



Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Geophysical survey and archaeological trial
excavation at land off Banbury Lane
Kings Sutton,
Northamptonshire

October 2009



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November 2009

Report 09/161

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	Geophysical survey and archaeological trial excavation at land off Banbury Lane, Kings Sutton, Northamptonshire, October 2009	
Short description	An archaeological evaluation comprising geophysical survey and subsequent trial trench excavation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology in October 2009 at land off Banbury Lane, Kings Sutton, Northamptonshire. The work was in advance of a proposed housing development and was undertaken for CgMs Consulting who were acting for clients. The evaluation found a settlement comprising several ditched enclosures and possible roundhouse ring ditches. The small assemblage of pottery recovered from the site is dated to the 2nd century BC through to the early 1st century AD. Some animal bone was also recovered. The site was traversed by furrows of a former medieval field system.	
Project type	Evaluation by trial excavation	
Previous work	CgMs Consulting Desk based assessments	
Current land use	Horse Paddocks	
Future work	Possible	
Monument type and period	Iron Age ring ditches and pits	
Significant finds	Pottery	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Banbury Lane, Kings Sutton	
Easting Northing	SP 49618 36478	
Area (sq m/ha)	1.5 ha	
Height OD	87m above Ordnance Datum	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator		
Project Design originator	Mike Dawson, CgMs Consulting Ltd	
Director/Supervisor	Jason Clarke, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project Manager	Mark Holmes, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	26/10/2009	
End date	29/10/2009	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents
Physical		Iron Age pottery, animal bone and flint
Paper		Site context file, registers, plans, section drawings and photographic record
Digital		Client report PDF
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
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**GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY AND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL EXCAVATION AT
LAND OFF BANBURY LANE, KINGS SUTTON
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

October 2009

Abstract

An archaeological evaluation comprising geophysical survey and subsequent trial trench excavation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology in October 2009 at land off Banbury Lane, Kings Sutton, Northamptonshire. The work was in advance of a proposed housing development and was undertaken for CgMs Consulting who were acting for clients. The evaluation found a settlement comprising several ditched enclosures and possible roundhouse ring ditches. The small assemblage of pottery recovered from the site is dated to the 2nd century BC through to the early 1st century AD. Some animal bone was also recovered. The site was traversed by furrows of a former medieval field system.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological evaluation comprising geophysical survey and subsequent archaeological trial excavation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology in October 2009 at land off Banbury Road, Kings Sutton, Northamptonshire (Fig 1; NGR SP 49618 36478). The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting acting on behalf of clients and was undertaken to inform a planning application for proposed housing development.

The fieldwork was carried out between 16th and 30th November 2009. The trial trenching followed a scheme detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology on 21st October 2009 (NA 2009). The objective of the trial excavation was to determine the presence of any archaeological features or deposits, and to date and characterise their extent, depth of burial and state of preservation. All works were conducted in accordance with the *IfA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 1994, revised 2008).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Historical background

A desk-based assessment detailing the historical background to the site has been produced by CgMs Consulting (Dawson 2009). The report shows that prehistoric activity has been recorded immediately to the west of the proposed development site where excavation revealed the remains of a Middle Iron Age settlement (*op cit*, 11). To the north-east of the site there are cropmarks representing enclosures that may also be of Iron Age date (*ibid*).

Roman activity in Kings Sutton is known through coins and pottery dating to the 3rd century, some of which were discovered within the proposed development area. The

desk-based assessment suggests that this evidence may indicate the presence of settlement and possibly a cemetery at the site.

Although there is no known evidence for significant archaeological activity directly related to the proposed development area from the Saxon period onwards, the site is transected by the remains of preserved earthworks of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation.

2.2 Topography and geology

The proposed development site lies to the east of the River Cherwell on slightly raised ground which forms the first gravel terrace. To the north the site is bounded by hedges and agricultural land, to the south is a hedged boundary along the rear of back plots of properties on Wales Street. The eastern boundary is formed by Banbury Lane, where a variety of 20th-century properties lie along the east side of the road facing the development area.

The site lies close to the boundary between outcropping Marlstone of the Middle Lias series and the Lower Lias sands and clays of Lower Jurassic date exposed by the River Cherwell (BGS 1969). The site sits at approximately 87m OD.

The area for investigation comprised two separate grass fields used as horse paddocks. A right of way runs from the village, north-west, across the fields.

3 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

3.1 Methodology

The entire area of the two paddocks was subject to a geophysical survey (c. 1.8ha). The presence of an electric fence and telegraph poles in the fields caused some interference to the results but generally the survey was conducted without significant impediments.

The survey was undertaken with Bartington Grad 601-2, twin sensor array, vertical component fluxgate gradiometers (Bartington and Chapman 2003). These are standard instruments for archaeological survey and can resolve magnetic variations as slight as 0.1 nanotesla (nT).

The site was divided up into 30m x 30m grid squares, which formed the basic unit of survey. These were set out manually by tape measure and optical square, with tie-in measurements taken to fixed points of detail on the ground. The gradiometers were carried at a brisk but steady pace through each grid, collecting data along 1m spaced traverse lines. Measurements were automatically triggered every 0.25m along the traverses, giving a total of 3600 measurements per grid.

All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the guidelines issued by English Heritage, and by the Institute for Archaeology (EH 2008; Gaffney, Gater and Ovendon 2002).

The data were processed using Geoplot 3.00u software. Striping, caused by slight mismatches in sensor balance, was removed using the 'Zero Mean Traverse' function and destaggering of the data was performed as necessary.

The processed data is presented in this report in the form of a greyscale plot (scale +10nT to -10nT black ~ white). This has been scaled, rotated and resampled (georectified) for display against the Ordnance Survey base mapping (Fig 2). An

interpretative plot has been produced and is shown overlain onto the data in Figure 3.

3.2 Results (Figs 2 and 3)

The survey revealed a palimpsest of strong magnetic anomalies that represent a series of ditched enclosures and related archaeological features of probable Iron Age or Romano-British date. The features were primarily located in the northern field but some weaker magnetic anomalies were also located to the south. Magnetic halos occurred around the field margins as a result of modern fences, gates and other such metal objects but these generally did not interfere with the overall results. However, the ridge and furrow cultivation, visible as earthworks in both fields, produced magnetic anomalies which sometimes slightly confused interpretation of other more localised anomalies.

Northern field

At the western edge of the field there was a broad positive D-shaped anomaly which appears to define part of an enclosure, approximately 22m wide [A]. A gap in its southern corner probably represents an entrance but the western half of the feature extends beyond the edge of the survey area.

Immediately to the north was a series of at least five other enclosures situated in a broad band running from north-west to south-east across the south-eastern half of the field. Sub-circular enclosure [B], was approximately 20m diameter and had a narrow curvilinear outer ditch, possible an annex, positioned along its northern edge [C]. A smaller sub-rectangular enclosure [D], extended out from [C] into the westernmost corner of the field. This latter enclosure appeared to have an entrance in its southern corner.

To the south-east of [A] was a second sub-rectangular enclosure measuring c 11m by 16m [E]. The eastern edge of this feature coincided with the position of an electric fence and was thus obscured by the magnetic interference.

Coincident with enclosures [B] and [E] was a narrower curvilinear anomaly [F] which appears to define part of a further enclosure representing a different phase of activity at the site. To the immediate east of the main enclosures was a smaller, sub-circular ditched feature [G].

A broad linear north-east to south-west anomaly [H] crossed features [A][E] and [G]. Its positioning in regard to these enclosures again suggests a separate phase of activity at the site. It probably represents a large boundary ditch and may be related to north-west to south-east aligned ditch situated towards the eastern side of the field [I]. Two further curvilinear anomalies [J] and [K] lie immediately to the west of this latter feature and their form suggests that they are the ring gullies of roundhouses. Other less well defined anomalies at the northern edge of the field may be related [L].

A further linear feature, again probably representing a ditch, crossed the field in its eastern corner and extended into the southern field [M].

Two large discrete, ferrous anomalies, one in the north-west corner of the field [N] and one towards the southern boundary [O], were identified. These probably indicate buried pieces of iron or steel debris although they may represent the locations of some form of industrial activity.

Ridge and furrow earthworks observed on the ground were also apparent in the magnetic data where they appear as linear features aligned north-east to south-west. However, the magnetic strength of many of the other archaeological features serves to obscure the response from these remains of medieval cultivation.

Southern field

Near to the centre of the southern field was a single curvilinear, magnetically weak anomaly which may indicate a small enclosure or the ring gully of a further roundhouse [P]. There were also a poorly defined group of anomalies in the south-eastern corner of the field which may form the edge of a second cluster of settlement features [Q].

Ditch [M] extends into the southern field from the north. It is set at roughly right angles to an east to west aligned ditch at the southern end of the field [R] and the two ditches may form a large rectangular enclosure or field system extending beyond the bounds of the site. A third linear anomaly at the northern end of the field [S] is on a different alignment but may be associated. Alternatively it may form the southern boundary of an enclosure formed with ditch [I] in the northern field and may explain why the majority of the enclosures are confined to the northern field.

At the eastern side of the field, a shallow linear depression, visible as an earthwork, cuts across the ridge and furrow cultivation and shows in the survey data as a broad negative anomaly [T]. A strong ferrous anomaly located towards the eastern edge of the field [U] probably has the same origin as anomalies [N] and [O] in the northern field.

3.3 Conclusion

The geophysical survey revealed an extensive complex of archaeological anomalies. Their form suggested that they represent a group of Iron Age or Romano-British settlement enclosures, possibly set in a wider field or enclosure system. More than one phase of activity was indicated.

The strength of the magnetic response across the northern field was notable, perhaps suggesting the presence of domestic debris, burning, industrial activity or other such fills. In this regard the northern field is set apart from the southern which not only revealed many fewer archaeological features but also much less magnetically strong anomalies.

4 TRIAL EXCAVATION

4.1 Objectives and methodology

The trial excavation was designed to test the results of the geophysical survey and to help determine the extent, character, date, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be affected by the proposed development.

Eight evaluation trenches were excavated; four 20m long trenches within the northern field and four 25m long trenches in the southern field totalling c 2% of the development area (Fig 4).

The trenches were located using GPS surveying system, although some repositioning was required in order to avoid obstacles in the field. Trenches 5 and 8 were excavated in two sections to enable the public footpath to remain in use whilst

Trench 1 was relocated three metres to the south and shortened to avoid a telegraph pole and the public footpath.

A mechanical excavator fitted with a 2m flat ditching bucket was used to remove overburden to archaeological levels or the natural substrata. The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of archaeological features. A hand-drawn site plan of all archaeological features was made at scale 1:50 and was related to the Ordnance Survey. Archaeological deposits and artefacts were examined by hand excavation to determine their nature with basal deposits of all sectioned features investigated. Recording followed standard Northamptonshire Archaeology procedures as described in the *Fieldwork Manual* (NA 2003) with context sheets, cross-referenced to scale plans, section drawings and photographs, both in 35mm monochrome film and on colour slides, and supplemented with digital images. Deposits were described on *pro-forma* context sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds. The record was supplemented by direct annotations of the site general plan as required. Sections of the features were drawn at scale 1:10 or 1:20 and related to Ordnance Survey datum. A metal detector survey was undertaken across all excavated areas and the upcast from the trenches.

4.2 The excavated evidence

The natural geology lay at c 0.60m – 0.80m below the modern ground surface throughout the site. In the majority of the northern field it comprised orange-brown gravels. However, at the extreme southern end of the field in Trench 4 this gave way to light yellow-brown clay with frequent iron panning. It was this latter geology which occupied the entire southern field. All archaeological features were cut into the natural geology and were sealed by a mid orange-brown silty clay subsoil between 0.40m – 0.60m thick. The topsoil was dark grey-brown silty clay between 0.13m – 0.23m thick.

Trenches 1, 3 and 4 explored the sequence of enclosures in the southern half of the northern field (enclosures A to E), whilst Trench 2 examined the possible ring ditches towards the eastern side of the field (J and K). Trenches 5 to 8 were positioned in the southern field where Trenches 5 and 7 explored rectilinear enclosure ditches M and R and Trench 6 was cut across possible ring gully P. Trench 8 was positioned in the south-east corner of the field where it sampled the strong ferrous anomaly U and the possible ditches Q.

Archaeological features corresponding with the geophysical anomalies were identified in all of the Trenches, save for Trench 8. An inventory of contexts is listed in Appendix 1.

4.3 Trench 1 (Fig 4)

Trench 1 was aligned north-east to south-west and was positioned over the western side and interior of Enclosure D. A ditch terminal and a south-western entrance into Enclosure D was located [105], however, no internal features were present.

Ditch [105]

Ditch terminal [105] was aligned north-west to south-east and was 1.10m wide and 0.68m deep. It had a U-shaped profile and was filled with mid greyish-brown silty clay (104). Three sherds of Iron Age pottery, including scored ware, and some animal bone were recovered.

4.4 Trench 2 (Figs 4, 5, 6 & 7)

Trench 2 was aligned north-west to south-east and positioned to sample anomalies J and K which had been interpreted as possible ring gullies, towards the northern corner of the site. Anomaly J proved to be a small ditch or gully [218] but no obvious return that would make an enclosure was detected in the trench. Anomaly K was gully [207] and gully terminal [215], these two features describing an enclosure with a diameter of c 8m. Pit [211] and posthole [213] may be associated internal features. An undated but stratigraphically later ironstone surface was also present in the trench (208).

Gully [207] (Figs 5 & 6)

Gully [207] was a north-east to south-west aligned ditch, 1.05m wide and 0.39m deep with a U-shaped profile. The primary fill was dark brown-grey sandy silt (206) which was overlaid by mid grey-brown silty sand (205). The latest fill (204) was a similar mid grey-brown silty sand. This latter fill produced worked flint, Iron Age pottery and animal bone.

Surface (208) (Fig 6)

Surface (208) comprised an area of compacted ironstone fragments. It was 5.40m wide and 0.10m deep. The surface was sealed by the subsoil and furrows but overlay Iron Age ditch [207]. No diagnostic dating material was recovered from the feature. The possible surface spanned the width of the trench and continued beyond the limits of excavation.

Pit [211]

A circular pit, 0.64m in diameter and 0.08m deep, was located towards the southern end of the trench. It had concave sides merging with a flat base. It was filled with mid grey-brown silty clay (210) overlain by a later fill of dark grey-brown sandy silt (209). No dating evidence was recovered but some animal bone was present.

Posthole [213]

A circular posthole, 0.08m wide, had a fill of mid black-grey silty clay (212). The feature was left unexcavated.

Gully [215] and posthole [216] (Fig 7)

Ditch [215] was a ditch terminal, 0.80m wide and 0.25m deep with concave sides and base. A posthole [216], 0.20m wide and 0.15m deep, was cut into its base. Both features had fills of dark black-grey silty clay with a moderate amount of burnt stone inclusions (214), from which Iron Age pottery and animal bone was recovered.

Ditch [218]

Ditch [218] was located towards the northern end of the trench. It was aligned north-east to south-west and was 0.74m wide and 0.58m deep, with a U-shaped profile. It was filled with mid grey-brown sandy silt (217), from which Iron Age pottery and animal bone were recovered.

4.5 Trench 3 (Figs 4 and 8)

Trench 3 was positioned to sample Enclosures A, B and F and their respective interiors. The north-east side of enclosure A was demarcated by a succession of recut ditches [307][309][311][313]. The latest of these [307] produced the only pottery from the site dating to the late Iron Age. Its size and shape may indicate a remodelling or change of function for the enclosure. Enclosure B, located one metre to the north, was marked by a ditch with a single recut [326]. A further ditch [317] may be an internal feature along with postholes [319] and [321]. Part of the western

side of enclosure F was located at the northern end of the trench [323] but this was not excavated.

Two post-medieval features were identified. Overlying the subsoil at the northern end of the trench was a layer of cinder and ash (302) 0.06m thick, immediately below the topsoil. At the southern end of the trench was a square patch of compacted stones measuring 0.20m wide and 0.10m deep, which also overlay the subsoil (324).

Ditches [307][311][309][313] (Fig 8)

Ditch [313] was aligned east to west. It had a U-shaped profile and was filled with mid grey-sandy silt (312). It had been cut away on the south-west and north-east sides by ditches [309] and [311] respectively. These latter two ditches both had rounded U-shaped profiles and were filled with mid orange-brown sandy silt (308) and (310). They are probably re-cuts of the earlier ditch. All three ditches were truncated by a single large ditch [307] on a similar alignment. It was 5.0mm wide and 0.67m deep and was filled with dark brown sandy silt (305). The fill produced sherds of pottery indicating a date from the 1st century BC into the early 1st century AD. There was also a lens of fragmented ironstone pieces indicating tipping from the exterior of the enclosure (306).

Ditches [315] [326]

Ditch [326] was north of ditch [313]. It had a similar east to west alignment and was 0.84m wide and 0.68m deep. It had a U-shaped profile with a fill of dark brown-grey sandy silt (325). It was succeeded by a ditch to the north [315], a probable re-cutting of the enclosure ditch. Ditch [315] was 1.43m wide and 0.77m deep with concave sides and a flat base. The primary fill (328) was dark orange-brown sandy silt. This was overlain by mid orange-brown silty sand (327). The latest fill was dark brown-grey sandy silt (314), from which Iron Age pottery was recovered.

Ditch [317]

To the north of ditch [326] was a north-west to south-east aligned ditch [317], 1.0m wide and 0.49m deep with a U-shaped profile. It cut through adjacent pit [319]. The ditch was filled with dark brown-grey sandy silt (316). Iron Age pottery and animal bone was recovered.

Pit [319]

A sub-circular pit [319], 0.52m wide and 0.45m deep, had concave sides and a flat base. It was filled with mid brown sandy silt (318) and was cut by ditch [317] to the south-west. Iron Age pottery was recovered.

Posthole [321]

A circular posthole [321], 0.20m in diameter, in the middle of the trench was not excavated.

Gully [323]

At the southern end of the trench ran the north-east to south west aligned gully [323]. It was only partially exposed, with its full width lying outside the area of excavation. It was not excavated.

4.6 Trench 4 (Figs 4 & 9)

Trench 4 was positioned to cut across the southern side of rectilinear Enclosure E and Boundary Ditch H. On excavation the enclosure ditch [406] was located along with an internal pit [410]. The boundary ditch was not present and it would appear that there is a gap or entrance in the ditch at this point. The positioning of the trench was also designed to sample the strong ferrous anomaly O, identified by the

geophysical survey. A large fragment of concreted natural iron panning at the south of the trench appears to be the origin for this anomaly.

A change in the natural geology was seen within the trench. At the south end the gravels encountered elsewhere in the field (404) gave way to light yellow-brown clay with frequent iron panning (403).

Ditches [406] [408] (Fig 9)

Enclosure ditch [406] was aligned north-east to south-west. It was 1.70m wide and 0.75m deep with a V-shaped profile. It had a fill (405) of mid grey-brown silty clay from which Iron Age pottery and animal bone was recovered. The ditch had been cut through on its northern side by a second shallow ditch on an identical alignment [408]. This measured 0.82m wide and 0.18m deep and had a U-shaped profile. It was filled with dark grey sandy silt (407) and may have been a re-cutting of the enclosure ditch.

Pit [410]

A sub-circular pit [410] was located within the interior of enclosure E. It was 1.23m wide and 0.12m deep, had concave profile and was filled with dark grey sandy silt (409) which produced no finds.

4.7 Trench 5 (Figs 4 & 10)

Trench 5 in the southern field was positioned to sample Enclosure Ditch M and shallow linear depression T. The trench needed to be split in two in order to avoid the public footpath that crossed the field. The north to south aligned enclosure ditch was located [504] but the linear depression marked the position of a modern field drain. This cut through a very shallow possible gully aligned north-east to south-west [509].

Ditch [504] (Fig 10)

At the west end of the trench was a north to south aligned ditch [504], 1.94m wide and 0.56m deep. It had a U-shaped profile and its primary fill comprised grey-brown sandy clay with frequent pebble inclusions (505). Subsequent fills comprised mid grey-brown sandy clay (506) and grey-brown sandy clay (507). No finds were present.

Gully [509]

At the east end of the trench was a north-east to south-west aligned gully [509], 0.35m wide and 0.10m deep. It had a U-shaped profile and was filled with mid grey-brown sandy clay (508). The gully was cut by a land drain.

4.8 Trench 6 (Fig 4)

Trench 6 was positioned to sample a possible ring gully revealed by the geophysical survey (anomaly P) as well as test areas that, apart from ridge and furrow cultivation, were shown as blank on the geophysical survey. The trench located a single very shallow gully equating with the eastern side of the anomaly [605] but no internal features were present nor was there an indication of a western gully. This would suggest that the enclosure was penannular in shape with a north-west facing entrance. The shallow nature of the feature may account for the low magnetic response demonstrated in the geophysical survey

Gully [605]

At the east of the trench was a north to south aligned gully [605], 0.80m wide and 0.06m deep. It had concave sides and a flat base and was filled with light brown-

grey silty clay (604). No dating evidence, only animal bone, was recovered from the fill.

4.9 Trench 7 (Figs 4 & 11)

The trench sampled linear anomaly R. It showed that the anomaly was a wide east to west aligned ditch [706]. No other features were present in the trench.

Ditch [706] (Fig 11)

In the middle of the trench was an east to west aligned ditch [706], 2.48m wide and 0.95m deep. It had a U-shaped profile and a primary fill of dark grey silty clay (705). Its secondary fill was mid orange-brown sandy clay (704). No finds were present.

4.10 Trench 8 (Fig 4)

Trench 8 was located in the south-east corner of the proposed development area. It was designed to sample curvilinear anomalies Q and ferrous anomaly U. The trench had to be split to allow continued use of the public footpath and so could not directly sample the curvilinear anomalies. An area of modern burning at the southern end of the trench may account for the magnetic anomalies there, whilst an area of modern disturbance at the northern end of the trench may account for anomaly Q. No archaeological features were present in the trench.

5 THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

5.1 Flint by Yvonne Wolfram-Murray

Two pieces of worked flint were recovered, both residual in later contexts. The flints comprised one blade and one scraper, summarised in Table 1 below. Post-deposition edge damage consisted of occasional to frequent nicks on the two pieces. The raw material was a vitreous flint of mid brownish grey to dark grey colour and the small amount of cortex present on both artefacts was light cream and mid brown coloured. The blade was squat and soft hammer struck. The end/side side scraper was manufactured on a squat flake with a broad striking platform. There was abrupt retouch on the distal end and on one lateral edge.

The worked flints are not directly dateable but their technological characteristics suggest a Neolithic to Early Bronze Age date. No further work is recommended.

Table 1: Summary of worked flint

Context/ Feature (SF)	Object	Portion	Tool	Period	Material	Cortex	Comments
204/207 Ditch (1)	Blade	Whole		Neolithic	vitreous mid brownish- grey	light cream	Iron Age ditch, post- depositional edge damage
402 Subsoil (2)	Flake	Proximal	Scraper, end/side	Late Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age	vitreous dark grey	mid brown	subsoil, squat flake

5.2 Iron Age pottery by Andy Chapman

A total of 62 sherds weighing 725g was recovered from features in trenches 1, 2, 3 and 4. Based on fabric and other sherd characteristics, these come from a total of 16 sherd families, with this providing an indication of the number of vessels present.

The majority of the sherds are in a shelly fabric, most commonly containing dense large shell inclusions, often 3-5mm diameter. This fabric is characteristic of the thicker-walled vessels, up to 12mm thick, which would be assumed to come from larger jars. Thinner-walled sherds from smaller vessels tend to contain sparser and smaller shell inclusions, typically no more than 1mm diameter. The single example of a burnished bowl contains sparse finely crushed shell. The vessels have grey to black cores and the surfaces are also typically dark in colour, most often dark grey with some mottles of dark to light brown, although a few sherds have a consistently dark brown inner or outer surface.

In addition, there is a single sherd from context (217) in a sandy fabric containing quartz grains and also small irregular pieces of probable ironstone and unidentified rounded black mineral grains.

A further fabric type appears in a single body sherd from a large, thick-walled storage jar with a grey core and oxidised orange surfaces, from context (305). This is a sandy fabric, but also containing some coarse and finely crushed shell, large (2-5mm diameter) pellets of light grey grog, and occasional irregular pieces of ironstone (2-4mm diameter).

There is also a large irregular lump of hard fired sandy clay, weighing 55g, from context (217).

Table 2: Quantification of Iron Age pottery

Context/Feature	Feature type	Sherds	Sherd families	Weight (g)
104/105	Ditch terminal	3	1	15
204/207	Ditch	22	2	235
214/215	Gully	2	2	20
217/218	Ditch	9	4	95
305/307	Enclosure ditch	18	4	325
316/317	Ditch	6	2	25
405/406	Ditch	2	1	10
Totals		62	16	725

The assemblage is dominated by plain body sherds, but there are individual sherds of scored ware from contexts (104) and (305). The few rim sherds are very simple. There is a small rounded bowl with a well smoothed surface, from context (204), which has no neck with the body running directly into a slightly tapered rounded rim. A thin-walled sherd from another small bowl also has a simple flattened rim, from context (316). There is also a rounded upright rim above a shallow concave neck on a globular dark grey, burnished bowl, from context (305).

The broad nature of the assemblage is characteristic of the middle Iron Age, with the presence of some scored ware vessels and the general absence of incised decoration and the relatively low occurrence of oxidised surfaces. The simple rim forms and the absence of defined necks or shoulders are characteristic of a later date, probably the 2nd century BC.

Most of the groups are too small to comment on individually, but of the two larger groups the material from context (204), the fill of ditch [207], comprises sherds from two vessels that can only be dated to the middle Iron Age.

In contrast, the group from context (305), the fill of enclosure ditch [307], comes from four more diverse vessels. There is a typical scored ware sherd, but in addition there is a rim sherd from a globular bowl, with a uniform black fabric, a burnished surface on both the interior and exterior, and a rounded upright rim. This vessel is probably dated to the 1st century BC. In addition, there are also sherds from two large, thick-walled storage jars with bright orange oxidised external surfaces that are in marked contrast to the dark colours of the bulk of the assemblage. One of these jars has a shelly fabric, while the other is the only sherd in a sandy fabric that also contains grog and ironstone. This sherd has probably come from a large storage jar of a form associated with assemblages of the early 1st century AD.

The overall chronology is probably one of middle Iron Age settlement, perhaps with an origin as late as the 2nd century BC, but with some of the enclosures of a later date, probably beginning in the 1st century BC and continuing into the early 1st century AD.

5.3 Animal bone by Karen Deighton

A total of 2.1kg (1 archive box) of animal bone were collected by hand during the course of excavation. This material was assessed to ascertain the condition of the bone, the species present and potential contribution to the understanding of the site and to inform on future collection strategies.

Table 3: taxa by context

Cut/fill Feature	<i>Bos</i>	<i>Ovic/ cap</i>	<i>Sus</i>	<i>Equus</i>	<i>Ovic/ cap</i>	<i>L. ung</i>	<i>S. ung</i>	Total
	Cattle	Sheep/ goat	Pig	Horse	Sheep/ goat/roe	L. hoofed	S. hoofed	
105/104 Ditch						1		1
207/204 Ditch	10	1	1			1		13
211/209 Pit						1		1
213/212 Posthole	1							1
215/214 Gully					1	3		4
218/217 Ditch	1	3	1	1		1	1	8
307/305 ditch	3	1	2					6
317/316 Ditch		1						1
406/405 Ditch				1				1
605/604 Gully	1		1					2
Totals	16	6	5	2	1	7	1	38

Key: *Ovic/cap*= Ovicaprid/Capreolus, *L.ung* = Large ungulate, *S.ung*=Small ungulate

The animal bone was scanned and identifiable elements were noted (following Halstead 1985 after Watson 1979). Preservation and modification (after Binford 1981) were also noted (Table 3). Any available biometrical data (after von den

Driesch 1976) was noted as was any available ageing data. Ageing data included state of fusion (after Silver 1969), neonatal bone (after Amorosi) and tooth eruption and wear (after Payne 1973 for Ovicaprids and Halstead 1985 after Payne 1973 for Bos).

Results

Fragmentation was moderate, as was surface abrasion. The frequency of Canid gnawing was fairly high at 21% which suggests the presence of dogs/foxes at the site. Burning was noted in context 204. Evidence for butchery was limited to one example.

The most abundant taxon present was cattle closely followed by sheep/goat and pig. No concentrations of bone were noted.

Ageing and metrical data

Table 4: The availability of ageing and metrical data

Taxa	Fusion	Toothwear	Measurements
<i>Bos</i>	3		3
<i>Ovicaprid</i>	1	1	
<i>Sus</i>	2		
<i>Equus</i>	1		4

Discussion

The taxa present are those expected for the Iron Age. Little more can be said, other than a small range of common domesticates were exploited at the site, due to the small size of the current assemblage.

Potential

The reasonable level of preservation and identifiability, along with the availability of ageing and metrical data, suggests that the collection of further material from dateable/phaseable contexts, should further excavation take place, would provide information on the animal economy of the site.

The importance of the assemblage lies in the fact it would add to the corpus of existing work and provide useful comparanda for future work. Sites for comparisons include those along the A43 (Deighton 2007), Hardingstone (Gilmore 1969) and Great Houghton (Deighton 2001) for example.

Conclusion

Analysis has shown a small assemblage of common domesticates. It has also demonstrated that the collection of more material during subsequent excavations could provide useful information on the economy and function of the site and contribute to the study of zooarchaeology in the region.

5.4 Medieval find by Tora Hylton

A single cast copper alloy bar mount was recovered from topsoil deposits overlying Trench 1. The mount comprises a perforated central lobe flanked by raised terminal lobes pierced by rivet holes (one rivet extant). Mounts of this type date to c 1300-1400, and would have been used as a belt stiffener to strengthen and/or visually enhance items manufactured from leather and textile. For a similar example see Egan and Pritchard 1991 (fig 134, 1158).

6 CONCLUSION

The archaeological evaluation identified the presence of an Iron Age site within the development area. Archaeological features comprising enclosures, boundary ditches and possible roundhouses were primarily concentrated within the northern field although activity did extend into the southern field.

The pottery recovered from the excavations indicates that the site has a middle Iron Age origin, probably as late as the 2nd century BC whilst pottery from some of the enclosures shows that they began in the 1st century BC and continued into the early 1st century AD. An extended use of the site is supported by the many ditches that showed examples of re-cuts and remodelling. The palimpsest of features produced by the geophysics also points to different phases of activity.

The concentration of features in the northern field may be due to a desire to occupy the gravel terrace of the River Cherwell, since in the southern field the geology gives way to clay bedrock. The change in geology may account for the differing magnetic response between the geophysical anomalies in the two fields, although a lack of occupation at the south may also be contributory. The archaeological features in the southern field principally appear to represent field or large enclosure boundaries and a single small penannular gully was the only possible structural element present.

The site would appear to be contemporary with the features identified during the watching brief and salvage excavation at Wales Street, located to the south-west of the site. This was a middle Iron Age site with circular buildings, a droveway, enclosure ditches, pits, postholes and a possible furnace, which was suggested to be evidence for iron smelting (ASC n d).

No evidence for post-Iron Age occupation was identified at the Banbury Lane site and the area appears to have been given to agriculture since at least the medieval period. Although ridge and furrow cultivation crosses both fields it does not appear to have greatly compromised the below ground archaeology.

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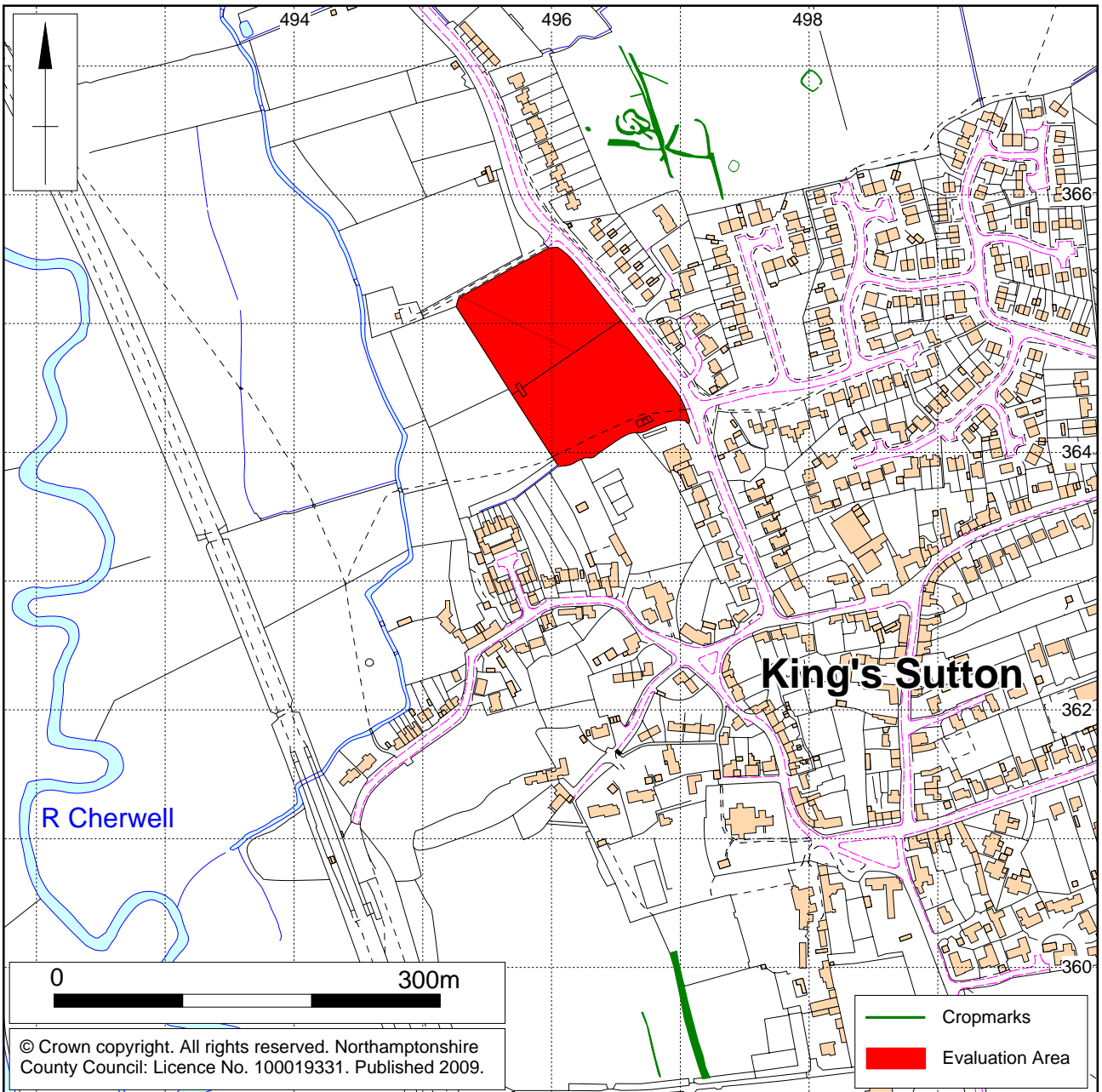
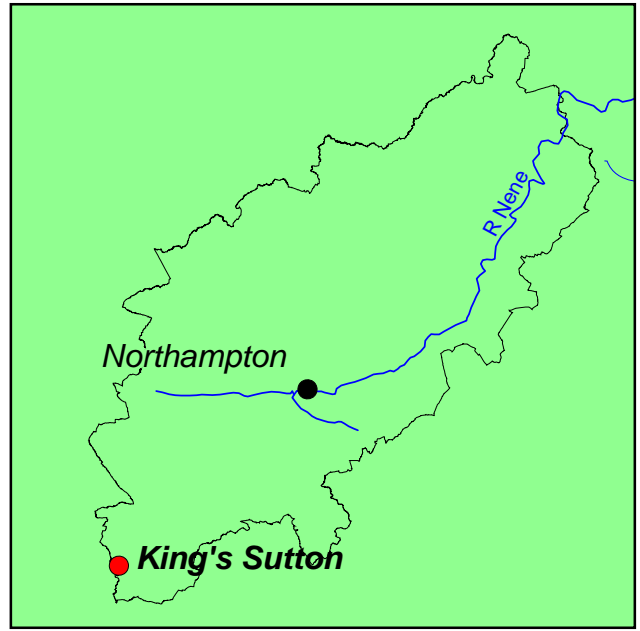
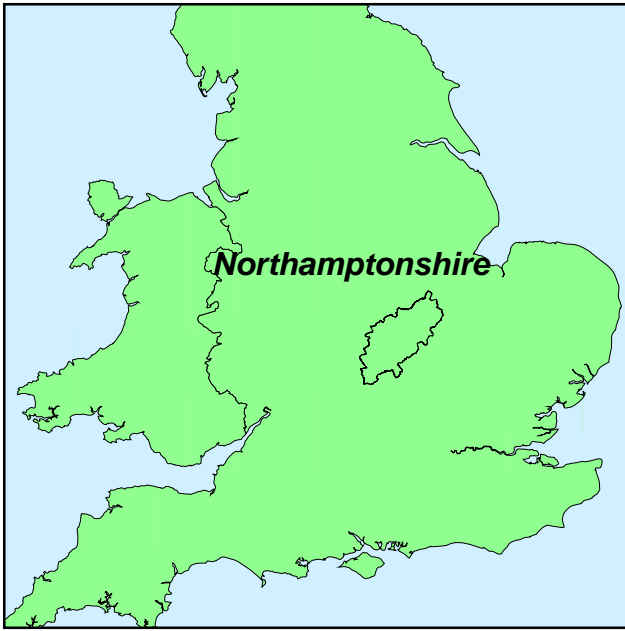
APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench	Context	Deposit Type	Description	Artefact types
Trench 1	101	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silty clay, 0.13m thick	
	102	Subsoil	Mid orange-brown silty clay, 0.60m thick	
	103	Natural	Mid orange-brown gravel	
	104	Fill	Mid grey-brown clay silt, fill of [105]	Iron Age pottery and animal bone
	105	Cut	Cut of butt-end gully, filled by (104), 1.10m wide and 0.68m deep	
Trench 2	201	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silty clay, 0.15m thick	
	202	Subsoil	Mid orange-brown silty clay, 0.55m thick	
	203	Natural	Mid orange-brown gravel	
	204	Fill	Mid grey-brown silty sand, fill of [207], overlies (205), 1.05m wide and 0.14m deep	Flint (SF1), Iron Age pottery and animal bone
	205	Fill	Mid grey-brown silty sand, fill of [207], overlain by (204), overlies (206). 0.76m wide and 0.15m deep	
	206	Fill	Dark brown-grey sandy silt, primary fill of [207], overlain by (205). 0.45m wide and 0.10m deep	
	207	Cut	Cut of ditch, filled by (204), (205) and (206), 1.05m wide and 0.39m deep	
	208	Surface	Fragmented ironstone surface, 5.40m wide and 0.10m deep	
	209	Fill	Dark grey brown sandy silt, fill of [211], overlies (210), 0.62m diameter and 0.03m deep	Animal bone
	210	Fill	Mid orange-brown silty clay, fill of [211], overlain by (209), 0.65m diameter and 0.05m deep	
	211	Cut	Cut of pit, filled by (209) and (210), 0.65m diameter and 0.08m wide	
	212	Fill	Mid black-grey silty clay, fill of [213], 0.08m diameter	
	213	Cut	Posthole, filled by (212), 0.08m diameter	
	214	Fill	Dark black-grey silty clay, fill of [215] and [216]	Iron Age pottery and animal bone
	215	Cut	Cut of gully terminal, filled by (214), 0.80m wide and 0.25m deep	

Trench	Context	Deposit Type	Description	Artefact types
	216	Cut	Cut of posthole within terminal of [215]. Filled by (214), 0.20m wide and 0.15m deep	
	217	Fill	Mid grey-brown sandy silt, fill of [218]	Iron Age pottery and animal bone
	218	Cut	Cut of ditch, filled by (217). 0.74m wide and 0.58m deep	
Trench 3	301	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silty clay, 0.15m thick	
	302	Layer	Black cinder, ash and charcoal, at the south of the trench	
	303	Subsoil	Mid orange-brown silty clay, 0.53m thick	
	304	Natural	Mid orange-brown gravel	
	305	Fill	Dark brown-grey sandy silt, fill of [307], overlies (306). 5m wide and 0.67m deep	Iron Age pottery and animal bone
	306	Fill	Lens of ironstone fragments, fill of [307], overlies (308), overlain by (305), 3.10m wide and 0.08m deep	
	307	Cut	Cut of enclosure ditch, filled by (305) and (306), cuts (308) and (310), 5.0m wide and 0.67m deep	
	308	Fill	Mid orange-brown sandy silt, fill of [309], cut by [307].	
	309	Cut	Cut of ditch, filled by (308), cuts (312), 1.28m wide and 0.40m deep	
	310	Fill	Mid orange brown sandy silt, fill of [311], cut by [307]	
	311	Cut	Cut of ditch, filled by (310), cuts (312), 1.0m wide and 0.24m	
	312	Fill	Mid grey sandy silt, fill of [313], cut by [311] and [309]	
	313	Cut	Cut of ditch, filled by (312), 0.44m wide and 0.48m deep	
	314	Fill	Dark brown-grey sandy silt, fill of [315], overlies (327). 1.43m wide and 0.55m deep	Iron Age Pottery
	315	Cut	Cut of ditch, filled by (314), (327) and (328), 1.43m wide and 0.77m deep	
316	Fill	Mid brown sandy silt, fill of [317]	Iron Age pottery and animal bone	
317	Cut	Cut of ditch, filled by (316), cuts (318). 1m wide and 0.49m deep		

Trench	Context	Deposit Type	Description	Artefact types
	318	Fill	Mid brown sandy silt, fill of [319], cut by [317]	Iron Age pottery
	319	Cut	Sub-circular pit, filled by (318), 0.52m wide and 0.45m deep	
	320	Fill	Dark black-grey sandy silt, fill of [321]	
	321	Cut	Cut of posthole, filled by (320)	
	322	Fill	Mid black-grey sandy silt, fill of [323]	
	323	Cut	Cut of ditch, filled by (322)	
	324	Stone	Concentration of stones, possible building pad	
	325	Fill	Dark brown-grey sandy silt, fill of [326]	
	326	Cut	Cut of ditch. Filled by (325), 0.84m wide and 0.68m deep	
	327	Fill	Mid orange-brown sandy silt, fill of (315), overlain by (314), overlies (328) 0.90m wide and 0.20m deep	
	328	Fill	Dark brown-orange sandy silt, primary fill of [315], overlain by (327), 0.67m wide and 0.20m deep	
Trench 4	401	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silty clay 0.15m thick	
	402	Subsoil	Mid orange-brown silty clay, 0.55m thick	
	403	Natural	Light yellow-brown sandy clay, in the south of the trench	
	404	Natural	Mid orange-brown gravel	
	405	Fill	Dark grey-brown silty clay, fill of [406], cut by [408]	Iron Age pottery and animal bone
	406	Cut	Cut of ditch, filled by (405), 1.70m wide and 0.75m deep	
	407	Fill	Dark grey sandy silt, fill of [408]	
	408	Cut	Cut of gully, filled by (407), 0.82m wide 0.18m deep	
	409	Fill	Dark grey sandy silt, fill of [410]	
	410	Cut	Cut of pit, filled by (408), 1.23m wide and 0.12m deep	
Trench 5	501	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silty clay, 0.19m thick	
	502	Subsoil	Mid orange-brown silty clay, 0.46m thick	

Trench	Context	Deposit Type	Description	Artefact types
	503	Natural	Mid orange-brown sandy clay	
	504	Cut	Cut of ditch, filled by (505), (506) and (507), 1.94m wide and 0.56m deep	
	505	Fill	Mid grey-brown sandy clay, primary fill of [504], overlain by (506), 0.84m wide and 0.28m	
	506	Fill	Grey-brown sandy clay, fill of [504], overlies (505), 1.84m wide and 0.28m deep	
	507	Fill	Grey-brown sandy clay, fill of [504], overlies (506), 1.94m wide and 0.18m deep	
	508	Fill	Mid brown-grey sandy clay, fill of (509), 0.35m wide and 0.10m deep	
	509	Cut	Cut of gully, filled by (508), 0.35m wide and 0.10m deep	
Trench 6	601	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silty clay, 0.23m thick	
	602	Subsoil	Mid orange-brown silty clay, 0.40m thick	
	603	Natural	Mid yellow-brown clay	
	604	Fill	Light brown-grey silty clay, fill of [605]	Animal bone
	605	Cut	Cut of gully, filled by (604), 0.80m wide and 0.06m deep	
Trench 7	701	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silty clay, 0.18m thick	
	702	Subsoil	Mid orange-brown silty clay, 0.44m thick	
	703	Natural	Mid yellow-brown clay	
	704	Fill	Mid orange-brown sandy clay, fill of [706], overlies (705), 2.48m wide and 0.55m deep	
	705	Fill	Dark grey silty clay, fill of [706], overlain by (704), 1.24m wide and 0.40m deep	
	706	Cut	Cut of ditch, filled by (704) and (705), 2.48m and 0.95m deep	
Trench 8	801	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silty clay, 0.21m thick	
	802	Subsoil	Mid orange-brown silty clay, 0.51m thick	
	803	Natural	Mid orange-brown sandy clay	
	804	Burning	Areas of burning below the topsoil at the south of the trench	



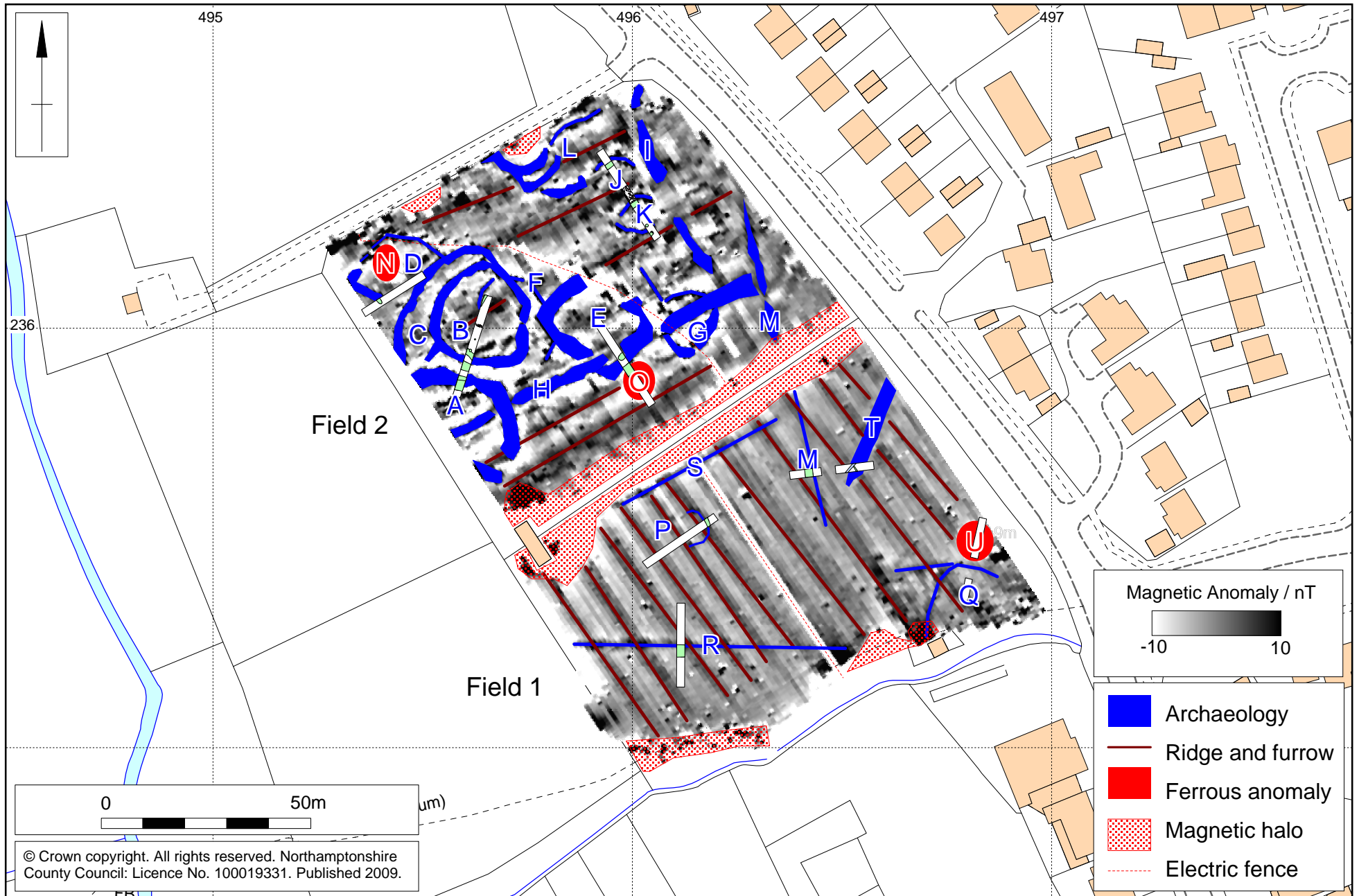
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Site Location Fig 1



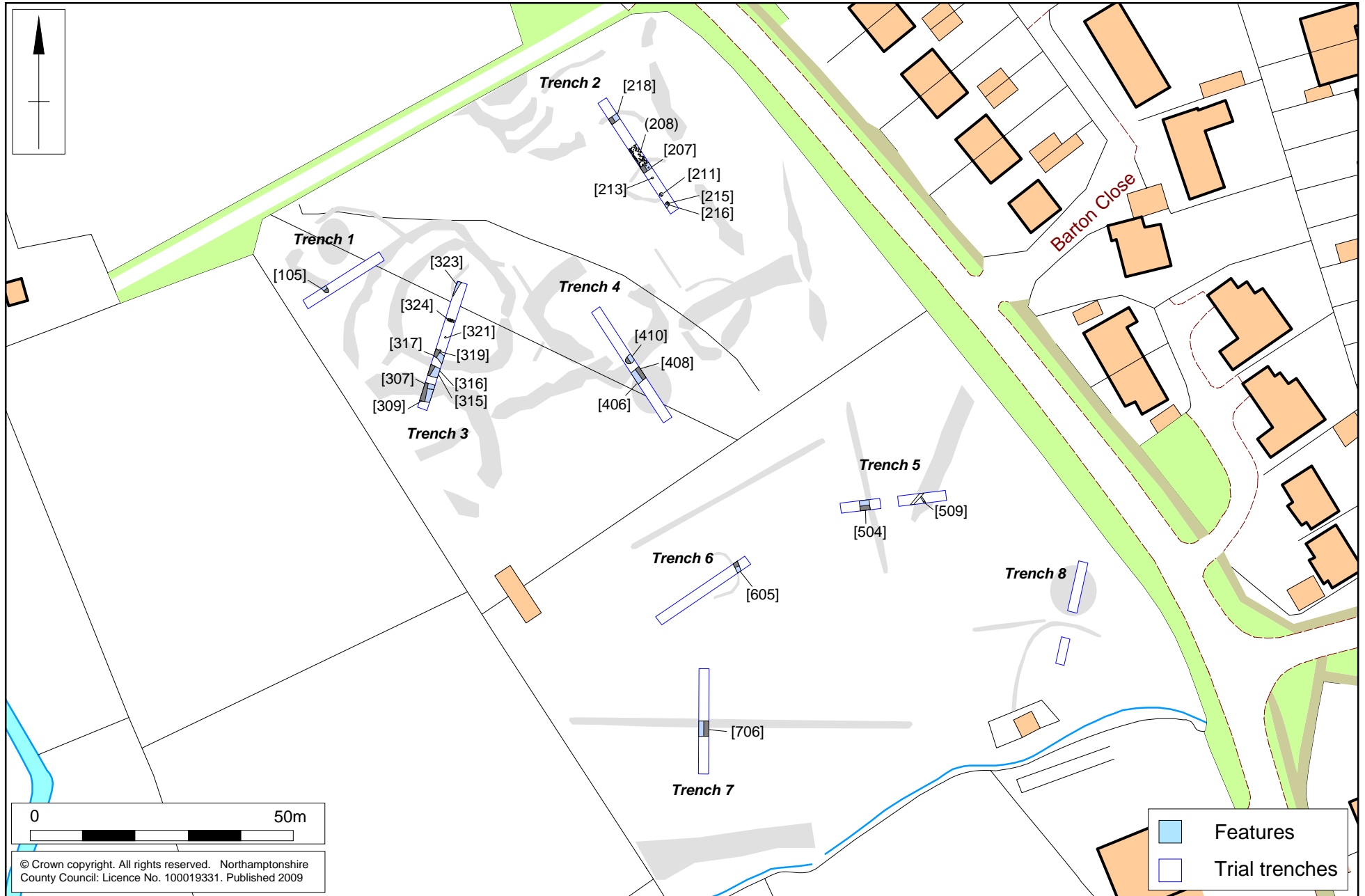
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Magnetic Gradiometer Survey Results Fig 2



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Magnetic Gradiometer Survey Interpretation and trial trench results Fig 3



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Trial trenches and features Fig 4



Gully [207], looking north-east Fig 5



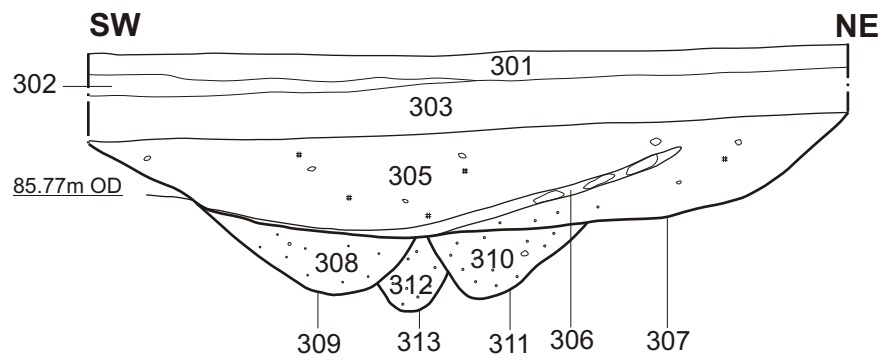
Gully [207] and stone surface (208), looking west Fig 6



Gully terminal [215] with posthole [216] Fig 7



Trench 3, Section 1



Key

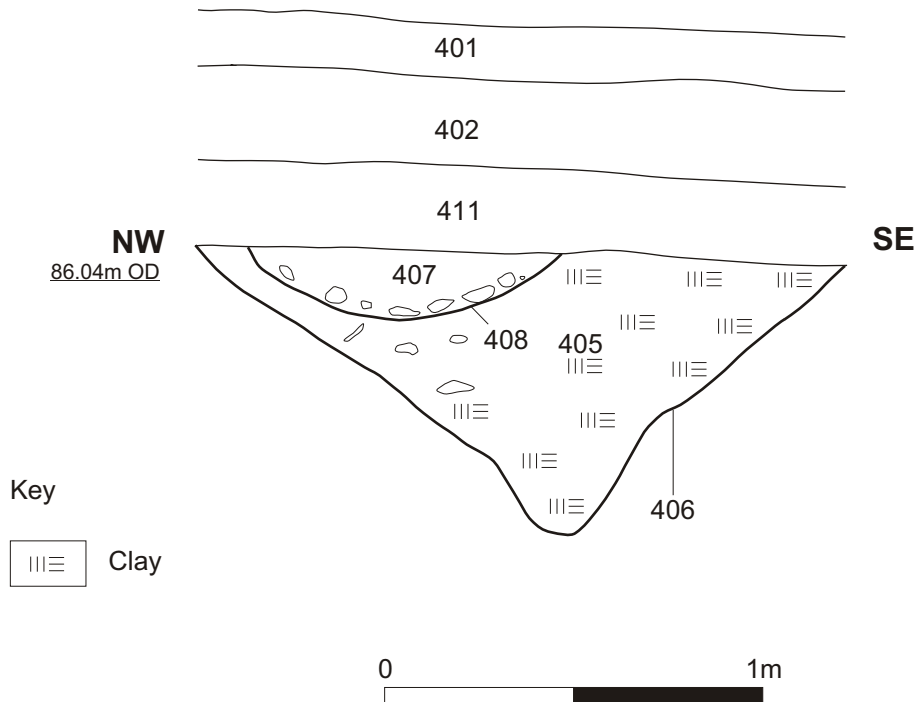
- |||≡ Clay
- # Charcoal



Trench 3, Section 1, looking south-east Fig 8



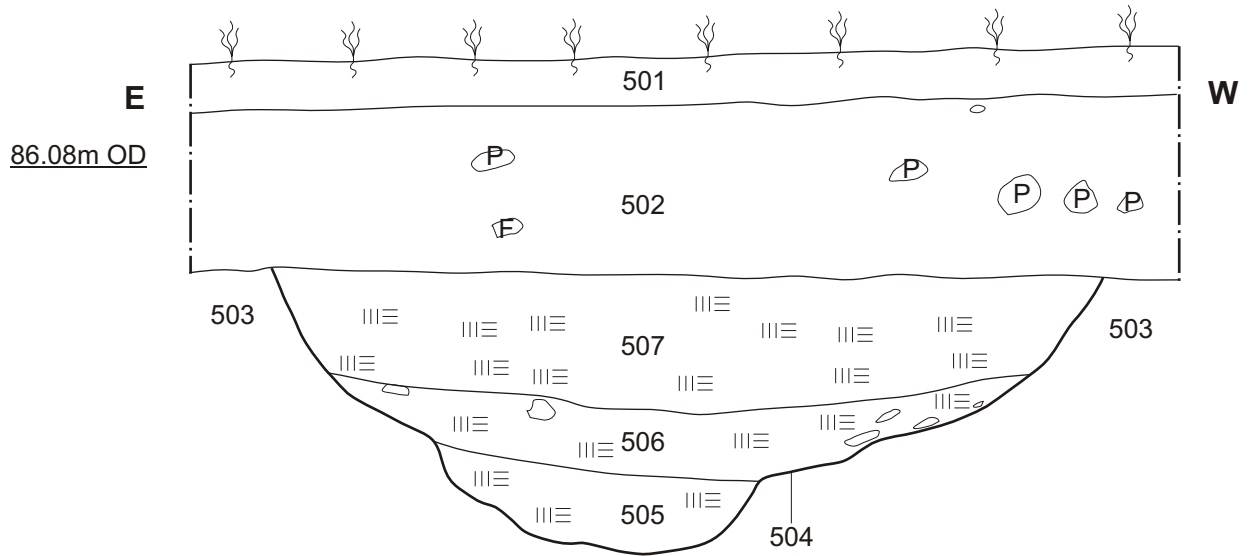
Section 2



Trench 4, Section 2, looking north-east Fig 9



Section 3



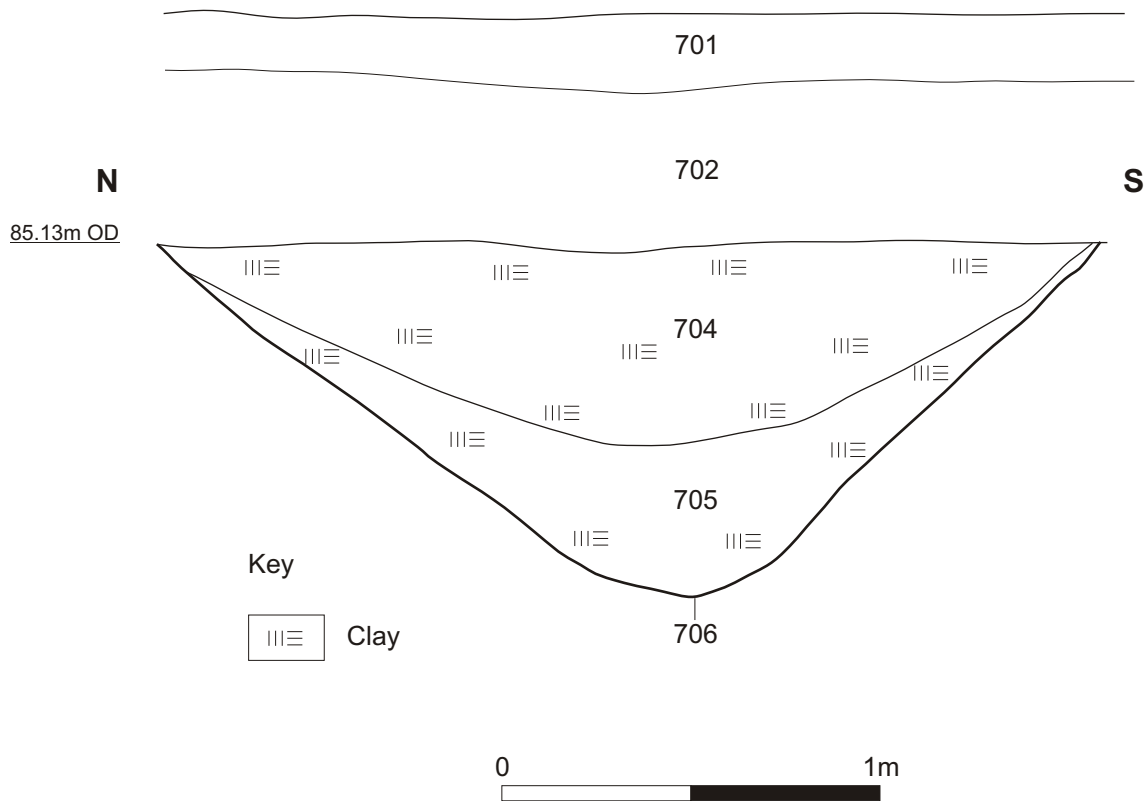
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Trench 5, Section 3, looking south Fig 10



Section 4



Trench 7, Section 4, looking east Fig 11



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