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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

SERVICES

Bowling Green Farm Quarry, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

Phase 5

Archaeological Recording Action

by Pierre-Damien Manisse and Andrew Mundin

Site Code: CEF17/114

(SU 3167 9490)

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

(Phase 5 extraction area)

An Archaeological Recording Action

For Hills Quarry Products

by Pierre-Damien Manisse and Andrew Mundin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CEF 17/114

Summary

Site name: Bowling Green Farm Quarry, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 3167 9490

Site activity: Recording Action

Date and duration of project: 23rd May - 7th September 2018

Project Manager: Joanna Pine

Site supervisor: Pierre-Damien Manisse, Jon Tierney, Josh Hargreaves

Site code: CEF 17/114

Area of site: c.2.3ha

Summary of results: The work in this extraction phase revealed, in two parts, a sparse collection of pits and a continuation eastwards of ditch 102. A small collection of flints and pottery was recovered from one of the slots of Ditch 102. This ditch has previously been dated from its systematic sampling as Middle Iron Age. The pottery from this phase included some that was earlier but on the whole reinforced the Middle Iron Age date and the flint is most likely residual. Flints were also recovered from pit 527.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 21.05.19

Steve Preston ✓ 21.05.19

Chinham Farm Extension, Bowling Green Farm Quarry, Stanford Road, Faringdon, Oxfordshire (Phase 5 Extraction)

An Archaeological Recording Action

by Pierre-Damien Manisse and Andrew Mundin

Report 17/114

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action on a parcel of land covering c.077 ha at the Chinham Farm Extension of Bowling Green Farm Quarry, Stanford Road, Faringdon, Oxfordshire SN7 8HB (SU 3164 9490) (Fig.1). This phase of monitoring follows on from Phase 4 which was undertaken in 2017 in what is now the active mineral extraction area of the quarry.

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 a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording prior to extraction. The investigation followed a written scheme of investigation based on a brief prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Coddington 2006). Monitoring works prior to extraction have been ongoing since 2007, on land between Bowling Green Farm in the west and Chinham Farm in the east (Fig. 1). Archaeological deposits and finds have been found in all the previous phases of works, including Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age and Middle Iron Age pottery in features in Phase 4 (Mundin 2017a and 2017b). The track of a single boundary ditch (102) has been recorded across several of the phases, for at least 300m.

This phase of work was undertaken between 23rd May to 6th June 2018. The project was managed by Joanna Pine, with machine stripping undertaken by her, Andrew Mundin and Will Attard. The excavation of the features was undertaken by Pierre-Damien Manisse and Anne-Michelle Huvig. The site code is CEF 17/114, though these works carry on from the works under the previous site code of CFF07/01. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and with be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site lies between the modern historic market town of Faringdon and the large village of Stanford-in-the-Vale in the south-west of Oxfordshire, on the northern side of the A417 (Fig. 1). It is located on the Corallian Ridge which runs east-west and divides the Oxford Clay basin, with the top of the ridge at *c*.103m above Ordnance

1

Datum sloping gradually down from south to north to the Frogmore Brook at 95m aOD. The underlying geology at the high point in the south is Stanford (Jurassic) Limestone, with alluvial clay, sand, gravel and sandstone silts filling on the valley edges to the north (BGS 1971). The current works are immediately to the east of the previous works referred to as Phase 4b (Fig. 2).

Archaeological background

An archaeological survey of the Corallian Ridge was undertaken by Hingley in 1979-80, though little could be summarised from the air photography findings of visual barrow remains due to a lack of physical investigation and evidence from these sites (Bradley 1986, 39). It was concluded that the Corallian Ridge was just as densely occupied as the gravels of the Upper Thames in the Bronze Age and identified over 21 ring ditches and several flint scatters at the eastern end of the ridge. At the time, the only local comparison site of Bronze Age and Iron Age date was the excavated remains of an enclosure on Rams Hill, south of Faringdon (Bradley and Ellison 1975), though more recently a slightly later important prehistoric site recovered an Iron Age date at Coxwell Road on the west side of the town (Ford and Weaver 2003). In this instance, the Frogmore Brook, to the south east of the town and a tributary of the River Ock, is the focus of the activity in this area with this quarry extension next to Chinham Farm on the south bank of the water course. Further to the east, the villages of Shellingford and Hatford both have nearby quarries. Publication has already outlined findings of Iron Age and Early Roman enclosure deposits on the opposite side of the Frogmore Brook, north west of Hatford (Booth and Simmonds 2003). However, desk-based assessment here suggested limited archaeological remains in the extension area of the quarry at Chinham Farm area and was considered to have low archaeological potential (Hindmarch 2003).

Earlier, archaeological investigations at Bowling Green Farm in advance of quarrying between 1988 and 1994 (by Oxford Archaeological Unit and Oxford University Archaeological Society) revealed substantial Middle Iron Age and Roman settlement. Stone buildings, ovens, kilns and surfaces were found and the site was originally considered to be a 'vicus', or an informal town most likely established next to a Roman enclosure with attached shrine (Chambers 1988; 1989; 1990), though it seems more likely now to be a large farmstead developing from an early group of Iron Age buildings: over 1500 coins recovered, mainly of 4th century date collected in a distinct spread, but 2nd century pottery was also recovered from features. The later nature of the settlement was highlighted from workshop and areas of industry under a 'dark earth' layer, filled with domestic debris and refuse material identifying the abandonment of the settlement.

Previous recording on the site

Evaluation at the site of the present weighbridge for Bowling Green Farm Quarry revealed Roman ditches, presumably part of the larger outlying field system associated with the settlement to the north, and a likely southern boundary to the settlement (Parsons 1994). Cropmarks representing a double-ditched droveway with adjoining rectangular enclosure were visible on an aerial photograph to the west of the site.

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 radiocarbon dated to 1691–1530 cal BC with re-use of the monument for a crouched inhumation in the backfill of the ditch dated 1413–12090 cal BC, in the Early to Middle Bronze Age. Finds included Early and Middle Bronze Age pottery and a deliberately broken bronze rapier blade. A residual late Mesolithic microlith was also recovered pointing to earlier use of the landscape.

Excavation in 2011 (Phase 3), also to the west of the present site, revealed a range of archaeological finds and deposits of prehistoric and Roman date. The earliest periods were represented by collection of Mesolithic flintwork, though 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 this part of the site took place in mid-Roman times and was represented by a rectangular enclosure with both double and triple elements (Weale 2011). Excavation in 2014 (Phase 2), to the south-west of the current area uncovered a continuation and a more defined trace of the Iron Age ditch found in the eastern side of Phase 1 works (Elliot 2017). A single cremation was also found. This major boundary ditch (102) traversed the width of the Phase 2 extraction area, with a second ditch (124), parallel to and to the north of ditch 102, containing Roman pottery. This ditch, unlike the other, terminated before it reached the eastern edge of Phase 2.

The works in 2017 (Phases 4a and 4b) uncovered a continuation ditch 102 traversing the landscape on a slightly wavering course but remained at least 2m in width. A pit located in Phase 4b contained pottery of Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age date (Mundin 2017b). A discrete cluster of pits also contained Iron Age pottery, and the pottery in the boundary ditch is likely Middle Iron Age in date (Mundin 2017a). Parallel aligned pits on the northern side of one portion of the ditch seemed to represent a wooden palisade erected on its northern side for a short length, similar to other examples seen on similar Iron Age features located on the Upper Thames gravels (Lambrick with Robinson 2009, 57-62). The sampling of the eastwards track of the ditch located further Iron Age pottery, and particularly from Phase 4b, found one discrete source of 30 sherds from the same vessel. However, there has been a notable lack of other finds or environmental material to refine its interpretation. The continuation of this ditch (102) was therefore expected to be found in this phase of works.

Objectives and methodology

The general objectives of the project are:

to excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the areas threatened by the proposed development;

to produce relative and absolute dating and phasing for deposits and features recorded on the site;

to establish the character of these deposits with an attempt to define functional areas on the site with areas such as industrial, domestic etc; and

to produce information on the economy and local environment and contrast with these with the results of other excavations in the region.

Specific research objectives were to attempt to answer the following questions:

When was the site first occupied and when as the site abandoned?

What is the layout and organisation of the site?

What activities are taking place on the site?

What is the nature and date of any landscape features encountered? (e.g fields, boundary features or enclosures) and what is their spatial organisation?

What is the palaeoenvironmental setting of the site?

Topsoil was removed under continuous archaeological supervision with a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a bladed, grading bucket. This exposed the uppermost surface of the archaeological horizon, usually directly above the natural geology. The stripped areas would include areas for soil bunds, haul roads and conveyor belts corridors as well as main extraction areas. Where appropriate and necessary, hand cleaning of the stripped surface was to take place. All archaeological features were to be planned and sectioned as a minimum objective, with excavation or sampling to an agreed fraction depending on the nature and significance of the feature. Bulk soil samples were taken from all excavated features for environmental remains and to enhance finds recovery.

This phase of the excavation comprised an area c.0.77ha (Fig. 3). Topsoil and subsoil were typically 0.25m-0.3m deep, deepening in the centre of the site as the underlying geology changed from limestone in the south to yellow sand and brown clay silts in the north. The northern edge of the site is covered with subsoil and colluvium on the top of the Frogmore Brook up to 1m deep. As in Phase 4, only one phase of datable features was encountered, with a small number of undated pits.

Results

Iron Age

Ditch 102 (Pls 1 and 2)

Ditch 102 continued eastwards from previous phases of excavation, with a length of 141m exposed in this strip, it stretched the full width of the site. Eleven evenly spaced slots were excavated along its length and two more closer together next to the limits of excavation. Just two of the slots in this phase contained pottery (slot 538 and 549) which also had residual flint from the upper fill (fill 966 of ditch 538). The depth of the ditch varies slightly from W to E with the western slot 0.7m deep and single fills of the ditch in slots 543 and 544 in the east. These were 0.41m to 0.55m deep respectively.

This phase Ditch 102 was examined with thirteen slots (538, 540, 541, 542, 543, 546, 548, 549, 600, 601, 602, 603 and 610) the upper fill of ditch slot 538 and 540 were distinctly similar, with a brown silt with small gravel inclusions (966 and 970). A soil sample (1020) was taken from the top fill (966) of ditch slot 538, but no material of interest was recovered. Other fills from slot 538 include the secondary fill which was a firm light grey brown clayey silt (967), with was 0.2m thick and the basal fill which was a compact light grey-brown clayey silt with frequent limestone pieces (968). A sample from the basal fill recovered only very small flecks of comminuted charcoal. The ditch at slot 538 was 1.5m wide and 0.7m deep. Other slots on the ditch recorded two fills in slot 540, 1.5m wide and 0.65m deep (Pl. 1). Two samples were taken of the fills of slot 540 (970 and 971 respectively), but no material of interest was recovered. Slots 541, 542 and 543 all contained single fills and were between 1m and 1.5m wide and 0.45–0.55m deep (Pl. 2). All contained a firm brown silt with small angular inclusions (972, 973 and 975), and slot 542 contained flecks of charcoal in (975).

Two fills (fills 980 and 981) were also recovered from another ditch slot (549) which contained pottery in the upper fill contained a mix of prehistoric pottery dating from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age. The ditch was 0.41m deep and the slot was 1.10m wide. The ditch cut a pit (547) on its southern side, This tree throw hole was filled with a single fill (978) with a soft light brown grey clay sand to a depth of 0.18m deep.

Three shallow gullies at the south end of the site are thought to be of modern origin. A 44m-long gully (125) was investigated with three slots, either terminal end, and its mid point (607, 608, 609). It was shallow, and just 0.72m to 0.95m wide. The slots contained just one sherd of pottery and piece of tile in slot (608), both modern.

To the south of, but parallel with gully 125, gully 126 was investigated in two slots. It was likely to continue out of the site to both west and east. Slots 604 and 605 were both less than 0.7m wide and just 0.03m and 0.09m deep. No finds were encountered.

Between these two gullies, and again parallel, a short (1.5m) stretch of another gully was investigated (606). It was 0.66m wide and 0.16m deep. It contained no finds. Gullies 606 and 126 are presumably related to gully 125 and modern, although this is uncertain.

Pits

Discrete pits were also uncovered. Two isolated pits were to the north of the area (527 and 528), a pair of pits (530 and 531) were located near a small group of three others (529, 537 and 539) clustered north of the western part of Ditch 102. Five other pits or postholes were south of Ditch 102 in a loose cluster (532, 533, 534, 535 and 536), not obviously structural.

The two pits to the north of the strip were circular and had sharp U-shaped profiles but were shallow. Pit 527 was 0.13m deep and 0.6m in diameter, and pit 528 was c.24m to the west, with a rounded profile, 0.54m in diameter and 0.2m deep. Both pits were filled with a firm brown-grey silt with occasional charcoal flecks (954 and 955). Samples of the fills were sterile apart from charcoal flecking. Pit 527 contained pieces of worked flint and may be prehistoric.

The pits near Ditch 102, were all between 0.5-0.6m in diameter and no deeper than 0.2m. Pit 529 was circular and filled with a secondary fill that was light reddish brown clayey silt (957) and the basal fill of light brown grey clayey silt (956) at a depth of 0.18m deep. A sample produced some tiny sherds of prehistoric pottery. The pair of pits (530 and 531) were both 0.6-0.64m in diameter, circular and very shallow, 0.13m deep. Both contained a single fill (958 and 959 respectively) of light brown-grey clayey silt. Neither contained finds.

The other features, a pit and a posthole, to the north of Ditch 102 (537 and 539) were circular with steep side. The profile of the posthole was slightly deeper (0.22m) than the other pits in the area, and could have been related to a post-hole structure to the north of the ditch. Pit 537 was filled with a single fill, a firm brown silt very occasional sub-angular gravel inclusions (965). Pit 539 was circular, 0.18m deep and filled with brown silt with very occasional sub-angular gravel inclusions (969). A sample taken from this fill produced no material of interest.

The five pits to the south of Ditch 102 were all contained a single fill (960, 961, 962, 953 and 964). All pits were circular and between 02-0.35m in diameter. All were very shallow and less than 0.1m deep. No finds were recovered from their fills. Two further pits were present to the north of Ditch 102, (544 and 545). Posthole 544

was in proximity to the north side of the ditch like Posthole 537. Posthole 544 was 0.45m in diameter and 0.08m deep. Pit 545 was 0.16m in diameter and 0.2m deep. No archaeological finds were found in these features.

Pottery was recovered from spoil heaps and from subsoil, with a mixture of Iron Age and Roman dates.

Finds

Pottery by Jane Timby

Phase 5 of the archaeological work resulted in the recovery of a further 53 sherds of pottery weighing 563g dating to the prehistoric and Roman periods to add to material from previous work. Although the sherds have an average weight of 10g, the pieces are in fairly worn condition and 12 fragments consist of little more than crumbs which could not be classified. Pottery was recovered from just four features with 13 sherds from unstratified collection. As far as can be determined most of the assemblage dates to the later prehistoric period with just two probably Roman sherds. Four sherds could potentially be of earlier prehistoric date but are very fragmentary.

Early prehistoric?

Four fragmentary sherds were found; two from ditch 548 unaccompanied by other material and two from ditch 549, featured alongside later prehistoric material, which could potentially be of early prehistoric date. The sherds have a sandy textured fabric with a sparse frequency of round grains of quartz sand <0.5mm and voids (<2mm) from dissolved calcareous material (fabric SACA). The pieces are fired with an oxidized exterior and black interior typical of early Bronze Age material.

Later prehistoric

Most of the assemblage, some 48 sherds, are of more clearly of later prehistoric date. Seven sherds are in a fine sandy ware containing sparse, coarse fossil shell (SH1). These include a large flared rim jar with a shoulder carination from the spoil which appears to be of early Iron Age date with further two bodysherds from ditch slot 538. Pit 529 produced a very small fine flint-tempered sherd (FL2) along with two pot crumbs which could be later Bronze Age or early Iron Age.

Twenty sherds in a fine sandy ware from ditch slot 549 (fabric SAF) are more typical of the middle Iron Age. A handmade, fine, black sandy ware with a burnished finish and a single sherd of black glauconitic sandy ware, both recovered from spoil, are also probably of middle Iron Age date. A beaded rim jar in finer limestone and fossil shell-tempered ware (LISH), also from the spoil, is likely to be later Iron Age or early Roman in date.

Roman

Four sherds of a grey ware with sparse grog (GYGR) recovered from the spoil are probably early Roman in date. These include two everted rim jars. More clearly of Roman date is a fine oxidized sherd recovered from the subsoil and possibly a very degraded fine grey ware from the surface of ditch slot 538 which is presumably intrusive.

Struck Flint by Steve Ford

A small collection of 20 struck flints was recovered during this phase of fieldwork, most of which were unstratified (Appendix 3). The narrow flakes (blades) suggest the continued presence of a Mesolithic component in the collection, but the other pieces are less easily datable other than to a broad Neolithic/Bronze Age date.

Animal bones by Ceri Falys

A single fragment of non-human bone was recovered from ditch slot 541 (972). Weighing just 1g, the preservation of the fragment is poor, with all surfaces etched and weathered in appearance. It has the texture and morphology of a thin piece of sheep/goat sized tooth.

Metalwork

A single piece of corroded metal was gained from ditch slot 542 (975). It was within the sample, as a bulk find (1024) and weighed 6g.

Macrobotanical Plant Material and Charcoal by Cristina Mateos

Twenty-one bulk samples were processed from the site. They were wet sieved to 0.25mm and the resultant flots air dried. A small amount of charcoal was present in samples from pits 527 (954), 528 (955) and 529 (956) and ditch 102. However this material of was of size and structure that does not allow species identification (pieces under 2mm).

Conclusion

This phase of work recorded a similar selection of deposits as seen in the previous phases of work. The key feature is the continuation of Ditch 102, which has produced further pottery with a variety of dates from Bronze

Age to Iron Age. A fair quantity of pottery has now been recovered from this ditch, as it crosses the landscape, and it is now reliably dated as Middle-Late Iron Age.

A single Roman sherd from the surface can reasonably certainly be dismissed as intrusive, although it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the ditch remained as at least a shallow hollow into the Roman period: its alignment does broadly match that of the Roman enclosure recorded in Phase 3.

A small collection of residual flint was also recovered. Flints were also found in a pit to the north, 528, allowing a suggestion that it is broadly of earlier prehistoric date.

A collection of other pits contained no datable material.

Three insubstantial gullies at the south of the site appear to be modern, although this has not been conclusively demonstrated and they are on broadly the same alignment as the Iron Age ditch.

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APPENDIX 1: Feature details

Group	Cut	Fill (s)	Туре	Date	Dating evidence
	527	954	Pit	Prehistoric?	flints
	528	955	Pit	-	-
	529	956, 957	Pit	-	-
	530	958	Pit	T -	-
	531	959	Pit	-	-
	532	960	Pit	-	-
	533	961	Posthole	-	-
	534	962	Posthole	-	-
	535	963	Posthole	-	-
	536	964	Pit	-	-
	537	965	Posthole	-	-
102	538	966, 967, 968	Ditch	Iron Age	pottery; Association
	539	969	Pit	-	-
102	540	970, 971	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
102	541	972	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
102	542	975	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
102	543	973	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
	544	974	Posthole	-	-
	545	976	Posthole	-	-
102	546	977	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
102	547	978	Tree bowl	-	-
102	548	982	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
102	549	980 981	Ditch	Iron Age	Pottery; Association
102	600	979	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
102	601	983	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
102	602	984	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
102	603	987	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
126	604	986	Gully	?modern	Association
126	605	992	Gully	?modern	Association
	606	991	Gully	?modern	Association
125	607	988	Gully	Modern	Association
125	608	989	Gully	Modern	pottery; tile
125	609	990	Gully	Modern	Association
102	610	985	Ditch	Iron Age	Association

APPENDIX 2: Pottery catalogue by context

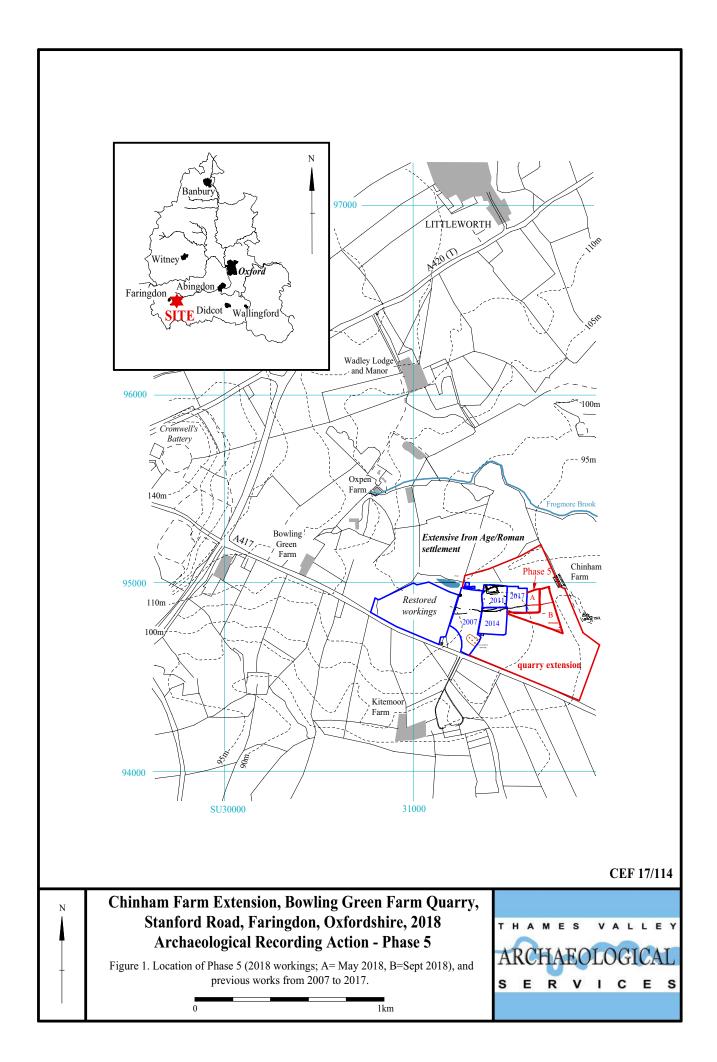
									Dia	EV	
Cut	Cxt	Туре	Fabric	Description	Form	Wt	No	Rim	m	E	Date
spoil	0		SH1	coarse fossil shell	carinated jar	303	4	1	32	12	?EIA
spoil	0		GYGR	grey with grog	everted rim jar	37	0	1	24	10	eRo
spoil	0		LISH	fine limestone and fossil bead rim jar		6	0	1	14	5	LIA
spoil	0		GYGR	grey with grog jar		45	2	1	17	12	eRo
spoil	0		BWFSY	fine black sandy		10	0	1	14	7	IA
spoil	0		BWSA2	black glauconitic sandy		23	1	0	0	0	IA
subsoil	0		OXFOX?	Oxford fine oxidized	bowl?	4	0	1	14	7	Roman
529	956	pit	FL2	fine flint-tempered		3	1	0	0	0	Preh
529	956	pit	00	crumbs		1	2	0	0	0	Preh
538	966	ditch	GYF	fine grey ware		1	1	0	0	0	?Roman
				oxidized sandy with							
538	966	ditch	SACA	voids, black interior		13	2	0	0	0	Preh
538	966	ditch	SH1	coarse fossil shell		3	2	0	0	0	IA
538	966	ditch	00	crumbs		2	10	0	0	0	Preh
549	980	Ditch	SAF	medium-fine sandy		108	19	1	0	1	MIA?
548	982	ditch	SACA	sandy with dissolved cal-	jar/bowl	4	2	0	0	0	Preh
				careous							
TOTAL						563	46	7		54	

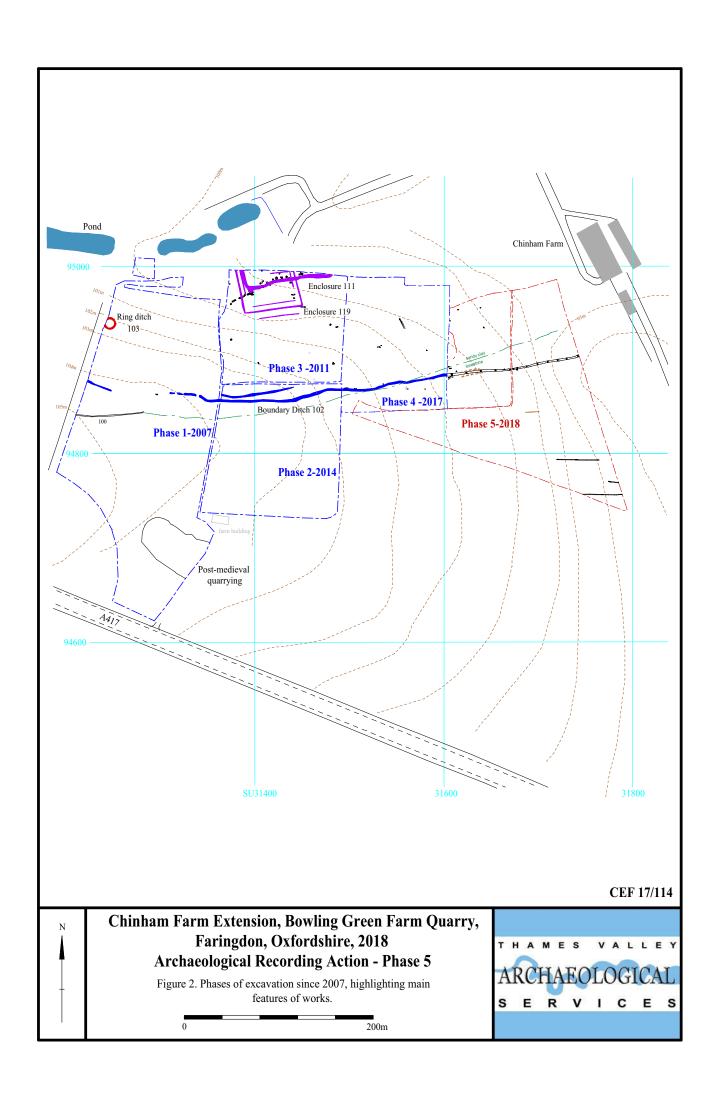
(EVE x 100)

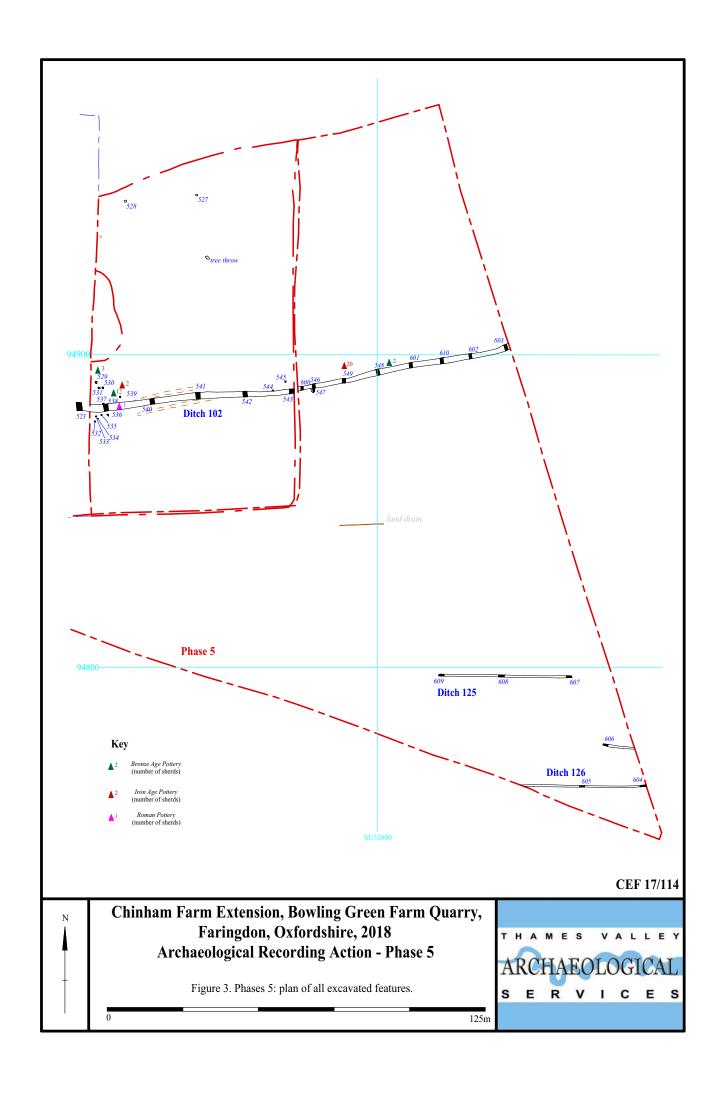
APPENDIX 3: Flint catalogue by context

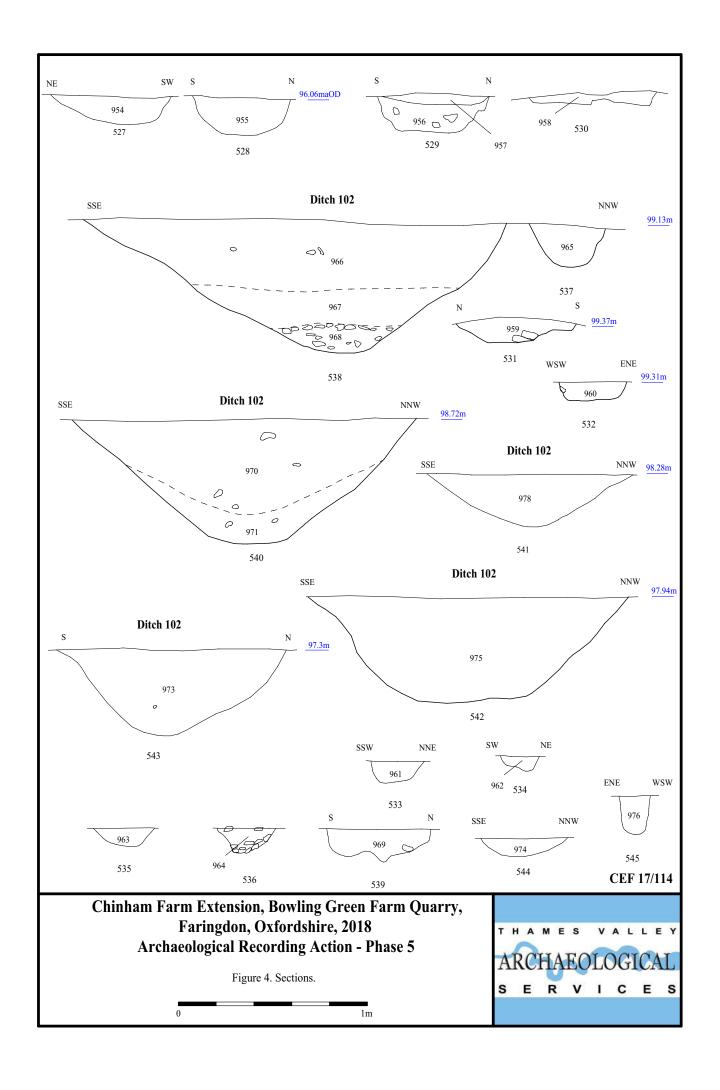
Cut	Fill	Туре	Intact Flake	Intact Blade	Broken flake	Broken Blade	Spall	Core	Other
spoil heap north			1p						
spoil heap south									flake used as core (p)
U/S			1p	2p	3p		4p	1p	
527	954	pit					1p		
527	954	pit		1p					
538	966	ditch	1p		1p	1p	2p		

p- patinated









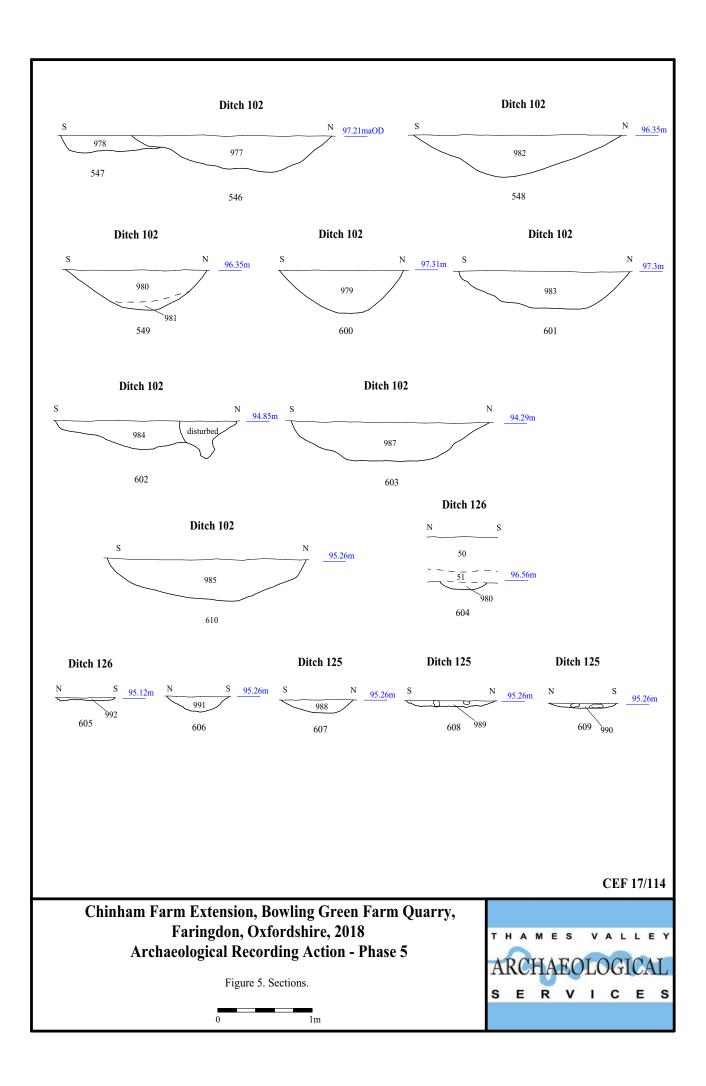




Plate 1. Ditch 102, slot 540, looking south west, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Ditch 102, along length of ditch from slot 543, looking west, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.

CEF 17/114

Chinham Farm Extension, Bowling Green Farm Quarry Stanford Road, Faringdon, Oxfordshire, 2018 Archaeological Recording Action

Plates 1 and 2.



TIME CHART

Calendar Years

Modern	AD 1901
Victorian	AD 1837
Post Medieval	AD 1500
Medieval	AD 1066
Saxon	AD 410
Roman Iron Age	AD 43 AD 0 BC 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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