

Land at Knightacott Cross Bratton Fleming Devon

Archaeological Evaluation



for
Clearwinds Ltd

CA Project: 880003
CA Report: 15251

May 2015



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 Bratton Fleming
 Devon

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A	15 May 2015	Joe Whelan	Laurent Coleman	Internal review		Cliff Bateman

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Land at Knightacott Cross
Location:	Bratton Fleming, Devon
NGR:	SS 6573 3945
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	27 – 29 April 2015
Planning Reference:	North Devon District Council 58895
Accession Number:	NDDMS2015.6
Site Code:	RPK 15

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in April 2015 on land at Knightacott Cross, Bratton Fleming, Devon. A total of seven trenches was excavated.

Undated gullies were identified in four trenches and a quarry pit was identified in a fifth. A possible, undated hearth was also identified. Two trenches were devoid of archaeological features and no finds were recovered from any of the trenches.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In April 2015 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Clearwinds Ltd on land at Knightacott Cross, Bratton Fleming, Devon (centred on NGR SS 6573 3945; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to accompany a planning application (North Devon District Council (NDDC) ref. no 58895) for the development of a ground mounted solar photovoltaic panel array together with biodiversity enhancements. Stephen Reed, Archaeologist, Historic Environment Team, Devon County Council (archaeological advisor to NDDC) had outlined the requirement for a geophysical survey and subsequent trial trenching of the identified anomalies (ref. Arch/DM/ND/22968) prior to the determination of the planning application. The geophysical survey was undertaken in March 2015 and this document presents the results of the trial trenching.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2015a) and approved by Mr Reed. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014), the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006).

The site

- 1.3 The proposed development area is 4.8ha in extent, and comprises an area within a single field situated within farmland to the east of the village of Knightacott. The field is set to pasture on the slopes of Bratton Down. The site slopes steeply down to the north and west and contains a series of dips and undulations.
- 1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Morte Slate Formation of the Devonian era (BGS 2015). The natural substrate comprised silty clay with slate inclusions and was identified in all of the evaluation trenches.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 No World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields, Conservation Areas or any other designated sites are

located within the site. The nearest Scheduled Monument is a Bowl Barrow located approximately 400m to the south-east of the site.

- 2.2 The site lies in an area of known prehistoric activity. To the east and north-east, on Bratton Down, lie numerous prehistoric ritual and funerary monuments, some of which are protected as Scheduled Monuments. Approximately 2km to the south-west lies Smythapark Hillfort. Archaeological investigations on the site of a solar farm located approximately 400m to the south-east at Capelands Farm, Bratton recorded a probable Neolithic mortuary enclosure (CA 2015b).
- 2.3 The 1889 Ordnance Survey Map (1:2,500 County Series; Devon) shows 'old quarry' workings within the entrance to the site (south-eastern corner of the field) and within several neighbouring fields.
- 2.4 The preceding geophysical survey (GSB Prospection 2015) identified a large area of magnetic disturbance (Anomaly 1 – Trench 4), an east/west orientated palaeochannel, a field boundary, a number of anomalies of uncertain origin and anomalies probably relating to agricultural activity.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the evaluation are to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality, in accordance *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014). This information will enable NDDC to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset, consider the impact of the proposed development upon it, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of seven trenches in the locations shown on Fig. 2. All trenches measured 1.9m in width; one trench measured 60m in length, one 40m in length and five trenches 20m in length. The trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with

CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual*. All seven trenches targeted anomalies identified by the previous geophysical survey (GSB 2015).

- 4.2 The trenches were excavated by a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*. A single sample was retained from hearth 104 in Trench 1. The results are summarised below.
- 4.4 The archive from the evaluation is currently held by CA at their offices in Andover. The archive will be deposited with Barnstaple and North Devon Museum under accession number NDDMS2105.6. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-7)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and environmental sample (palaeoenvironmental evidence) are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively.
- 5.2 All identified archaeological features cut the natural substrate and the fills were sealed by the overlying topsoil, with the exception of fill 204 within ditch 203 which was sealed by a localised, shallow subsoil deposit.
- 5.3 Archaeological features were identified in Trenches 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6. Trenches 3 and 7 were devoid of archaeological features and are not discussed further.



Trench 1 (Figs 2 & 3)

- 5.3 Natural substrate 101, a mid-yellow brown silty clay with common inclusions of slate, was identified at an average depth of 0.29m below present ground level (bpgl). It was cut by ditch 102, which had a gently sloping side to the south-west, a steeply sloping side to the north-east and a concave base (Fig 3, Section AA). The undated ditch was orientated east/west and measured 0.42m in width and 0.09m in depth. Its single undated fill, 103, comprised a greyish brown silty clay.
- 5.4 South of ditch 102 was a sub circular cut 104, with near vertical sides and a flat base measuring 0.28m in diameter and up to 0.16m in depth. It was filled with a charcoal rich silt, 105, and was surrounded by an area of *in situ* scorched natural substrate, 106. The scorching, broadly oval in shape, measured at least 0.98m in length by 0.85m in width by up to 0.18m in depth (Fig. 3, section BB). The undated fill, 105, was retained as environmental sample <1> (Appendix B). The processed sample identified charcoal derived from oak and alder/hazel which suggested that the feature was a hearth.
- 5.5 The feature did not correlate to any anomaly identified by the geophysical survey. Both the fills of ditch 102 and hearth 104 were sealed by topsoil 100 which consisted of yellowy brown clayey silt with common slate inclusions.

Trench 2 (Figs 2 & 4)

- 5.6 Natural substrate 202, a greyish yellow brown silty clay with common inclusions of slate, was identified at an average depth of 0.29m bpgl. It was cut by a north/south orientated ditch 203, which had steeply sloping sides, a concave base and measured 0.66m in width by 0.27m in depth (Fig.4, section DD). It contained yellow brown silty clay fill 204 which was sealed by subsoil 201, that was in turn overlain sealed by topsoil 200. The ditch correlated to a linear anomaly identified by the geophysical survey.

Trench 4 (Figs 2 & 5)

- 5.7 The natural substrate, 401, comprising yellow brown silty clay with abundant slate inclusions, was identified at 0.25m bpgl and was cut by a large quarry pit, 402, measuring 39.4m in length (Fig. 5, section EE). The base of the undated feature could not be excavated within the confines of the trench, but a depth of at least 1.2m was reached at the north-western end. The fill, 403, consisted of a poorly consolidated yellow brown silty clay with abundant slate fragments. The quarry pit fill

was sealed by topsoil 400. The quarry pit correlated to an area of magnetic disturbance identified by the geophysical survey.

Trench 5 (Figs 2 & 6)

- 5.8 Natural substrate 501 consisted of yellow grey silty clay with abundant slate inclusions and was identified at 0.20m bpgl. It was cut by an undated ditch, 502 (Fig. 6, section FF) which was orientated north-east/south-west and measured 0.44m in width by 0.28m in depth. It had a gently sloping side to the north-east, a steeply sloping side to the south-west and a flat base. It was filled by a yellow brown clay silt, 503. The ditch was sealed by topsoil 500. The feature did not correspond to any anomaly identified by the geophysical survey.

Trench 6 (Figs 2 & 7)

- 5.7 The natural substrate, 600, was identified at an average depth of 0.30m bpgl and consisted of yellow brown silty clay with common inclusions of slate fragments. It was cut by ditch 602 which was aligned south-west/north-east and measured 0.64m in width and 0.89m in depth (Fig. 7, section GG). The sides were near vertical with a concave base. The undated feature was filled with a poorly consolidated grey brown clay silt 603 with abundant large sub-angular slabs of slate. The cut was visible within the section, extending into the base of the topsoil, but was not visible on the surface. The feature did not correspond to any anomaly identified by the geophysical survey.

6. PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

Plant macrofossils and charcoal

- 6.1 One environmental sample (<1> 20 litres of soil) was retrieved with the intention of recovering evidence of industrial or domestic activity and material for radiocarbon dating. The sample was processed by standard flotation procedures (CA Technical Manual No. 2).

Undated

- 6.2 Sample <1> was recovered from fill 105 within hearth104. The sample contained no plant macrofossil material, but did contain a moderate assemblage of well-preserved charcoal identified as oak (*Quercus*) and alder/hazel (*Alnus glutinosa/Corylus avellana*) charcoal (Appendix B). The absence of any further artefactual or

ecofactual material means no further interpretation of function can be made other than suggesting the use of this feature as a small hearth.

- 6.3 The alder/hazel charcoal would be suitable for radiocarbon dating if required.

Animal bone

- 6.4 A single fragment of animal bone (1g) was recovered via bulk soil sampling from deposit 105 within hearth 104. The bone was too fragmentary to confirm either an animal or human origin. However, it displayed clear signs of being burnt, supporting the interpretation of the plant macrofossil and charcoal evidence that this feature was potentially used as a hearth.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The evaluation has identified a limited number of features within five of the seven trenches. Only one of the excavated features, (ditch 203 in Trench 2) corresponds to an anomaly identified by the geophysical survey. The large quarry pit within Trench 4 corresponds with the area of magnetic disturbance. The remaining anomalies did not correspond to archaeological features and some of the features were not identified by the geophysical survey.
- 7.2 The ditches recorded within Trenches 1, 2, 5 and 6 are all undated and are suggestive of a drainage function and/or agricultural boundaries. The ditch identified in Trench 6 was at least partially cut through the topsoil and it may represent a mole drain.
- 7.3 The shallow patch of scorched geology and associated charcoal from Trench 1 is again undated and clearly indicates the location of localised burning, possibly a hearth. The location of ditch 102 close to the north of the *in situ* burning is as likely to be coincidental as indicative of associated activity.
- 7.4 The large quarry pit in Trench 4 is also undated but is of significant dimensions. The presence of the larger magnetic disturbance in addition to the undulating ground in the region of Trench 4 suggests further quarry pits may lie close by. Whilst undated, the notation on the 1899 Ordnance Survey map of 'old quarry' in the entrance to the site and the field immediately to the south suggests a post-medieval date for this feature.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Joe Whelan, assisted by Natasha Djukic and Jack Marten Jones. The report was written by Joe Whelan with assistance from Jack Marten Jones. The illustrations were prepared by Leo Heatley. The archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Andrew Donaldson. The project was managed for CA by Laurent Coleman.

9. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2015 *Geology of Britain Viewer*

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed 22 April 2015

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015a *Land at Knightacott Cross Bratton Fleming: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015b *Land near Rye Park, Knightacott, Devon: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Geophysical Survey*

DCLG (Department of Communities and Local Government) 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework*

GSB Prospection 2015 *Rye Solar Park Bratton Fleming Devon; Geophysical Survey Report G1535*



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay		1.93	0.29	
1	101	Layer		Natural	Mid yellowish brown silty clay. Common amount of sub-angular slate		1.93	0.06+	
1	102	Cut		Gully	Small, slightly irregular gully running NW-SE. Sides gently concaving and has an irregular flat base.		0.42	0.09	
1	103	Fill	102	Fill of gully	Mid greyish brown silty with slate.		0.42	0.09	
1	104	Cut		Hearth	Oval, with sub-rounded corners and moderately concave sides. Has gradual breaks of slope	0.98	0.88	0.18	
1	105	Fill	104	Fill of hearth	Very dark grey charcoal rich clayey silt	0.98	0.50	0.16	
1	106	Fill	104	Fill of hearth	Mid reddish brown scorched natural clay	0.98	0.88	0.18	
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Greyish mid brown clayey silt with slate.		1.93	0.1	
2	201	Layer		Subsoil	Greyish mid brown silty clay slate throughout.		1.93	0.19	
	202	Layer		Natural	Mid yellowish brown silty clay.		1.93	0.1+	
2	203	Cut		Gully	Small gully with moderately concave sloping sides and concave curving base which is fairly regular. N-S orientation.		0.7	0.27	
2	204	Fill	203	Fill of gully	Mid yellowish brown silty clay with slate		0.7	0.27	
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay		1.93	0.25	
3	301	Layer		Natural	Mid yellowish brown silty clay with slate		1.93	0.15+	
4	400	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay		1.93	0.2	
4	401	Layer		Natural	Mid yellowish brown silty clay with slate		1.93	0.1+	
4	402	Cut		Quarry	Quarry pit		1.93+	1.2+	
4	403	Fill	402	Fill of quarry	Mid yellowish brown silty clay, loose with inclusions of slate		1.93+	1.2+	
5	500	Layer		Topsoil	Mid yellowish brown clayey silt. Occasional slate inclusions.		1.93	0.2	
5	501	Layer		Natural	Pale yellowy/greyish brown silty clay with slate.		1.93	0.1+	
5	502	Cut		Gully	Linear with steep sloping sides. Flat base. NE-SW orientation.		0.44	0.08	
5	503	Fill	502	Fill of gully	Yellowy brown clayey silt which is firm occasional slate fragments.		0.44	0.08	
6	600	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brownish grey silty clay. With inclusions of slate		1.93	0.29	
6	601	Layer		Natural	Mid yellowish brown silty clay, inclusions of slate		1.93	0.16	
6	602	Cut		Gully	Linear Steep sides which are slightly		0.64	0.89	

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thickness (m)	Spot-date
					irregular and have sharp breaks of slope. Flattish base. NE-SW				
6	603	Fill	602	Fill of gully	Mid greyish brown silty clay which is compact. Common slate		0.64	0.89	
7	700	Layer		Topsoil	Mid greyish brown silty clay with slate		1.93	0.19	
7	701	Layer		Natural	Yellowish brown silty clay with slate		1.93	0.19	

APPENDIX B: PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL TABLES

Charcoal Identifications

Context number		105	
Feature number		104	
Sample number (SS)		1	
Flot volume (ml)		123	
Sample volume processed (l)		3	
Soil remaining (l)		0	
Period		U/D	
Charcoal quantity		++++	
Charcoal preservation		Good	
Family	Species	Common Name	
Betulaceae	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i> (L.) Gaertn./ <i>Corylus avellana</i> L.	Alder/Hazel	6
Fagaceae	<i>Quercus petraea</i> (Matt.) Liebl./ <i>Quercus robur</i> L. h/w	Sessile Oak/ Pedunculate Oak	4
Number of Fragments:			10

Key

U/D = undated

+ = 1–4 fragments; ++ = 4–20 items; +++ = 21–49 items; ++++ = 50–99 items; +++++ = 100–500 items; ++++++ = >500 items

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	
Project Name	Land at Knightacott Cross, Bratton Fleming, Devon
Short description	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in April 2015 on land at Knightacott Cross, Bratton Fleming, Devon. A total of seven trenches was excavated. Undated gullies were identified in four trenches and a quarry pit was identified in a fifth. A possible, undated hearth was also identified. Two trenches were devoid of archaeological features and no finds were recovered from any of the trenches.
Project dates	27- 29 April 2015
Project type	Field evaluation
Previous work	
Future work	Unknown
PROJECT LOCATION	
Site Location	Land at Knightacott Cross, Bratton Fleming, Devon
Study area (M ² /ha)	
Site co-ordinates	SS 6573 3945
PROJECT CREATORS	
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology
Project Brief originator	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology
Project Manager	Laurent Coleman
Project Supervisor	Joe Whelan
MONUMENT TYPE	
none	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	
none	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	
Intended final location of archive Barnstaple and North Devon Museum NDDMS2015.6	Content
Physical	none
Paper	Trench sheets, Context sheets, Drawings
Digital	Database, digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015: <i>Land at Knightacott Cross Bratton Fleming Devon Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report 15251	

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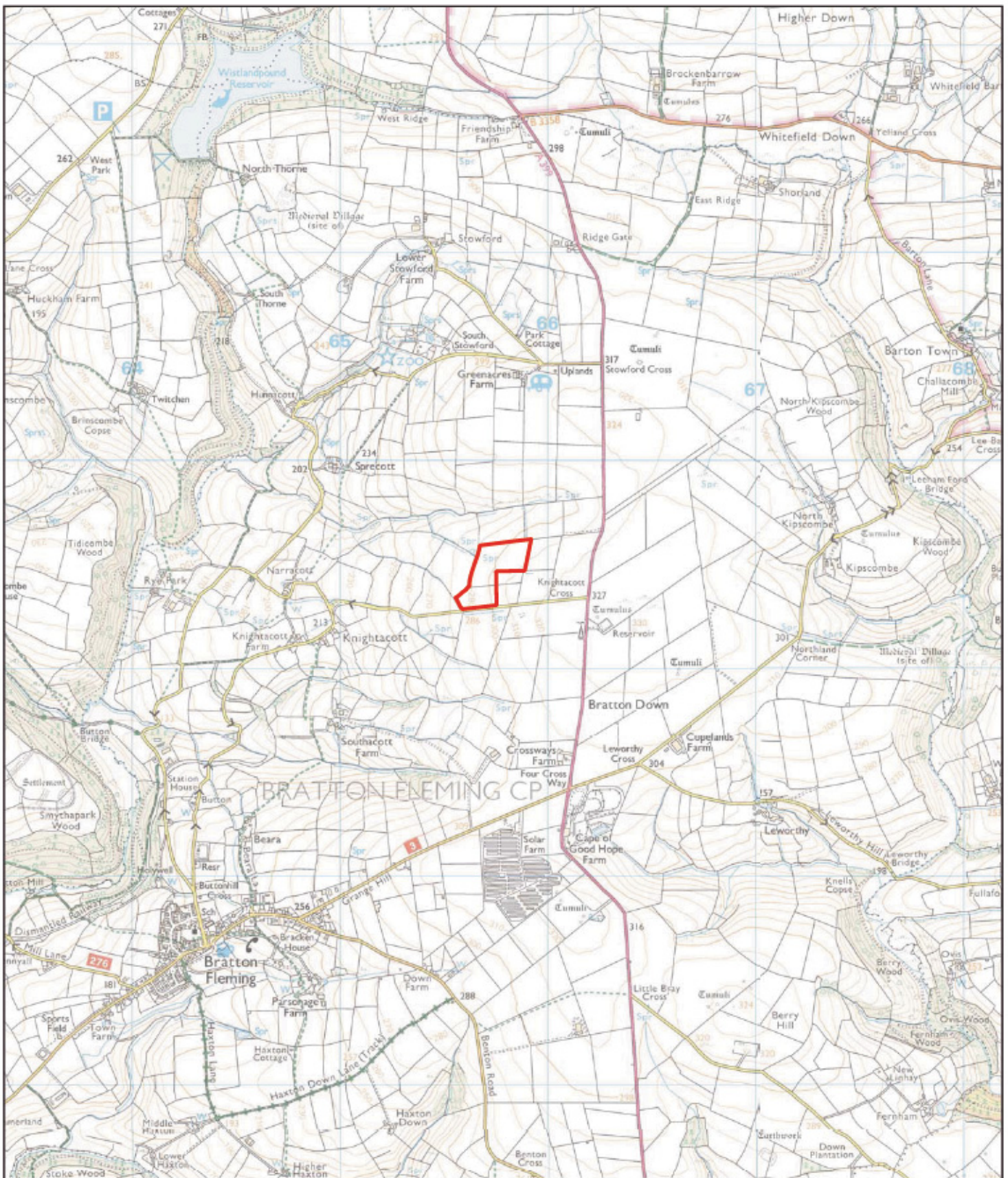
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PROJECT TITLE
 Land at Knightacott Cross
 Bratton Fleming, Devon

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

0 1km

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FIGURE NO.

1



- site boundary
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- geological feature

**Geophysics survey results
(GSB 2015)**

- Magnetic disturbance
- Uncertain origin (discrete anomaly/trend)
- Old field boundary (positive/negative)
- Ploughing (discrete anomaly/trend)
- Natural (discrete anomaly/trend)
- Ferrous (discrete anomaly/trend)



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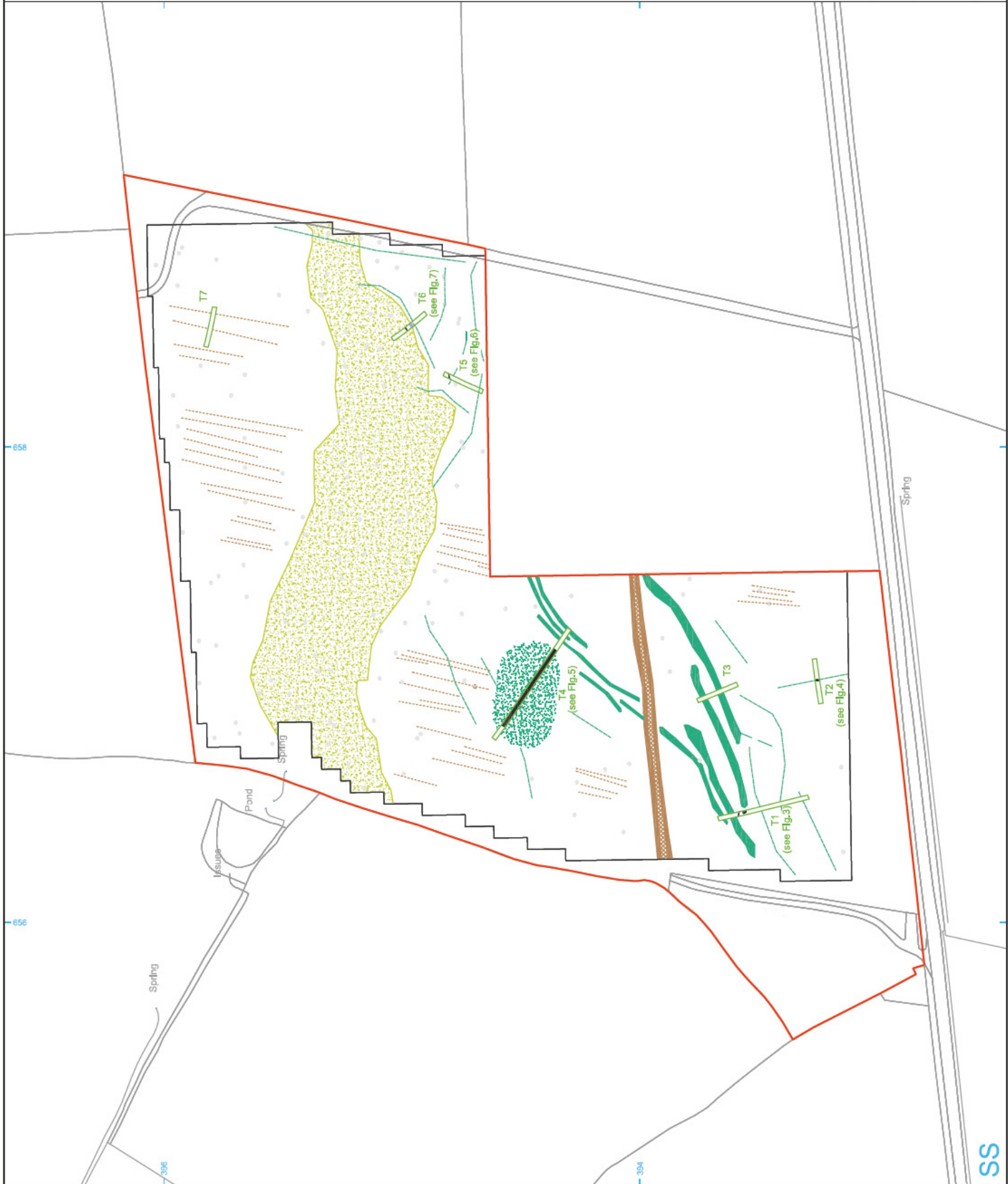
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PROJECT TITLE
**Land at Knightcote Cross
 Bratton Fleming, Devon**

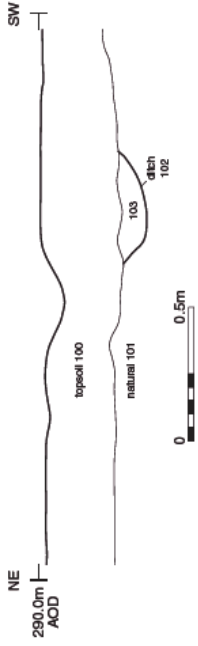
FIGURE TITLE
**Trench location plan showing
 archaeological features and
 geophysical survey results**

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DATE	18/02/2015	SCALE	1:1000

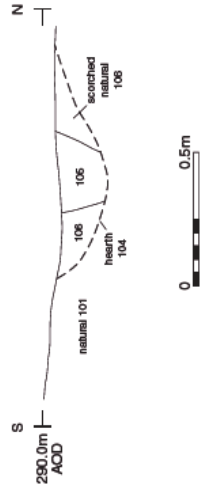
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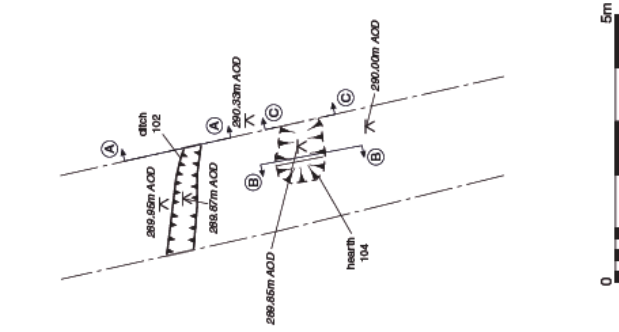
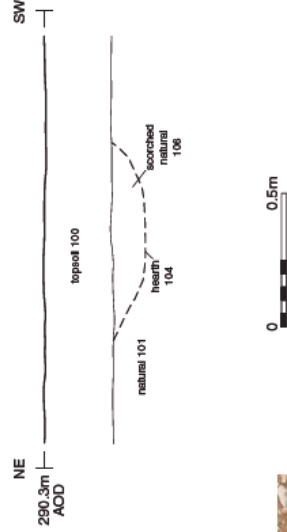
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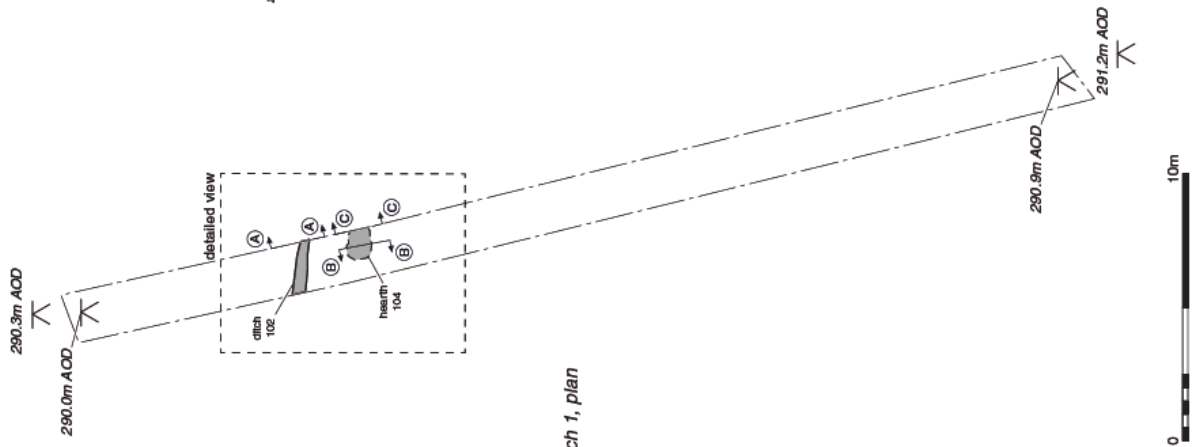
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Section CC



Trench 1, plan



Hearth 104, looking west (1m scale)

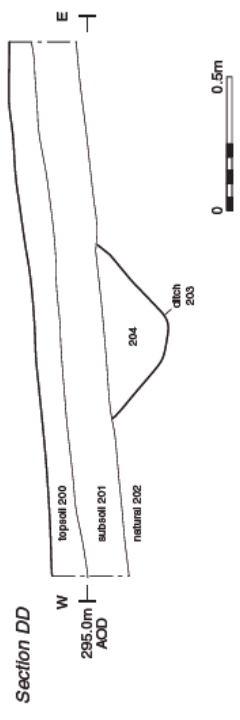
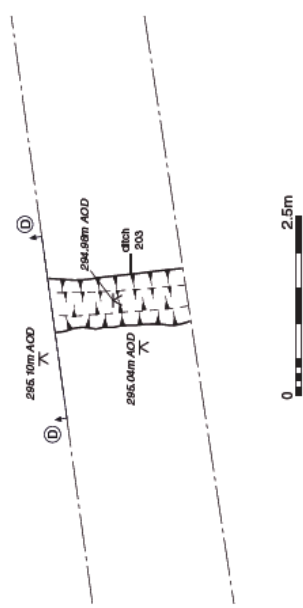
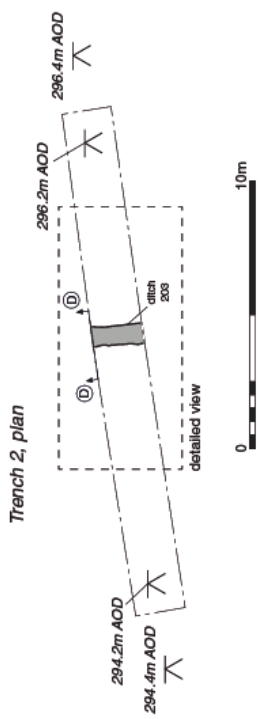
evaluation trench
archaeological feature

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PROJECT TITLE
**Land at Knightacott Cross
 Bratton Fleming, Devon**

FIGURE TITLE
**Trench 1: plan, sections and
 photograph**

DRAWN BY LJH PROJECT NO. BR0003 FIGURE NO.
 CHECKED BY JIB DATE 15/05/15 15/05/15
 APPROVED BY LECC SCALE@A3 1:20, 1:100 & 1:200 3



Ditch 203, looking north-west (2m scale)

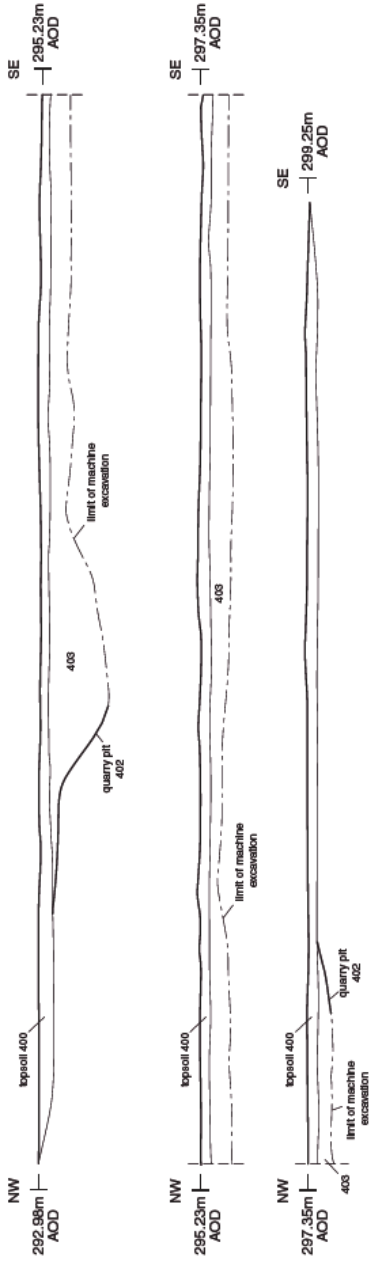
evaluation trench
 archaeological feature

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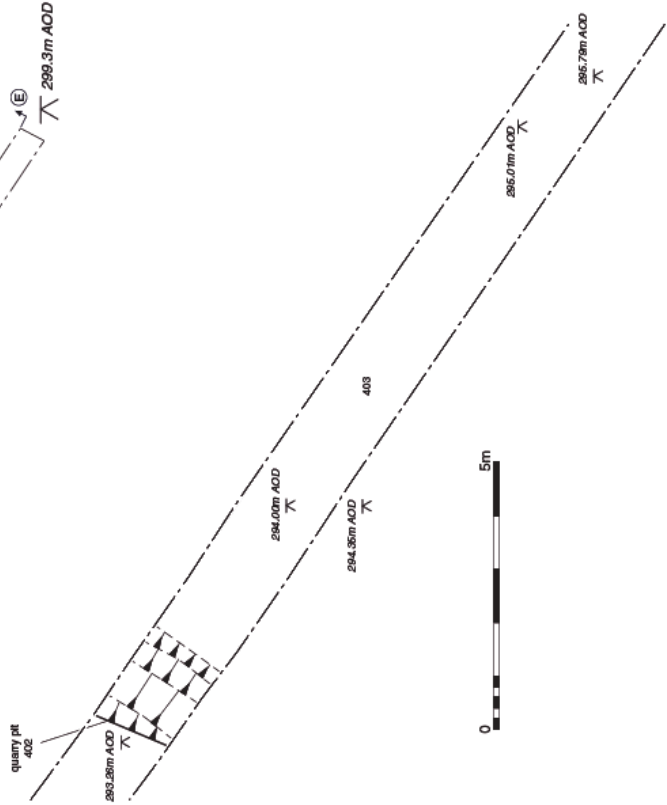
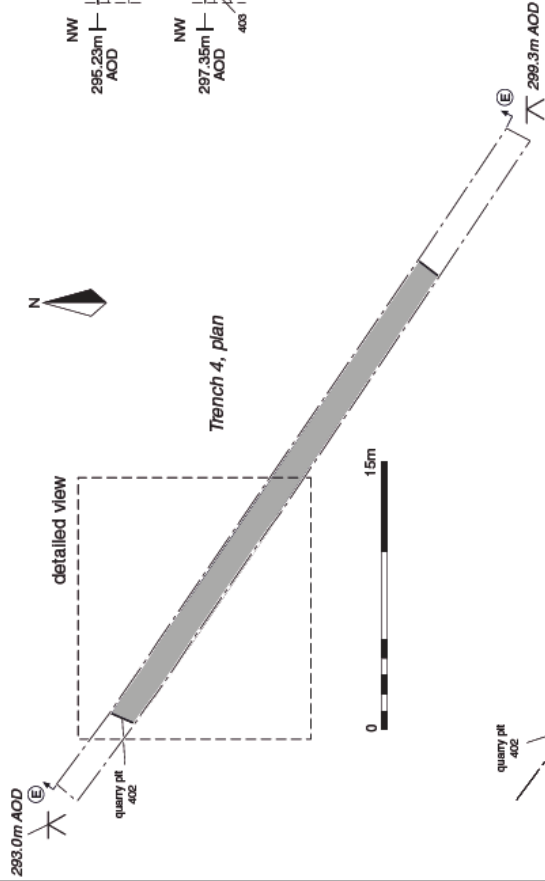
PROJECT TITLE
 Land at Knightcote Cross
 Bratton Fleming, Devon
FIGURE TITLE
Trench 2: plan, section and photograph

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Section EE



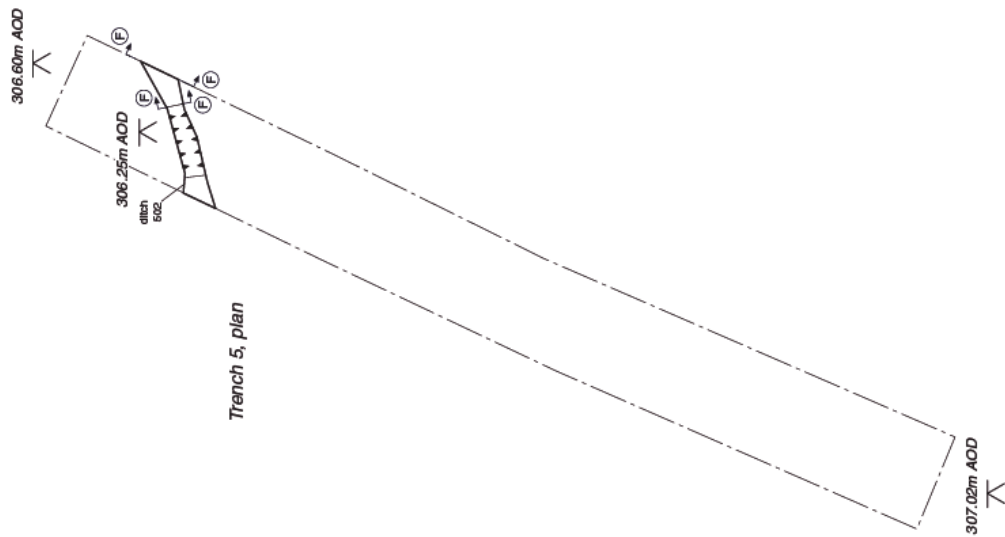
Trench 4, plan



Trench 4, looking south-east (1m scale)

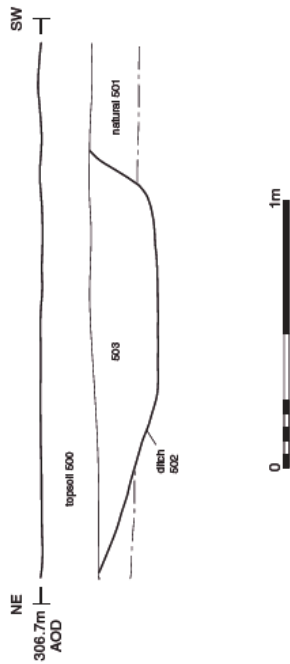
evaluation trench
 archaeological feature

Cotswold Archaeology
 PROJECT TITLE
 Land at Knightcote Cross
 Bratton Fleming, Devon
 PROJECT NO. 180003
 DRAWN BY LJH
 CHECKED BY JIB
 APPROVED BY LECC
 DATE 15/05/15
 SCALE 1:100 & 1:200
 FIGURE NO. 5



Trench 5, plan

Composite Section FF



Gully 502, looking north-east (0.2m scale)

evaluation trench
archaeological feature



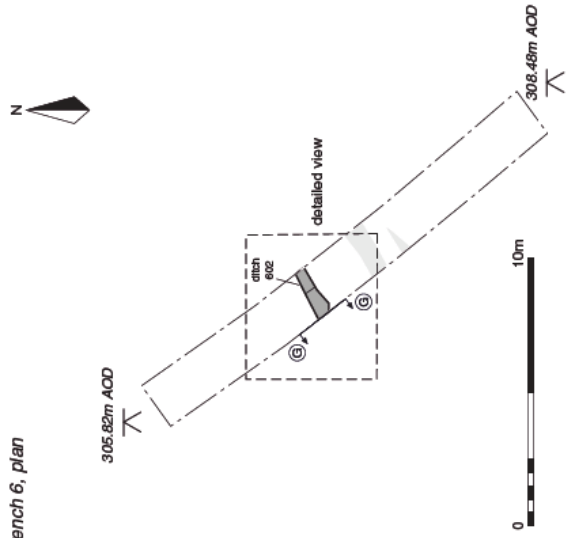
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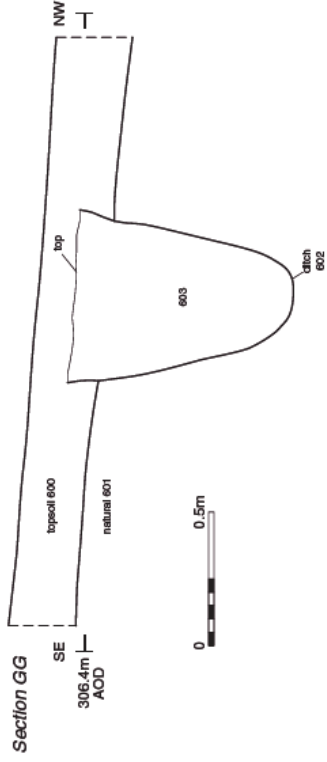
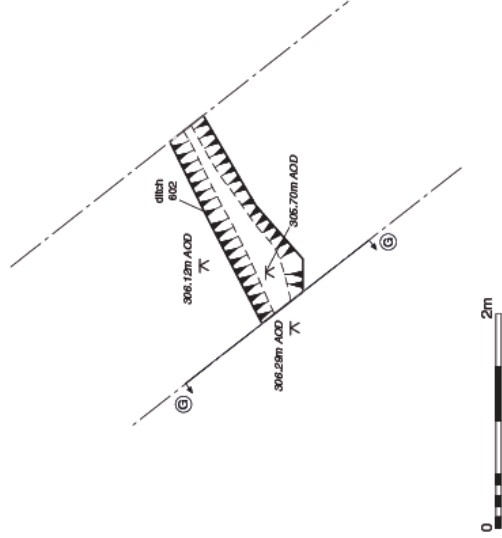
FIGURE TITLE
Trench 5: plan, section and photograph

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CHECKED BY	JJB	DATE	15/05/15		
APPROVED BY	LECC	SCALE	1:100 & 1:20		

Trench 6, plan



Detailed view



Ditch 602, looking west (1m scale)

- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- geological feature

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PROJECT TITLE
**Land at Knightcote Cross
 Bratton Fleming, Devon**

FIGURE TITLE
Trench 6: plan, section and photograph

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CHECKED BY	JJB	DATE	14/05/15		
APPROVED BY	LECC	SCALE	1:200, 1:50 & 1:20		7