



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological field evaluation at Herne Road Oundle, Northamptonshire October-November 2010



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Northamptonshire
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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	Herne Road, Oundle, Northamptonshire	
<p>An archaeological evaluation was carried out in October and November 2010 by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land at Herne Road, Oundle, Northamptonshire, in response to a planning application for a proposed residential development. The evaluation identified a sequence of activity dating from the Roman to the post medieval period, comparable with the linear anomalies found in the geophysical survey.</p> <p>The earliest features found were two palaeo-channels, possibly of prehistoric date, sealed by a buried soil horizon. A single gully containing first and second century Roman pottery was present in the south – eastern part of the development area.</p> <p>In the centre of the area, was a large ditched boundary aligned east-west that had gone out of use by the early nineteenth century. The ditch was overlain by a headland visible as a raised bank in the field. The headland was probably part of a pre-enclosure system of ridge and furrow cultivation. The majority of the surviving ridge and furrow dates to the post enclosure cultivation of the fields.</p>		
Project type	Evaluation	
Previous work	Desk-based assessment (Prentice 2008) & geophysical survey 2008 (Fisher 2008)	
Current land use	Pasture	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type and period	None	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Ashton Road, Oundle	
Easting Northing	TL 0455 8794	
Area (sq m/ha)	3.42 ha	
Height aOD	23-34m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council	
Project Design originator	NA	
Director/Supervisor	Nathan Flavell (NA)	
Project Manager	Antony Walsh (NA)	
Sponsor or funding body	Kier Ventures Ltd	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	25/10/2010	
End date	02/11/2010	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents
Physical		Pottery, flint, bone
Paper		Site records (1 small archive box)
Digital		Client report PDF
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title	Archaeological field evaluation at Herne Road, Oundle, Northamptonshire, October- November 2010	
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION
AT HERNE ROAD, OUNDLE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2010

Abstract

An archaeological evaluation was carried out between October and November 2010 by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land at Herne Road, Oundle, Northamptonshire, in response to a planning application for a proposed residential development. The evaluation identified a sequence of activity dating from the Roman to the post medieval period, comparable with the linear anomalies found in the geophysical survey.

The earliest features found were two palaeochannels, possibly of prehistoric date, sealed by a buried subsoil. A single gully containing first and second century Roman pottery was present in the south east part of the development area.

In the centre of the area, aligned east-west was a large ditched boundary that had gone out of use by the early nineteenth century and is not shown on the historic mapping (Oundle town fields were enclosed in 1807). The ditch was overlain by a headland visible as a raised bank in the field. The headland was probably part of an pre-enclosure system of ridge and furrow cultivation, also found in one trench, set out upon a slightly different alignment. The sequence suggests that the majority of the surviving ridge and furrow dates to the post enclosure cultivation of the fields.

1 INTRODUCTION

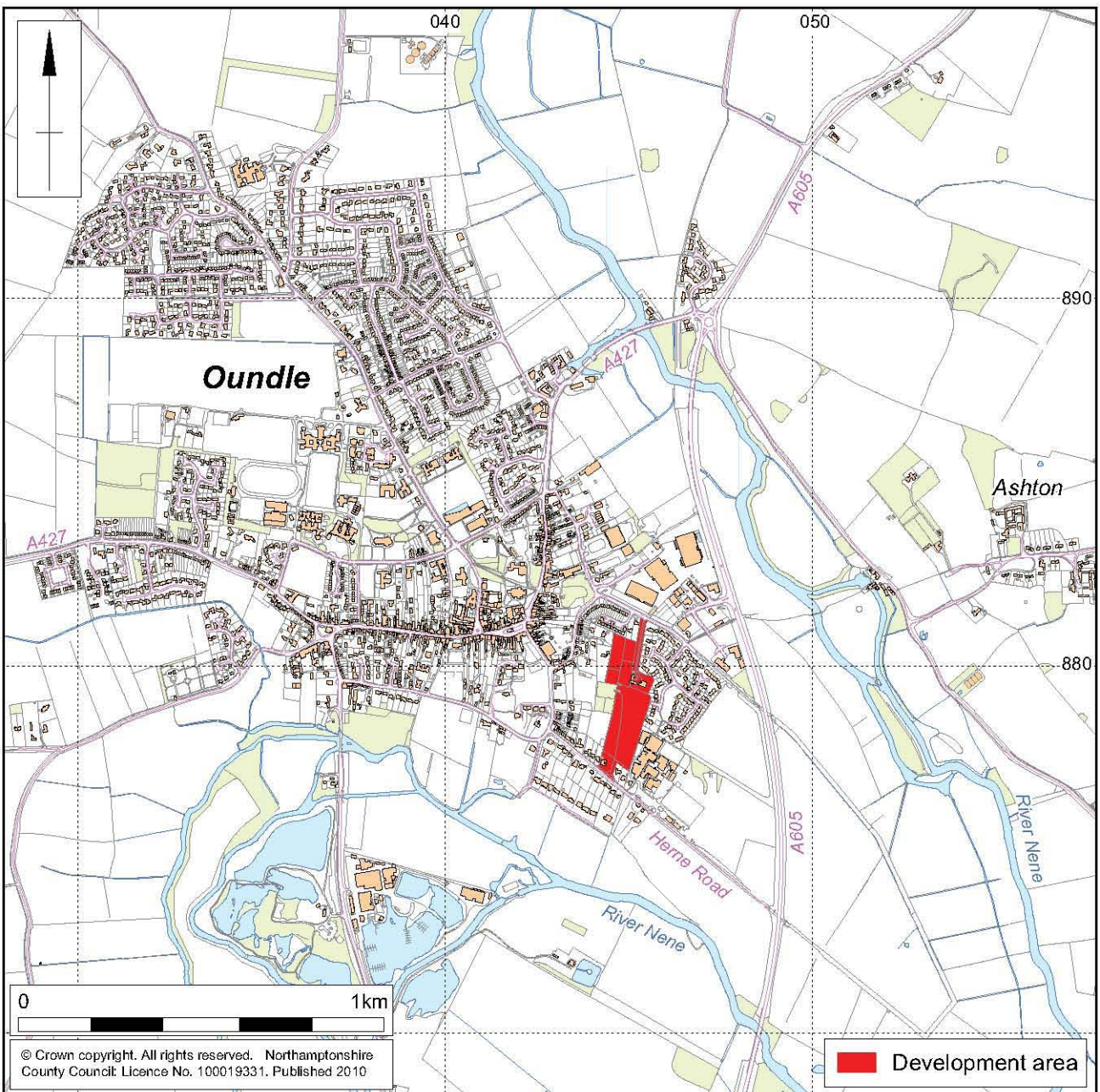
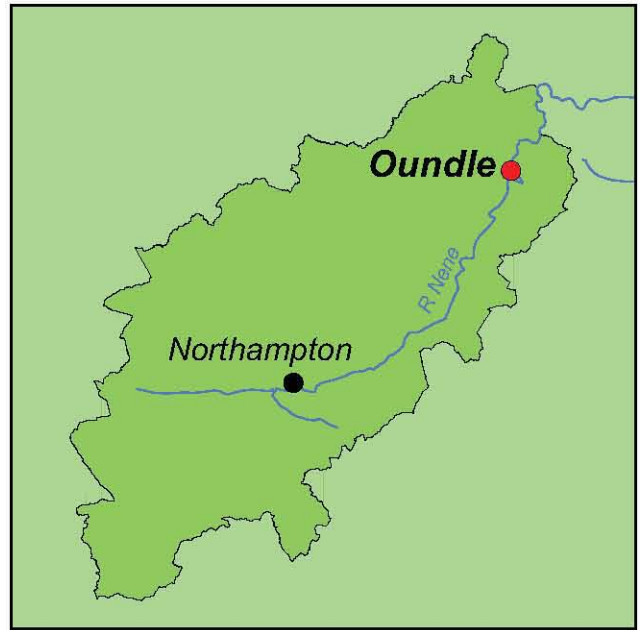
An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out between October and November 2010 by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) at Herne Road, Oundle, Northamptonshire (NGR: TL 0455 8794; Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Kier Ventures Ltd and was undertaken to inform a planning application for a proposed residential development.

The scope of works was outlined in the brief issued by Northamptonshire County Council (NCC 2010) and detailed in the written scheme of investigation prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2010).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and geology

The application area, which covers an area of 3.42ha, lies towards the south eastern edge of Oundle, c 150m south east of the town centre. The area is located to the south of Ashton Road and the north side of Herne Road. The buildings of Herne Lodge are located near the centre of the site. It is bounded to the north, north east and south by residential properties, to the south east by Prince William School and to the west by undeveloped land identified in the Design and Access statement as Phase 2 of the proposed development.



Scale 1:17,500

Site location Fig 1

The site is currently made up of a number of fields, some of which are used for grazing. Topographically the southern end of the site is fairly level to approximately 130m north of Herne Road, where an east-west oriented ridge runs across the field. North of the ridge the land slopes gradually down towards Ashton Road. The southern end is at a height of 34m aOD and the northern end is at 23.80m aOD.

The underlying geology as mapped by the British Geological Survey comprises First Terrace gravel on the edge of the Nene valley alluvium (BGS 2009) deposited over Lias or Oolitic Limestone (bedrock).

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

The following is a summary of the desk-based assessment and subsequent geophysical survey of the site carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Prentice 2008; Fisher 2008):

The Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) shows no documented sites and monuments within the proposed development area. There are no Listed Buildings or Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the study site, nor is it on the register of battlefields or parks and gardens.

The Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) of Oundle shows that the development area is located within the historic core of Oundle although the centre of the historic town lies to the north-west. Documentary evidence suggests that Oundle may have been an important Saxon centre, perhaps even a provincial capital with a monastery and a major late Saxon manor (Foard nd, Johnston 1994; SMR Supplementary note 0488035). The presence of a Roman small town some 500m to the north-east at Ashton on the other side of the River Nene is of uncertain significance to the foundation of the Saxon settlement and only a light scatter of Roman artefacts has been found in Oundle.

The Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) for Oundle suggested that, on the basis of documentary evidence, a late Saxon chapel dedicated to St Cett or Scytta may have been located in this area.

All of the buildings within the development area are of post-medieval date. The cropmarks and earthworks have not been investigated and the quarries appear to be a combination of modern features.

A number of excavations have been carried out on East Road (to the north of the current area of investigation) and its environs since 1996, and all suggest that there is no evidence for early occupation on this side of the road "*there was neither Saxon nor medieval occupation east of Jericho Lane (East Road)*" (Atkins 1999).

The Inclosure map of 1810 (NRO map 2858) shows the investigation area, within St Sythe's Field, to be divided into numerous plots (Prentice 2008, fig 3). There do not appear to be any buildings shown apart from a short row along East Road outside the area of investigation. The Ordnance Survey preparatory survey of 1810, clearly shows the area, divided into three large plots with buildings adjacent to Ashton Road to the north, and near to Herne Road to the south. On the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885 (25 inch, NRO map 1526) the area is shown to have both of the buildings shown on the 1810 map, but in addition a number of buildings along the south-west side of Herne Road. Herne Lodge is clearly present and must have been built between 1810 and 1885; the buildings on Ashton Road are still present. The area covered by the present investigation is divided into mostly small plots or fields.

The 1901 Ordnance Survey map (NRO map 1540) shows no change of any consequence (figs 4 and 5).

The geophysical survey of the site (Fisher 2008) was indistinct in some areas but did suggest the presence of archaeological features, including three possible ditches, medieval ridge and furrow cultivation, and modern pipes.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The specific objectives of the project were to:

- Establish whether any archaeological deposits existed in the area with particular regard to any which merit preservation *in situ*.
- Identify the date, form and function of any archaeological deposits, together with its extent, depth and quality of preservation.
- Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

3.2 Methodology

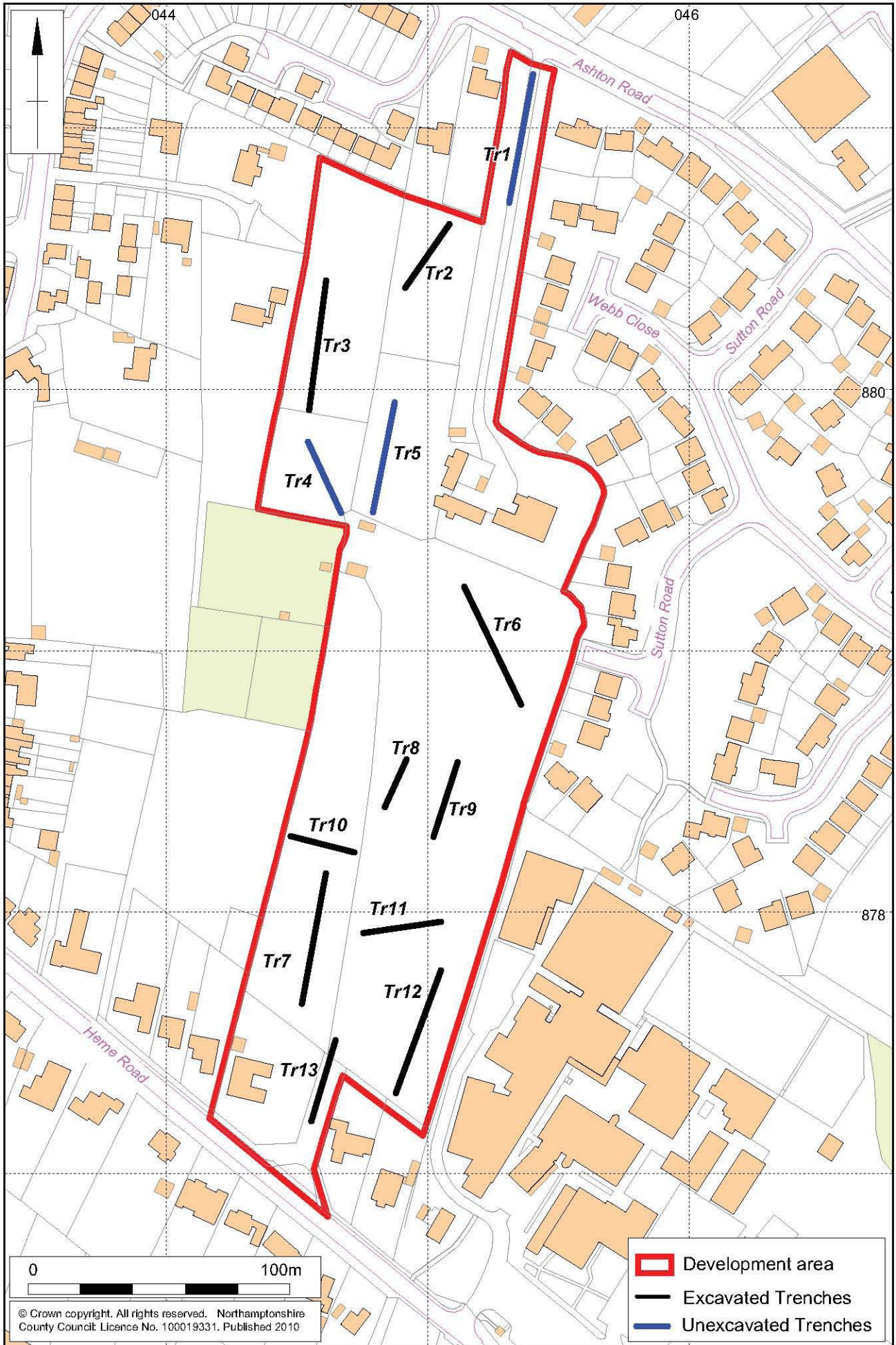
Thirteen trenches were proposed to be excavated within the development area, but owing to site restrictions, three trenches 1, 4 and 5 were excluded from the evaluation. The remaining ten trenches (2-3, 6-13) were excavated by a 360° tracked excavator, with trenches 3, 6, 7 and 12 measuring 50m long by 1.8m wide. Trenches 2, 9 and 11 were 30m long, and trench 8 was 20m long. Trenches 10 and 13 were reduced to 25m and 32m in length respectively, due to the location of existing boundaries.

The topsoil and subsoil were removed under archaeological supervision to reveal the natural substrate, with the overburden materials stacked separately either side of the trench. All procedures complied with Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.

Each trench was cleaned sufficiently to define the exposed features, and the features were then excavated by hand to determine their date and character. All archaeological deposits were fully recorded, following standard NA procedures. The archaeological features and deposits were given separate context numbers. They were described on *pro-forma* context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation. Artefacts and ecofacts were collected by hand and retained, receiving appropriate care prior to removal from site (Watkinson and Neal 1998). Unstratified animal bones and modern material were not retained.

All of the trenches were surveyed using GPS and related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Trenches containing archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:50 and. Sections or profiles through features were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and related to Ordnance Datum. A full photographic record comprising 35mm black and white negatives and colour slide film was maintained, supplemented with digital images. The field data has been compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.

Monitoring of the programme of fieldwork was carried out by Liz Mordue, Northamptonshire County Council Assistant Archaeological Advisor. All works were conducted in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 1994, revised 2008) and the *Code of Conduct of the Institute for Archaeologists* (1985, revised 2010).



1:2000

Trench location Fig 2

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

4.1 General stratigraphy

The natural substrate, fragmented Oolitic limestone was encountered at between 0.3m and 0.98m below ground level across the site, with clay observed in the northern part of the site.

A subsoil layer was encountered in all trenches apart from trench 7. In the northern part of the site, it varied from an orange-brown sandy-clay, between 0.12m and 0.25m thick. In the southern part of the site it was a grey-brown silty or sandy-clay, 0.1m-0.7m thick. In trenches 8 and 9 there was earlier buried subsoil 0.2m-0.35m thick.

The topsoil was a grey-brown sandy loam measuring 0.15-0.35m deep.

4.2 The archaeological evidence

Trenches 7, 10, 11, and 13 did not contain any archaeological features. Substantial steep sided ditches were found in trenches 2, 8, and 9 and gullies were present in trenches 3 and 12. Two palaeo-channels were also present in trenches 8 and 9.

An earlier arrangement of medieval furrows was evident in trench 6, and the possible remains of a relatively early medieval headland was visible as a thickening of the subsoil in trenches 8 and 9. These were clearly distinct from the more recent furrows, which were still evident as earthworks (Fig 3).

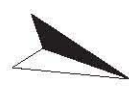
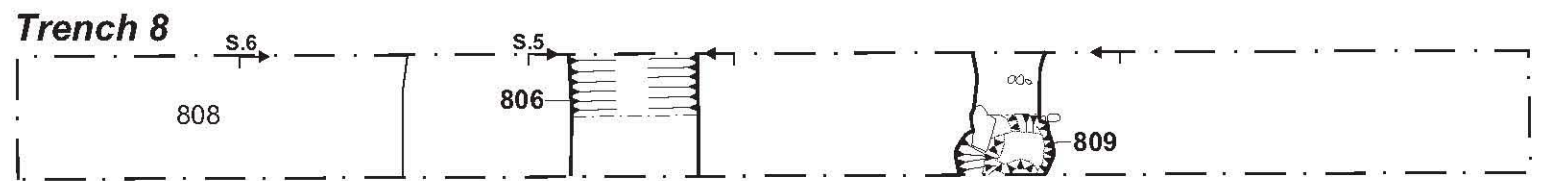
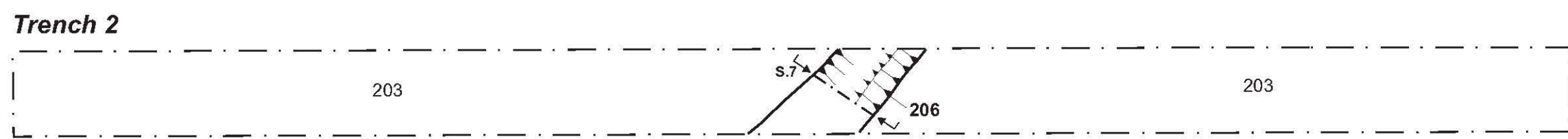
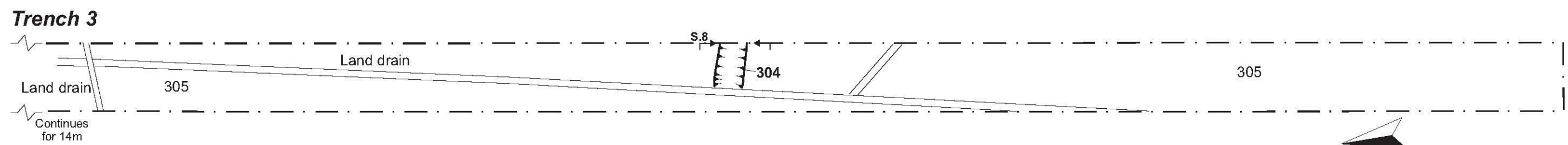
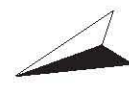
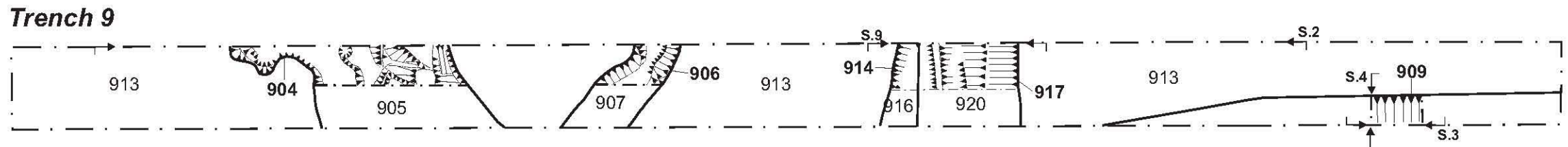
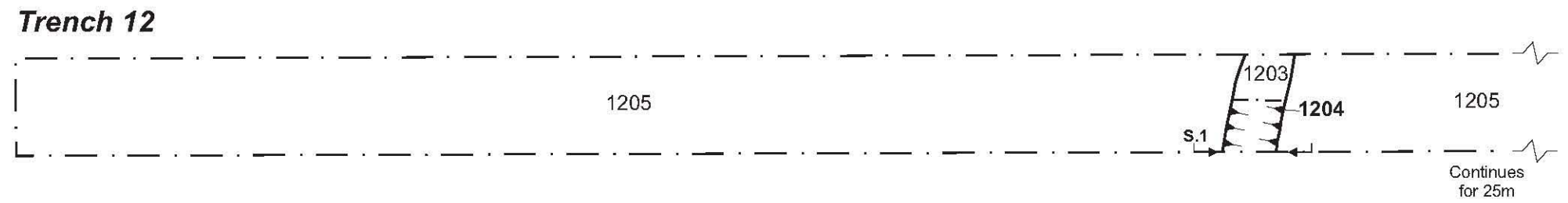
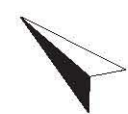
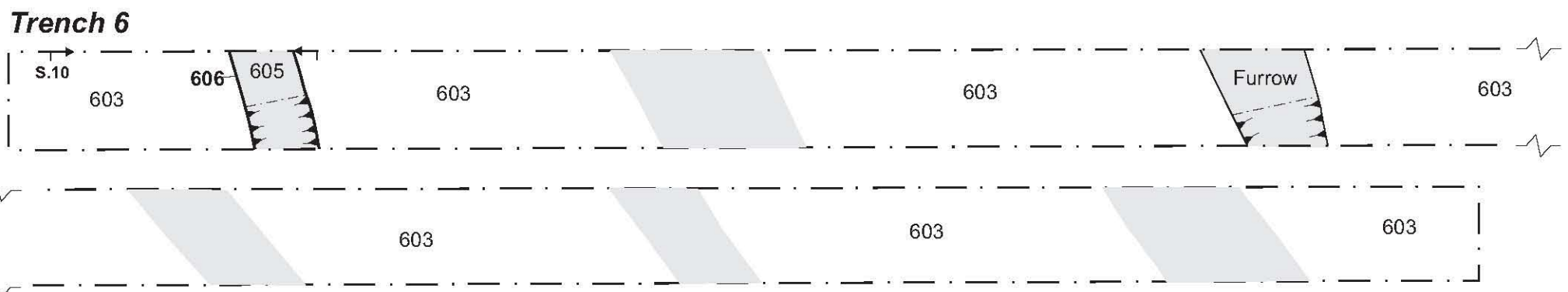
4.3 Trenches 8 and 9

The earliest features on the site were a pair of palaeochannels encountered in trenches 8 and 9. One was visible on a north west-south east alignment in trenches 8 and 9, [809] and [906], 1.05m below the current ground level. It was between 1.1m and 1.2m wide with shallow sides and an uneven base. It was filled by reddish-brown sand (810) and (907) respectively, and was between 0.3m and 0.4m thick (Fig 4, Section 2).

In trench 9, there was a second palaeochannel [904], on a north east-south west alignment, visible at 0.7m - 0.9m below ground level. Its sides were shallow and it had a uneven base. It measured 3.75m wide by 0.35m deep and was filled by reddish-brown slightly clayey sand (905).

The palaeochannels were sealed by a 0.2m–0.35m thick buried soil horizon, a reddish-orange sandy-silt (807) and (912), which was subsequently cut by four ditches, [806], [909], [914] and [916]. In trench 8 ditch [806] contained three fills, with the primary fill comprising light brown sandy-clay (805) with frequent small limestone pebbles and measuring 0.25m thick. This was overlain by lighter brown sandy-clay (804), also with frequent limestone fragments, 0.78m thick (Fig 5, Section 5; Fig 6, Section 6). This is likely to have been a dumping layer to fill the ditch hollow and make the ground surface more even. It may represent the last traces of the original land boundary between the two fields this ditch created.

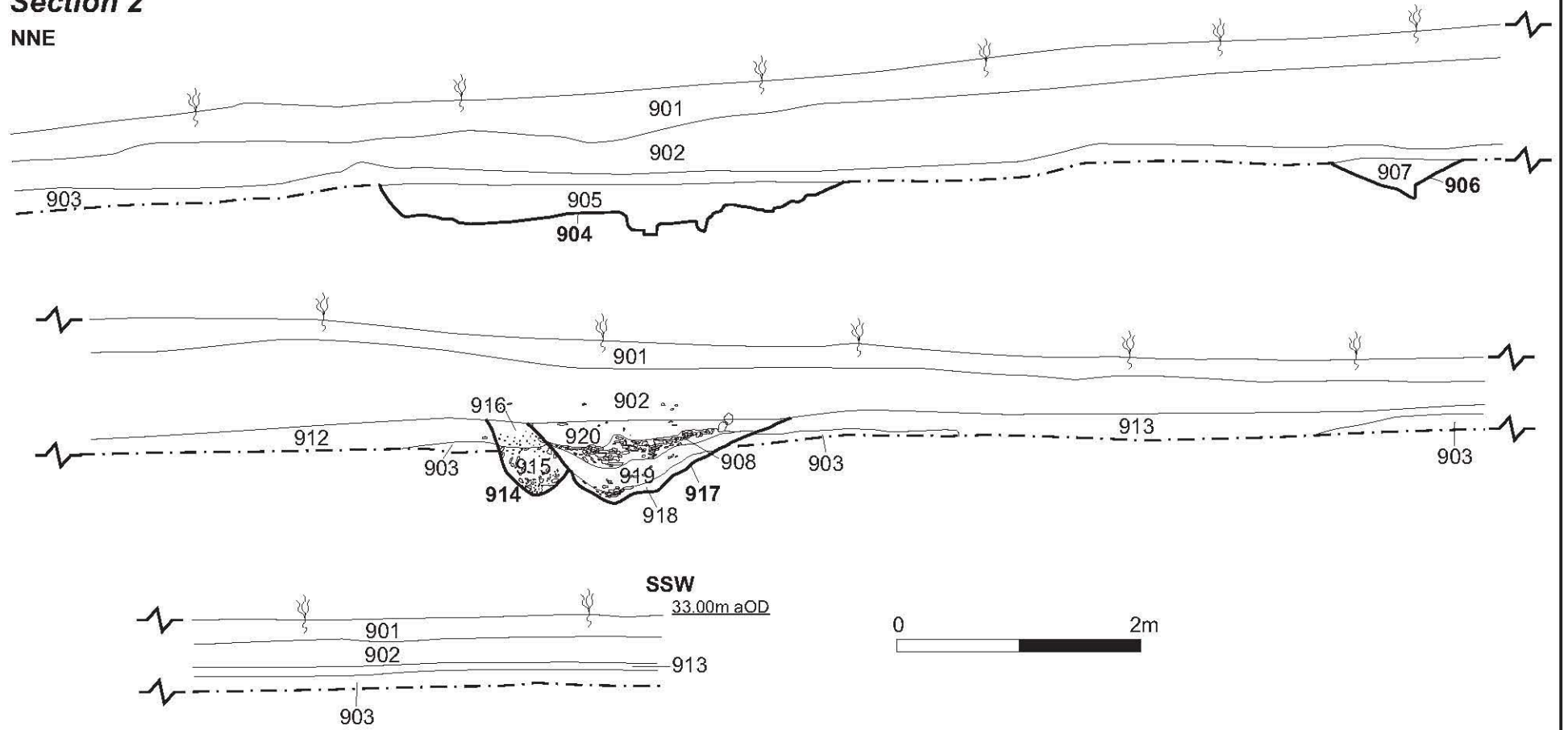
The upper fill was a light yellow-brown sandy-silt (803) with larger limestone pebbles measuring 0.35m thick.



Furrow

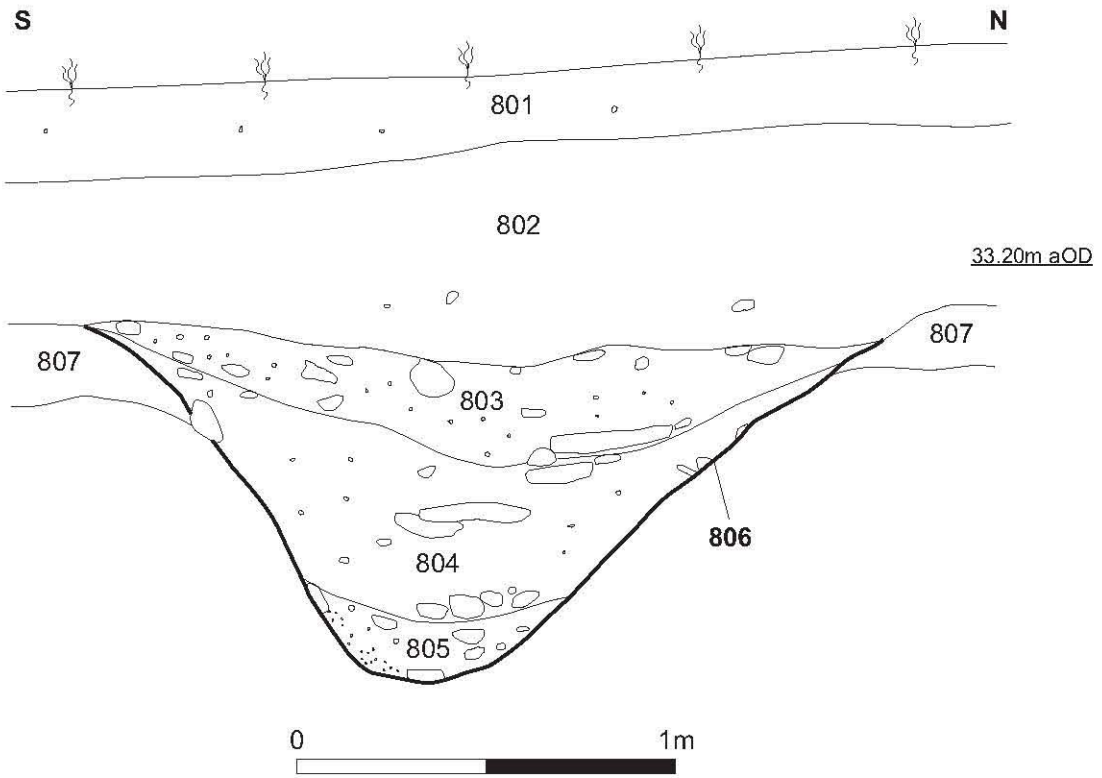
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Section 2
NNE



Section 2, trench 9 Fig 4

Section 5

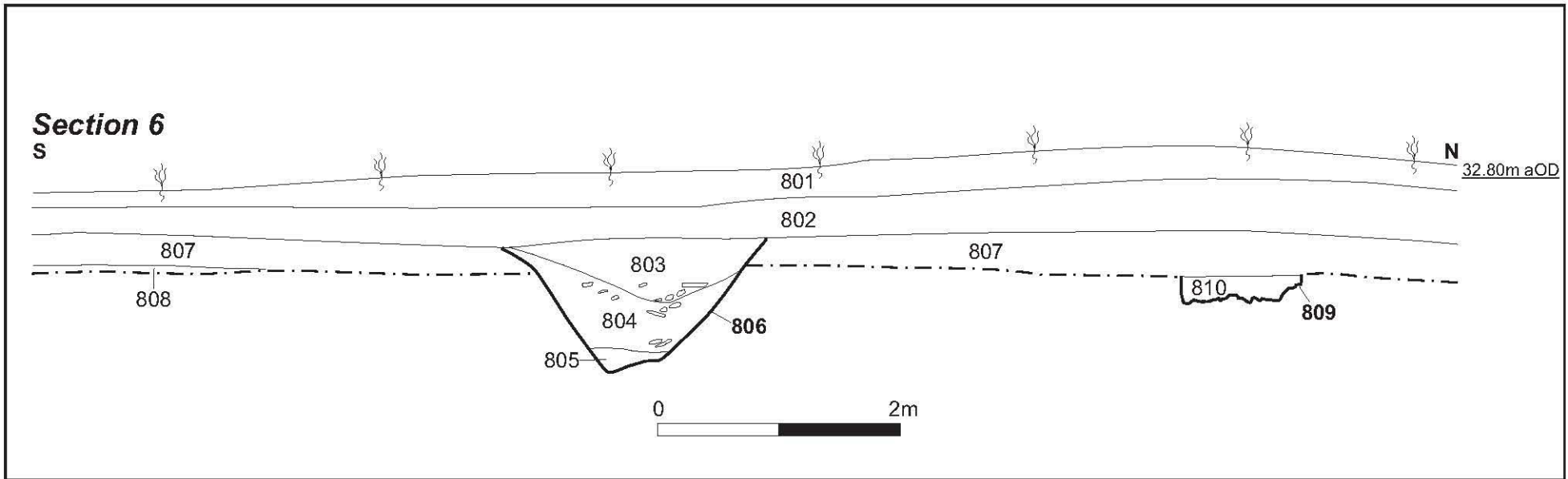


Section of ditch 806 Fig 5

Scale 1:50

Section of ditches 806 and 809

Fig 6



In trench 9 the earliest feature was ditch [914], which was identified 0.66m below ground level (Fig 4, Section 2; Fig 7, Section 9). It was 0.96m wide by 0.73m deep and was aligned east-west. The surviving north side was rather steep, to an almost V-shaped base. The primary fill was yellow-brown clay (915) with very frequent limestone inclusions, measuring 0.4m thick. This was overlain by a layer of brown-orange sandy-clay (916), 0.23m thick, containing a single abraded flint flake fragment.

Ditch [914] was truncated by a later ditch [917], aligned east-west, corresponding to ditch [806] within trench 8. The ditch was between 2.1m and 2.45m wide, with steep sides and a concave base. The primary fill (918) was yellow-brown gritty sandy-clay with frequent limestone fragment inclusions, 0.1m thick. This was overlain by (919), mid-brown sand-clay with only a moderate amount of limestone inclusions, 0.2m thick. Above this was (908) compact deposit of limestone fragments 0.3m thick. The upper fill (920) was mid-brown sand-clay loam 0.21m thick.

In the south west corner of trench 9 a further ditch [909] also cut the buried soil horizon (Fig 8, Section 3 and 4). It was aligned north-south, and was at least 0.56m wide, with a steeply sloping east side; the west side and base of the ditch lay beyond the limit of the trench. The lower fill was mid brown sand (910) with a small clay content with a gravel and limestone mixed inclusion was 0.47m thick. It was overlain by light brown sandy-clay (911) with a small amount of limestone and flint pebbles, and measured 0.24m thick.

All three ditches were sealed by the later subsoil (902) comprising, dark brown sandy clay with sandstone patches. To the north of the ditches the subsoil was visibly deeper, and was up to 0.75m thick. This was interpreted as the remains of a possible headland associated with the earlier ridge and furrow, truncated by the surviving furrows.

Above the subsoil was the current topsoil, (901). Seven sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery were recovered from the topsoil and subsoil, ranging in date from the mid 15th century through to the 19th century; this is consistent with a general manuring scatter, comparable to the six sherds present over trench 7, which contained no archaeological features.

4.4 Trench 12

A single gully [1204] was encountered in trench 12 (Fig 9, Section 1). It was aligned north west-south east, and measured 0.8m wide by 0.2m deep. It had steep sides and a U-shaped profile. It was filled by mid brown sandy-clay (1203) with infrequent flint pebbles. The fill contained eight sherds of locally produced Romano-British pottery broadly datable to the late 1st and early 2nd century; and a small amount of environmental evidence including bone, charcoal, wheat and cereal grains.

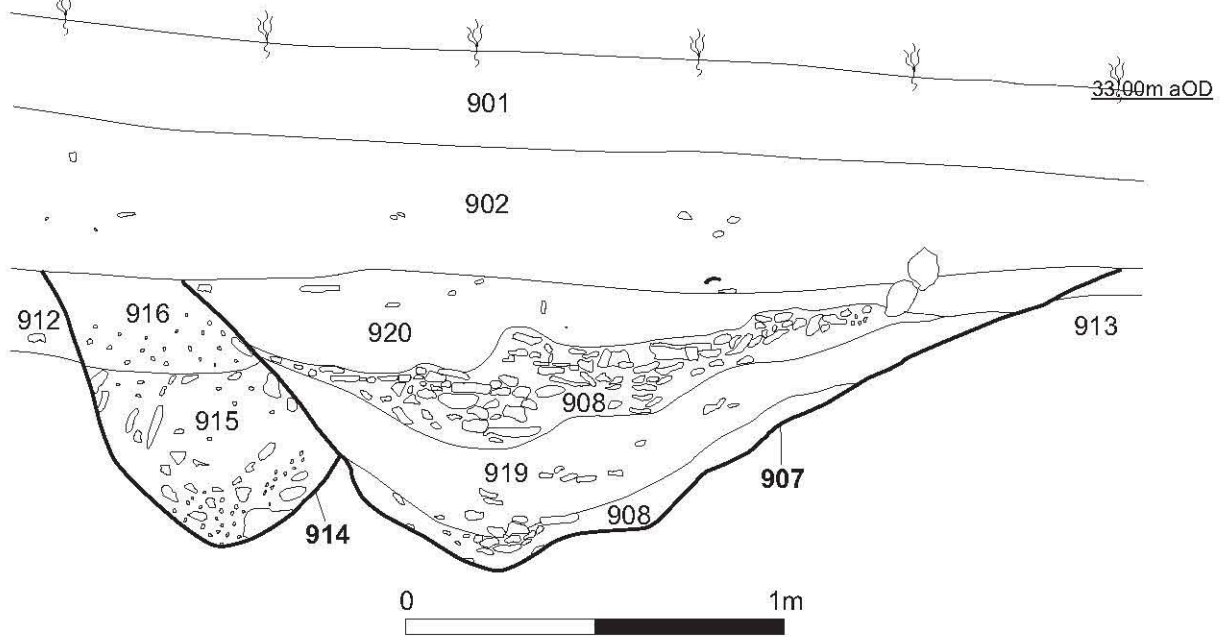
4.5 Trench 3

A single gully [304] was encountered in trench 3 (Fig 10, Section 8). It was aligned east south east to west north west and measured 0.7m wide by 0.23m deep. It had moderately steep slopes and a concave base and was filled with (303) yellow-brown sandy-clay with some infrequent limestone pebbles.

Section 9

NNE

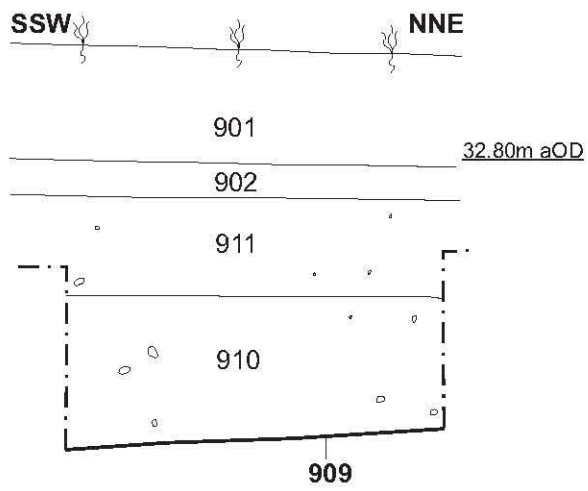
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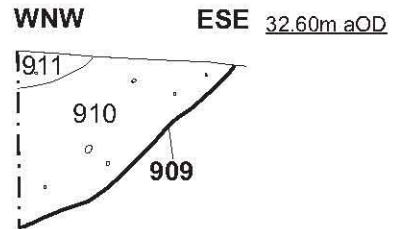
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Section of ditches 907 and 914 Fig 7

Section 3

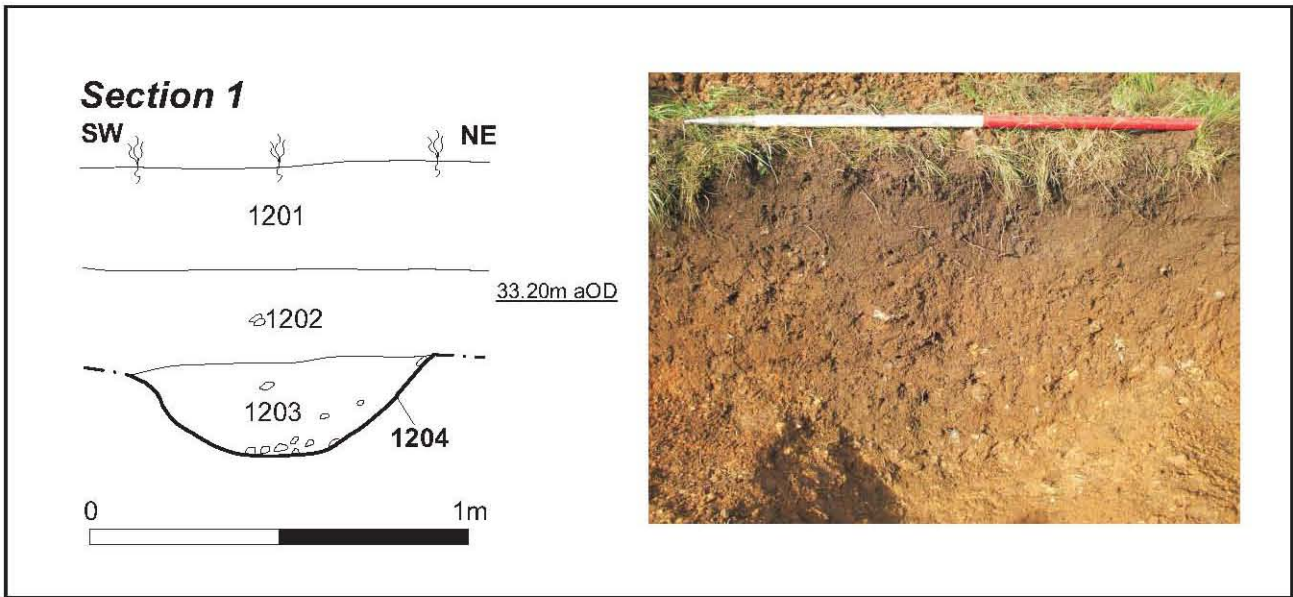


Section 4



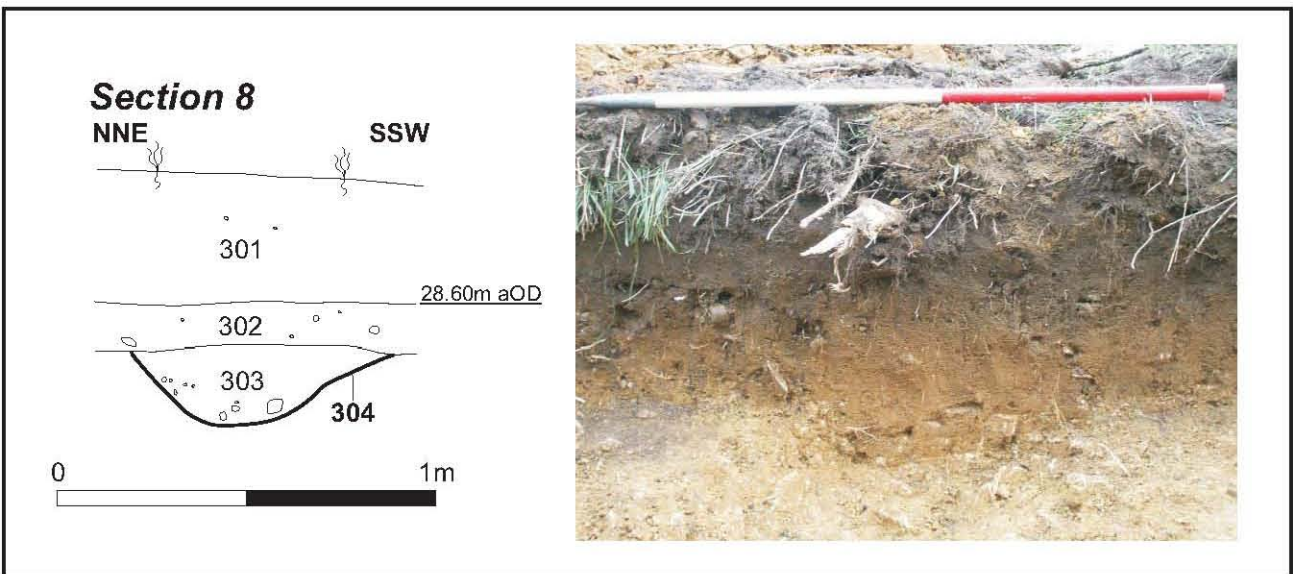
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Section of ditch 909 Fig 8



Scale 1:20

Section of ditch 1204 Fig 9



Scale 1:20

Section of gully 304 Fig 10

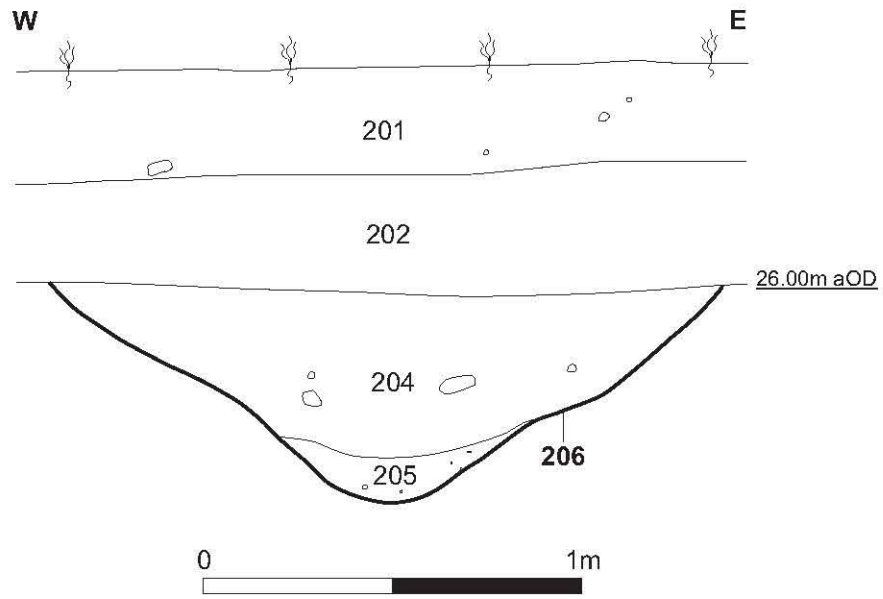
4.6 Trench 2

In trench 2 there was a ditch [206] aligned north-south, measuring 1.8m wide, by 0.57m deep (Fig 11, Section 7). It had steep sides, with a small angled shelf on the west side, and a concave base. The primary fill (205), was yellow-brown sandy-clay, which was 0.12m thick. The secondary but main fill was orange-brown sandy-clay (204), which was 0.46m deep and contained a heavily-patinated fragment of a flint blade.

4.7 Trench 6

Apart from the most recent set of furrows that were still evident as earthworks, there was an earlier set of furrows only encountered in trench 6. The earlier furrows were on a northeast-southwest alignment and generally measured 1.2m to 2.2m wide and 0.2m deep. Furrow [606] had a shallow slope and slightly concave base (Fig 12, Section 10). It was filled by orange-brown sandy-clay (605) with very few limestone pebbles, which was very similar to the buried subsoil observed in trenches 8 and 9. These furrows were sealed by the current subsoil that was encountered across the site. Cut into this was a second set of furrows that still survive as earthworks within the topsoil. Three sherds of Midland Blackware pottery dated to the 17th century were present in the topsoil.

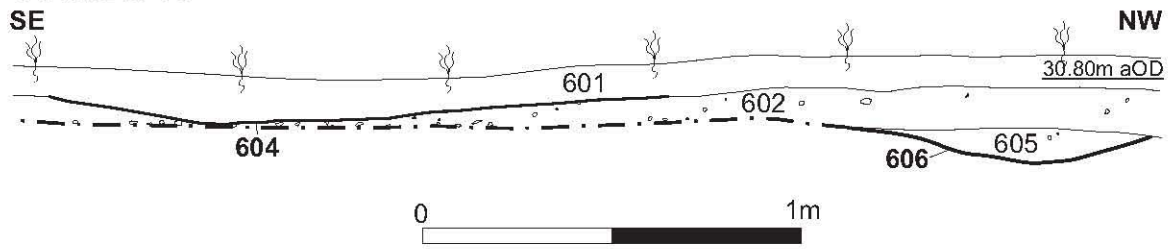
Section 7



Scale 1:20

Section of ditch 206 Fig 11

Section 10



Scale 1:20

Section of furrow 606 Fig 12

5 THE FINDS

5.1 The flint by Yvonne Wolframm-Murray

Two pieces of worked flint were recovered from undated contexts. The flint comprised one flake fragment and the medial section of a blade (Table 1). Post-depositional edge damage was present on both pieces and consisted of frequent nicks. The blade fragment was heavily patinated. The raw material of the flake was a vitreous mid honey colour, suggesting that the raw material was sourced from local terrace gravels. The worked flint is not directly dateable and no further work is recommended.

Table 1: Summary of worked flint

Context	SF	Flake/Blade	Portion	Colour	Patination	Comments
916	2	Flake	Proximal	vitreous mid honey		Post-depositional edge damage
204	1	Blade	Medial	“ “	Heavy	Post-depositional edge damage

5.2 The Roman pottery by Tora Hylton

A small group of eight Roman sherds with a combined weight of 212g, were recovered from the fill (1203) of ditch [1204] in trench 12. The sherds display little sign of abrasion, suggesting that they had not been lying around prior to deposition. Only undiagnostic body sherds are represented and therefore the fabric has been used as an indicator of date. The fabrics comprise locally produced wares in grog-tempered, shell-gritted and greyware fabrics. The presence of two grog-tempered sherds furnished with a girth groove and a cordon, suggest that this small group dates to the late 1st to early 2nd century.

Table 2: Roman pottery type by context, sherd-count and weight

FABRIC TYPE	CONTEXT 1203/[1204]	
	Number of sherds	Weight (g)
Grog-tempered ware	6	139
Greyware	1	47
Shell-gritted ware	1	26
Totals	8	212

5.3 The medieval and post-medieval pottery by Iain Soden

A total of 17 sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery was recovered, comprising eight fabrics or types and deriving from six contexts. They weigh a total of 339g (Table 3).

The pottery has been counted and weighed and related to the Northamptonshire County Type Series (CTS) and assigned to their general production range.

Table 3: Medieval and post-medieval pottery type by context, sherd-count and weight

Type/context/	CTS	601	701	801	901	902	1202	Total
Lyveden/Stanion ware 1250-1500	329	--	--	--	1/8g	--	--	1/8g
Shelly coarseware 1300-1500	330	--	1/6g	--	--	--	2/50g	3/56g
Midland Purple ware 1450-1700	403	--	--	1/8g	--	--	--	1/8g
Glazed red earthenware 1500-1650	407	--	--	--	--	1/45g	--	1/45g
Midland Blackware C17th	411	2/34g	3/20g	--	--	1/67g	--	6/121g
Midland Yellow 1500-1700	406	--	--	--	--	1/28g	--	1/28g
Manganese mottled ware, 1680-1740	413	--	1/9g	--	--	1/23g	--	2/32g
Pancheon 19th century	426	--	1/27g	1/14g	--	--	--	2/41g
Total		2/34g	6/62g	2/22g	1/8g	4/163g	2/50g	17/339g

This very small assemblage of pottery covers a long period of 700 years. As such it does not betoken any intensity of occupation. However, few of the sherds are abraded by wind and rain, despite the fact some are from topsoil. This suggests that the land has not been regularly turned over for a long period of time. In fact the opposite is the case; those from contexts 902 and 1202 are so cleanly broken that it is possible contemporary deposits or occupation features lie close by.

Other than for dating purposes, the assemblage is unremarkable and not of intrinsic value. It may be considered for discard rather than deposition.

5.4 Charred plant material and molluscs by Karen Deighton

Introduction

Three samples were collected by hand from a range of contexts during the course of excavation (Table 4). This material was processed and assessed to determine the presence, preservation and nature of any ecofacts and to inform on further sampling strategies.

Method

The samples were processed using a modified siraf tank fitted with a 250micron mesh and flot sieve. The resulting flots and residues were dried. The flots were then sorted with the aid of a stereoscopic microscope (10x magnification) and residues were scanned. Any charred plant remains were identified with the aid of the author's

small reference collection and Jacomet 1996. Mollusc identifications were made with the aid of Glöer and Meier-Brook (2003) and Kerney and Cameron (1994).

Results

Preservation

Preservation for was solely by charring, fragmentation was low and surface abrasion was moderate.

Taxonomic distribution

Table 4: Ecofacts by context

Cut/fill	1204/1203	206/205	806/805
Sample	1	2	3
Feature type	gully	ditch	ditch
Date	Roman		
Volume (litres)	40	40	40
Charcoal	50	50	20
Breadwheat (<i>T.aestivum</i>)	-	-	3
Naked barley (<i>H.vulgare</i> var <i>nudum</i>)	1	-	-
Wheat/barley (<i>Triticum</i> / <i>Hordeum</i>)	10	-	-
Cereal	16	-	-
Pulse	1	-	-
Plantain (<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>)	-	-	1
indet	-	-	-
Molluscs	-	-	-
<i>Cepaea nemoralis</i>	-	-	10
<i>Cochlicopa lubrica</i>	-	-	10
<i>Cochlicopa lubricella</i>	1	-	25
<i>Clausilia bidentata</i>	-	-	26
<i>Euconulus fulvus</i>	-	4	33
<i>Vallonia costata</i>	-	-	9
<i>Vertigo pygmaea</i>	-	-	13
<i>Pupilla muscorum</i>	3	4	18
<i>Vallonia</i> sp	3	4	115
<i>Oxychilus</i> sp	-	-	13
<i>Carychium</i> sp	-	-	207
<i>Bithynia</i> sp	-	8	-
Indeterminate 1	-	-	-
Indeterminate others	-	-	200
Amphibian	-	-	5

Discussion

Well preserved and identifiable ecofacts were recovered from all three samples. The small amount of charred cereal grains and weed seeds suggests background material, (ie material washed or blown into features from activities taking place elsewhere). The mollusc taxa present are largely indicative of damp environments such as open ditches.

5.5 The animal bone by Karen Deighton

A total of 37g of animal bone was collected from three contexts, the fill of a ditch and two gullies. This material was analysed to determine the taxa present, the level of preservation and the contribution to the understanding of the site. Identifiable bones were noted as was the level of preservation.

Results

Fragmentation was fairly heavy and was largely the result of old breaks. Bone surface abrasion was moderate. Evidence for gnawing by dogs was noted on sheep/goat (*ovicaprid*) bone fragments from context (1203). No evidence for butchery or burning was noted.

Indeterminate fragments were recovered from fill (303), gully [304] and fill (920), ditch [917]. A sheep/goat tibia shaft, metacarpal and femur shaft fragment were noted from fill (1203), gully [1204].

Discussion

Little can be added to the understanding of the site, due to the paucity of bone available, other than to say that cattle were associated with it.

6 DISCUSSION

The evaluation was successful in identifying a sequence of activity dating from the prehistoric to post-medieval periods. Whilst there is a dearth of any dating evidence from the site as a whole; with most of the pottery found within the topsoil and subsoil, a general stratigraphic sequence has been achieved. The earliest features observed on the site were two palaeochannels, possibly of prehistoric date found within trenches 8 and 9, which were subsequently sealed by buried soil horizon, which was only observed within this part of the development area.

The only demonstrable dated feature was a small gully within trench 12, located towards the south-eastern part of the development area, which was found to contain eight sherds of locally produced Romano-British pottery broadly datable to the late 1st and early 2nd century.

The buried soil horizon in trenches 8 and 9 was sequentially cut by ditches. The latest more substantial ditch in trench 9 was most likely the same ditch as within trench 8, located 20m to the west. No pottery was found from any of the ditch fills, the dating confined to a single abraded fragment of 18th Century clay pipe stem in a secondary deposit containing large limestone fragments, suggesting a post-medieval date for its infilling. The ditch possibly represents a former property boundary within Scythe Field, pre-dating the 1810 Inclosure map. It may be a continuation of the northern boundary of the parcel belonging to the Town Estates, leased by John Pole in 1810 (Prentice 2008, fig 3). The perpendicular ditch in trench 9 may also represent a north-south sub-division. All of these ditches were then sealed by the current subsoil found elsewhere across the site.

The remaining features in the northern part of the site, sealed by the current subsoil, comprised a single ditch within trench 2 and a gully within trench 3. The two features possibly form a property boundary denoting a separation in land ownership, with the gully forming a possible internal land division.

The latest activity on the site is defined by two phases of medieval/post-medieval cultivation ploughing, with the early set of furrows observed within trench 6 aligned in a slightly different direction to that of the later surviving set found across the rest of the proposed development area.

The earlier furrows are aligned northeast-southwest perpendicular to the two private roads marked on the 1810 Inclosure map (now Ashton and Herne Roads). They probably relate to furlongs within St Scythe's Field, which was one of the three demesne fields for Oundle (recorded in the field book of 1565).

The upstanding headland evident in the middle of the pasture field extended over the fill of the large ditch found in trenches 8 and 9 which suggests that the boundary had gone out of use by then. The single fragment of clay pipe found in the upper fill was generally datable to the 18th century. The boundary was not present by the time of the Inclosure (1807).

During enclosure new boundaries were established and later post enclosure ploughing took place parallel to and either side of the hedge boundary of the fields. The second set of furrows were formed following enclosure and post-date the headland, as the ridge and furrow could clearly be seen going over it.

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APPENDIX: CONTEXT DATA

Trench	Context	Type	Description	Dimensions /thickness (m)	Artefact type
2	201	Topsoil	Grey-brown sandy-clay loam	0.2m-0.25m thick	
	202	Subsoil	Orange-brown sandy-clay	0.2m-0.25m thick	
	203	Natural	Orange sandy-clay with patches of yellow clay		
	204	Fill of ditch	Mid orange-brown sandy-clay	0.46m thick	Flint
	205	Fill of ditch	Yellow-brown sandy-clay	0.12m thick	
	206	Ditch	N-S linear	1.8m wide, 0.54m deep	
3	301	Topsoil	Grey-brown sandy-clay loam	0.2m-0.35m thick	
	302	Subsoil	Grey-orange sandy-clay	0.12m-0.2m thick	
	303	Fill of ditch	Mid-yellow-brown sandy-clay	0.23m thick	Bone
	304	Ditch	ESE-WNW linear	0.7m wide, 0.23m deep	
	305	Natural	Orange-yellow sand with broken limestone patches		
6	601	Topsoil	Grey-brown sandy loam	0.2m thick	Pot
	602	Subsoil	Grey-brown silty-clay	0.1m-0.15m thick	
	603	Natural	Red-brown sandy clay		
	604	Furrow	NNE-SSW linear	3.5m wide	
	605	Furrow	Orange-brown sandy-clay	0.2m thick	
	606	Furrow	NE-SW linear	1.4m wide	
7	701	Topsoil	Grey-brown sandy loam	0.25m-0.3m thick	Pot
	702	Natural	Mid brow-red sandy clay with occasional sandstone pieces	0.15m-0.2m thick	
8	801	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey silty loam	0.2m-0.3m thick	Pot
	802	Subsoil	Grey-brown sandy-clay	0.1m-0.4m thick	
	803	Fill of ditch	Light brown sandy-silt	0.35m thick	Flint, bone
	804	Fill of ditch	Mid brown sandy-clay	0.78m thick	
	805	Fill of ditch	Light brown sandy-clay	0.25m thick	
	806	Ditch	E-W linear	2.1m wide	
	807	Buried subsoil	Red-brown sandy-silt	0.15m-0.2m thick	
	808	Natural	Mixed broken limestone with some clay		
	809	Palaeo-channel	E-W linear, irregular edges	Irregular edges and base, 1.2m wide, 0.4m deep	
	810	Fill of palaeo-channel [809]	Red-brown clay-sand	0.4m thick	
9	901	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey silty loam	0.15m-0.2m thick	Pot
	902	Subsoil	Red clay with sandstone patches	0.15m-0.7m thick	Pot
	903	Natural	Mixed limestone and clay		
	904	Palaeo channel	NE-SW linear	Irregular edges	

HERNE ROAD, OUNDLE

Trench	Context	Type	Description	Dimensions /thickness (m)	Artefact type
				and base, 4m wide, 0.5m deep.	
	905	Fill of palaeo channel [904]	Red-brown clay-sand	0.5m thick	
	906	Palaeo channel	NNW-SSE linear	1.1m wide	
	907	Fill of palaeo channel [906]	Red-brown clay-sand	0.3m thick	
	908	Fill of ditch [917]	Limestone fragments	0.3m thick	Clay pipe
	909	Ditch	N-S linear	0.56m wide	
	910	Fill of ditch [909]	Mid brown clay-sand	0.47m thick	
	911	Fill of ditch [909]	Light brown sandy-silt	0.24m thick	
	912	Buried subsoil	Red-brown sandy-clay	0.15m-0.7m thick	
	913	Natural	Mixed limestone and clay		
	914	Ditch	E-W linear	0.96m wide, 0.73m deep	
	915	Fill of ditch [914]	Yellow-brown silty-clay	0.4m thick	
	916	Fill of ditch [914]	Orange-brown sandy-clay	0.23m thick	Flint
	917	Ditch	E-W linear	2.45m wide, 0.75m deep	
	918	Fill of ditch [917]	Yellow-brown sandy-clay	0.1m thick	
	919	Fill of ditch [917]	Mid brown sandy-clay	0.2m thick	
	920	Fill of ditch [917]	Mid brown-orange sandy-clay	0.21m thick	Bone
10	1001	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey silty loam	0.21m-0.35m thick	
	1002	Subsoil	Grey silty-sandy clay	0.1m-0.2m	
	1003	Furrow	N-S linear	4m wide	
	1004	Natural	Broken limestone and orange sandy-clay		
11	1101	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey silty loam	0.22m-0.4m thick	
	1102	Natural	Orange-brown silty-clay	0m-0.25m thick	
	1103	Furrow	N-S linear	2m wide	
	1104	Furrow	N-S linear	2m wide	
	1105	Natural	Orange-brown sandy-clay with broken limestone.		
12	1201	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey silty loam	0.25m-0.35m thick	
	1202	Subsoil	Grey-brown sandy-loam	0.16m-0.36m thick	Pot
	1203	Fill of ditch [1204]	Mid brown silty-clay	0.26m thick	Bone, Pot
	1204	Ditch	NW-SE linear	0.8m wide	
	1205	Natural	Orange gravel terrace		
13	1301	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey silty loam	0.13m-0.26m thick	
	1302	Levelling layer	Red-brown sandy clay	0.14m-0.3m thick	
	1303	Buried topsoil	Mixed red clay and sandstone	0.21m-0.36m thick	
	1304	Buried subsoil	Dark brown sandy clay loam	0.1m-0.2m thick	
	1305	Colluvium	Red-orange silty-sand	0.25m-0.36m thick	
	1306	Natural	Broken sandstone		



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