26
16	53.9	1.8	0.57	0-0.24 topsoil; 0.24-0.54m subsoil; 0.54m+ natural gault clay. Gully 22.
17	51.4	1.8	0.42	0-0.19m topsoil; 0.19-0.41m subsoil; 0.41m+ natural gault clay. Ditch 23
18	54.1	1.8	0.49	0-0.27m topsoil; 0.27-0.49m subsoil; 0.49m+ natural gault clay. Ditch 112, pit 111, gully 110.
19	49.4	1.8	0.46	0-0.22m topsoil; 0.22-0.46m subsoil; 0.46m+ natural gault clay. Gully 100.
20	48.15	1.8	0.45	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.45m subsoil; -.45m+ natural gault clay. Gullies 117-119 [Plate 4]
21	43	1.8	0.45	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.45m subsoil; 0.45m+ natural gault clay. Gullies 113, 114, 115, Ditch 116
22	46.4	1.8	0.44	0-0.23m topsoil; 0.23-0.44m subsoil; 0.44m+ natural gault clay. Gullies 203-209
23	50.2	1.8	0.58	0-0.27m topsoil; 0.27-0.53m subsoil; 0.53m+ natural gault clay. Gullies 1, 2, 3
24	50.4	1.8	0.61	0-0.27m topsoil; 0.27-0.58m subsoil; 0.58m+ natural gault clay. Ditches 18, 19, Gullies 20, 21
25	51.4	1.8	0.62	0-0.26m topsoil; 0.26-0.57m subsoil; 0.57m+ natural gault clay. Gullies 4, 5, 6
26	49.5	1.8	0.59	0-0.26m topsoil; 0.26-0.56m subsoil; 0.56m+ natural gault clay.
27	48.9	1.8	0.6	0-0.29m topsoil; 0.29-0.52m subsoil; 0.52m+ natural gault clay.
28	47.8	1.8	0.64	0.29m topsoil; 0.29-0.64m subsoil; 0.64m+ natural gault clay.
29	51.8	1.8	0.62	0-0.26m topsoil; 0.26-0.62m subsoil; 0.62m+ natural gault clay.
30	47.8	1.8	0.48	0-0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.46m subsoil; 0.46m+ natural gault clay, patchy gravel to NE. Gullies 15, 16, 17
31	49	1.8	0.53	0-0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.46m subsoil; 0.46m+ natural gault clay, and gravel, Gullies 7-10, 12, pit/pad 11
32	52	1.8	0.54	0-2m topsoil; 0.2-0.5m subsoil; 0.5m+ natural gault clay. Pit 13, gully 14
33	53.3	1.8	0.45	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.45m subsoil; 0.45m+ natural gault clay. Gullies 101-108
34	51.5	1.8	0.5	0-0.23m topsoil; 0.23-0.5 subsoil; 0.5m+ natural gault clay. Gullies 126-131, 133 [Plate 2]
35	43.5	1.8	0.47	0-0.23m topsoil; 0.23-0.47m subsoil; 0.47m+ natural gault clay. Gully 132.
36	43.7	1.8	0.35	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.35m subsoil; 0.35m+ natural gault clay. Gullies 134-138
37	46.7	1.8	0.6	0-0.22m topsoil; 0.22-0.6m subsoil; 0.6m+ natural gault clay. Pits 120, 121, Gullies 122, 124, 125
38	50.6	1.8	0.52	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.52m subsoil; 0.52m+ natural gault clay.
39	54.6	1.8	0.58	0-0.33m topsoil; 0.33-0.58m subsoil; 0.58m+ natural gault clay. Gullies 139 - 142
40	49	1.9	0.39	0-0.22m topsoil; 0.22-0.39m subsoil; 0.39m+ natural gault clay.
41	49.7	1.9	0.49	0-0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.48m subsoil; 0.48m+ natural gault clay.
42	49.5	1.9	0.42	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.42m subsoil; 0.42m+ natural gault clay.
43	48.8	1.9	0.45	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.44m subsoil; 0.44m+ natural gault clay.
44	49.7	1.9	0.39	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.39m subsoil; 0.39m+ natural gault clay.
45	59.6	1.8	0.7	0-0.24m topsoil; 0.24-0.66m subsoil; 0.66m+ natural gault clay. Gullies 146, 147, 148, 200, 149, 201, 143, 144, 145
46	48.7	1.9	0.46	0-0.27m topsoil; 0.27-0.46m subsoil; 0.46m+ natural gault clay. Gully 202.

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

Trench	Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence
23	1	50	Gully		
23	2	51	Gully		
23	3	52	Unex. Gully		
25	4	53	Gully		
25	5	54	Gully		
25	6	55	Unex. Gully		
all	-	56	Topsoil	N/A	Pottery, tile
all	-	57	Subsoil	N/A	Tile
all	-	58	Natural clay	N/A	
31	7	59	Primary fill of gully?		
31		60	Secondary fill of gully		
31	8	61	Gully, gap or terminal?		
31	9	62	Gully		
31	10	63	Gully terminal		
31	11	64	Pit/pad		
31	12	65	Gully		
32	13	66	Irregular pit		
32	14	67	Gully		
30	15	68	Gully		
30	16	69	Gully		
30	17	70	Gully		
24	18	71	Small ditch		
24	19	72	Small ditch		
24	20	73	Gully		
24	21	74	Gully		
16	22	75	Gully		
17	23	76	Ditch		
15	24	77	Ditch		
15	25	78	Ditch		
15	26	79	Ditch		
12	27	80	Ditch		
12	28	81	Gully		
13	29	82	Gully		
13	30	83	Gully		
13	31	84	Ditch		
13	32	85	Ditch		tile
13	33	86	Ditch		
14	34	87	Ditch		
14	35	88	Ditch		
14	36	89	Ditch	Late Med.	pottery, tile
14	37	90	Gully		
14	38	91	Primary fill of gully		
14		92	Secondary fill of gully		
14	39	93	Ditch		
14	40	94	Ditch	Late Med.	pottery
8	41	95	Gully		
4	42	96	Gully		struck flint
4	43	97	Ditch	Late Med	pottery
4	44	98	Ditch		
7	45	99	Ditch		
9	46	151	Ditch	Late Med-early P -Med	pottery, tile
6	47	152	Gully		
1	48	153	Ditch		tile
2	49	154	Gully		
9	-	150	Spread	Late Med-early P -Med	pottery
19	100	155	Ditch		
33	101	156	Ditch		
33	102	157	Ditch terminal		flint core
33	103	158	Ditch		
33	104	159	Gully		
33	105	160	Ditch		tile
33	106	161	Ditch		
33	107	162	Gully		
33	108	163	Ditch		struck flint
2	109	165	Ditch		
18	110	164	Gully		

Trench	Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence
18	111	166	Pit		
18	112	167	Ditch		
21	113	168	Gully terminal		
21	114	169	Gully		
21	115	170	Gully		
21	116	171	Ditch		
20	117	172	Ditch	Late Med-early P -Med	pottery
20	118	173	Ditch terminal		
20	119	176	Ditch		
37	120	175	Pit		
37	121	176	Pit		
37	122	177	Ditch terminal		
37	123	178	Gully		
37	124	179	Gully		
37	125	180	Ditch		
34	126	181	Ditch		
34	127	182	Gully		
34	128	183	Ditch		
34	129	184	Ditch		tile
34	130	185	Ditch		
34	131	184	Ditch		
35	132	187	Ditch	Late Med	pottery
34	133	188	Ditch terminus		
36	134	189	Gully		
36	135	190	Ditch		
36	136	191	Gully		
36	137	192	Gully		
36	138	193	Gully		
39	139	194	Gully		
39	140	195	Ditch		
39	141	196	Ditch		
39	142	197	Ditch		
45	143	198	Ditch terminal		
45	144	199	Ditch terminal		
45	145	250	Gully		
45	146	251	Ditch intersection		
45	147	252	Ditch terminal		
45	148	253	Gully		
45	149	254	Gully		
45	200	262	Ditch intersection		
45	201	263	Gully intersection		
46	202	264	Ditch		
22	203	255	Unex. Ditch		
22	204	256	Unex. Ditch		
22	205	257	Unex. Ditch		
22	206	258	Unex. Ditch		
22	207	259	Unex. Ditch		
22	208	260	Unex. Ditch		
22	209	261	Unex. Ditch		
1	210	262	Unex. Ditch		
1	211	263	Unex. Ditch		

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

Trench	Cut	Fabric Deposit	E01		E02		P01		P48		P03		WE	
			No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
2		U/S							1	17				
2		Buried Soil					1	7	1	10				
3		U/S	1	5					1	7				
8		U/S					1	22						
11		U/S					1	11						
14		U/S					1	3						
15		U/S					2	14					2	13
16		U/S					2	30			1	15	1	10
24		U/S					1	3						
25		U/S			1	23								
26		U/S					1	37						
9		150					1	26						
14	36	89			3	11								
14	40	93	1	5										
4	43	97			1	19								
9	46	151			1	7	2	7						
20	117	172					1	2						
35	132	187			1	1								
		Total	2	10	7	61	14	162	3	34	1	15	3	23

APPENDIX 4: Inventory of animal bone

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Number of fragments</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
2	-	265			
9	46	151	3	134	Highly Fragmented
Total			6	228	-

APPENDIX 5: Inventory of struck flint

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Identification</i>
4	42	96	Intact flake
33	102	157	Core fragment
33	108	163	Intact flake

APPENDIX 6: Inventory of environmental sampling

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Litres sieved</i>	<i>Artefacts/Ecofacts</i>
1	16	69	3	N/N
2	15	68	2	N/N
3	9	62	2.5	N/N
4	8	61	2.5	N/N
5	14	67	4	N/N
6	18	71	3	N/N
7	19	72	6	N/N
8	23	76	5	N/N
9	34	87	16	N/N
10	48	151	7	N/N
11	26	79	7	N/N



**Pratt's Quarry Extension, Great Billington,
Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire 2007**

Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Billington and within Bedfordshire.

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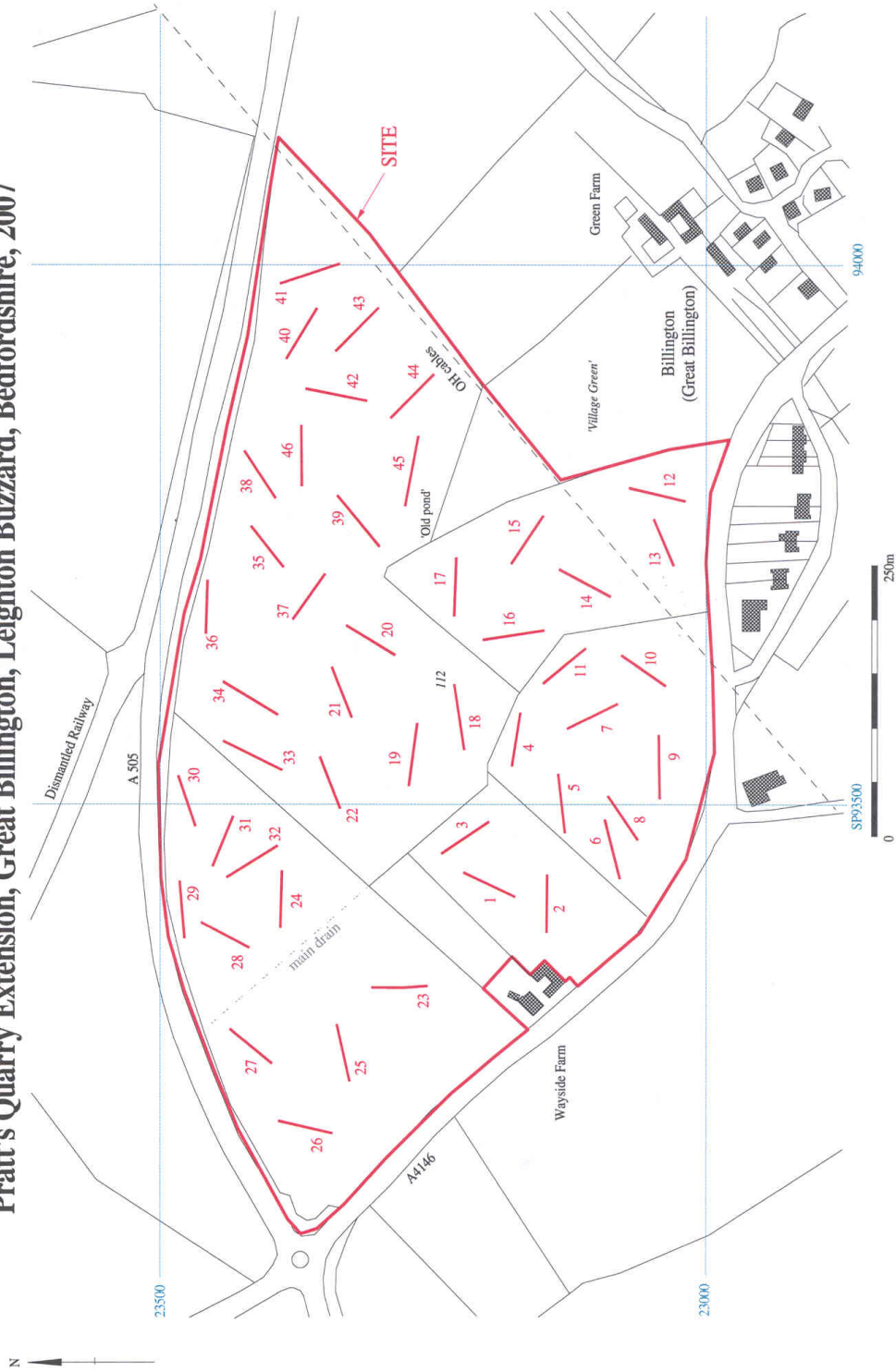
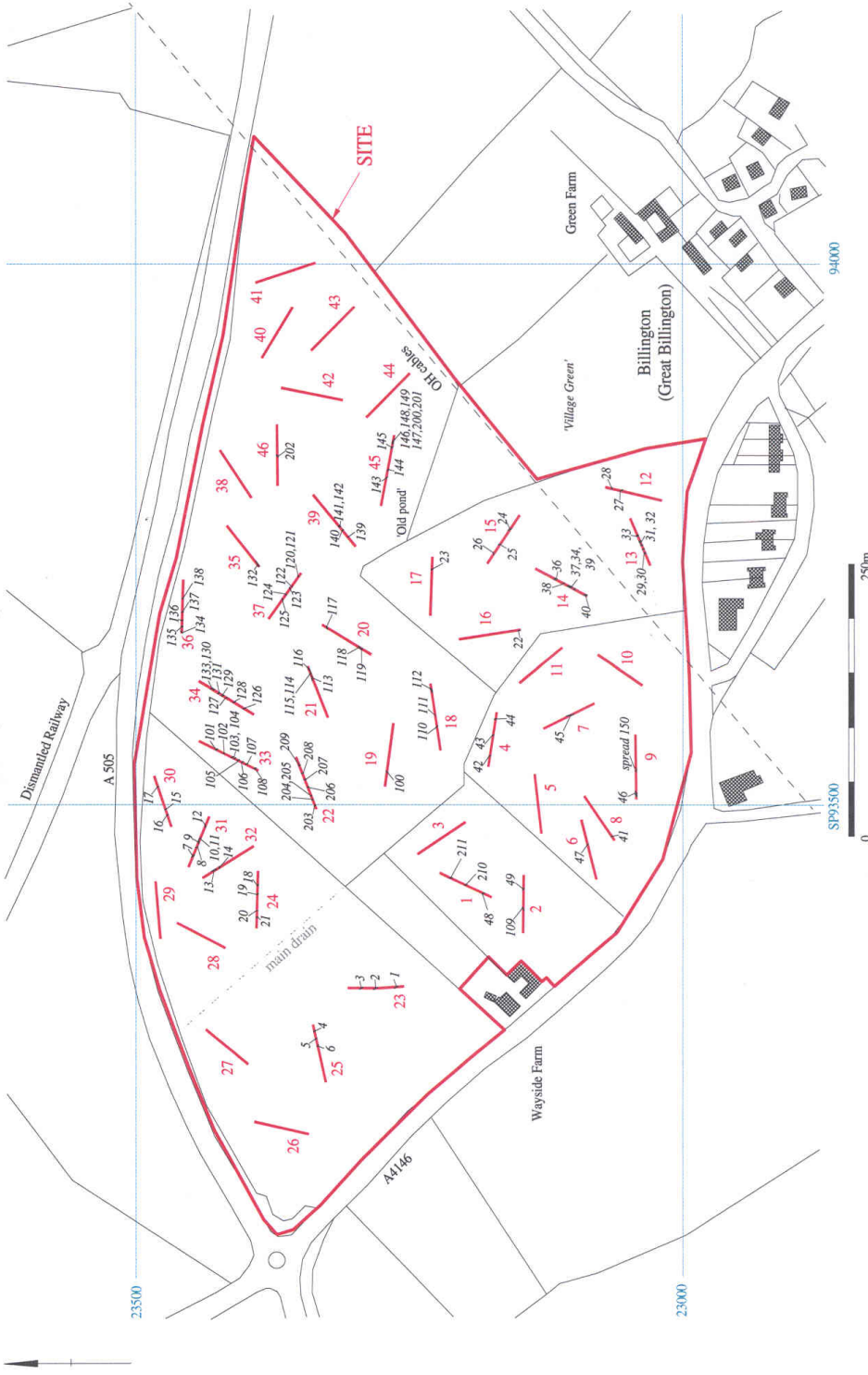


Figure 2. Location of trenches.

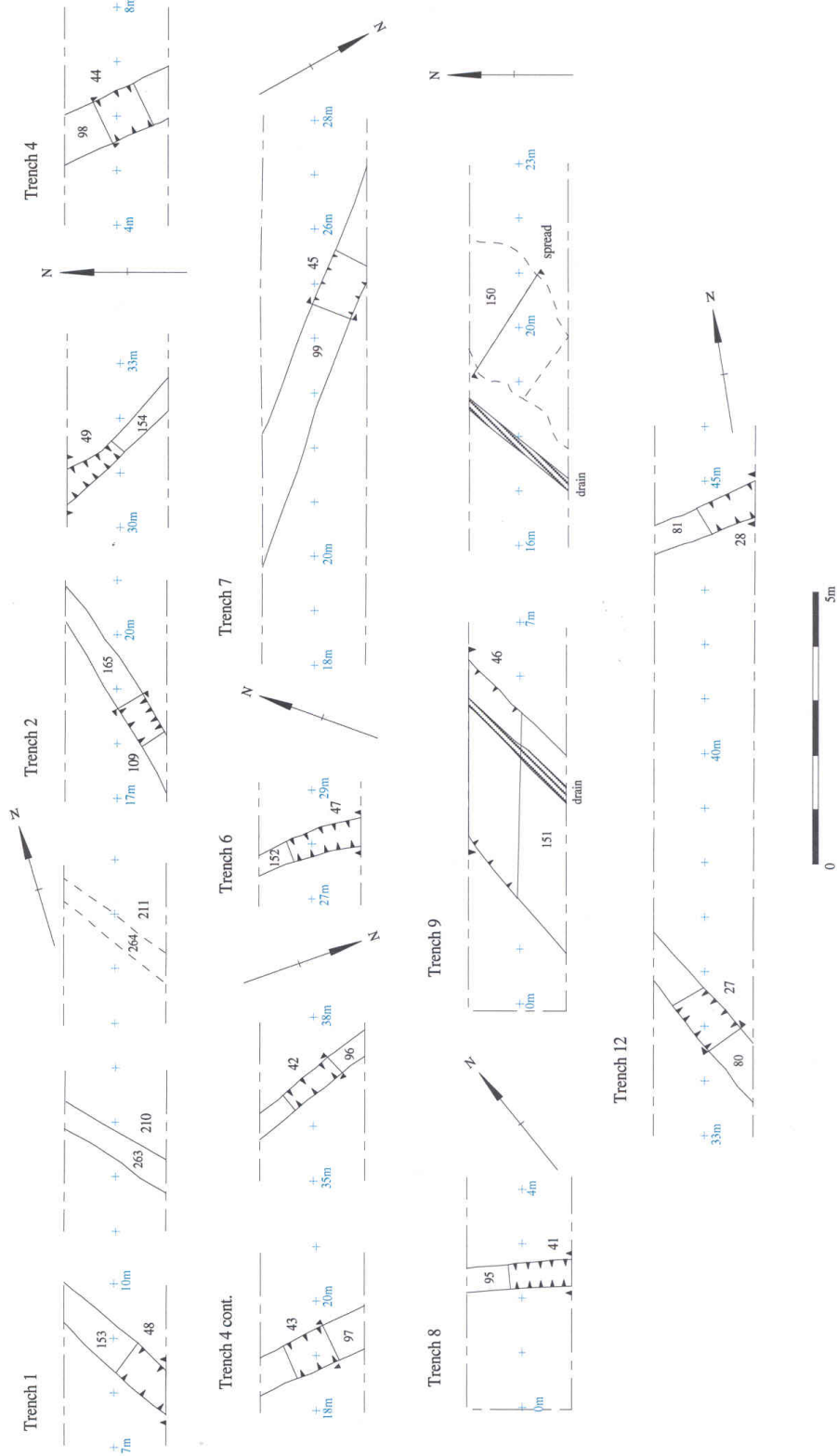
Pratt's Quarry Extension, Great Billington, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, 2007



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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

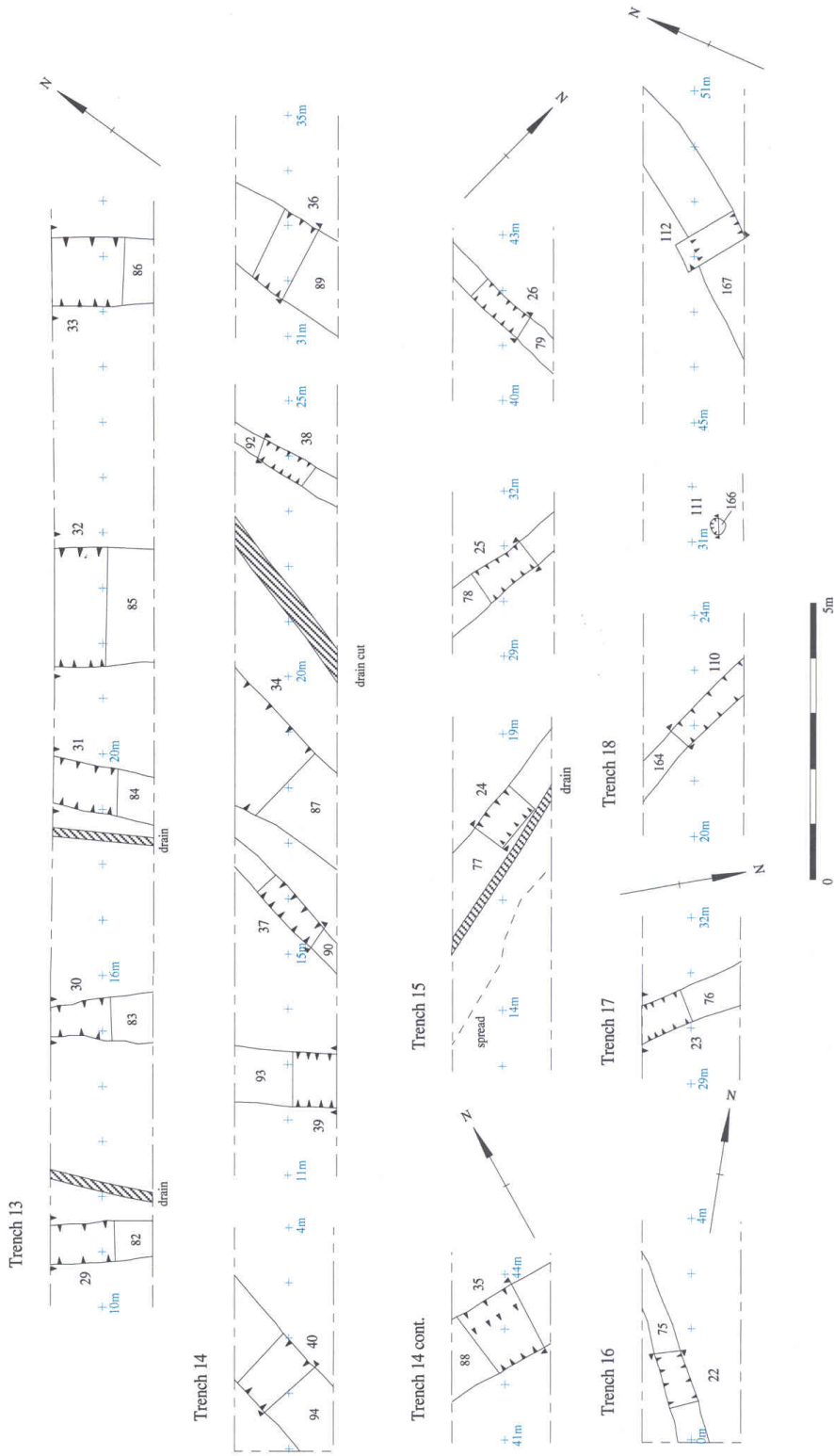
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Figure 4. Detail of trenches.

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Figure 5. Detail of trenches (continued).

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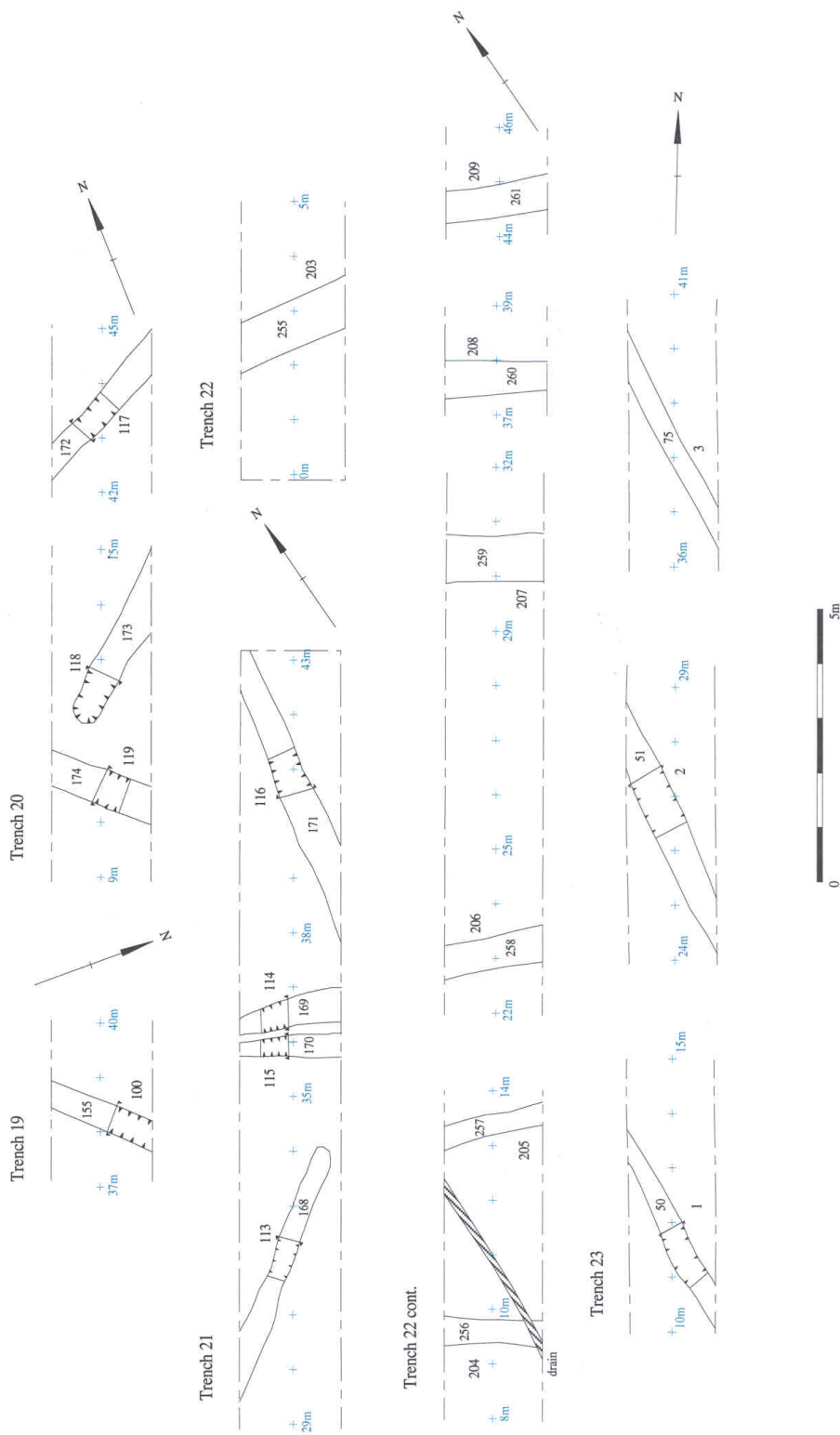


Figure 6. Detail of trenches (continued).

Pratt's Quarry Extension, Great Billington, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, 2007

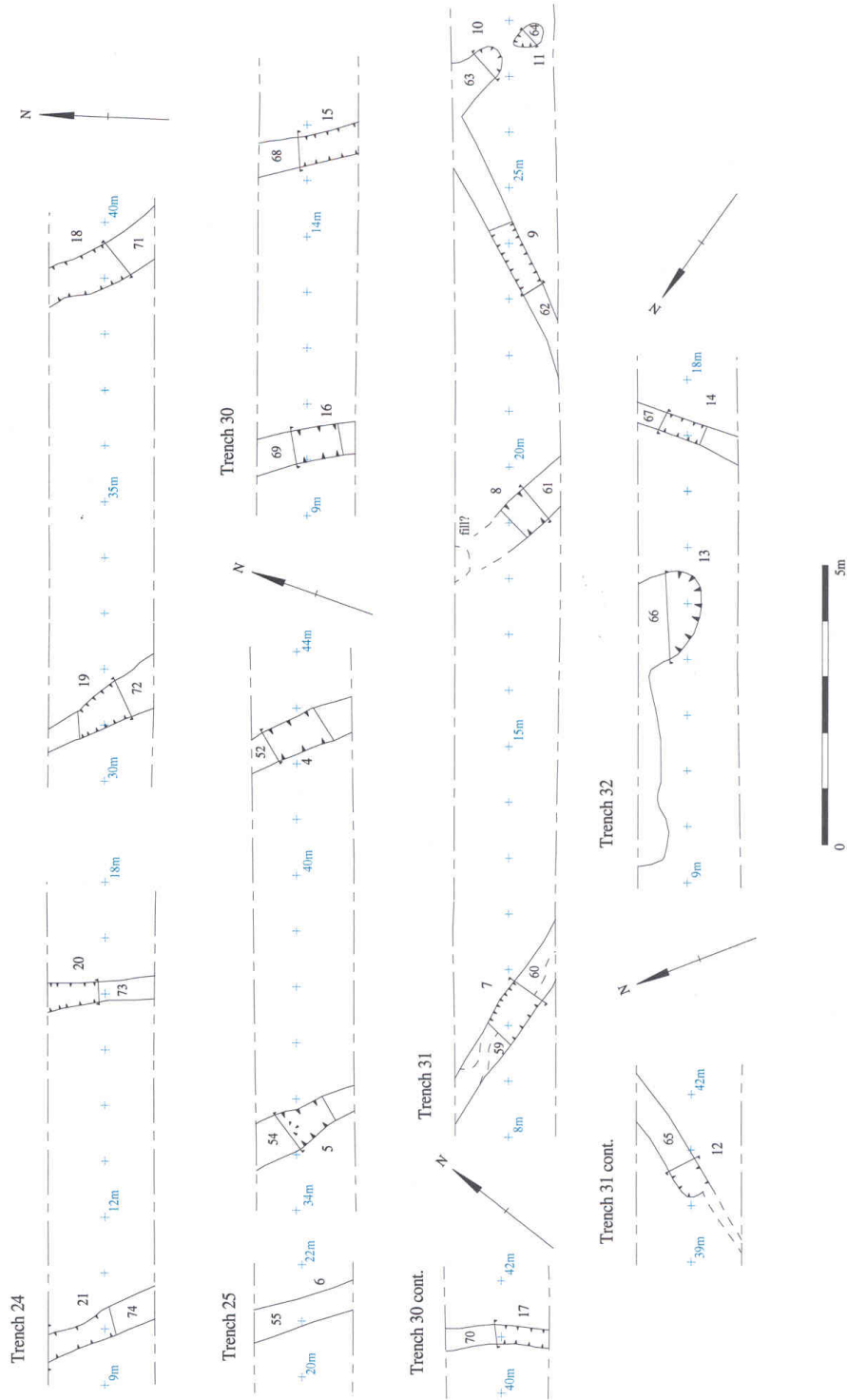


Figure 7. Detail of trenches (continued).

Pratt's Quarry Extension, Great Billington, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, 2007

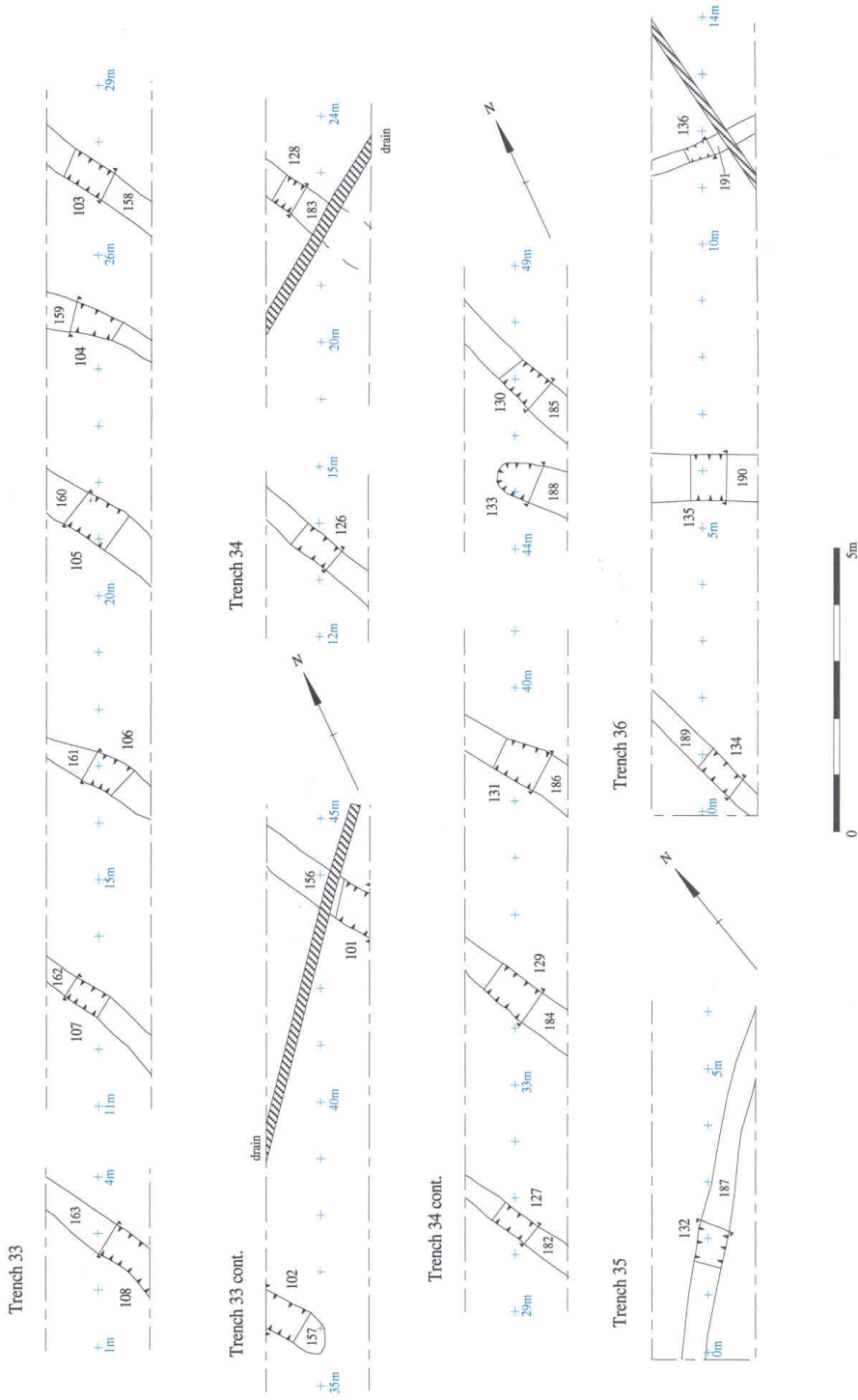


Figure 8. Detail of trenches (continued).

Pratt's Quarry Extension, Great Billington, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, 2007

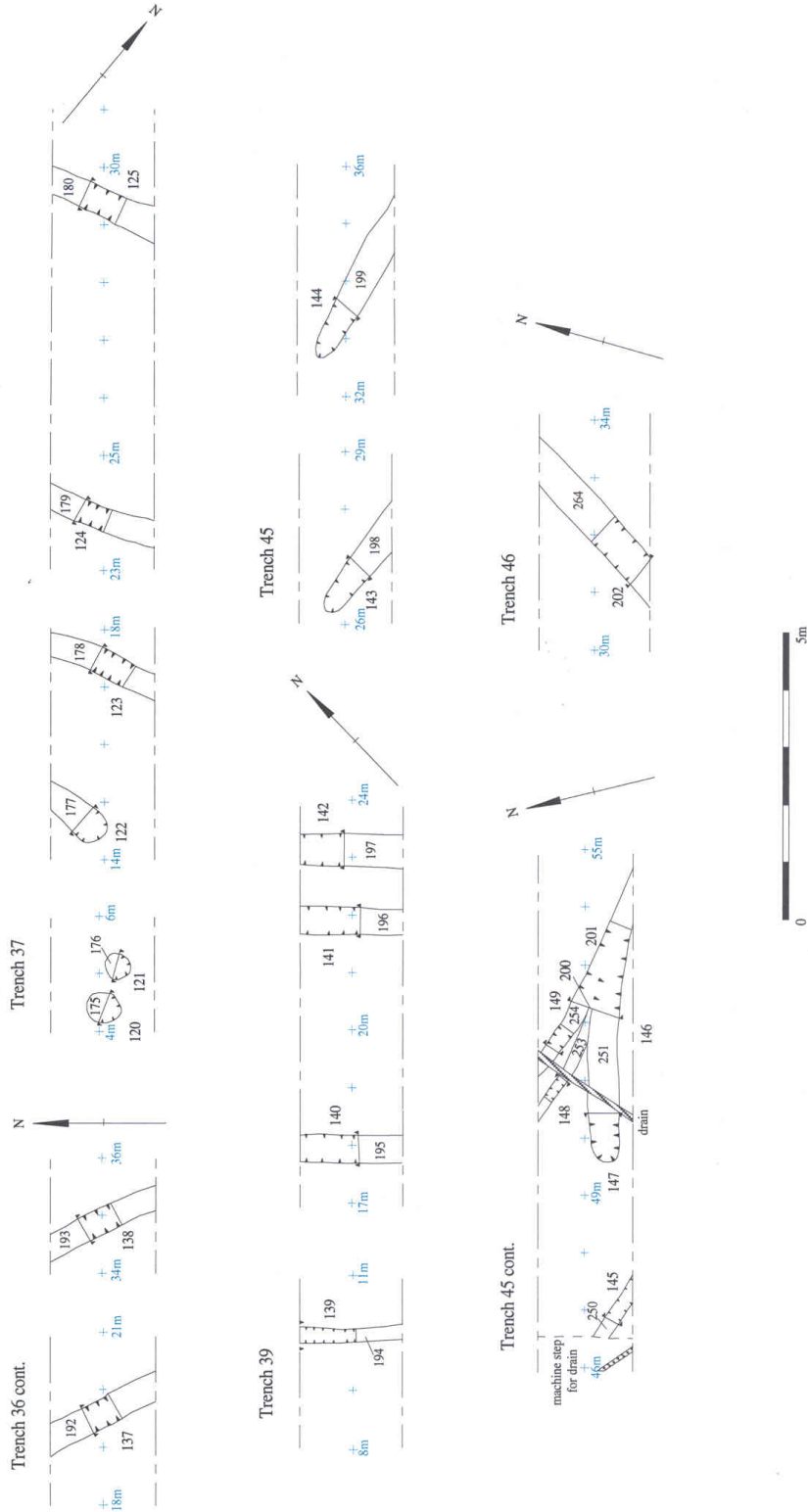


Figure 9. Detail of trenches (continued).

Pratt's Quarry Extension, Great Billington, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, 2007

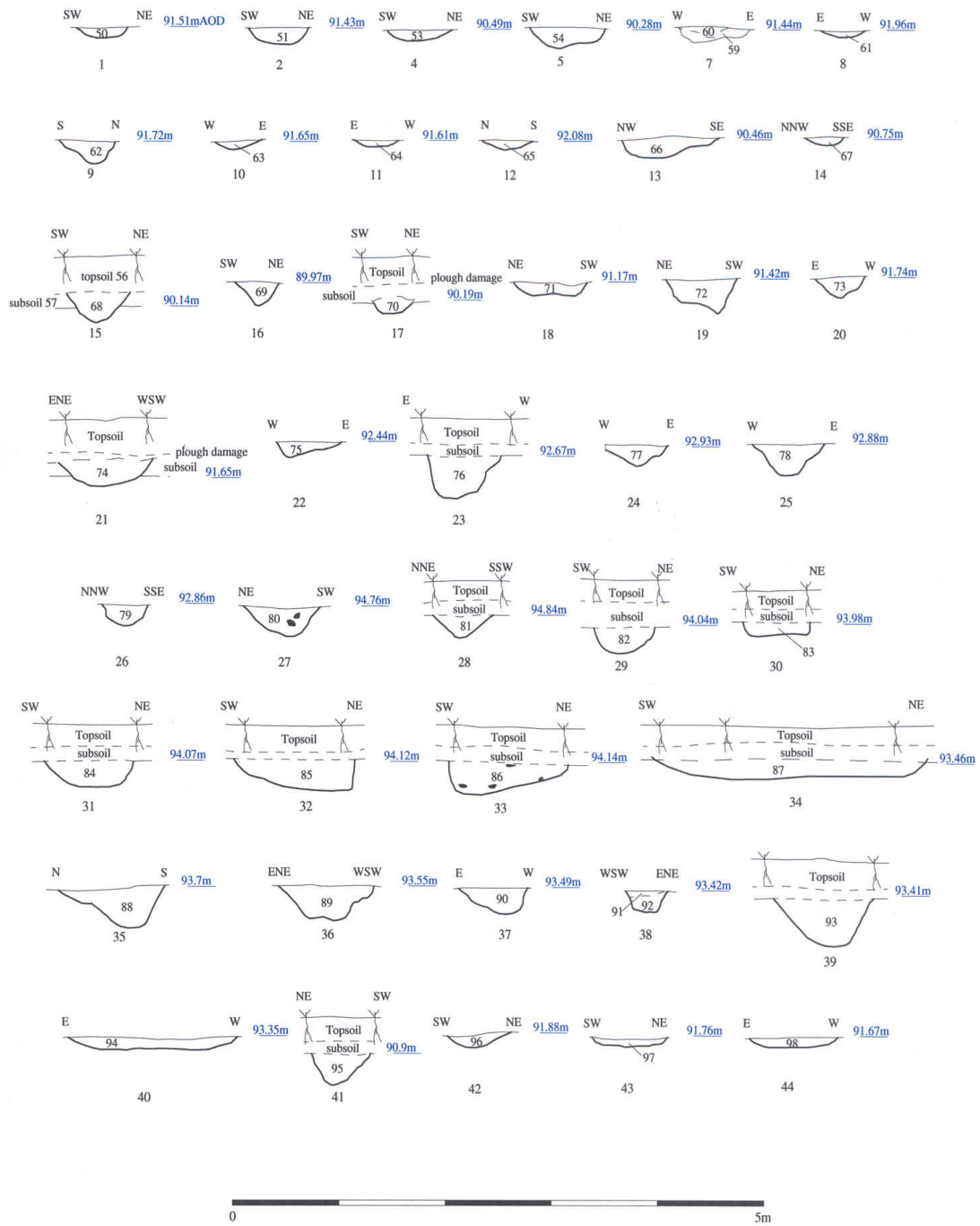


Figure 10. Sections.

Pratt's Quarry Extension, Great Billington, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, 2007

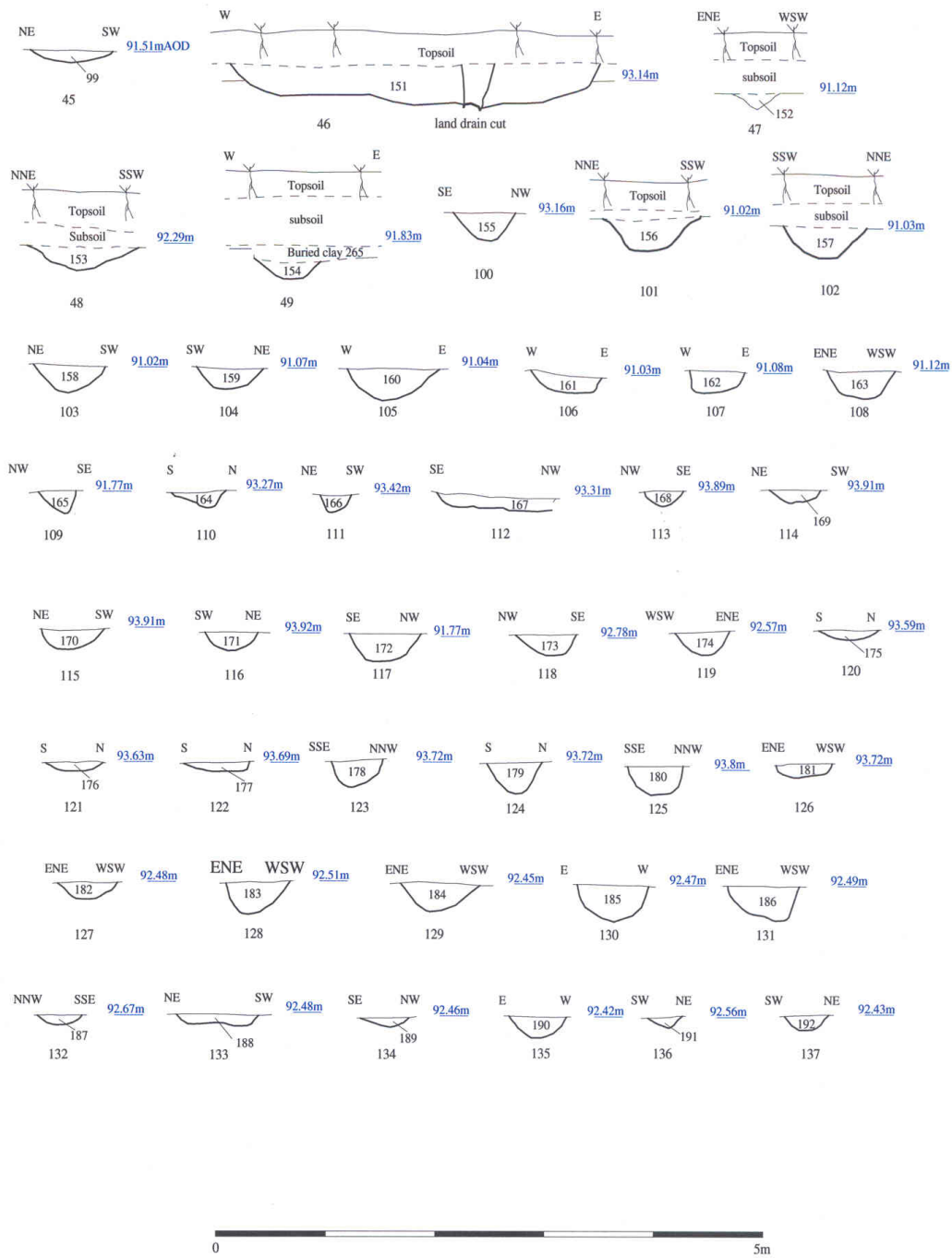


Figure 11. Sections (continued).

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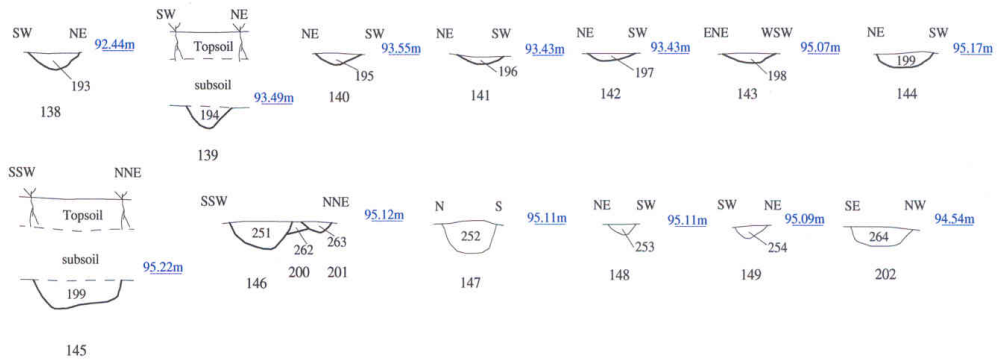


Figure 12. Sections (continued).

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Plate 1. Trench 9 looking east, horizontal scale 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 34 looking north east, horizontal scale 2m and 1m.



Plate 3. Trench 14, ditch 36, looking east, horizontal scale 0.4m, vertical scale 0.1m.



Plate 4. Trench 20, gully 117, looking west-southwest, horizontal scale 0.4m, vertical scale 0.1m.