



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation at Barn Lodge Farm, Croxton Kerrial, Leicestershire



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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: 141834
Project name	Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Barn Lodge Farm, Croxton Kerrial, Leicestershire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by N Hall Archaeological Services, on behalf of their client Belvoir Estate, to conduct an archaeological evaluation at Barn Lodge Farm, Croxton Kerrial, Leicestershire prior to a proposed extension to the poultry farm. Seven trenches were excavated, two were extended to delineate a large undated ditch in the north of the field.	
Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc)	Evaluation	
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	None	
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	None	
Current Land use	Arable	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	None	
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Leicestershire	
Site address (including postcode)	Barn Lodge Farm, Croxton Kerrial, Leicestershire NG32 1RB	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	2.6ha	
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. letter code)	SK 8464 2807	
Height OD	Approx. 154 aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator	Historic Environment Consultant, LCC	
Project Design originator	NA	
Director/Supervisor	Chris Chinnock	
Project Manager	Ed Taylor	
Sponsor or funding body	N Hall Archaeological Services, on behalf of Belvoir Estate	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	21/01/13	
End date	23/01/13	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	Leicestershire Museums Archaeology Collections	Pottery
Paper	Leicestershire Museums Archaeology Collections (X.A1.2013)	Site file
Digital	Leicestershire Museums Archaeology Collections (X.A1.2013)	Mapinfo plans, Word report
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Barn Lodge Farm, Croxton Kerrial, Leicestershire	
Serial title & volume	13/20	
Author(s)	Chris Chinnock	
Page numbers		
Date		

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Context Inventory

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION AT
BARN LODGE FARM, CROXTON KERRIAL, LEICESTERSHIRE
JANUARY 2013**

Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by N Hall Archaeological Services, on behalf of their client Belvoir Estate, to conduct an archaeological evaluation at Barn Lodge Farm, Croxton Kerrial, Leicestershire prior to a proposed extension to the poultry farm. Seven trenches were excavated and two were extended to further investigate a large ditch in three trenches to the north of the field. Two very small fragments of Roman pottery were recovered near the surface of the ditch and may not be indicative of its age.

1 INTRODUCTION

In January 2013, Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by N Hall Archaeological Services on behalf of their client, Belvoir Estate, to conduct an archaeological evaluation at Barn Lodge Farm, Croxton Kerrial, Leicestershire (NGR SK 8464 2807).

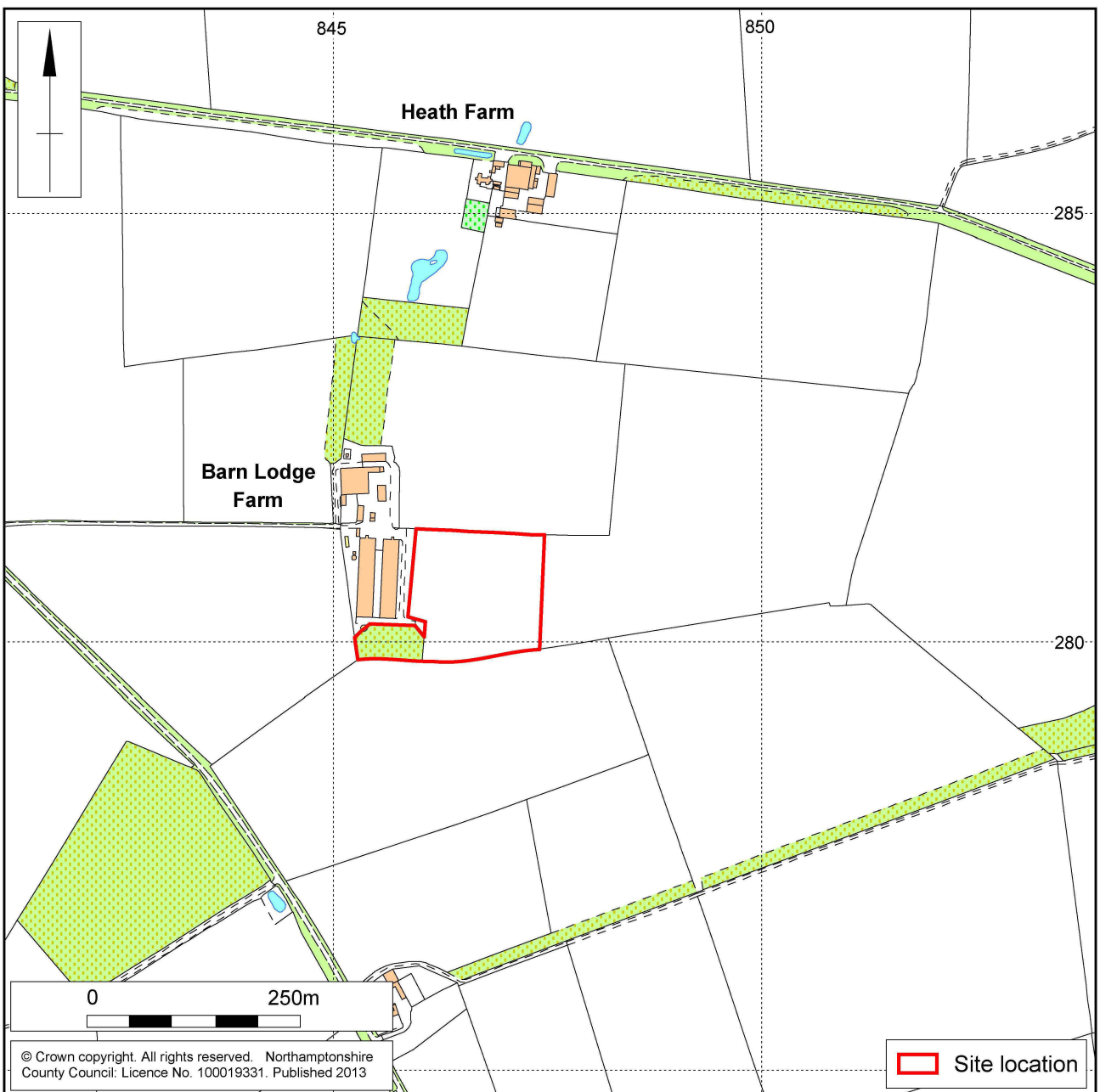
The site lies within an area of potential archaeological interest and sensitivity due to its close proximity to nearby prehistoric and Roman finds, and Bronze Age activity to the south-east, as recorded in the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record. Consequently a programme of archaeological evaluation within the area of the proposed development was required. The requirements were outlined in a brief issued by Historic and Natural Environment Team Leicestershire County Council (LCC 2012) and the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by NA (2013).

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The evaluation of the site was designed to provide information that will allow for the effective targeting of further investigation of the site, if required, prior to or during the early phases of its development.

The following information was required to allow the development of a strategy for further investigation of the site:

- The location, extent, nature, and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;
- The integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present.

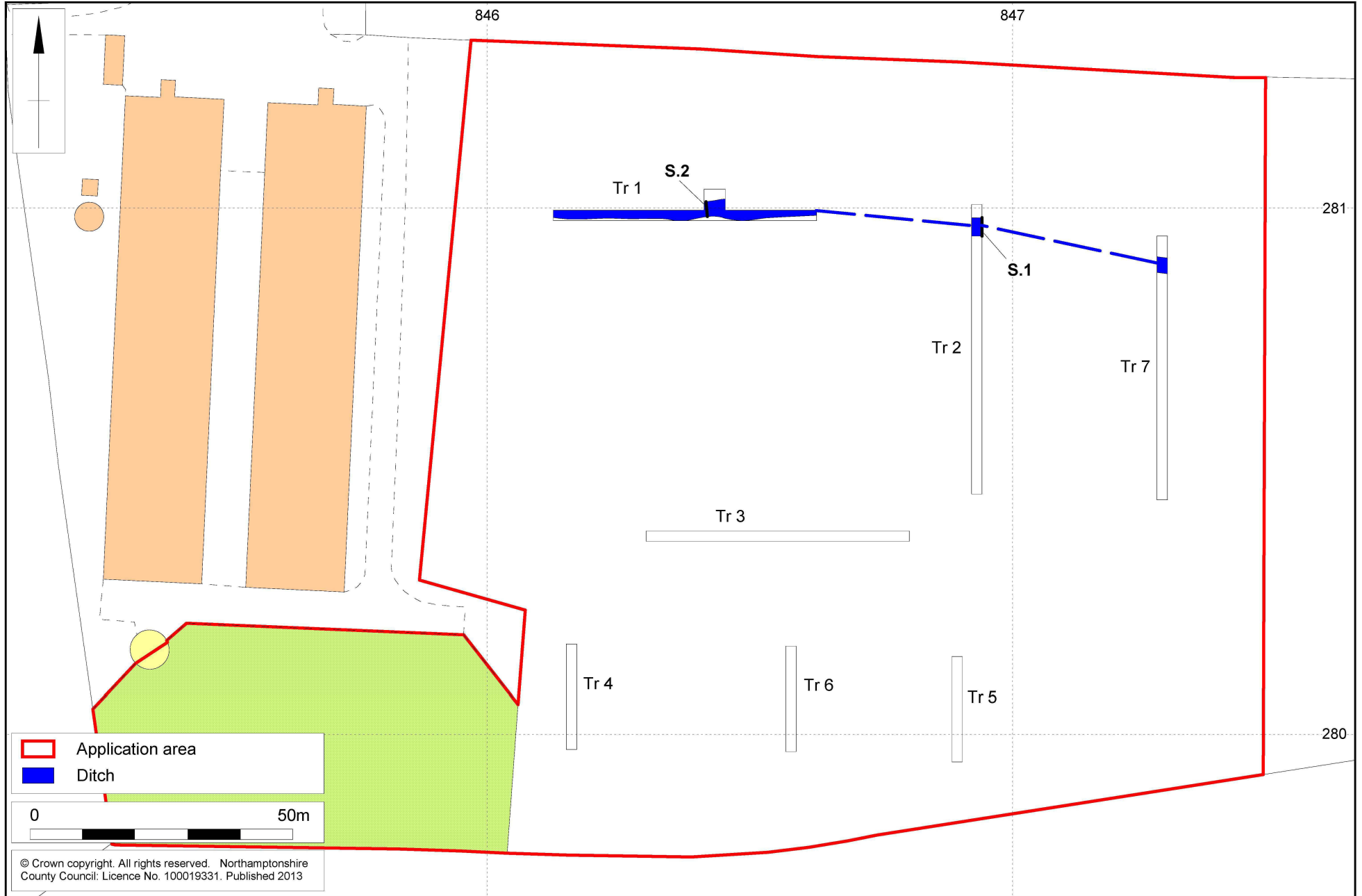


Scale 1:7500

Site Location Fig 1

Scale 1:1000 (A4)

Trench location Fig 2



The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the IfA's *standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008), the *Northamptonshire Archaeology Fieldwork Manual* (NA 2011) and the *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LCC 1997).

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Topography and geology

Barn Lodge Farm is approximately 1km south of Croxton Kerrial in north-east Leicestershire. The civil parish of Croxton Kerrial is part of the Melton borough of Leicestershire. The development area is part of the Belvoir Castle Estate, ancestral home of the Manners family and current home to the 11th Duke and Duchess. The site occupies a rectangular area of land (2.3ha) and is bounded by poultry sheds and farm buildings to the east and arable farmland on all other sides. It lies at approximately 154m aOD. The underlying geology is mapped as Lower Lincolnshire Limestone (www.bgs.ac.uk).

3.2 Historical and archaeological background

Croxton is mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086 as Crohtone or Crochstone. White's 1877 Leicester and Rutland Directory notes that King Stephen (reigned 1135-1154) gave Croxton to his natural son, William Earl of Montaigne. William is said to be one of the founders of Croxton Abbey in the mid 11th century. The feudal affix Kerial, which distinguished this settlement from the nearby settlement of South Croxton, was derived from the family name of Bertramus de Cryall, who was granted the manor of Croxton in AD1239 (Hall 2012). White goes on to state that in the 13th and 14th centuries 'It [Croxton] was held, mostly under the abbey, by the Criol, Curiel or Kyriel family'. In the 1887 Gazetteer of the British Isles, John Bartholomew makes reference to Croxton Keyrial. This progression is presumably the root of the modern Croxton Kerrial.

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) makes reference to several nearby areas of archaeological significance. Bronze Age pit alignments can be seen as cropmarks 400m to the south-east of the Barn Lodge Farm (HERMLE17670). King Lud's entrenchments (HER MLE3552) are situated to the east and south-east of the assessment site; the line of which may possibly be continued further to the west by the line of the boundary between the parishes of Croxton Kerrial and Sproxton. The origin of the 'entrenchments' is unclear but they may represent a late Bronze Age or Iron Age bank and ditch system. Fieldwalking between 1963 and 1978 in the field immediately to the west of the site yielded 32 sherds of Roman pottery, two 4th century coins and roof tile fragments (HER MLE8647). It has been suggested that this represents a nearby Roman settlement. A Roman quern stone was recovered south-east of Croxton Kerrial during WW2 (HER MLE6603).

Ordnance Survey maps show that the current layout of the field boundaries has not changed since at least 1885. The boundary to the south of the site is the parish boundary which again, has not moved since 1885.

4 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

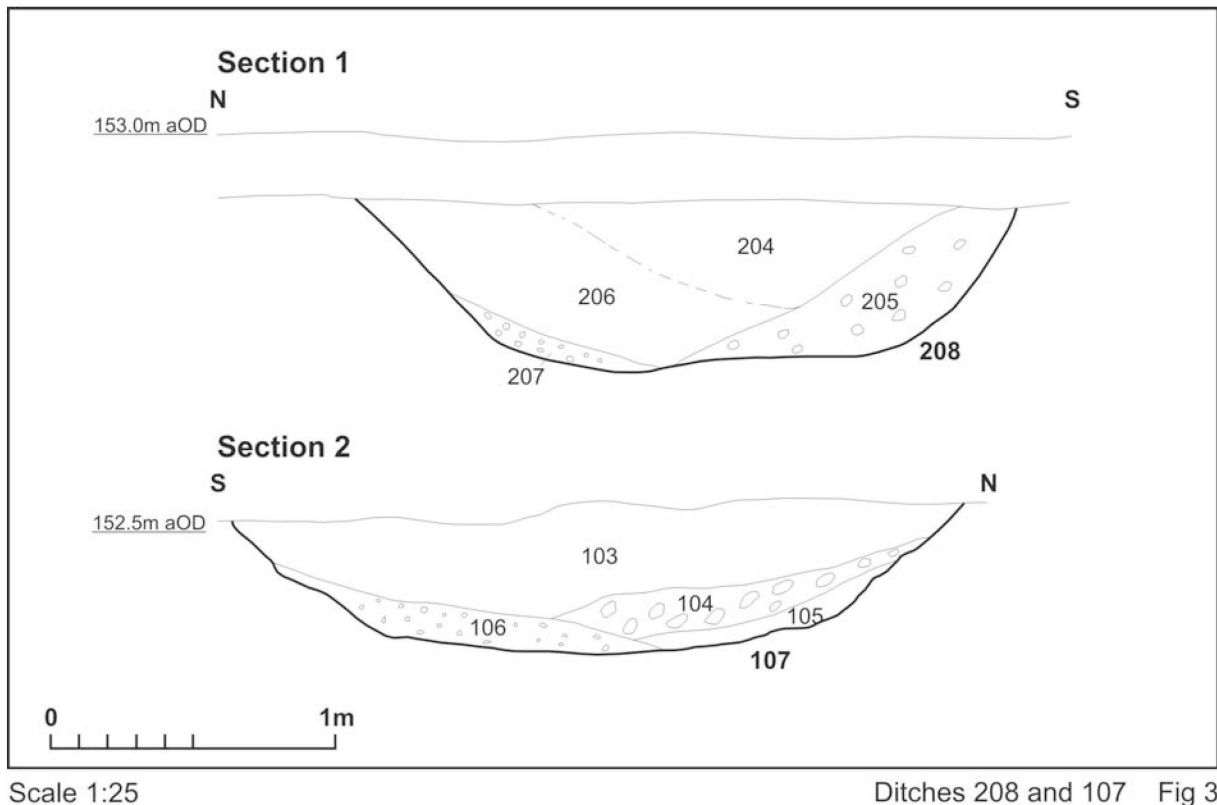
Seven trenches were excavated using a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m-wide toothless ditching bucket. Altogether four 50m trenches and three 20m trenches were excavated. The topsoil and subsoil were removed under archaeological direction to reveal natural substrate. The topsoil and subsoil were stacked separately at the side of the excavated area. All procedures complied with Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.

The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to define any features. The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval.

All archaeological deposits encountered during the course of the evaluation were fully recorded, following standard NA procedures (NA 2011). All deposits were given a separate context number. They were described on *pro-forma* context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation. Unstratified animal bones and modern material were not retained.

The location of the trenches were surveyed and related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. A full photographic record comprising both 35mm black and white negatives and colour transparencies was maintained, supplemented with digital images. The field data from the evaluation has been compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.

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). The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the brief issued by the Leicestershire County Council (LCC 2012), Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2012). and the *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LCC 1997).



5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

All trenches were excavated in the agreed location. Trench 2 was extended by 5m to the north in order to reveal the northern edge of a large ditch. A perpendicular 4m by 4m extension to Trench 1 was excavated again to reveal the dimensions of a large ditch present along the entire length of Trench 1. The trench locations with amendments can be seen in Fig 2.

5.1 General Stratigraphy

Throughout all of the trenches the general stratigraphy remained the same. Mid brown silty clays of around 0.30m thick made up the topsoil. Limestone fragments were present throughout the topsoil, presumably brought up from the natural substrate as a result of ploughing. Subsoil was recorded at a thickness of between 0.05m and 0.10m. This was mid-dark yellow-brown silty clay. The natural substrate was easily identifiable due to the extremely high level of limestone with orange-brown silty clay (Fig 4).



Trench 7 General shot facing north Fig 4

5.2 The Ditch

Only one feature was observed during the course of the evaluation. Visible in trenches 1, 2, and 7 aligned east-west was a large ditch (Fig 5). Extensions were made to reveal the full width of the feature in trenches 1 [107] and 2 [208].

The ditch (Fig 3) in profile had irregular edges at a roughly 40-60 degree gradient, dictated by the limestone natural. The fills were largely sterile reflecting the surrounding natural of limestone and silty clays. (205) and (204) possibly relate to slumped or collapsed bank material made up of the natural material removed during the construction of the ditch. The uppermost fill (103) and (204) probably represents backfilled material upon closure of the ditch. In this context two tiny fragments of pottery were recovered of Roman date. No other finds were discovered.

A soil sample (40 litres) was taken from (103) though both the section in Trench 2 and Trench 1 looked to be largely sterile during excavation. Nothing of interest was found after processing the aforementioned sample.



No other archaeological features were present in any of the remaining trenches.

Ditch [208] facing east Fig 5

6 THE POTTERY by Tora Hylton

Two sherds of Roman pottery weighing 14.7g were recovered from (103). Where possible the pottery has been coded according to the Leicester and Leicestershire Pottery Type Series, as discussed by Pollard (1994). An undiagnostic body sherd in a medium sandy greyware fabric of uncertain source (Fabric GW) and one miniscule fragment of calcite gritted ware (Fabric CG1). This small assemblage probably dates to the 1st-2nd century AD.

7 DISCUSSION

The excavated trenches were largely blank perhaps due to the very shallow geology and ploughing over many years. Plough scarring was not however present in any of the excavated trenches.

A large ditch, aligned east-west clipped the northern ends of Trench 2 and 7, and following the entire length of Trench 1. Full profiles in Trench 1 [107] and Trench 2 [208] indicates that it is the same ditch (Fig 3). Two fragments of pottery recovered from (103) give a tentative date of 1st -2nd century AD. However, the location of the pottery so close to the surface and the absence of any further pottery mean that this date is far from conclusive. Unfortunately soil sampling also failed to provide any dating evidence and as such, the date of the ditch remains inconclusive.

The nearby Roman finds in the adjacent field to the west (HER MLE8647) hint at a nearby Roman settlement. Its proximity to the evaluation area and the small amount of Roman pottery retrieved in Trench 1 suggests a possible link. The size and shape of the ditch is consistent with boundary features, and if far enough from a settlement nucleus may remain largely sterile as in this case.

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WEBSITES

www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html

Appendix: Context Inventory

Trench 1	Length, Width & Alignment 50mx1.8m E-W		Surface Height (West end) 153.06m aOD	Depth & Height of Natural 0.35m 152.71m aOD
Context	Context Type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
101	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay, occasional limestone	0.30m thick	
102	Natural	Limestone with orange/brown silty clay	0.05m thick	
103	Fill of Ditch [107]	Mid brown silty clay with mid-large limestone throughout	2.55m wide, 50m long 0.40m deep	Roman pottery 1st-2nd century
104	Fill of Ditch [107]	Mid brown-orange silty clay with heavy limestone inclusion throughout	1.33m wide, 50m long, 0.17m deep	
105	Fill of Ditch [107]	Mid orange-yellow silty clay/sand, small-medium limestone throughout	0.91m wide, 50m long 0.09m thick	
106	Fill of Ditch [107]	Mid brown-yellow silty clay (slightly gritty), small-medium limestone throughout	1.35m wide, 50m long, 0.13m high	
107	Cut of Ditch	Wide shallow bottomed boundary ditch, same as [208], [704]	50m long, 2.55m wide 0.53m deep	

Trench 2	Length, Width & Alignment 50mx1.8m N-S		Surface Height (South end) 152.53m aOD	Depth & Height of Natural 0.32m 152.21m aOD
Context	Context Type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
201	Topsoil	Red-brown silty clay with occasional sub-angular limestone throughout	0.27m thick	
202	Subsoil	Dark yellow-brown silty clay with limestone throughout	0.05m thick	
203	Natural	Limestone with orange-brown silty clay	0.00m thick	
204	Fill of Ditch [208]	Mid brown silty clay with occasional limestone throughout	1.05m wide, 2m long 0.39m thick	
205	Fill of Ditch [208]	Mid orange-brown with heavy limestone inclusions throughout	1.18m wide, 2m long, 0.32m thick	
206	Fill of Ditch [208]	Mid brown-orange silty clay with medium limestone throughout	1.5m wide, 2m long 0.42m thick	
207	Fill of Ditch [208]	Light brown silty clay/sand with small-medium limestone throughout	0.80m wide, 2m long, 0.10m thick	
208	Cut of Ditch	Wide shallow bottomed ditch	2m long, 2.35m wide 0.60m deep	

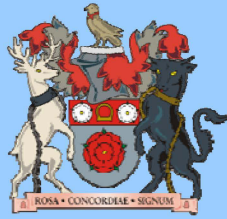
Trench 3	Length, Width & Alignment 50mx1.8m E-W		Surface Height (West end) 152.52m aOD	Depth & Height of Natural 0.28m 152.24m aOD
Context	Context Type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
201	Topsoil	Red-brown silty clay with occasional sub-angular limestone throughout	0.18m thick	
202	Subsoil	Dark yellow-brown silty clay with limestone throughout	0.10m thick	
203	Natural	Limestone with orange/brown silty clays	0.00m thick	

Trench 4,	Length, Width & Alignment 20mx1.8m N-S		Surface Height (South end) 152.23m aOD	Depth & Height of Natural 0.28m 151.95m aOD
Context	Context Type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
401	Topsoil	Red-brown silty clay with occasional sub-angular limestone throughout	0.18m thick	
402	Subsoil	Dark yellow-brown silty clay with limestone throughout	0.10m thick	
403	Natural	Limestone with orange/brown silty clays	0.00m thick	

Trench 5,	Length, Width & Alignment 20mx1.8m N-S		Surface Height (South end) 152.03m aOD	Depth & Height of Natural 0.35m 151.68m aOD
Context	Context Type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
501	Topsoil	Red-brown silty clay with occasional sub-angular limestone throughout	0.28m thick	
502	Subsoil	Dark yellow-brown silty clay with limestone throughout	0.07m thick	
503	Natural	Limestone with orange/brown silty clays	0.00m thick	

Trench 6,	Length, Width & Alignment 20mx1.8m N-S		Surface Height (South end) 151.89m aOD	Depth & Height of Natural 0.30m 151.59m aOD
Context	Context Type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
601	Topsoil	Red-brown silty clay with occasional sub-angular limestone throughout	0.22m thick	
602	Subsoil	Dark yellow-brown silty clay with limestone throughout	0.08m thick	
603	Natural	Limestone with orange-brown silty clays	0.00m thick	

Trench 7,	Length, Width & Alignment 50mx1.8m N-S		Surface Height (South end) 152.65m aOD	Depth & Height of Natural 0.28m 152.37m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context Type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
701	Topsoil	Red-brown silty clay with occasional sub-angular limestone throughout	0.21m thick	
702	Subsoil	Dark yellow-brown silty clay with limestone throughout	0.07m thick	
703	Natural	Limestone with orange/brown silty clays	0.10m thick	
704	Cut of Ditch	2.5-3m wide ditch as seen in Trench 1 and 2	2.5-3m wide	



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