



Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological evaluation of land
at Priory Lane, Marcham, Oxfordshire
October 2012



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**Northamptonshire
County Council**

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October 2012

Report 12/182

OXFCMS 2012.139



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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

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| PROJECT DETAILS | | OASIS No: 136527 | |
| Project name | Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Priory Lane, Marcham, Oxfordshire | | |
| Short description (250 words maximum) | Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Manor Oak Homes to conduct an archaeological evaluation, comprising the excavation of four trial trenches, on land at Priory Lane, Marcham, within an area of known archaeological interest. The excavations identified a number of medieval features, dating from the Saxo-Norman period to the 13th century, concentrated at the western side of the site. The activity principally comprised boundary and enclosure ditches although isolated pits and a posthole were also present. Slag found in a large pit indicated smithing activity in the vicinity. Two limestone walls were also present, although these may belong to a later post-medieval phase of activity. | | |
| Project type | Trial trench evaluation | | |
| Site status | None | | |
| Previous work | Geophysical survey (NA 2012) | | |
| Current Land use | Pasture | | |
| Future work | Unknown | | |
| Monument type/ period | Medieval/post-medieval | | |
| Significant finds | None | | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | | |
| County | Oxfordshire | | |
| Site address | Priory Lane, Marcham, Oxfordshire | | |
| Study area (sq.m or ha) | c 0.85ha | | |
| OS Easting & Northing | SU 4563 9655 | | |
| Height OD | c 57m aOD | | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | | |
| Organisation | Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) | | |
| Project brief originator | Oxfordshire County Council | | |
| Project Design originator | NA | | |
| Director/Supervisor | Mark Holmes | | |
| Project Manager | Charlotte Walker | | |
| Sponsor or funding body | Manor Oak Homes | | |
| PROJECT DATE | | | |
| Start date | October 2012 | | |
| End date | October 2012 | | |
| ARCHIVES | Location | Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc) | |
| Physical | OXFCMS 2012.139 | Pottery, slag, animal bone | |
| Paper | OXFCMS 2012.139 | Record sheets, drawings | |
| Digital | OXFCMS 2012.139 | Digital mapping, photos | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | | |
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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF LAND AT
PRIORY LANE, MARCHAM, OXFORDSHIRE
OCTOBER 2012**

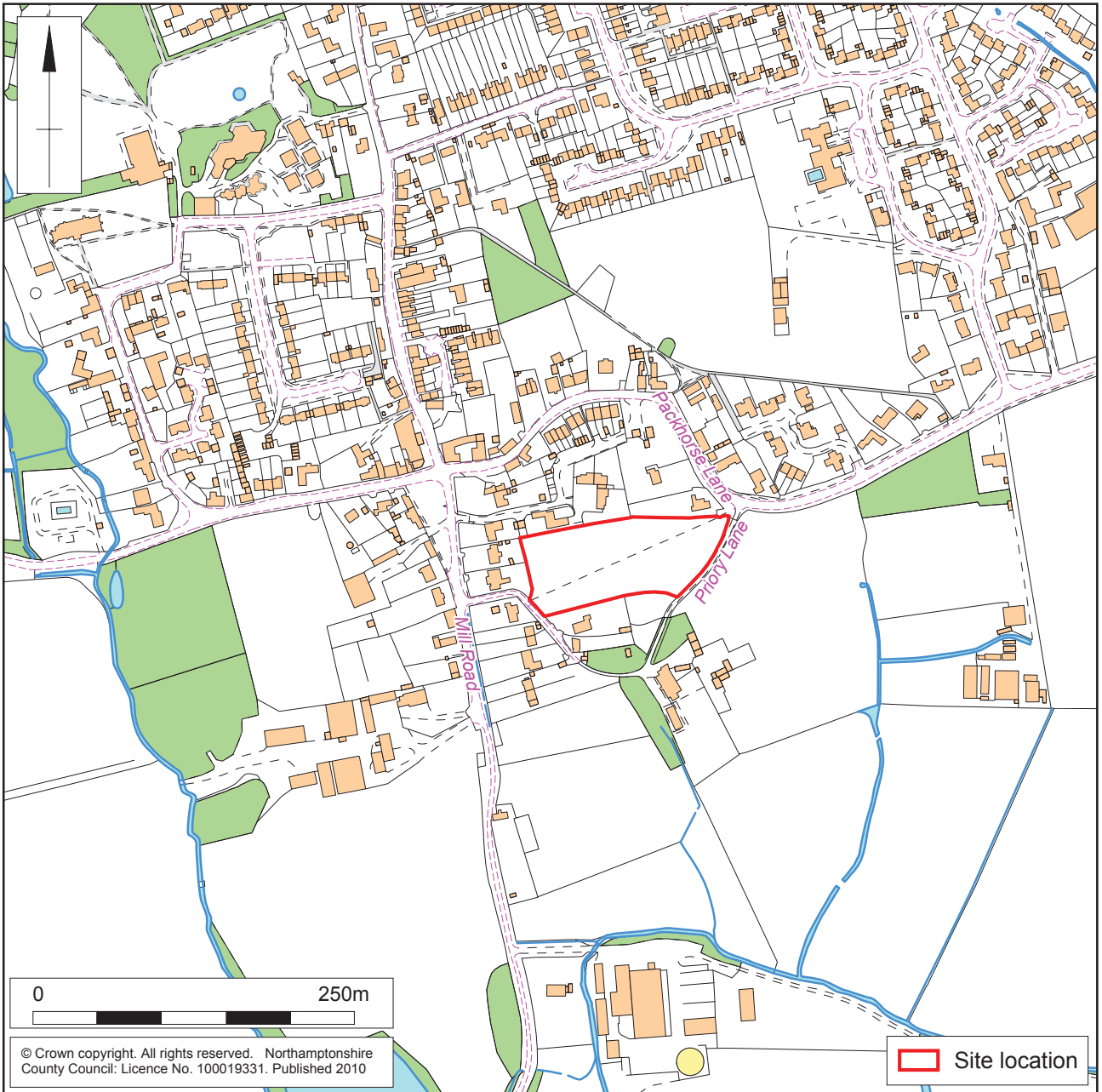
Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Manor Oak Homes to conduct an archaeological evaluation, comprising the excavation of four trial trenches, on land at Priory Lane, Marcham, within an area of known archaeological interest. The excavations identified a number of medieval features, dating from the Saxo-Norman period to the 13th century, concentrated at the western side of the site. The activity principally comprised boundary and enclosure ditches although isolated pits and a posthole were also present. Slag found in a large pit indicated smithing activity in the vicinity. Two limestone walls were also present, although these may belong to a later post-medieval phase of activity.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by Manor Oak Homes to carry out archaeological trial trenching on a proposed development site at Priory Lane, Marcham, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 4563 9655; Fig 1). The works are being undertaken in response to a brief issued by the Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council (OCC 2012) and complied with the Written Scheme of Investigation (NA 2012) prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology and approved by the Planning Archaeologist for OCC. The work has been undertaken in accordance with *the National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

A total of four trial trenches were excavated between 18-22 October. The accession number for this project is OXFCMS 2012.139.



Scale 1:5000

Site Location Fig 1

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Archaeological background

A geophysical survey of the site has been undertaken on the current site (Walford and Walker 2012). A watching brief was carried out on land to the north of the proposed development site (Gill 2006) and geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation have been carried out on land to the north-east (Wessex Archaeology 2012 a, b and c). Although there are no monuments on the Historic Environment Record for the site itself, there is evidence of archaeological activity close by.

A Bronze Age barrow cemetery and Iron Age settlement have been found on playing fields c 150m to the north-east (Wessex Archaeology 2012b and c). The activity extended beyond the site boundaries. The early/middle Iron Age settlement comprised roundhouses and storage pits with some evidence of structured deposition of artefacts. The settlement may have been occupied into the late Romano-British period. To the north-east of the village considerable quantities of Iron Age pottery and Romano-British pottery and tiles have been found in conjunction with an area of cropmarks of possible Iron Age date. About 200m to the south of the proposed development site are a series of undated linear cropmarks. The site lies on the edge of the historic core of Marcham, which originated in the Anglo-Saxon period.

King Edgar granted 50 hides of land in Marcham to Abingdon Abbey in 965 AD. The abbey still held Marcham in 1086, when its lands here were assessed at 10 hides (VCH 1924). In 1538, the manors of Marcham, Frilford and Garford and the advowson of the church were surrendered to the crown by the abbot. To the south of the site lies a building probably dating to the 16th century. It is known as Marcham Priory, but is said to have been a hostel run by the abbey (Ford 2007).

On the 1818 Inclosure Map the north-western part of the site was a cottage and garden belonging to Esther Stone (Fig 14). The remainder of the site was a field known as Malthouse Close. By the late 19th century the buildings on Esther Stone's former plot appear to have been replaced by an extension to Malthouse Farm, which mostly lay north of the current site.

A watching brief was carried out on land immediately to the north of the proposed development site during excavation of the footings for a number of houses (Gill 2006), but no archaeological features were observed.

The geophysical survey of the site revealed possible evidence of archaeological features within the site. The anomalies clustered in the north-western corner of the site included two parallel, north-south aligned ditches abutting a further east-west aligned ditch. Further features also appeared to be present. Some of the anomalies may correspond with a plot visible on the 1818 enclosure map of Marcham (Fig 14).

Further anomalies represent the line of a footpath which currently crosses the site, another a footpath which was present on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map.

2.2 Topography and geology

The site lies within Marcham, about 4km west of Abingdon, and comprises a single pasture field (Fig 1). It is bounded to the north and west by housing and to the south by The Priory, a late 16th century building and associated gardens. It is bounded to the east by a track.

The proposed development area is largely flat and stands at a height of about 57m aOD (Fig 2). The geology consists of Coral Rag limestone, overlain by brown rendzina soils (SSEW 1983).



The site prior to excavation, looking east Fig 2

3 OBJECTIVES

The principal aim of the archaeological evaluation was to quantify the quality, character, date, state of preservation, depth of burial and extent of the archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts and ecofacts within the area affected by the proposed development. This was to be achieved through trial trench evaluation targeting anomalies following geophysical survey.

The project was to address the research aims and make reference to the Solent Thames Research Frameworks as appropriate (thehumanjourney.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=553&Itemid=277).

4 METHODOLOGY

Trial trenches were positioned in accordance with the WSI (NA 2012) and in accordance with the trench plan agreed with the Oxfordshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist (Fig 3). A total of four 30m trial trenches were excavated, totalling 120m. The trenches were targeted on geophysical anomalies and to investigate potentially blank areas.

Trenches were set out in the specified positions using hand tapes. Trenches were excavated by machine using a toothless bucket to reveal archaeological remains or,

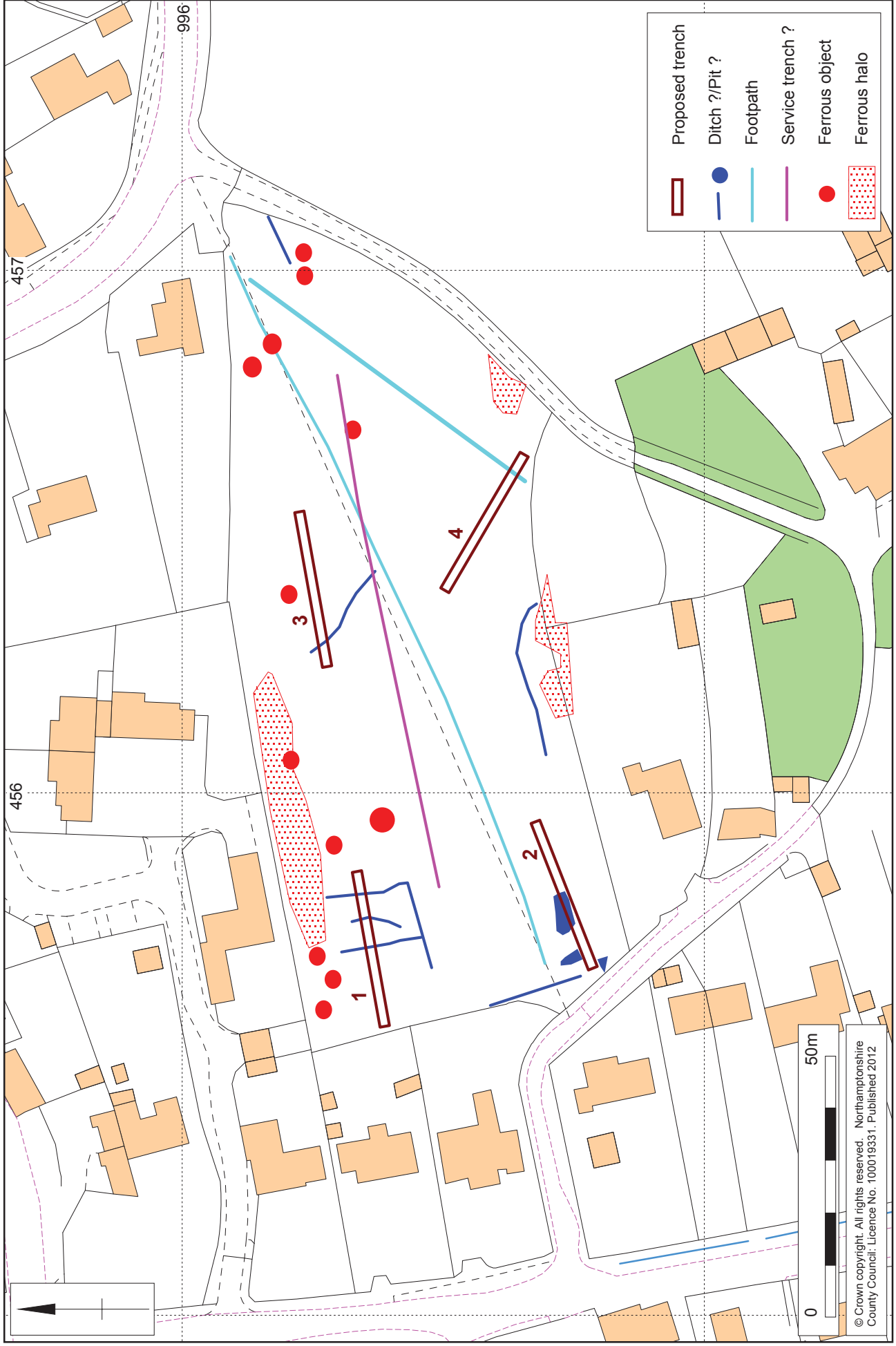
where these were absent, undisturbed natural horizons. All works were monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist. The topsoil was stacked separately from the subsoil.

Each trench was hand cleaned sufficiently to enhance the definition of features, unless it was certain that there were no archaeological remains present. Sufficient features were sampled by hand to determine their date and character. Discrete features (pits and postholes) were subject to 50% excavation. Linear features were examined by the excavation by sections of a minimum of 1.0m in width and 20% of their length. Excavation did not compromise the integrity of the archaeological record. All archaeological deposits and artefacts encountered during the course of excavation were recorded following standard Northamptonshire Archaeology procedures (NA 2011). Trenches with archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:50, the trench sections and profiles through features were drawn at a scale of 1:10. Levels were related to the Ordnance Datum.

Artefacts were collected from archaeological deposits but unstratified bone and modern material was not retained. Soil samples were taken from dateable contexts with the potential for the preservation of charcoal and carbonised plant remains. The sampling strategy conformed to English Heritage guidelines (EH 2002).

Photographs were taken as 35mm monochrome negatives, colour transparencies and digital photos as a supplement for reporting purposes. A photographic record of vehicle movements and reinstatements was maintained. The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned by metal detector.

The evaluation conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (revised Oct 2008). All stages of the project were undertaken in accordance with English Heritage, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (EH 2006).



Trench location plan with magnetometer survey interpretation Fig 3

Scale 1:1000

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5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

5.1 General stratigraphy

The underlying limestone geology was generally encountered between 0.48-0.66m below the modern ground surface. The bedrock varied in character between solid laminated sheets and fragments of pale grey limestone to orange brown sand with small limestone and quartzite inclusions. This was in turn covered by subsoil comprising mid brown sandy or silty clay, usually between 0.10-0.25m thick containing occasional small angular limestone pieces. Topsoil was very dark grey silty clay with very occasional small limestone pieces. The topsoil varied in depth between 0.25-0.56m.

The archaeological features generally cut into the natural geology. The exception occurred with walls located in Trenches 1 and 2 which were sealed directly by the topsoil.

5.2 The trial trenches

All four trial trenches contained archaeological features (Figs 4 and 12). These comprised ditches, probably dating to the 11th-12th centuries AD, a small pit and a posthole. Trenches 1 and 2 both contained limestone walls which, although undated, are proposed as dating to the post-medieval period due to their stratigraphic relationships. No plough furrows were present.

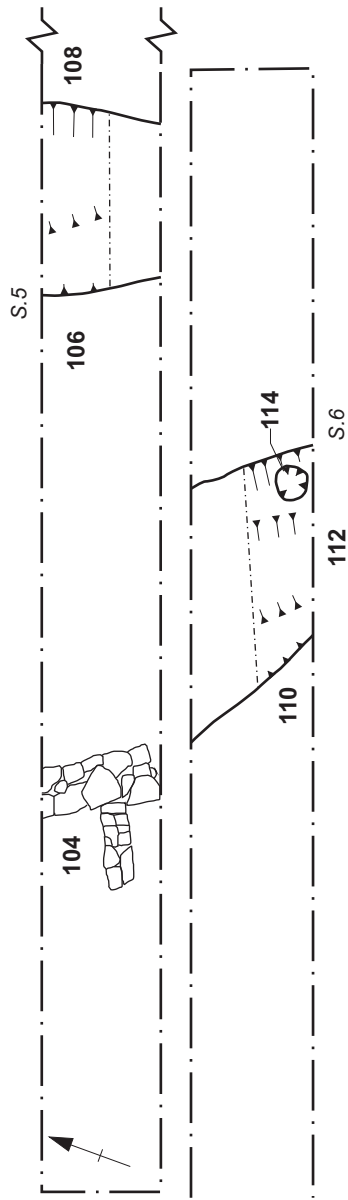
Trench 1

Trench 1 was 30m long and aligned east-north-east to west-south-west (Figs 3 and 4). Two ditches and a limestone wall were present. The ditches had both been re-cut and one had a possible posthole in its base. They contained pottery suggesting a mid 11th-13th century date for their infilling.

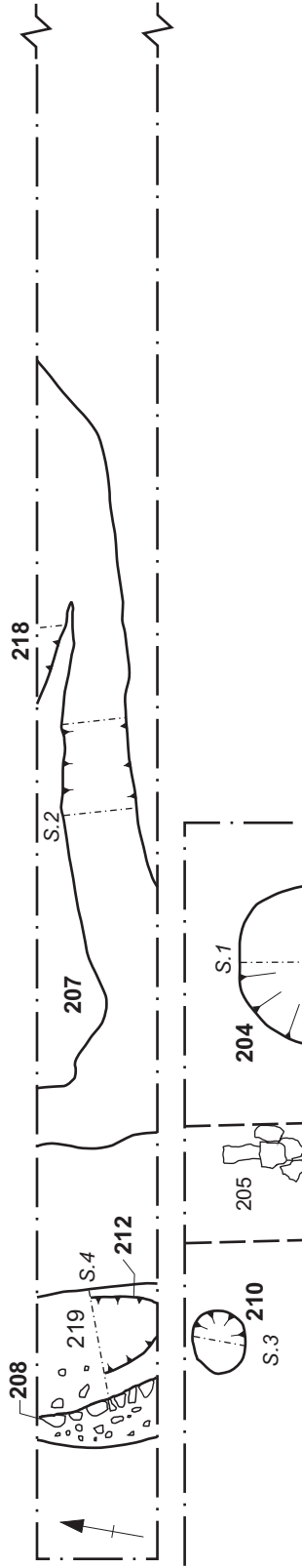
Ditches [106] and [108]

A ditch, [108], was aligned north to south and was up to 1.40m wide and 0.10m deep with a flat base (Figs 4 and 5, Section 5 and Fig 6). It was filled with mid brown sandy clay with moderately frequent limestone gravel inclusions (107). The ditch was re-cut [106] to a width of 2.25m and a depth of 0.20m. It had a similar flattish base. It was filled with dark grey-brown sandy silt (105) with occasional limestone inclusions and very occasional flecks of charcoal. The fill included a relatively large amount of cattle bone fragments (the largest from the site) as well as two sherds of pottery which suggested a 13th-century date for the infilling of the re-cut ditch.

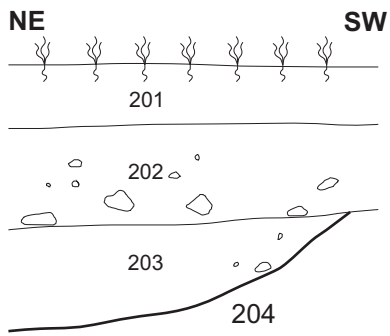
Trench 1



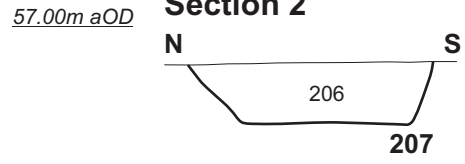
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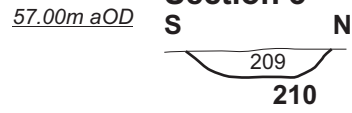
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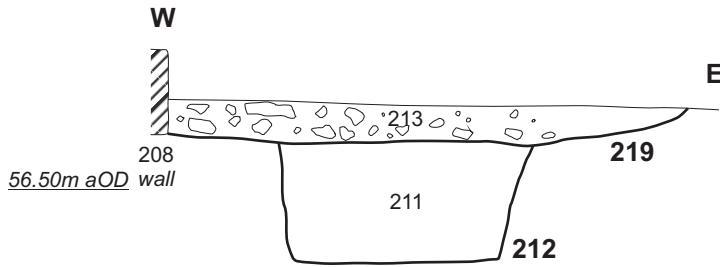
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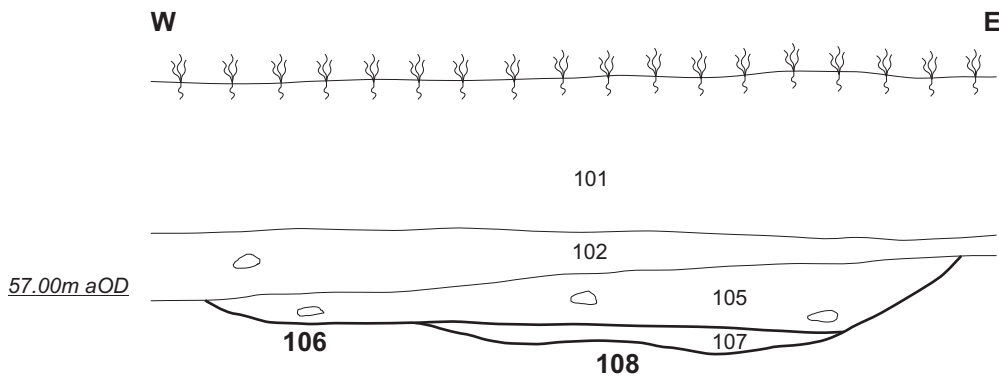
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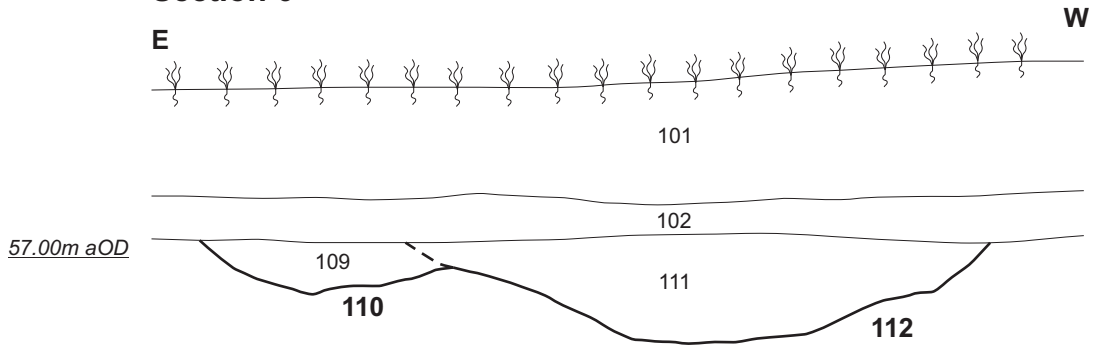
Section 4



Section 5



Section 6





Ditches [106] and [108], looking north Fig 6

Ditches [110] and [112]

Approximately seven metres to the east of ditch [106] was a further ditch [110], which was aligned north-north-west to south-south-east (Figs 4 and 5, Section 6 and Fig 7). It was 0.80m wide and 0.15m deep filled with dark grey-brown sandy silt, with limestone and small rounded pebbles (109). It had a shallow U-shaped profile. The seven sherds of pottery recovered from the fill suggest a mid 11th-century date.

The ditch was probably re-cut on its eastern side by ditch [112]. However, the fills of the two ditches were very similar and the relationship was consequently equivocal (Fig 7). Ditch [112] was 0.40m deep, 1.20m wide, with a broad U-shaped profile. It had a fill (111) identical to fill (109) from which ten sherds of pottery were recovered, indicating a mid 12th-century date for the infilling of the re-cut.



Ditches [110] and [112], looking south Fig 7

Posthole [114]

A depression within the base of ditch [112] may be the remains of a posthole [114]. It was roughly circular with a diameter of 0.40m and was 0.15m deep (Fig 4). Its fill (109) was identical to the remainder of the ditch.

Wall [104]

The foundations of a limestone wall, aligned north-north-west to south-south-east, were exposed towards the western end of the trench (Figs 4 and 8). The wall was 0.50m wide and extended across the width of the trench. It was constructed from irregular limestone fragments and appeared free-standing with no construction cut visible. An east-west return extended at right angles towards the west for c 1.00m but appeared to have been truncated after that.

No floor levels were present and it would seem that only the very base of the foundations survived. However, the wall appears to be sitting upon a subsoil (102) from which a sherd of mid 16th-century pottery was recovered.



Wall foundation [104], looking south

Fig 8

Trench 2

Trench 2 was 30m long and aligned north-east to south-west. At the eastern end of the trench a wall, and two possible ditches, all on a similar alignment, may indicate a continuing boundary division. Towards the centre of the trench, a further ditch might define a small enclosure whilst an associated pit contained slag which suggests the presence of iron smithing in the vicinity. A pit, possibly a quarry pit and a single posthole were also present

Pit [204]

At the eastern end of the trench and extending beyond its bounds to the south, there was a probable oval shaped pit, [204], at least 1.20m long, 0.90m wide and 0.40m deep (Figs 4 and 5, Section 1). It was filled with grey-brown silty clay with moderate small limestone pieces (203). The pit had a bowl shaped profile and contained sherds of pottery dating to the late 12th century.

The pit is perhaps best interpreted as a small quarry pit, being located close to a change in the character of the natural to a more laminated limestone (2005).

Posthole [210]

A shallow, flat based, circular posthole [210], 0.45m diameter and 0.10m deep, was located to the west of pit [204] (Figs 4 and 5, Section 3). It was filled by grey-brown silty clay with frequent limestone inclusions. It did not contain any finds.

Ditch [207]

A possible boundary or small enclosure ditch was located towards the centre of the trench (Figs 4 and 5, Section 2 and Fig 9). It was aligned approximately north-east to south-west but possibly turned towards the north at its western end. It had vertical sides and a flat base and was approximately 0.77m wide, although its width varied slightly throughout its length. It was 0.25m deep and filled with dark grey silty clay from which three sherds of North-East Wiltshire Ware pottery were retrieved, suggesting a mid 11th-century date for the feature.



Ditch [207], looking north-east

Fig 9

Pit [218]

A possible pit was present at the northern edge of the trench adjacent to ditch [207], with which it shared a similar fill of dark grey silty clay (Fig 4). Due to the similarity of fills it was not possible to clearly define the boundary between the two features. Where sampled the fill produced seven sherds of pottery suggesting a late 12th-century date. The fill also produced a quantity of slag, which derived from a smithing hearth. Given the presence of industrial material within the fill and the equivocacy of the relationship between the pit and ditch [207] only a small section was excavated so as not to compromise the integrity of the archaeology.

Ditch [212]

The terminal of a ditch, aligned north-west to south-east, was located immediately to the east of wall [208] (Figs 4 and 5, Section 4 and Fig 10). The ditch appeared to terminate at the southern edge of the trench. The ditch itself was 0.85m wide and 0.40m deep. It had vertical sides and a flat base and was filled with dark grey silty clay with moderate limestone inclusions (211). A single sherd of mid 11th-century pottery was recovered.

Wall [208]

The foundation for a small limestone wall [208], aligned north-west to south-east was located towards the eastern end of the trench (Figs 4 and 10). It was 0.20m wide and survived to a height of 0.22m. It was constructed of a single row of flat limestone pieces. The limestone was set in a cut [215], 0.72m wide, which was filled with a loose light brown sandy clay containing moderate small limestone pieces (2016). The construction cut for the wall cut through a light yellowish-brown sandy clay, mottled with mid brown sandy loam (214). This layer occupied the western end of the trench and may represent former subsoil.



Wall [208], ditch [212] and hollow [219], looking north-west Fig 10

Hollow [219]

Immediately overlying ditch [212] and abutting wall [208], was a layer of dark grey silty clay with very frequent large pieces of limestone (Figs 4 and 5, Section 4 and Fig 10). The layer may possibly have been tumble from wall [208] but it sat within a shallow, flat-based cut 0.12m deep [219], aligned north-west to south-east. Its position against wall [208] and overlying ditch [212] may suggest that the cut is related to the boundary in some way, possibly a small hollow running along the base of the wall.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was 30m long and aligned east-north-east to west-south-west. A single ditch was present, which may be associated with an immediately adjacent surface.

Ditch [305]

Ditch [305] was aligned north-west to south-east (Figs 11 and 12). It was 1.00m wide and 0.27m deep with evenly sloping sides merging with a flat base. Its fill (304) was orange-brown silty clay with occasional limestone pieces. It was frequently mottled and mixed with grey-brown silty clay. The mixed nature of the fill differentiated it from other ditches on site and it may be that [305] is a later feature, especially as it is bordered to the west by surface [306] which lay immediately below the topsoil. The fill contained animal bone.

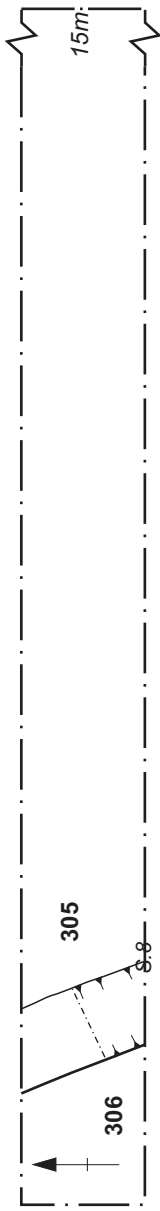


Ditch [305], looking south Fig 11

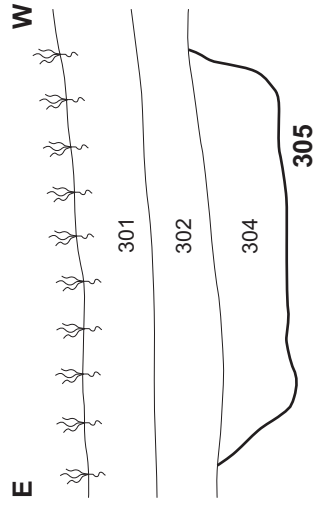
Surface [306]

Immediately to the west of ditch [305], and occupying the end of the trench was a layer of compacted small limestone pieces, 0.12m deep (Fig 12). The layer was situated immediately below the topsoil and may have abutted or been cut through by ditch [305] since it did not occur to the east of the feature. The limestone pieces sat on a layer of loose orange sand (307), 0.13m deep which in turn overlay the natural geology.

Trench 3

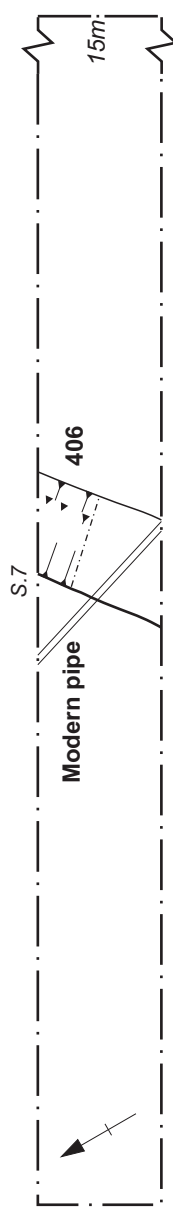


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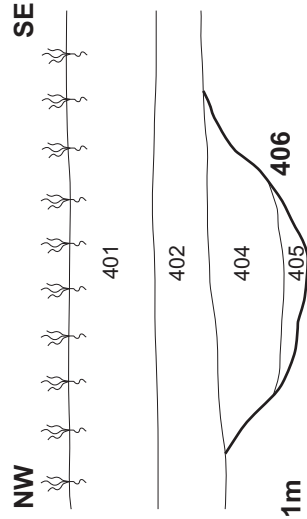


56.50m aOD

Trench 4



Section 7



56.50m aOD



Trenches

Sections

Trench 4

The trench was 30m long and aligned north-west to south-east. A single medieval ditch was found in the trench. Other anomalies were observed, although when tested these proved to be of natural origin. A small modern service pipe ran through the trench.

Ditch [406]

The ditch was located at the western end of the trench and was aligned north-east to south-west (Figs 12 and 13). It was 1.20m wide and 0.40m deep, with a generally rounded bowl-shaped profile, although for some of its length the eastern edge dropped vertically for the last third of its height, creating a slight channel in the centre of the ditch. The primary fill (405) was grey brown sandy clay with occasional small gravel inclusions. A single sherd of mid 11th-century pottery was recovered from this fill. The secondary fill (404) was very similar mid brown sandy clay.



Ditch [406], looking north-east Fig 13

6 THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTALEVIDENCE

6.1 The medieval and post-medieval pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 38 sherds with a total weight of 607g. It was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXAC: Cotswold-type ware (AD975-1350), 9 sherds, 155g

OXBF: North-East Wiltshire Ware (AD1050-1400), 18 sherds, 349g

OXY: Medieval Oxford ware (AD1075-1350), 6 sherds, 65g

OXAW: Early Brill/Boarstall Ware (late 12th-13th century), 3 sherds, 32g

OXAM: Brill/Boarstall Ware (AD1200-1600), 1 sherd, 2g

OXDR: Red Earthenwares (1550+), 1 sherd, 4g

A single (15g) residual sherd of Romano-British ware was also noted.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region, and suggests that there was activity at the site from around the time of the Norman Conquest until the 13th century. The end date is suggested by the paucity of Brill/Boarstall fabric OXAM, which is a common find on sites of 13th-16th century date in the region (ibid).

Generally, the assemblage is in very good condition, and the sherds are large and unabraded. It includes a full profile of an OXAC bowl from the fill of pit [218], with the rest of the assemblage largely comprising fragments of jars, including a number of rimsherds, along with two small glazed jug sherds. This is a typical pattern for early medieval assemblages in the region. The level of preservation indicates that the pottery is largely a result of primary deposition, and that there was earlier medieval activity in the immediate vicinity of these excavations.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence per context by fabric type

| Fabric type Context feature | OXAC | | OXBF | | OXY | | OXAW | | OXAM | | OXDR | | Date |
|-----------------------------------|----------|------------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|--------|
| | No | Wt (g) | No | Wt (g) | No | Wt (g) | No | Wt (g) | No | Wt (g) | No | Wt (g) | |
| 102 subsoil | - | - | 1 | 9 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 4 | M16thC |
| 105 ditch 106 | - | - | 1 | 17 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | 13thC |
| 109 ditch 110 | - | - | 5 | 140 | 2 | 23 | - | - | - | - | - | - | M11thC |
| 111 ditch 112 | 3 | 68 | 5 | 95 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 9 | - | - | - | - | L12thC |
| 203 pit 204 | - | - | 2 | 25 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 5 | - | - | - | - | L12thC |
| 206 ditch 207 | - | - | 3 | 48 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | M11thC |
| 211 ditch 212 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | - | M11thC |
| 213 H'low219 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 32 | - | - | - | - | - | - | M11thC |
| 217 pit 218 | 6 | 87 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 18 | - | - | - | - | L12thC |
| 405 ditch 406 | - | - | 1 | 15 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | M11thC |
| Total | 9 | 155 | 18 | 349 | 6 | 65 | 3 | 32 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | |

6.2 The Slag by Andy Chapman

Eight fragments of slag weighing 1065g, was recovered from the fill (217) of pit [218], dated to the late 12th century.

The material is fresh and consistent in appearance indicating that it had formed a primary deposit probably from a single act of metalworking. Five of the pieces comprise undiagnostic hearth/furnace slag; irregular, light and highly vesicular. Another piece retains part of the fired clay lining, with a smooth, glassy surface, and comprises an accumulation of slag from immediately below a blow hole. A further small piece with a smooth glassy surface against fired clay lining has also come from close to the blow hole, either above or to one side. The other piece is half of a small oval fragment, perhaps 120mm long, 70mm wide and 20mm thick, with a concave upper surface. This is a typical hearth bottom, indicating that this group of material has come from cleaning out an iron smithing hearth.

6.3 The animal bone by Stephanie Vann

An assemblage of 67 fragments was recovered and consisted of cattle, ovicaprid, dog, and large and medium mammals.

Method

The assemblage was subjected to macroscopic examination. Species identification was undertaken at a context level. Fragments of mammal bone that could not be attributed to a taxonomic group equal or lower than genus were categorised as either 'large mammal' or 'medium mammal'. A summary of the results is presented in Table 2. Fused and unfused elements were recorded. For the main domestic species – cattle and sheep/goat – tooth wear on mandibles and mandibular teeth was recorded to calculate age where possible. Measurements were taken where appropriate following Von den Driesch (1976).

Results

Preservation of the animal bone at this site was moderate to good. Fragmentation was moderate and surface abrasion was moderate with bone exhibiting signs of erosion, weathering and other taphonomic damage in some instances. Fragmentation was the result of both old and fresh breaks. There was evidence of butchery on two bones and canid gnawing on five bones. There was no evidence of burning or pathology.

Table 2: Total number of fragments per species per context

| Context | (Bos) Cattle | (Ovicaprid) Sheep/goat | (Canis) Dog | Medium Mammal | Large Mammal | Unid |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|------|
| 105 ditch 106 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 109 Ditch 110 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| 211 Ditch 212 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| 304 Ditch 305 | 5 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Total | 43 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 5 |

The total number of fragments was 67, of which 62 (92 %) were identifiable. The species present were cattle, ovicaprid (sheep/goat), dog, medium mammal (most likely ovicaprid) and large mammal (most likely cattle). There was no evidence of other domestic mammals, wild mammals, bird or fish remains.

Table 3: Total number of fragments per species per period

| Period | (Bos) Cattle | (Ovicaprid) Sheep/goat | (Canis) Dog | Medium Mammal | Large Mammal | Unid |
|---------------|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Medieval | 38 | 3 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 2 |
| Post-medieval | 5 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Total | 43 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 5 |

Tooth wear was recorded for the mandibles that were complete enough to permit it following Grant (1982) and the results are shown in Table 4. This is a widely used, published procedure that records the stage of tooth eruption and wear based on a series of defined stages, enabling an age to be assigned to individual animals and thus analysis of age at death patterns to be undertaken.

Table 4: Ageing of Species by Tooth Wear (Grant 1982)

| Context | Species | DP4 | M1 | M2 | M3 |
|----------------|----------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 109 | Sheep/Goat | g | - | - | - |
| Ditch 110 | | | | | |

Discussion

Whilst it is true that the small size of the assemblage makes it difficult to draw any significant conclusions, there is nothing about it that is in any way extraordinary for a domestic assemblage of the medieval – post-medieval period. Cattle and ovicaprids are regularly exploited during this period as can be seen from the medieval – post-medieval layers at Causeway Lane, Leicester (Gidney 1999) where domestic animals, especially cattle and ovicaprid, form the majority of the assemblage. Similar patterns can be seen at other sites of this period such as Exeter (Maltby 1979). The dominance of such remains within the assemblage from Marcham Priory is therefore not unusual. The good survivability of large, strong bones such as those of cattle does also need to be taken into consideration, however, as this dominance may be a reflection of preservation rather than husbandry practices at this site.

Following the York System (Table 5), the mandibular tooth for which it was possible to calculate an age would appear to have belonged to a juvenile animal as the DP4 is in wear.

Three elements showed unfused epiphyses. The unfused epiphysis of a proximal cattle tibia would indicate an animal of less than 42 – 48 months (3.5 – 4 years) of age (Reitz and Wing 1999). The unfused centrum of an ovicaprid axis and of a medium mammal thoracis vertebra are indicative of animals of less than 48 – 60 months (4 – 5 years) of age (Reitz and Wing 1999). Although a limited data set, this is compatible with the tooth wear data and indicates the presence of at least some immature animals on the site.

Table 5: Definitions of dental eruption and attrition stages used in analysis of age at death

| Cattle and Sheep Mandibles | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|--|
| N | Neonatal | DP4 Unerupted or just in the process of eruption |
| J | Juvenile | DP4 in wear, M1 not in wear |
| I | Immature | M1 in wear, M2 not in wear |
| SA | Subadult | M2 in wear, M3 not in wear |
| SA1 | | M3 forming, to just erupting |
| SA2 | | M3 erupting |
| A | Adult | M3 in wear |
| A1 | | M3 up to minor dental exposure (stages a and b) |
| A2 | | M3 dentine exposure across central column (stages c and d) |
| A3 | | M3 dentine exposure on distal column (stages e to h) |
| E | Elderly | Dentine exposure to or beyond stage j |
| Pig Mandibles | | |
| N | Neonatal | DP4 Unerupted or just in the process of eruption |
| J | Juvenile | DP4 in wear, M1 not in wear |
| I | Immature | M1 in wear, M2 not in wear |
| I1 | | M2 present in crypt |
| I2 | | M2 erupting |
| SA | Subadult | M2 in wear, M3 not in wear |
| SA1 | | M3 present in crypt |
| SA2 | | M3 erupting |
| A | Adult | M3 in wear |
| A1 | | M3 with enamel attrition only (stage a) |
| A2 | | M3 with minor dentine exposure (stages b to d) |
| A3 | | M3 dentine exposure merging on mesial cusps (stages e to h) |
| E | Elderly | Three main zones of dentine exposure across M3 merging (stage j) |

Using mandibles with at least one recordable molar or 4th premolar. Adult stages are defined by reference to Tooth Wear Stage sensu Grant (1982; also Reitz and Wing 1999: 163-5). After O'Connor (2003: Table 31)

The skeletal elements represent a variety of parts of the body, including the axial skeleton (cranium and vertebrae), the feet (astragalus) and the limbs (humerus, radius, femur, tibia). This distribution pattern, combined with the presence of several small cut marks on a cattle astragalus from context (105), ditch [106] and a chopped medium mammal thoracic vertebra from context (109), ditch [110], may indicate that this is normal butchery waste, rather than the result of some other industrial process. The cut marks on the astragalus, especially, are of a type and position usually considered to be indicative of dismemberment (Binford 1981).

Canids were present on the site throughout the medieval – post-medieval period. This is indicated by both the presence of dog bones from context (304) and by the evidence for canid gnawing on five elements from contexts (105), (109), ditches [106 and [110] and (211), ditch [212]. Due to incompleteness, it was not possible to measure the greatest length of the canid bones and estimate the shoulder height. However, the breadth measurements taken are compatible with the three bones belonging to the same individual.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The trial trench evaluation has found evidence of medieval and post-medieval activity within the proposed development site which appears to have been concentrated at its western edge close to Priory Lane.

There were a number of ditches which dated from the 11th to 12th centuries and may have formed plot boundaries. The ditches are generally aligned north-south or east-west. Many of the boundaries had been re-cut, which suggests that they were maintained for some time. The 11th century date of most of the ditches may suggest that there was planned development of regular plots in Marcham during this period; a late Saxon phenomenon which has been widely documented elsewhere.

Other activity included a pit lying adjacent to one of the ditches. It produced a primary deposit of slag derived from cleaning out an iron smithing hearth which lay in the vicinity. It is possible that the ditches and other features represent 'back-plot' activity of tenements fronting onto Priory Lane.

Two walls probably dated to the post-medieval period, based upon stratigraphical relationships with the medieval features. One of the walls, in Trench 1, lies close to a former building visible on the early 19th century Inclosure map (Fig 14).



Marcham Inclosure Map, 1818 Fig 14

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APPENDIX: CONTEXT TABLES

| Trench No | Length, width & alignment | NGR | Surface height | Depth & height of natural |
|----------------|---------------------------|--|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | 30m, E-W | SU 45570 96563 | 57.70m aOD | 0.50-1.06m, 56.64-57.20m aOD |
| <i>Context</i> | <i>Context type</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Dimensions</i> | <i>Artefacts/Samples</i> |
| 101 | Topsoil | Dark grey silty clay with very occasional small limestone pieces | 0.40 – 0.90m deep | — |
| 102 | Subsoil | Mid brown silty clay | 0.10 – 0.16m deep | Pottery |
| 103 | Natural | Limestone bedrock with patches of sand | — | — |
| 104 | Wall | Limestone wall. Comprising irregular limestone pieces | 0.50m wide | |
| 105 | Fill of [106] | Dark grey-brown sandy silt with occasional limestone inclusions and very occasional flecks of charcoal | 0.20m deep | Pottery Animal bone |
| 106 | Ditch re-cut | Shallow sided, flat based ditch aligned N-S. A re-cut of ditch [108] | 2.25m wide 0.20m deep | — |
| 107 | Fill of [108] | Mid brown sandy clay with moderately frequent limestone gravel inclusions | 0.10m deep | — |
| 108 | Ditch | Shallow sided flat based ditch, aligned N-S | 1.40m wide 0.10m deep | — |
| 109 | Fill of [110] | Dark grey-brown sandy silt, with limestone and small rounded pebbles | 0.15m deep | Pottery Animal bone |
| 110 | Ditch | Aligned NNW to SSE. Shallow U- shaped profile | 0.80m wide 0.15m deep | — |
| 111 | Fill of [112] | Dark grey brown sandy silt, with limestone and small rounded pebbles | 0.40m deep | pottery |
| 112 | Ditch | Aligned NNW to SSE. Broad U-shaped profile | 0.40m deep 1.3m wide | |
| 113 | Fill of [114] | Dark grey-brown sandy silt, with limestone and small rounded pebbles | 0.15m deep | |
| 114 | Posthole | Circular | 0.40m diam 0.15m deep | |

| Trench No | Length, width & alignment | NGR | Surface height | Depth & height of natural |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| 2 | 30m, ENE-WSW | SU 45580 96526 | 57.35m aOD | 0.34m, 57.01m aOD |
| Context | Context type | Description | Dimensions | Artefacts/Samples |
| 201 | Topsoil | Dark grey silty clay with very occasional small limestone pieces | 0.20m deep | — |
| 202 | Subsoil | Mid brown silty clay | 0.14m deep | — |
| 203 | Fill of [204] | Grey-brown silty clay with moderate small limestone pieces | 0.40m | Pottery |
| 204 | Pit | Oval-shaped pit with a bowl shaped profile | 1.20m long >0,90m wide 0.40m deep | — |
| 205 | Natural | Loose dark grey silty clay with very frequent large flat, limestone pieces | — | — |
| 206 | Fill of [207] | Dark grey silty clay, moderate small limestone inclusions | 0.25m deep | pottery |
| 207 | Ditch | Vertical sides, flat base. Aligned NE-SW | 0.77 – 1.00m wide 0.25m deep c 7.00m long | — |
| 208 | Wall | Limestone wall, aligned NW-SE comprising single row of flat limestone pieces | 0.20m wide 0.22m deep >1.60m long | — |
| 209 | Fill of [210] | Grey-brown silty clay with frequent limestone inclusions | 0.10m deep | — |
| 210 | Posthole | Circular, shallow-sided flat based cut | 0.45m diam 0.10m deep | — |
| 211 | Fill of [212] | Dark grey silty clay with moderate limestone inclusions | 0.40m deep | Pottery Animal bone |
| 212 | Ditch | Ditch aligned NW-SE. Vertical sides, flat base. | 0.85m wide 0.40m deep >1.60m long | — |
| 213 | Layer (fill of [219]) | Dark grey silty clay with very frequent large pieces of limestone | 0.12m deep | Pottery |
| 214 | Layer | Light yellowish-brown sandy clay, mottled with mid brown sandy loam | Not excavated | — |

| Trench No | Length, width & alignment | NGR | Surface height | Depth & height of natural |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------|
| 2 | 30m, ENE-WSW | SU 45580 96526 | 57.35m aOD | 0.34m, 57.01m aOD |
| <i>Context</i> | <i>Context type</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Dimensions</i> | <i>Artefacts/Samples</i> |
| 215 | Construction cut (for wall [208]) | Not excavated | 0.72m wide | — |
| 216 | Fill of [215] | Light brown sandy clay containing moderate small limestone pieces | Not excavated | — |
| 217 | Fill of [217] | Dark grey silty clay | Not fully excavated | Pottery, slag |
| 218 | ?Pit | Not fully excavated | c. 4.50m long c. 0.50m wide | — |
| 219 | Hollow | Shallow, flat based cut, aligned NW-SE | 0.12m deep 1.50m wide >1.60m long | — |

| Trench No | Length, width & alignment | NGR | Surface height | Depth & height of natural |
|----------------|---------------------------|--|--|---------------------------|
| 3 | 30m, E-W | SU 45638 96574 | 57.00m aOD | 0.55m, 56.45m aOD |
| <i>Context</i> | <i>Context type</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Dimensions</i> | <i>Artefacts/Samples</i> |
| 301 | Topsoil | Dark grey silty clay with very occasional small limestone pieces | 0.30m deep | — |
| 302 | Subsoil | Mid brown silty clay | 0.25m deep | — |
| 303 | Natural | Orange-brown silty sand overlying solid limestone bedrock | — | — |
| 304 | Fill of [305] | Orange-brown silty clay with occasional limestone pieces, mixed with a grey brown silty clay | 0.27m deep | Animal bone |
| 305 | Ditch | Bowl shaped profile with flat base, aligned NW-SE | 1.00m wide 0.27m deep | — |
| 306 | Layer | Compact orange-brown sand with very frequent limestone pieces (c 90x70x20mm) | >1.70m wide 0.12m deep >1.60m wide | — |
| 307 | Layer | Loose orange sand | 0.13m deep | — |

| Trench No | Length, width & alignment | NGR | Surface height | Depth & height of natural |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| 4 | 30m, NW-SE | SU 45651 96542 | 56.80m aOD | 0.55m, 56.25m aOD |
| <i>Context</i> | <i>Context type</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Dimensions</i> | <i>Artefacts/Samples</i> |
| 401 | Topsoil | Dark grey silty clay with very occasional small limestone pieces | 0.30m deep | — |
| 402 | Subsoil | Mid brown silty clay | 0.25m deep | — |
| 403 | Natural | Orange-brown silty sand overlying solid limestone bedrock | — | — |
| 404 | Fill of [406] | Mid brown sandy clay with occasional small gravel inclusions | 0.33m | — |
| 405 | Fill of [406] | Grey-brown sandy clay with occasional small gravel inclusions | 0.07m | Pottery |
| 406 | Ditch | Aligned NE-SW. Rounded bowl-shaped profile | 1.30m wide 0.40m deep >1.60m wide | — |



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