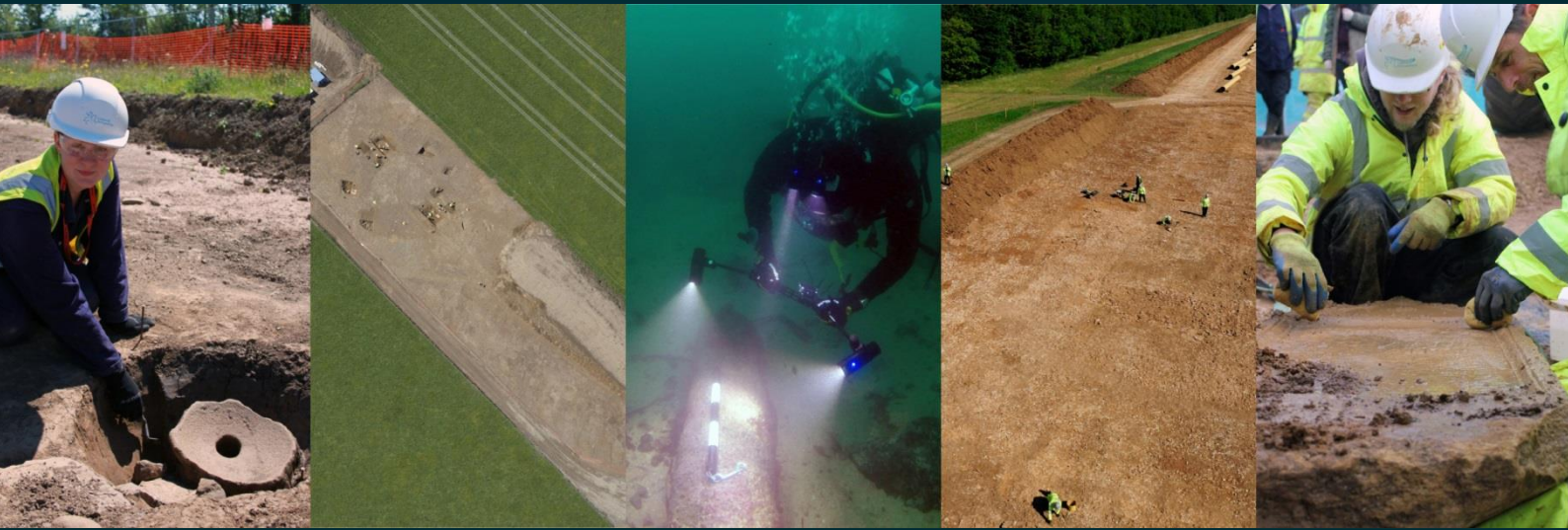


Hendra Road Stithians Cornwall

Excavation Report



for
Kier Living Ltd

CA Project: 889009
CA Report: 17418

February 2018



Hendra Road
Stithians
Cornwall

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for Cornish Archaeology

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Early Neolithic settlement, Bronze Age settlement and funerary activity and a medieval to post-medieval enclosure and field system at Hendra Road, Stithians, Cornwall, excavations in June 2016

DANIEL STANSBIE AND MARTIN GILLARD

with contributions by John Allan, Dana Challinor, Sharon Clough, Katie Marsden, Henrietta Quinnell, Ruth Shaffrey, Jacky Sommerville and Sarah Wyles

Summary

A programme of archaeological excavation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in June 2016 at the request of Kier Living Ltd. at Hendra Road, Stithians, Cornwall. Approximately 0.6h was excavated across the development area. The excavation revealed evidence for limited Mesolithic to Early Neolithic activity comprising two flint tools, one from an undated feature and one from a post-medieval ditch. Evidence was found for funerary activity in the form of the cremated remains of a single, probably older, adult individual deposited in a pit, and radiocarbon dated to the Middle Bronze Age. Possible occupation evidence from this period comprised two enigmatic ditches containing Middle to Late Bronze Age pottery. An undated possible post-built structure, which cut one of these Middle to Late Bronze Age ditches, was probably contemporary with them. In addition, there was a single small pit radiocarbon dated to the Early Iron Age. Evidence for medieval/post-medieval activity comprised a field-system, including a hollow-way, a quarry pit and parts of two sub-rectangular ditches, which may have enclosed a settlement that would have been outside the excavation area.

Introduction

During June 2016 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological excavation at Hendra Road, Stithians, (centred on NGR: 172990 037220; Fig. 1). The work was undertaken at the request of Kier Living Ltd in accordance with a detailed WSI produced by CA (2016a) and approved by the LPA acting on the advice of Sean Taylor, Development Officer (Historic Environment) – Archaeologist, Cornwall Council. It was monitored by Sean Taylor, including a site visit on 23 June 2016.

Location, topography and geology

The development site was approximately 0.88ha in extent, and prior to development comprised an agricultural field located on a gentle south-facing slope in an undulating landscape of small hills and valleys to the north of the River Kennall. It was bounded to the east and west by residential development, to the north by agricultural fields, and to the south by Hendra Road, with fields beyond. The site sloped down from approximately 138m AOD in the north to approximately 133m AOD along the southern boundary. The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Carnmenellis Intrusion granite. No superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2015).

Archaeological Background

Archaeological interest in the site arises from the results of a heritage desk-based assessment carried out by CA in 2015 (CA 2016b), a geophysical survey carried out by Substrata (Substrata 2016) and an archaeological evaluation carried out by CA in January and February 2016 (CA 2016c). The following section is a summary of information taken from these sources.

Prehistoric (pre AD43)

No activity earlier than the Neolithic period is recorded within the immediate environs (1km diameter circle) of the site. And no prehistoric activity of any kind was recorded within the site itself prior to the evaluation carried out by CA (CA 2016c). Within the wider environs of the site, a large backed bladelet of Upper Palaeolithic date was collected near Stithians Reservoir, approximately 1.7km to the south-west of the site (Berridge and Roberts 1986), and a Mesolithic site was investigated at Stithians Reservoir, approximately 1.23km to the south-west of the site (*ibid.* 1986).

The wider Neolithic (4000 BC–2400 BC) and Bronze Age (2400 BC–700 BC) environs of the site includes megaliths (standing stones) thought to have been associated with Early Bronze Age funerary and ritual activities although an earlier (Neolithic) origin for some of the monuments is also likely. A large granite megalith is located in a field approximately 870m north-east of the site. Post-medieval field names recorded within the immediate environs of the site, approximately 680m to the south-west and c. 410m to the east are also thought to indicate probable sites of former Neolithic/Bronze Age megalithic stone settings.

A possible plough-levelled Bronze Age round barrow visible as a cropmark on aerial photographs is located approximately 690m north-east of the site. Another mound of unknown date, located c. 350m to the east of the site could also potentially represent the remains of a prehistoric funerary monument although a more recent origin cannot be ruled out.

The geophysical survey and evaluation of the site (Substrata 2016, CA 2016c) identified possible enclosure ditches in the eastern part of the investigated area. One of these (ditch 509; Trench 5; Fig. 2) contained pottery dating to the Middle Bronze Age (1500 BC–1100 BC). In addition, three possible Middle Bronze Age pits (604, 606 and 608; Trench 6; Fig. 2) lay to the east of Middle/Late Bronze Age ditch B, although none of them produced any dating evidence.

Roman (AD 43 - AD410)

There is evidence for several Roman rounds (settlements enclosed by single banks and ditches) within the wider area. No Roman features were identified during the evaluation (CA 2016c), although a pottery sherd of possible Roman date was recovered from the topsoil. A number of sites regarded as possible rounds have been observed as cropmarks within the immediate environs of the site. These include an oval enclosure north-west of Penmennor, approximately 760m west of the site. Further possible rounds within 1km of the site have been identified from documentary sources, which indicate the presence of such remains in field-names. These include Crelow, approximately 250m south-east of the site, in a field in Foundry, approximately 670m to the south-east, at Carnsiddia, c. 480m to the south-west and at Carn c. 810m to the south-west. Silver and bronze coins, possibly representing an early to mid-4th century hoard, were discovered in 1918, approximately 810m south-east of the site. The hoard comprised six silver and seventeen bronze coins.

Early medieval (AD410 – AD1066) and medieval (AD 1066 – 1539)

There is limited evidence for early medieval activity within the study area, and no settlements within the surroundings of the site are mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086. However, the probable remains of a lann (church enclosure) of early medieval origin were identified within the surroundings of St. Stedian's Church in Stithians, during a survey carried out in the 19th century. There are 16 settlements of medieval origin recorded within the immediate environs of

the site, many of which are first mentioned in 13th and 14th century documents. Many of these settlements correspond with extant farmsteads in the local landscape. Four hamlets with medieval origins are located in the immediate environs of the site: Hendra, which dates back to 1302 (approximately 250m south-west of the site), Crelow, recorded in 1356, c.230m to the south-east, Ennis and Carbis, first recorded in 1522 and 1327 respectively (c. 240m to the south-east) and Trembroath (c. 330m to the north), mentioned in 1356.

These settlements would probably have been associated with extensive field systems, which may have undergone a degree of reorganisation during the medieval period. In addition to the surviving field boundaries, a number of former boundaries associated with the medieval enclosures have been recorded as earthworks (banks) and cropmarks on aerial photographs. These include the field systems at High Trewithen, Pembroath, Sewrah Moor, Tremenhere Skinner, Goonlase and Penmennor. A medieval corn mill, Trewithen Mill, was first recorded in 1370 and subsequently in 1815. No longer extant, the mill was located approximately 520m north of the site. The field boundaries along the edges of the site comprise Cornish hedges (earth banks).

The medieval parish church serving the communities that lived within the landscape surrounding the Site was located in Stithians. St. Stedian's Church dates to the 13th to 15th centuries, but has undergone extensive later restorations. A number of medieval stone crosses are located in the vicinity of the church and others, no longer extant, are recorded within the wider environs of the Site, with their location indicated by field and place-names.

The geophysical survey (Substrata 2016) and evaluation (CA 2016c) identified possible enclosure ditches in the eastern part of the site. One of these (ditch 303; Trench 3; Fig. 2) contained medieval pottery. Also identified during this phase of work was a medieval/post-medieval ditch (ditch 204; Trench 2; Fig.2), which ran parallel to the extant northern field boundary. This feature is likely to represent a former field boundary that is not depicted on the 1842 Stithians tithe map, or on later Ordnance Survey maps. As the extant field boundaries at the site may be medieval in origin a medieval date for ditch 204 seems possible.

Post-medieval (AD1540 – AD1800) and modern (1800 – present)

Post-medieval activity within the immediate environs of the site appears to reflect the settlement and field patterns established in the medieval period, comprising hamlets and farmsteads scattered within a landscape of enclosed fields. In the wider landscape, post-medieval activity is largely associated with industrial development and mining. In the immediate environs of the site this comprises cropmarks recorded approximately 910m north-west and 980m north of the site, and a wheel pit at Trembroath, located approximately 440m to the north-east. Additional industrial remains include a foundry and blacksmith's workshop, recorded approximately 900m south-east of the site, a twine factory, located approximately 920m to the south-east and a tucking/fulling mill, c. 880m to the south-east.

The trial trench evaluation (CA 2016c) identified two ditches at the western end of Trench 1 (Fig. 2). While neither of these features produced any dating evidence, their fills were similar in nature to the topsoil, which might indicate that they were post-medieval or modern in date. Two undated quarry pits (pit 205; Trench 2; Fig. 2) and pit 704; Trench 7; Fig. 2) were also recorded (*ibid.*).

Methodology

Fieldwork commenced with the removal of topsoil and subsoil from the excavation area by mechanical excavator, using a toothless grading bucket, under archaeological supervision. Approximately 0.6h was stripped and mapped and archaeological features were sampled according to the sampling strategy set out in the WSI (CA 2016a). The archaeological features thus exposed were hand-excavated to the bottom of the archaeological stratigraphy. All features were planned and recorded in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*. Deposits were assessed for their environmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The taking and processing of environmental and other samples from archaeological sites*. All artefacts recovered from the excavation were retained in accordance with CA Technical Manual 3: *Treatment of finds immediately after excavation*.

Results (Fig. 2)

As indicated by the geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation (Substrata 2016 and CA 2016c) the archaeological features were mainly concentrated on the eastern and western edges of the excavated area, with relatively few features in the central and southern parts of the excavation (Fig. 2). The features mainly comprised ditches, with a few mostly shallow pits and possible postholes. Many of the archaeological features recorded could be assigned to periods based on spot dates from the artefacts found in their fills and on the basis of spatial and stratigraphic relationships with more securely dated features. However, some features could not be dated on this basis and a programme of radiocarbon dating was therefore undertaken, in order to refine the chronology; this resulted in the elucidation of two additional periods belonging to the Early/Middle Neolithic and Early Iron Age respectively. Features were assigned to the following periods:

Period 1: Early/Middle Neolithic

Period 2: Middle Bronze Age

Period 3: Middle to Late Bronze Age

Period 4: Early Iron Age

Period 5: medieval/post-medieval

Period 6: undated

The following section provides an overview of the excavation and evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts, finds and environmental samples (biological evidence) are to be found in the finds and environmental reports section (below).

The substrate of the site consisted of granite gravel (known locally as rab) with occasional larger stones and boulders. It was overlain by topsoil which became progressively shallower from the southern end of the site to the northern end, thinning from 0.8m to 0.3m in depth.

Period 1: The Early/Middle Neolithic

A single sub-circular pit [125] situated towards the south-eastern corner of the excavation area, close to the limit of excavation (Figs 2 and 3, Section AA) contained a large assemblage of charred hazelnut shells, one of which returned a radiocarbon date of cal 3349–3095 BC, at 95.4% probability (SUERC 73449). The pit was irregular in profile and measured 1m in diameter by 0.23m in depth; it was filled by a single deposit (fill 126) of charcoal rich silty sand, which in addition to the charred hazelnuts produced some indeterminate burnt grain and worked flint, including a flake and some working debris.

Period 2: Middle Bronze Age (1500BC – 1100BC)

Sub-circular cremation pit [2009] measured 0.4m in diameter by 0.23m depth and had a flat base with steep, nearly vertical sides (Figs 2 and 3; section BB). Its fill (2010) was rich in charcoal and burnt bone, indicating the presence of a cremation burial. Analysis of the 410.7g of burnt bone demonstrated that it derives from an adult human, possibly an older individual and radiocarbon dating indicates a calibrated age of 1502-1326 cal BC, at 95.4% probability (SUERC-69739), well within the Middle Bronze Age. Apart from the human bone no finds were recovered from the fill.

Period 3: Middle to Late Bronze Age (1500BC-800BC)

The Middle to late Bronze Age period was represented by two large enigmatic ditches (ditch A and ditch B) situated near the eastern limit of excavation. Ditches A and B were orientated at right angles to one another and only ditch B was fully investigated as ditch A extended beyond the limit of excavation. Both ditches were linear, wide and ended in broad rounded terminals. However, while ditch B was shallow ditch A was relatively deep.

Ditch B was orientated south-west/north-east, had rounded terminals and measured approximately 25m in length by 2.35-3.0m in width and 0.14-0.25m in depth (Figs 4 and 5; section HH). In profile the ditch had a flat base and gently sloping sides. Its morphology, including its wide and shallow profile suggests that it is unlikely to have been part of a field boundary, or enclosure and its interpretation is therefore difficult. However, it was perhaps related in some way to the Middle Bronze Age cremation burial, possibly being associated with a bank screening a cemetery or related activity from the south-east, or it may equally have been related to settlement activity (focused beyond the limits of excavation), or industrial activity in some way. The ditch fills produced pottery of both Middle and Late Bronze Age date.

Ditch A was orientated north-west/south-east at an approximate right-angle to ditch B, ending in a rounded terminal approximately 3m from the south-eastern edge of ditch B and extending beyond the limit of excavation to the south-east. Ditch A measured at least 12m in length by 2.8-2.94m in width and 0.74-1.0m in depth (Figs 4 and 5; section GG). In profile it had steep and somewhat irregular sides and its multiple fills were gravel-rich and suggestive of erosion. The ditch fills contained Late Bronze Age pottery, most notably nine or ten sherds likely to be from the same vessel, found within fill (194) of the ditch terminal [191] (not illustrated in section). Some of the latter had charred residues adhering to them, which returned a radiocarbon determination of cal 976 – 817 BC, (95.4% probability) (SUERC-73448). However, this material was from an upper fill of the ditch and it is possible that the ditch could have stayed open for a considerable period of time, and its construction may therefore date to the Middle

Bronze Age. The size and shape of ditch A and its general similarity to ditch B may be indicative of a similar or related function.

Some other features, notably the numerous small pits and postholes located in the vicinity of ditches A and B, may well have been contemporary with the ditches but in the absence of clear evidence must be treated as undated.

Period 4: Early Iron Age (600BC-350BC)

Pit [135] was situated in the north-eastern corner of the site and had been partially cut away by ditch D (Figs 2 and 9). The pit was oval in plan and measured 1.4m in length by 0.5m in width and 0.4m in depth. Its upper fill (154) contained a rim sherd in a well-made gabbroic fabric dating to the Early Iron Age. The lower fill (153) was rich in charcoal and a radiocarbon determination on a fragment of charcoal (cherry species) returned a date of cal 805–551 BC, (95.4% probability) (SUERC 73444), within the Earliest Iron Age/Early Iron Age. The geological substrate around the pit was pink in colour, indicating burning and suggesting that the charcoal was a product of burning *in situ*.

Period 5: medieval/post-medieval (AD 1250 – AD 1600)

Medieval/post-medieval activity comprised a pair of enclosure ditches (ditch E and ditch F) lying parallel to and extending beyond the north-eastern limit of excavation (Fig. 2), which may possibly defined a small settlement or farmstead; and an outlying field system made up of ditches C, D, G, H, I, J and K, occupying the northern and western part of the site. These two groups of features are described in more detail below starting with the enclosure ditches.

The enclosure ditches

A pair of parallel ditches, E and F, ran north to south along the eastern side of the excavation area, returning to the east at their southern end and running beyond the limit of excavation to the north and south-east (Fig. 2). For most of their length they ran in close proximity without intercutting, suggesting contemporaneity; however, the pottery from their fills is of different dates (post-medieval and medieval respectively), indicating that they may rather represent successive redefinitions of the same boundary. The return to the east at the southern end of both ditches indicates that they enclosed an area lying immediately northeast of the site, currently under a late 20th century housing development. The tithe map of 1840 shows a single dwelling (the vicarage) with associated outbuildings in this location (CA 2016b, 23) and it is probable that these buildings (demolished in the late 20th century) lay on the site of a medieval settlement, or farmstead enclosed by the ditches.

The inner ditch (ditch F) measured 34.17m in length by 1.0-1.3m in width and 0.42-0.48m in depth (Fig. 2). In profile it had moderately sloping sides, and generally a concave base. Some of its fills were stone-rich, perhaps indicative of the erosion or demolition of a stone-faced boundary bank adjacent to the ditch. The ditch fills contained medieval pottery including seven sherds likely to be from the same vessel.

The outer ditch (ditch E) measured 47.5m in length by 1.7-1.9m in width and 0.54-0.75m in depth (Fig. 2). Like ditch F it had moderately sloping sides, and generally a concave base and some stone rich fills. Several sherds of post-medieval pottery were found within its fills.

The pottery from the fills of ditches E and F may be indicative of the date at which they were infilled; however, given the possibility of a nearby settlement this material could also be

residual, which would indicate a Roman or prehistoric date for the enclosure, however the lack of Roman or prehistoric material from the ditch fills makes this unlikely. Equally, the ditches may have been regularly cleaned out during their use-lives and the ceramics from their fills may therefore post-date construction by a considerable margin. Both a medieval and post-medieval origin could therefore be argued from the available evidence.

The outlying field-system

Ditches C, D, G, H, I, J and K probably formed the boundaries of a field system, which was perhaps associated with a settlement to their east and extended from the eastern side of the site across the northern part of the investigated area (Fig. 2). Ditch K may represent the remains of a hollow-way that formed part of the field system. With the exception of that between ditches C and D, and I and J, there was no stratigraphic relationship between any of these features. However, their spatial patterning suggests that they may have functioned to partially define a set of small fields lying either side of the axes defined by ditches G and H, and I, J and K, in addition to a probable access route into the enclosure defined by ditches E and F. The layout of these ditches indicates that there have been changes to the extant pattern of fields; these evidently predated the tithe map of 1840 (CA 2016b, 23) when the boundaries had the same layout as those present at the time of excavation. However, this seems to represent relatively minor adjustments rather than a wholesale reform of the field systems as some of the elements, ditches J and K for example, are aligned with, and directly adjacent to surviving boundaries.

Ditch D and its recut ditch C (Fig. 9), which curved around the outside of enclosure ditch E on a broadly north-south orientation possibly defined the western side of an access route into the enclosure, which may have reused a possibly relict Middle/Late Bronze Age ditch A at its southern end and led to an entrance positioned beyond the limits of the excavation. Ditch D measured approximately 35m in length by 0.6-0.8m in width and 0.32-0.55m in depth; ditch C measured approximately 34m in length by 0.7-0.73m in width and 0.23-0.32m in depth. The fills of both ditches contained a small quantity of Middle Bronze Age pottery and possibly Mesolithic or Early Neolithic flint, but the artefacts were infrequent, small and abraded and almost certainly represent residual material.

Ditches G and H were both orientated north-west/south-east terminating approximately 4m short of the northern end of ditch D/C at their south-eastern ends. Ditch H ran parallel to ditch G 3.0-4.0m to its south, extending for approximately 60m and ending in a rounded terminal approximately 2.4m short of the eastern side of ditch J. Ditch G was much shorter, measuring approximately 17m in length and also ending in a rounded terminal. Both ditches G and H were approximately 0.7m in width and ditch G was 0.13-0.32m in depth, while ditch H measured 0.2-0.3m in depth. The space between ditches D and G was partly blocked by ditch 149, a 2.1m long linear feature with rounded terminals on the same alignment as ditch G (Fig. 2). These ditches possibly defined a space previously occupied by a field-boundary bank that had been removed by the time of the excavation.

North-north-east/south-south-west orientated ditch J (Fig. 2) measured approximately 57.5m in length by 0.46-0.8m width and 0.05-0.2m in depth and ran parallel to ditch K, a much more substantial ditch approximately 33m in length by 2.5m in width on the same alignment, excavated during the evaluation (Fig. 2) (CA 2016c). These two ditches may have represented the course of a hollow-way (ditch K), with a boundary ditch (J) along its eastern side, potentially forming a boundary to the field system, or between two field systems. The fills of ditch K contained post-medieval pottery and glass. This implies that this feature was backfilled or silted up in the post-medieval period. The evaluation (CA 2016c) located numerous granite blocks

within the topsoil (evaluation 100) between these two ditches and these may be interpreted as the footings for a wall or hedgebank between the two.

The southern part of the western boundary of the field system was defined by north-north-east/south-south-west orientated quarry ditch I (Fig. 2). This was a very substantial and irregular feature measuring approximately 42m in length. It was only excavated to its full extent in one area where it was 2.5m wide and 0.9m deep. Elsewhere, it was much wider in plan (up to 6.0m) and, where machine-excavated at its southern end, in excess of 2m deep.

Period 7: undated

Numerous features remain undated as they did not produce sufficient artefactual dating evidence and could not be tied in to the archaeological sequence using stratigraphic or spatial relationships. These features generally consisted of scatters of small pits or postholes and fell into three broad groups: those in the eastern area of the site, which were at least spatially associated either with Early Neolithic pit [125], or Middle/Late Bronze Age (Period 3) ditches A and B, or medieval/post-medieval (Period 5) ditches E, F, C and D, undated features which contained residual Neolithic artefacts and those features distributed more broadly across the site without significant spatial associations.

Undated features possibly associated with Early Neolithic [pit 125] (period 1) Middle/Late Bronze Age ditches A and B (period 3) or Med/Post Med activity (period 5)

A scatter of nine undated pits or postholes ([118], [120], [187], [189], [206], [509], [604], [606], and [608]) lying between ditches A and B in the eastern area of the site (Figs 2 and 4) possibly represent Middle to Late Bronze Age activity, with the majority perhaps representing a sub-rectangular structure (Figs 2 and 4). Of these Pit [206] (Figs 2, 4, and 6; section II), which cut ditch B was the only feature with a significant stratigraphic relationship. The pits/postholes were generally sub-circular or irregular in plan and 0.80-0.90m in diameter by 0.2m in depth. Few of the fills contained any archaeological finds and the material that was present could have been residual.

A group of three undated pits or postholes ([166], [168] and [170]) lying between the southern returns of ditches E and F (Fig. 2) may have been associated with activity in the medieval/post-medieval enclosure. These features were sub-circular in plan and concave in profile, ranging in diameter from 0.23-0.54m and in depth from 0.04-0.1m deep. They lacked any dating evidence and do not form a clear structure.

Sub-rectangular pit or hollow [134] (Fig. 2) lay on the eastern edge of the excavation area, within the area defined by ditches E and F and extending beyond the eastern limit of excavation. It was a substantial feature in plan, measuring 4.5m in length on a north/south orientation and extending up to 0.75m into the excavation area. The pit was somewhat irregular both in plan and profile, and only 0.19m deep. Part of the base of the feature was reddened, suggesting burning, but the fill (133) was very similar to the topsoil and contained very little charcoal and no artefacts. This feature could be the product of activity within the medieval/post-medieval enclosure encompassed by ditches E and F, but might well be derived from later activity as suggested by the topsoil-like fill.

Undated features containing Mesolithic/Neolithic Flint

Ditch L (Fig. 2) was situated in the southeast corner of the site and was curvilinear in plan, extending beyond the limit of excavation to the south and ending in a rounded terminal to the north-west. It measured approximately 9.25m in length by 1.10-1.20m in width and 0.45-0.51m in depth. The morphology of the ditch both in plan and profile was similar to the medieval/post-medieval field boundaries recorded to its north. A single, probably residual flint flake from the fill of this ditch is thought to be Mesolithic or Early Neolithic on the basis of its technological characteristics.

Unassociated and undated features

To the north of the features associated with ditches A and B oval pit [131] was cut into the fill of ditch D and immediately to its south-east sub-circular pit [110] was cut into the geological substrate (Fig. 2). Other undated features in this area mostly comprised tree-throw holes.

A small group of five undated pits or postholes ([2035], [2037], [2039], [2041] and [2043]) (Fig. 2, inset) lay near the southern edge of the excavation area, to the west of ditch L. These were all sub-circular in plan and varied in diameter from 0.13-0.57m and in depth from 0.07-0.15m. Their fills were generally charcoal rich and heavily bioturbated.

In the northern part of the excavation area, to the north of ditches H and G, close to the limit of excavation was a substantial sub-oval pit [evaluation 205] (Fig. 2), measuring 3m in length by 2.1m in width. The presence of substantial granite blocks in its fill may suggest that it was a quarry pit, but it produced no dating evidence.

The finds

The finds consist of a small assemblage of worked flint, including a plano-convex knife and an end scraper, a small assemblage of pottery dating to the prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval periods, including Middle Bronze Age Trevisker ware and a rim sherd from an Early Iron Age vessel in a fine gabbroic fabric. Also found were three pieces of worked stone, including a hammer stone and a roof slate and a single fragmentary post-medieval metal object, possibly a knife or horseshoe tip.

Prehistoric pottery

Henrietta Quinnell

The assemblage consists of 31 sherds (373g). A few sherds may be Iron Age but the majority is Middle or Late Bronze Age in date.

Middle Bronze Age Trevisker

Fabric is either gabbroic or gabbroic admixture, gabbroic clay from the Lizard mixed with other material, sometimes demonstrably from near the site where the pottery was used (Quinnell 2012a). These fabrics were used for various ceramic styles in Cornwall in the 2nd millennium BC and especially for the local Trevisker style. Four sherds, from ditch B (fill 180), ditch E (fill 181), and one from ditch A (eval fill 503), have form and decoration distinctive of Trevisker ware. The latter three are expanded rims, out-turned rims with complex cord impressed horizontal lines below, the former has traces of incised decoration; all find comparanda among the largest

published Cornish assemblage from the settlement at Trethellan Farm (Woodward and Cane 1991). SUERC-69739, 1502-1326 cal BC, although it comes from cremation pit [2009], a context without ceramics, is entirely appropriate for the Trevisker assemblage.

Table 1: Prehistoric pottery

Deposit	Feature	Description	Sherd count	Weight (g)	Fabric
100		Topsoil	2	11	Gabbroic
116	Ditch H	Fill of linear terminal [117]	1	5	Gabbroic
123	Ditch B	Primary fill of ditch [122]	3	29	Gabbroic
124	Ditch B	Secondary fill of ditch [122]	2	14	Gabbroic
145	Ditch G	Fill of ditch [144]	1	3	Gabbroic
154	Pit 135	Secondary fill of pit [135]	1	3	Gabbroic
158	Ditch C	Fill of ditch [157]	2	9	Gabbroic
176	Ditch C	Fill of ditch terminal [175]	1	8	Gabbroic
180	Ditch B	Fill of ditch [179]	3	39	Gabbroic
181	Ditch E	Fill of ditch [183]	2	73	Gabbroic
193	Ditch A	Secondary fill of ditch terminal [191]	1	30	Gabbroic
194	Ditch A	Third fill of ditch terminal [191]	9	59	Gabbroic
196	Ditch A	Upper fill of ditch terminal [191]	1	10	Gabbroic admixture
204	Ditch A	Fifth fill of ditch [199]	1	38	Gabbroic
503 (evaluation)	Ditch F	Fill of ditch [303]	1	42	Gabbroic admixture
2032	Ditch B	Fill of ditch terminal [2030]	1	12	Gabbroic
TOTAL			32	385	

Late Bronze Age Plain Ware

Some contexts have gabbroic sherds of Late Bronze Age Plain Ware, dating from the 11th until the 9th centuries BC in Cornwall: gabbroic admixture was no longer used. Sherds from ditch B (fill 124) are from a simple fairly straight-sided vessel with a little fingernail decoration (see Trevelgue Head, Quinnell 2011, Fig 7.2). The sherds from ditch A terminal (fills 193 and 194) come from a straight-sided vessel with a simple rim with comparanda from a pit group at Scarcewater, Pennance (Quinnell 2010, 106). The rim from ditch A (fill 204) is paralleled in the large assemblage from Higher Besore, Truro (Quinnell in Gossip forthcoming). SUERC-73448, 976-817 cal BC, on residue from a sherd from ditch A fill 194, is only the third date from a Late Bronze Age Plain Ware assemblage in Cornwall.

Early Iron Age

The small, thin, well made, out-turned gabbroic rim from pit 135 (fill 154) should be Early Iron Age: cal 805–551 BC, (95.4 probability) % (SUERC 73444), comes from another fill of pit [135]. Sherds of this date from Trevelgue Head provide parallels for form and fabric (Quinnell 2011, 157). Bodysherds from ditch H terminal (fill 116) and ditch B terminal (fill 2032) are gabbroic and could possibly belong to the Iron Age.

The medieval and later pottery

John Allan

In total 18 medieval (13th- to 15th-century) sherds and 36 of post-medieval date were recovered from the excavation, their total weight being 694g. More than half the collection (six medieval and 25 post-medieval sherds) came from topsoil; the largest stratified group, from ditch F, cut [303], fill (304), consists merely of eight 13th or 14th-century sherds, most of them from one vessel. .

All the medieval pottery and most of the 16th/17th-century material consists of Cornish granite-derived coarseware. A kiln making such pottery is known from wasters from Mawgan-in-Meneage (now in the Museum of Cornwall, Truro), and post-medieval documentary evidence indicates that there were further local kilns at Truro, Constantine, Veryan, Kenwyn and Feock, as well as rather more distant sources in Cornwall (Douch 1967). At present it is not possible to distinguish the products of these different centres (Taylor and Allan 1998–9). North Devon pottery forms the other component of the early post-medieval ceramics; clearly it circulated in considerable quantities in 16th and 17th-century west Cornwall.

Table 2: Medieval and post-medieval pottery

Deposit	Feature Lable	Type	No of sherds / vessels	Comments
100 topsoil (28 sherds)		Chinese porcelain	1/1	Brown rim, c 1720-70
		Staffordshire white wares	3/3	After 1800
		Bristol-Staffordshire	1/1	Press-moulded dish, C18
		N Devon	2/1	C18-C19
		N Devon gravel-free	6/6	C16-C18
		N Devon gravel-tempered	1/1	C16-C18
		Post-medieval redware, source unknown	1/1	
		Cornish, granite-derived, glazed	4/4	Post-medieval
		Cornish, granite-derived, unglazed	4/4	1 x bowl, C16-C17
		Cornish, granite-derived, unglazed	5/4	Medieval
107, primary fill of cut 106	Ditch E	Cornish, granite-derived	3/3	1 x bowl, C16
160 primary fill of cut 159	Ditch E	Cornish granite-derived	1/1	Medieval
181 secondary fill of cut 183	Ditch E	Cornish, granite-derived, unglazed	2/2	Jugs, L13-15C
		Cornish, granite-derived	6/5	1 x bowl, post-medieval
		N Devon, gravel-tempered	1/1	Probably C16
		Sand-tempered, unclassified	1/1	
304 fill of cut 303	Ditch F	G-D, white mica	8/2	C13-C14

600 topsoil		N Devon gravel-free	2/2	C15-C16
2202		Cornish, granite-derived, wheel-thrown, unglazed	1/1	C15-C16
3000 topsoil		Cornish granite-derived, hand-made, oxidised	1/1	C13-C14

Lithics

Jacky Sommerville

Introduction and methodology

A total of 16 worked flints (59g) was recorded from ten deposits. The assemblage comprises seven flakes, five chips, one piece of shatter and three retouched tools.

Range and variety

Primary technology

Most of the debitage did not display chronologically diagnostic features. However, two flakes (one from medieval/post-medieval ditch C and one from undated ditch L, terminal [2025]) both had linear butts. This suggests the use of soft hammer percussion (Inizan *et al.* 1992, 80), which is a feature of Mesolithic and Early Neolithic technology.

Secondary technology

A microdenticulate (Fig. 10.1), made on a blade blank, was retrieved from undated ditch terminal L [2025]. The silica gloss on the lateral edges is quite common on this tool type, which is thought to have been used for processing siliceous plants, but not for harvesting (Saville 2002, 94). Microdenticulates are frequently found on Early Neolithic sites (Richards 1990, 18).

Fill (115) (of undated pit [114] produced a plano-convex knife (Fig 10.2), made on a flake blank. This type of knife was in use during the Early Bronze Age (Butler 2005, 172). An end scraper from topsoil (100) had been made on a relatively thick flake and displayed steep, moderately regular retouch on the distal dorsal end. It is not a closely dateable type.

Illustration catalogue

1 Undated ditch L terminal [2025] (fill 2027) – microdenticulate

It features very fine serrations along the right dorsal edge and part of the left dorsal edge. Both edges are rather worn and the reverse of the serrated edges displayed some ‘silica gloss’. Measures 45 x 15 x 3mm.

2 Undated pit 114 (fill 115) – plano-convex knife

The dorsal face is domed and has been invasively pressure-flaked; the ventral surface is flat and unretouched. Measures 50 x 18 x 6mm.

Potentially stratified lithics

Period 1 pit [126], which produced four chips, a flake and a piece of shatter, returned an Early/Middle Neolithic radiocarbon date of cal 3349–3095 BC, (95.4%) (SUERC-73449). Lithics from deposits which had been dated to the Bronze Age were: two flakes and a chip from Period 3 ditch B (Middle/Late Bronze Age); and a flake from Period 3 ditch A (Middle/Late Bronze Age). However, none of this debitage was chronologically diagnostic.

Discussion

The presence of the microdenticulate and plano-convex knife within the flint assemblage demonstrates activity during both the Early Neolithic and Bronze Age periods, in support of the evidence from the pottery. The assemblage is, however, too small to allow parallels to be drawn with other sites in Cornwall.

Metalwork

Katie Marsden

A single item of iron was recorded from medieval/post-medieval ditch E (fill 181). The item is fragmentary and comprises a broadly triangular body with a rounded tip which expands in thickness towards the break. It is a possible knife or horseshoe tip and is too fragmentary to be closely dateable.

Worked stone

Ruth Shaffrey

Three pieces of stone were retained and submitted for analysis. These comprise a possible palette fragment with one original bevelled edge, a hammerstone (both from the topsoil) and a roof slate (fill (181) of medieval/post-medieval ditch E), all made of presumably local slate. The hammerstone utilises a long thin flat cobble. It has percussion wear all around the edge but concentrated on the ends. Similar cobbles with wear almost exclusively on one end (Wickham-Jones 1983, 341) are sometimes called limpet hammers because of their association with shell middens in Scotland, but they could have been used for any process that required hammering, including flint working. Such processing cobbles and pebbles are common finds on Neolithic and Bronze Age sites in Cornwall, with numerous examples found, for example, between Sennen and Porthcurno (Quinnell 2012b, 27). The roof slate is clearly post-medieval or later in date, but the palette and hammerstone could both be much earlier, and given the evidence for Bronze Age activity in the immediate vicinity a prehistoric origin seems likely.

Catalogue of worked stone

Worked slate, possible palette? Approximately square piece of slate with one surviving original and bevelled edge. Measures >80 x >71 x 3mm. Weighs 80g. Topsoil.

Hammerstone. Long thin flat slate cobble with percussion damage all round its circumference and concentrated on its ends. Measures 102 x 53 x 18mm. Weighs 154g. Topsoil.

Roof slate. Slate fragment with offset roughly oval shaped perforation measuring 8x9mm. Two original edges. Measures >94 x >130 x 4mm thick. Weighs 171g. Fill 181 of period 5 ditch E, post-medieval.

The biological evidence

Cremated Human Bone

Sharon Clough

A single cremated bone deposit (2010) was recovered from an earth-cut grave [2009]. The bone was radiocarbon dated (SUERC -69739) to the Middle Bronze Age.

Standard methodology was followed (Brickley and McKinley 2004) for post excavation analysis of cremated human bone. The total weight of the cremated bone recovered was 410.7g. This falls short of the expected weight from a complete adult individual (McKinley 2000, 404), but is within the average recovered from Bronze Age burials (McKinley 1997). The feature was 0.23m deep and the bone was not within a ceramic container, therefore vertical truncation may have removed some bone. The cremated bone was fairly evenly distributed between the fraction sizes with the maximum fragment size 47mm (Table 3). This suggests high fragmentation levels. As a result only 58.5% of the bone fragments were identified to skeletal area. The identified bone was mostly long bone and cranium, these are more readily identifiable and have less trabecular bone content, and therefore survive better. The bone was completely white in colour. No other hints of colour were observed. This indicates excellent pyre technology, ensuring the corpse was thoroughly and completely burnt. The bone size indicated an adult individual. A single vertebral body had minor osteophytic growth on the edge and possible degeneration of body surface. Spinal degeneration is generally age-related and so this implies the individual was in the older age-range. The entire cremated individual was not generally deposited in the Bronze Age, it was either not important, or desired (Rebay-Salisbury 2010). Therefore the total weight of c. 400g of cremated bone may be around the total amount originally deposited. The ability to cremate the dead very efficiently in the Bronze Age, resulting in fine white bone, compounds the problem of identification. The bone may have originally been deposited in an organic container, now completely destroyed. The Middle Bronze Age radiocarbon date allows this apparently isolated find to contribute to the knowledge of funerary activity in this period in Cornwall. It was a time of transition from burial monuments to the realm of the domestic. Significance once placed on the remains and their place of internment had been replaced by emphasis upon places they once inhabited (Jones 2008). Much of the evidence for burial practice disappears archaeologically, and this lack of evidence increases the importance of the identification and scientific dating of this burial.

Table 3: Summary of cremated bone deposit

Context	Total weight (g)	Largest Fragment size (mm)	Identified bones	Age	Sex	Bone colour	Comments
[2009] (2010)	410.7 >10mm 162g (39.44%)	47x14	Cranial vault, petrous portion, occipital, zygomatic, ulna, radius, femur, tibia,	Adult – older range	Unidentified	white	Vertebral body had possible degeneration & slight

	10-5mm 160.4g (39.02%) 5-2mm 88.3g (21.49%)		fibula, ribs, vertebral body frags, phalanges frags, ilium, tooth root fragments Skull 76.6g Axial 9.6g U Limb 8.8g L Limb 72.4g U Limb 3g U 240.3g				osteophytes. Sutures of cranial vault sharp & vault fairly thin, some parts thicker.
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Charred Plant Remains

Sarah F. Wyles

A single sample from fill 126 of pit [125] was selected for further analysis based on the assessment of the samples from the excavation. An Early/Middle Neolithic date of cal. 3349-3095 BC (95.4%) (SUERC-673449) was obtained by radiocarbon dating a charred hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) shell fragment from pit [125]. The sample was processed following standard flotation methods, using a 250µm sieve for the recovery of the flot and a 1 mm sieve for the collection of the residue. All identifiable charred plant remains were identified following the nomenclature of Stace (1997) for wild plants, and traditional nomenclature, as provided by Zohary *et al* (2012) for cereals. The results are recorded in Table 4. The large assemblage recovered from fill 126 (sample 1) of pit [125] was dominated by very high numbers of hazelnut shell fragments. A few hulled wheat, emmer or spelt (*Triticum dicoccum/spelta*), grain fragments and crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*) pip fruit fragments were also recorded within this deposit. This predominance of hazelnut and other wild fruit fragments within assemblages of Neolithic date has been recorded from other deposits in Southern Britain and this may be indicative of the exploitation and general reliance on these wild food resources during this period (Moffett *et al* 1989; Stevens 2007; Robinson 2000). Hazelnut shell fragments and a few grain fragments were also recorded from Early Neolithic pits at Portscatho (Jones and Reed 2006).

Table 4: Charred plant identifications

Phase		Early/Middle Neolithic
Feature type		Pit
Cut		125
Context		126
Sample		1
Vol (L)		40
Flot size		500
%Roots		5
Cereals	Common Name	
<i>Triticum dicoccum/spelta</i> (grain)	emmer/spelt wheat	2
Cereal indet. (grains)	cereal	3
Other Species		
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L. (fragments)	hazelnut	1980
<i>Malus sylvestris</i> type	apple fruit	4

Wood Charcoal Report

Dana Challinor

Introduction and methodology

Four samples were submitted for charcoal analysis from Early/Middle Neolithic pit [125]; Middle Bronze Age cremation pit 2009 and Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pit [135]. All of the samples contained abundant charcoal, especially the assemblage from pit [135]. Taxonomic diversity was low and 50 fragments per feature were sufficient to characterise the assemblages. Standard identification procedures were followed, with representative fragments examined in longitudinal sections at high magnification (up to X400). Identifications were made according to appropriate keys (Hather 2000, Schweingruber 1990) and modern reference material. Observations on maturity and other features were made where possible. Classification and nomenclature follow Stace 1997.

Results

The condition of the charcoal was generally good to fair, with minimal infusion of sediment. Occasional high levels of vitrification were noted. Four taxa were positively identified, all of which were consistent with native species; *Quercus* sp. (oak), *Corylus avellana* (hazel), *Prunus spinosa* (blackthorn) and Maloideae (hawthorn, apple, pear, whitebeam/service/rowan etc.). The results are presented by fragment count in Table 5, with observations on maturity etc. made in the discussion below.

Table 5: Charcoal

	Phase	Early/Middle Neolithic	Middle Bronze Age		Late Early Iron Age
	Feature type	pit	cremation		pit
	Feature	125	2009		135
	Context	126	2010		153
	Sample	1	3	4	2
<i>Quercus</i> sp.	oak	12 (rh)	30 (hsr)	20 (sh)	32 (h)
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L.	hazel	37 (r)			
<i>Alnus/Corylus</i>	alder/hazel				1r
<i>Prunus spinosa</i> L.	blackthorn				12r
Maloideae	hawthorn etc.	1r			6r

Early Neolithic pit 125

The charcoal assemblage from this feature was mostly hazel, with some oak and a trace of Maloideae type. The hazel came from trunkwood as well as some small roundwood. Some heartwood was recorded in the oak. The large quantity of hazelnut shells along with some charred cereal grains in this deposit (Wyles, this report) indicated food waste. The charcoal, therefore, probably originated as fuel waste from cooking or food preparation activities and

reflects the use of oak-hazel woodland which was ubiquitous in the region during the Neolithic period (Wilkinson & Straker 2007).

Middle Bronze Age cremation 2009

The two samples from this feature were similar in character, although sample 4 was less abundant. Oak was predominant, with no evidence recovered for other taxa. Much of the charcoal was knotty/distorted and it may have included burr wood. This distortion, plus the fragmentation of the material, made the determination of maturity difficult, but it appeared that a range of small and larger trunk/heartwood had been utilised. The use of oak for cremation purposes was common in Bronze Age cremations, as it provided both the high calorific heat required for efficient cremations and was readily available. Although evidence from Middle Bronze Age cremation charcoal in Cornwall is limited, there are several comparable sites for the Early Bronze Age; including a series of barrows on the North Cornish Coast (Cartwright 1985) and Highgate Ritual Enclosure (Challinor 2015). Oak was also the primary fuel in the ceremonial cairn complex at Stannon Down (Gale 2004).

Early Iron Age pit 135

This feature produced the most diverse of the assemblages, albeit still restricted. Additional identifications might have yielded more taxa, but they would have formed a minor component of the assemblage. Oak was clearly present in large quantities, with multiple, highly comminuted fragments visible in the sample as a whole (which was rich, with >1000 fragments). The comminuted nature of the material meant maturity was difficult to ascertain, but a trace of heartwood was recorded and there was no evidence for small roundwood. The supplementary taxa, blackthorn, Maloideae type and single fragment of alder or hazel, all derived from small roundwood, some with pith and bark of 5-7 years' growth. The pit showed evidence of *in situ* burning, and the charcoal may represent the remains of a hearth. The charcoal is consistent with domestic type fuel indicating the use of oak logs, with supplementary roundwood from scrub/hedgerow type environments.

Radiocarbon dating

Sarah Cobain

Radiocarbon dating was undertaken in order to confirm the dates of cremation burial [2009], pits [125] and [135] and ditch A (cut 191). The samples were analysed during October 2016 and June 2017 at Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre (SUERC), Rankine Avenue, Scottish Enterprise Technology Park, East Kilbride, Glasgow, G75 0QF, Scotland.

The uncalibrated dates are conventional radiocarbon ages. The radiocarbon ages were calibrated using the University of Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit calibration programme OxCal 4.2.4 (2013) (Bronk Ramsey 2009) using the IntCal13 curve (Reimer *et al.* 2013) (Table 6).

Table 6: Radiocarbon dating results

Feature	Lab No.	Material	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$	Radiocarbon age	Calibrated radiocarbon age 95.4% probability	Calibrated radiocarbon age 68.2% probability
Context 2010 Cremation burial 2009	SUER C-69739	Cremated human bone - Unidentified long bone	-24.3‰	3163 ± 30 yr BP	1502–1393 cal BC (94.0%) 1334–1326 cal BC (1.4%)	1494–1478 cal BC (14.7%) 1457–1412 cal BC (53.5%)

Context 153 Pit 135	SUER C- 73444	Charcoal - <i>Prunus</i> (Cherry species twig)	-26.0‰	2557 ± 32 yr BP	805–744 cal BC (59.3%) 686–665 cal BC (8.9%) 644–551 cal BC (27.2%)	801–754 cal BC (54.9%) 681–670 cal BC (6.2%) 609–594 cal BC (7.1%)
Context 194 Ditch A (cut 191)	SUER C- 73448	Pottery - Charred residue	-26.2‰	2747 ± 32 yr BP	976 – 817 cal BC (95.4%)	915–841 cal BC (68.2%)
Context 126 Pit 125	SUER C- 73449	Charred seed – <i>Corylus avellana</i> (Hazelnut shell)	-23.7‰	4500 ± 32 yr BP	3349–3095 cal BC (95.4%)	3336–3308 cal BC (11.4%) 3302–3265 cal BC (13.9%) 3240–3210 cal BC (12.7%) 3192–3151 cal BC (16.9%) 3138–3105 cal BC (13.3%)

Discussion

The landscape context of the prehistoric and medieval/post-medieval activity at Hendra Road

The evidence for occupation at Hendra Road is long-lived but seems to have occurred in intermittent bursts, starting in early prehistory with Mesolithic/Early Neolithic activity in the form of flint tools and a single pit and continuing up to the medieval/post-medieval period with a field system and probable evidence for an enclosed settlement. The topography and location of the site, which comprises a gentle south facing slope overlooking a tributary stream of the River Kennall was ideal for settlement. The slope itself would have provided shelter and the opportunity for crop cultivation, while pasture for animals would have been available on the hill top and potentially on the valley floor, which would also have provided a source of fresh water. The small valley which the site occupies is on the north-eastern side of an area of granitic upland bordered to the east and south by lower lying coastal areas. Both topographies have in recent years produced plentiful evidence for settlement, farming and ritual monuments spanning the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman to early medieval periods. The following discussion seeks to set the findings at Hendra Road into this wider context.

The nature of prehistoric and medieval/post-medieval occupation at Hendra Road

Mesolithic and Neolithic to Early Bronze Age activity

Evidence for Mesolithic and Early/Middle Neolithic activity of some kind was present on the site in the form of two flint tools,] found as residual items in later contexts. However, stronger evidence for occupation or settlement, however ephemeral or temporary, took the form of a single bowl-shaped pit [125] radiocarbon dated to the first 3rd of the 4th millennium BC and containing an assemblage of charred hazelnut shells, some grains of hulled wheat, charred crab apple pips, a small worked flint assemblage including debitage and a single flake, and charcoal of oak and hawthorn. This material probably represents evidence of domestic occupation, including cooking and food preparation, and perhaps indicates secondary deposition of midden material. The isolated nature of the pit suggests that any such occupation was probably small-scale and relatively short lived, however, finds from the wider site including the flint tools mentioned above hint at more such activity in the immediate vicinity. Early Neolithic pits of this type, which in the Cornish landscape typically occur in pairs, or in small groups of less than six have been

found in increasingly frequent numbers since 1990 (Jones and Quinnell 2011, 201) and are generally interpreted as the result of short-term settlement by semi-mobile groups, with Jones and Quinnell (ibid. 202) suggesting that some may have been dug to receive special deposits representing ritual clearing up by mobile populations. Similar pits to the one at Hendra road have been found in several locations in the Cornish landscape, with the nearest being at Tremough 5.5km to the south-east, where a group of two Early Neolithic pits that may have been marked with stones were excavated between 2009 and 2011 along with two tree-throw holes; all four features were backfilled with artefacts and food remains (Jones, Gossip and Quinnell 2015, 17). The pits from Tremough were found near to a further group of five Early Neolithic pits associated with a flint scatter, a greenstone axe and a knapping floor (Jones and Gossip 2007). Further afield several small Neolithic pit groups have been excavated in Cornwall in the early 21st century (Jones and Quinnell 2011, 201), including along the North Cornish Coast (Gossip, Jones and Quinnell 2012; Jones and Quinnell 2014), on the south coast (Edwards and Kirkham 2008, Jones and Reed 2006) and inland at Lanner (Jones and Thorpe 2014). Larger concentrations of pits are scarce, but are present at Trenowah (Johns 2008) where 14 small pits of probable Early Neolithic date were excavated and Tregarrick Farm, Roche (Cole and Jones 2002-3) where a group of ten Early Neolithic pits, with mostly bowl-shaped profiles containing structured deposits of pottery, flint and hazelnuts were excavated.

There is no clear evidence for structures, or any form of more temporary occupation at Hendra Road in the Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age, however, a Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age shaft-hole adze, with traces of wear and flakes missing from both ends was found in Hendra in 1993 and reported by a local farmer to Cornwall Archaeological Unit (Hartgrove 1993), suggesting activity of this date in the area.

Middle Bronze Age

There is no direct evidence for settlement at Hendra Road during the Middle Bronze Age, however, the presence of a single cremation burial, comprising a sub-circular pit less than 0.5m in diameter, containing an unaccompanied, probably older adult who had been cremated using oak wood suggests that the landscape had some significance. The cremation, which was situated next to the western limit of excavation indicates that the use of the landscape had perhaps changed from one predominantly used for settlement to one primarily used for funerary ritual. The use of oak for the funerary pyre also suggests that oak woodland was probably accessible in the immediate locality. Such cremation burials, often occur close to earlier barrows and in settlements, but are also increasingly known from field systems and trackway junctions, and often without grave goods. They are fairly common from Middle and Late Bronze Age Southern Britain more generally (Yates 2007), although rarer in the South West peninsula. At Lanner 4km to the north west of the site a group of four pits produced cremated human bone dated to the Early to Middle Bronze Age (Jones and Thorpe 2014).

Middle to Late Bronze Age

Middle to Late Bronze Age activity comprised two large enigmatic ditches set at right angles to one another; both were linear, with rounded terminals. The northern ditch (ditch B) which measured a maximum of 0.25m in depth was the shallower of the two, while ditch A, which extended beyond the limit of excavation to the south east was a relatively deep feature at a maximum depth of 1m. The ditches were associated with an undated group of postholes and pits which occupied the space between and around the south-eastern edge of ditch B and the north-western terminal of ditch A. The spatial relationships of several of these features are somewhat suggestive of a sub-rectangular structure orientated north east/south west, however, the spacing

of the features is irregular and the putative structure lacks a convincing north western corner post. If the post/pit group is related to the ditches it may therefore represent several phases of rebuilding of a structure, or a more random arrangement of features. The assemblage of material from the ditch fills comprised a small assemblage of Late Bronze Age plain ware, some Middle Bronze Age Trevisker ware and a very small assemblage of undiagnostic worked flint, but no very substantial deposits of material culture.

The function and meaning of this arrangement of features is therefore difficult to interpret; it is possible that they originated in the Middle Bronze Age and were contemporary with the cremation burial to their west. If this was so then ditch B may have provided the material for a large bank to its north west, which would have been capable of functioning as a backdrop to funerary and/or other ritual activity. However, if this was the case then it might be expected that more cremation burials would have been found in this area and a lack of large amounts of material culture, or any placed deposits from the ditch fills may also be taken to argue against an explicitly ritual function. The spatial layout of the ditches, which did not include the obvious enclosure of space or the definition of trackways or other routes, as well as their large size, also seems to rule out any role as part of a field system or settlement enclosure.

A review of the literature on Bronze Age settlement in the south-west peninsular did not reveal any direct parallels for this arrangement of features. However, a complex of Middle and Late Bronze Age features excavated at Tremough 3.8km to the south east of Stithians included a somewhat similar, although much smaller arrangement of two Late Bronze Age ditches set at oblique angles to one another and associated with an amorphous group of post and stakeholes, which included an L-shaped arrangement interpreted as part of a structure, or several structures by the excavators (Jones, Gossip and Quinnell 2015, 40-42). The ditches at Tremough were much smaller than those at Hendra Road and had a slightly different spatial relationship to one another (*ibid.*); they were also very much shallower leading the excavators to suggest that they may have represented buried soils, or bedding trenches for a structure (*ibid.*). The fills of the ditches at Tremough, produced large quantities of burnt stone, and charcoal including oak, hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel and broom or gorse, and the fill of one of the post holes of the L-shaped arrangement included two stone mullers (*ibid.*). The landscape and topographical setting of the features at Tremough was also similar to that at Hendra Road, although with the major difference that the Tremough features were located inside a 60-65m diameter Late Bronze Age ring fort with an east facing entrance, which lead the excavators, in a comparison to the ring fort at Mucking North Ring, Essex, to suggest that the ditches may have represented the footings for a screen functioning to block the interior of the settlement from view when approached via the east facing entrance (Parker Pearson and Richards 1994). The ring fort at Tremough may have been associated with a second similar enclosure, which is largely known from geophysical survey (*ibid.* 49) and has been partially excavated, but produced only Late Iron Age and Roman pottery, however, there was also a Middle Bronze Age hollow set roundhouse with evidence for the production of copper alloy objects nearby (Jones, Gossip and Quinnell 2015, 17).

The function of the Middle Bronze Age features at Hendra Road remains ambiguous and there are significant differences with the site at Tremough, the most obvious of which is the lack of anything resembling a ring fort at Hendra Road, as well as their greater size. However, the similarities between the two sites are strong enough to suggest the possibility of a common function. Taken together the evidence from both sites suggests an industrial function of some kind, with the depth of the ditches at Hendra Road suggesting that they could have functioned as troughs and that the ditches at Tremough may have suffered from a degree of truncation. The presence of quantities of charcoal and burnt stone from the features at Tremough suggests the use of fire, perhaps to heat water contained in the ditches/troughs; and, despite a relative lack of

artefact evidence from Hendra road, this kind of activity may also have occurred there. Finally, the presence of two stone mullers at Tremough suggests that processing of some kind was also occurring and the presence of a Bronze Age hammerstone/processing cobble and a stone palette from the topsoil at Hendra Road (Shaffrey this report) is intriguing in this regard.

Early Iron Age

Early Iron Age activity was restricted to a single oval pit [135] situated in the north-eastern corner of the site. The lower fill of the pit, which was rich in charcoal probably derived from oak logs mixed with supplementary roundwood from scrub or hedgerow type environments and this combined with evidence of scorching around the edges of the pit suggests that it functioned as a hearth or fire pit. A single Early Iron Age rim sherd in a fine gabbroic fabric from the upper fill of the pit agrees with the Early Iron Age radio-carbon date on charcoal from the lower fill. Similar sherds from the terminal of medieval/post-medieval ditch E close by to the south-west indicates that contemporary features may have existed, but the isolation of the feature remains puzzling. It is possible that the pit was an outlying feature related to a contemporary settlement beyond the limit of excavation to the west and perhaps represented some industrial or agricultural activity on the fringes of a settlement. However, other isolated Early Iron Age pits are known in the region, for example, two Early Iron Age pits of ritual purpose, containing pottery, saddle querns and rubbing stones, which were associated with a stony bank representing an Early Iron Age field system were excavated at Trenowah, near St Austell (Johns 2008, 14).

Medieval/post-medieval

The main focus of medieval and post-medieval settlement at Hendra Road lay immediately east of the site, with the square ditched enclosure suggested by ditches E and F perhaps representing a settlement with medieval, or earlier origins, as shown by the 13th to 14th century pottery from the fill of the inner ditch (ditch F). If this is the case then the settlement perhaps represented a small medieval farmstead or proto-hamlet, later becoming a post-medieval farmstead and then the site of the vicarage by 1840. The focus of the excavations was on the ditched field system to the west of the enclosure. The western part of this seems to follow the layout of the modern fields, but the western and central part of which seems to predate this layout and therefore to have originated prior to the 1842 Stithians tithe map. These ditches seem likely to have been contemporary with the medieval and post-medieval settlement focus and perhaps also to have functioned as outworks for the settlement, perhaps channelling movement around the outside of the square enclosure to an entrance lying beyond the limits of excavation. The layout of the medieval/post-medieval ditches also suggests that Middle to Late Bronze Age ditch A and possibly also an associated bank may have been extant as an earthwork feature in these periods and incorporated into the outworks of the medieval/post-medieval enclosure. The assemblage of material culture from the medieval and post-medieval features, which included pottery and a post-medieval roof slate and iron knife or horseshoe tip was mostly of local origin, and does not indicate that the inhabitants had any special status or far flung social connections.

A review of the relevant literature did not reveal any direct excavated parallels for the settlement at Hendra Road, however, synthesis by Herring et al. (2011) makes clear that dispersed but nucleated hamlet style farming settlements were the norm in later medieval Cornwall (*ibid.* 287) and survey of an abandoned later medieval hamlet at Brown Willy shows several sub-rectangular enclosures associated with long houses (*ibid.* 290).

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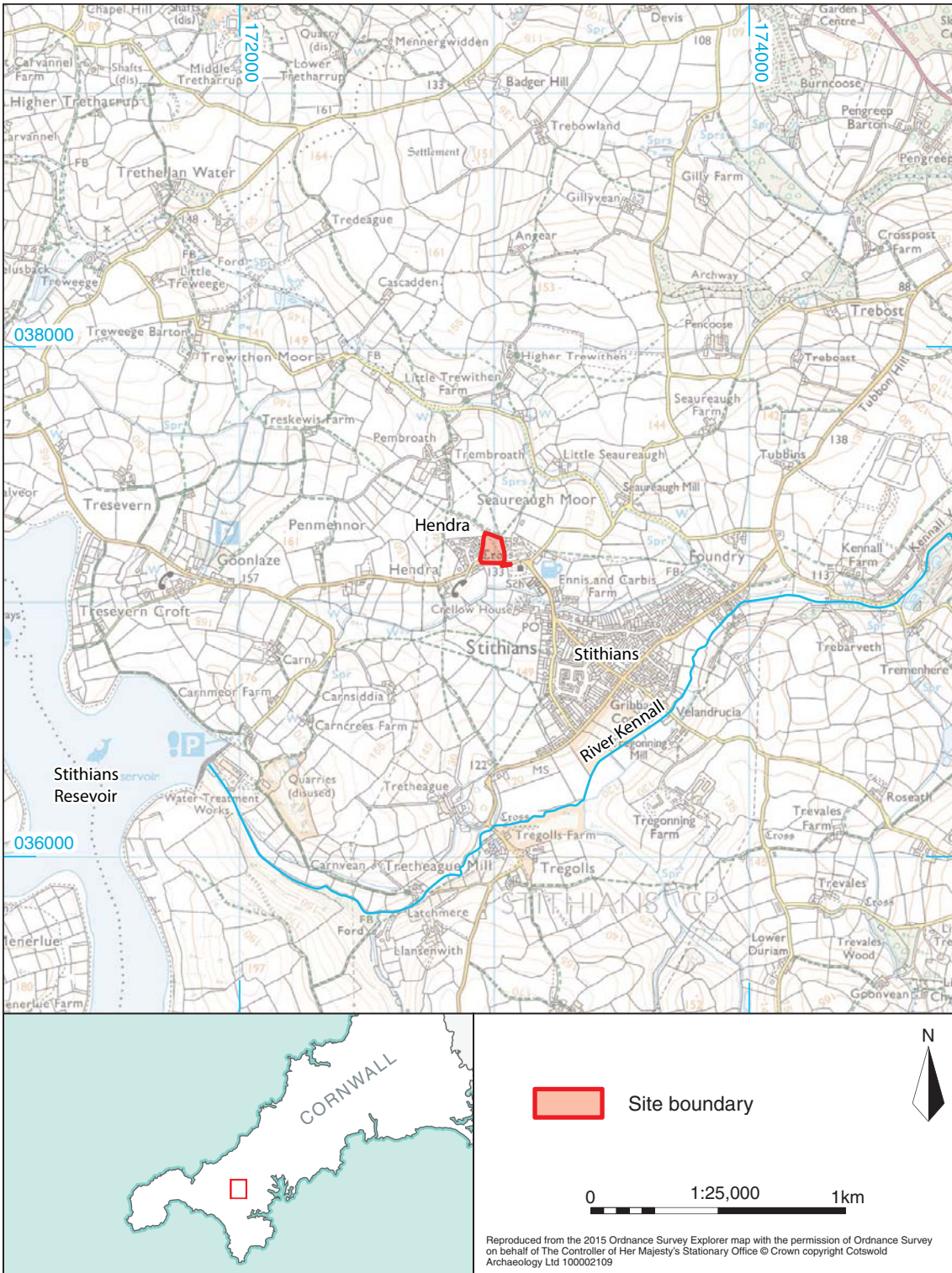


Figure 1: Site Location Plan.

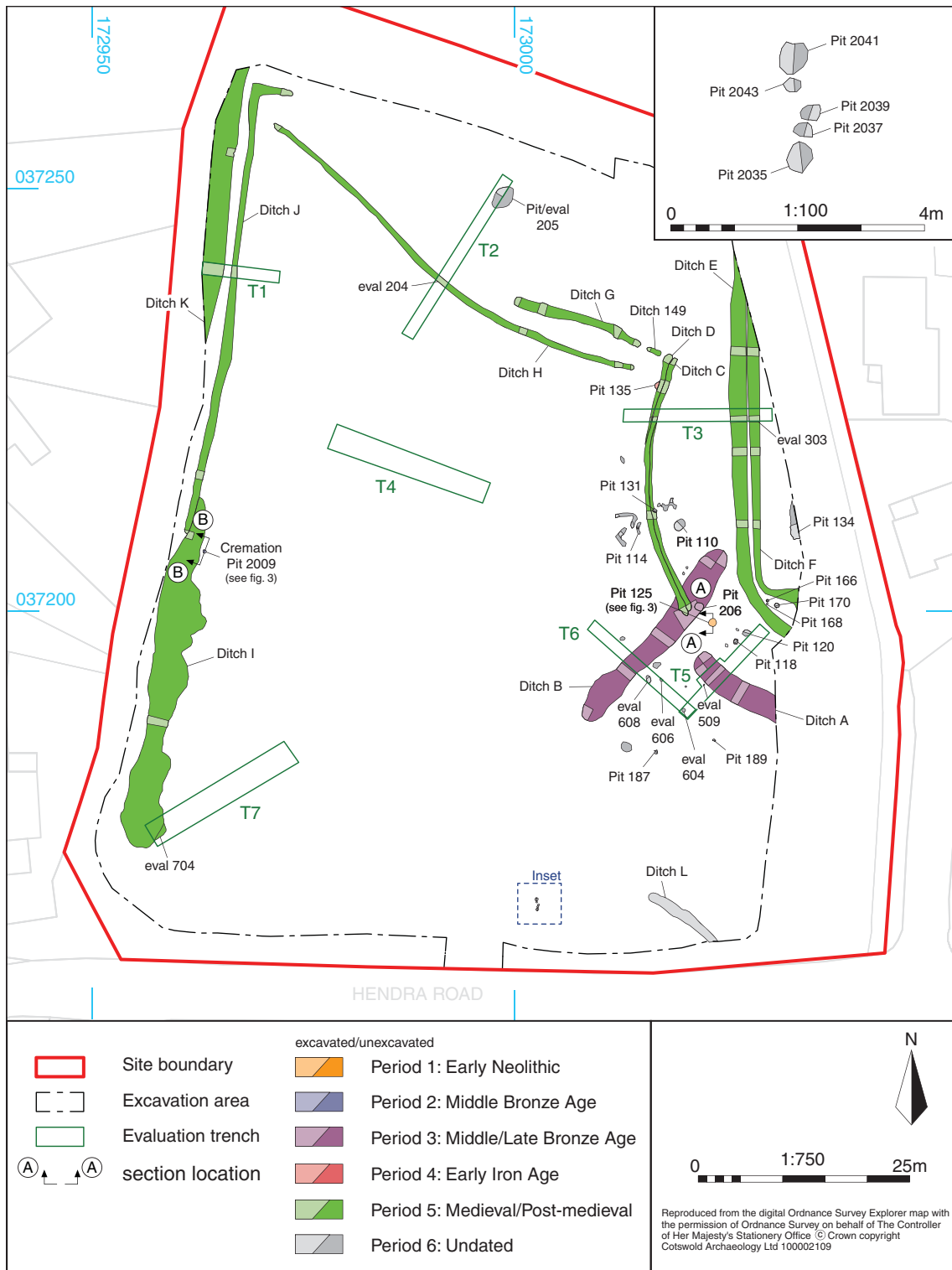


Figure 2: Phased Site Plan with evaluation trenches indicated.

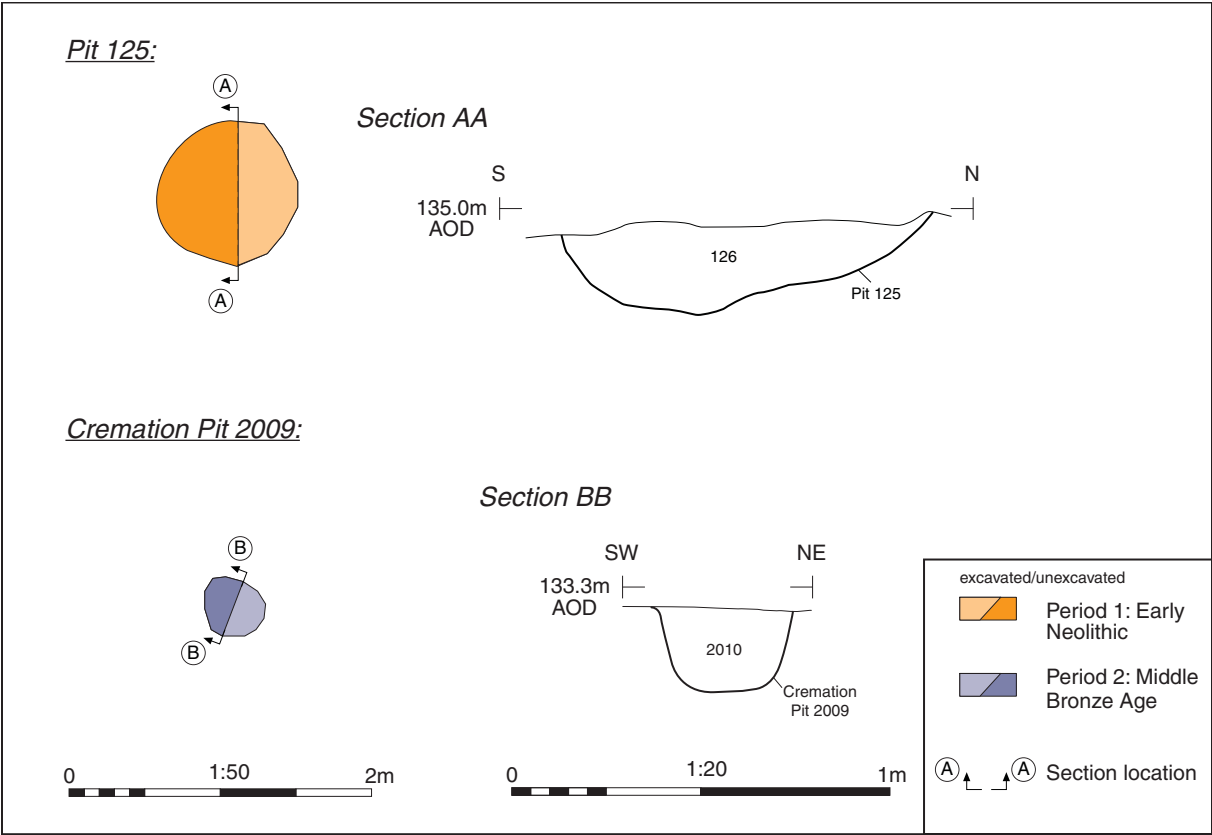


Figure 3: Pit 125 and cremation pit 2009.

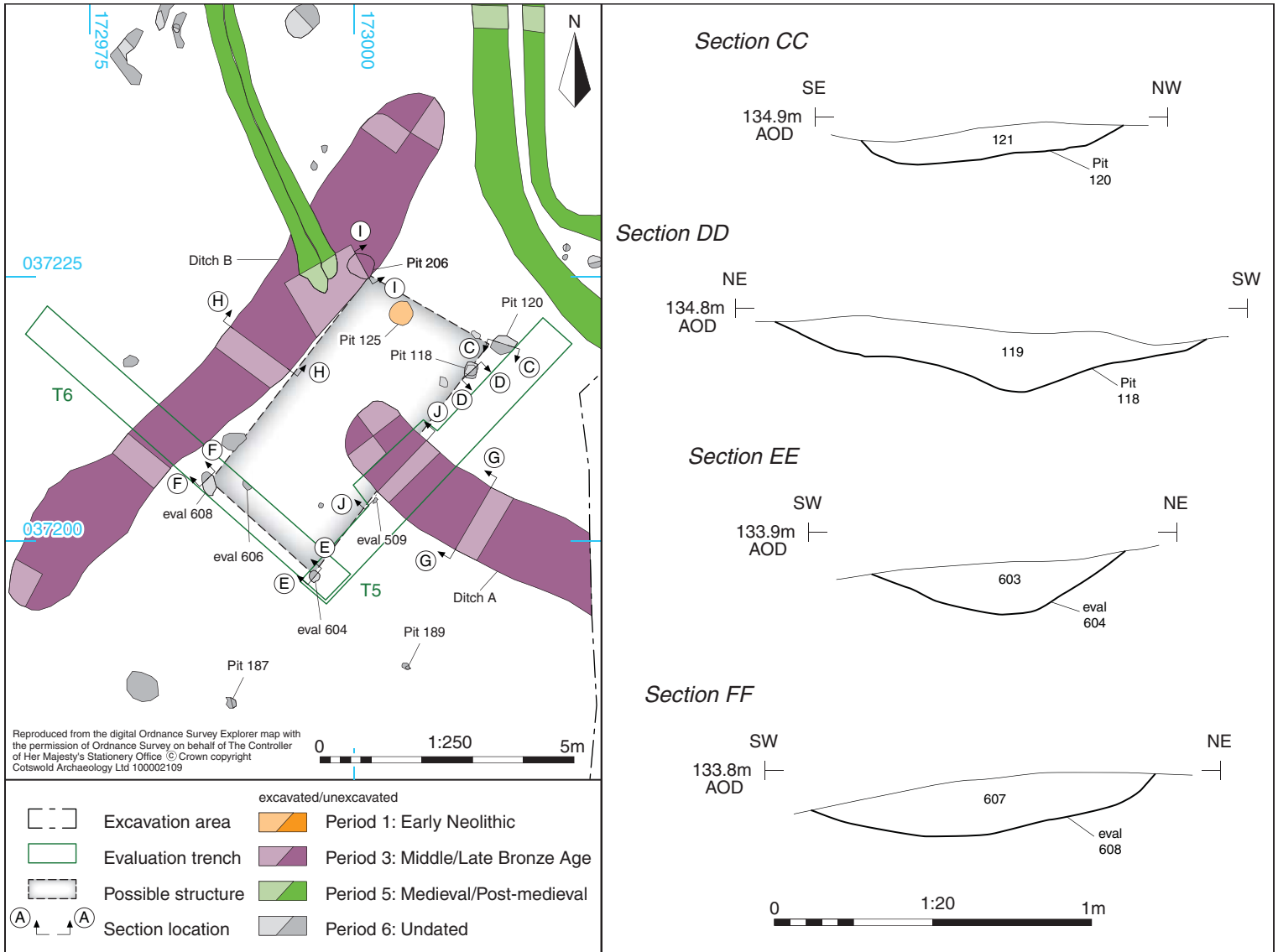


Figure 4: Middle to Late Bronze Age ditches A and B and associated pits and postholes.

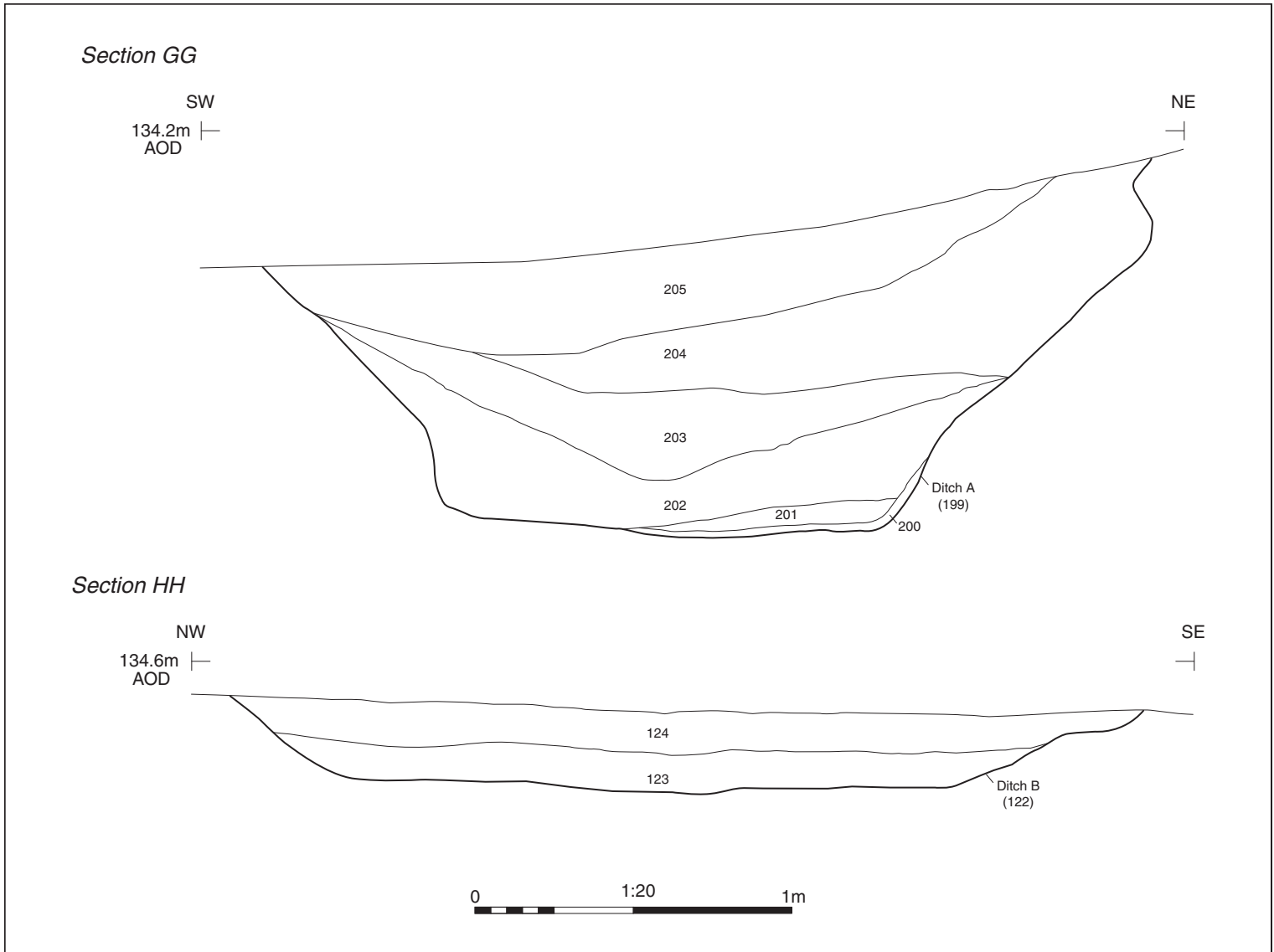
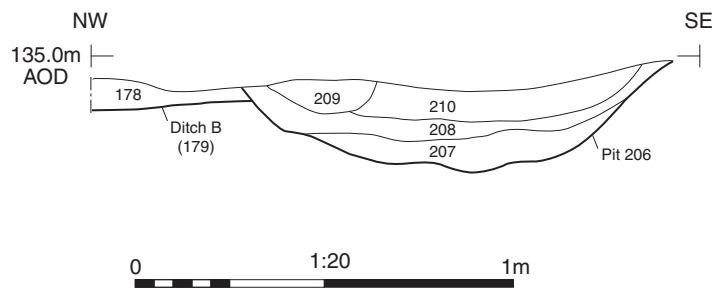


Figure 5: Sections through Middle to Late Bronze Age ditches A and B.

Section II



Section JJ

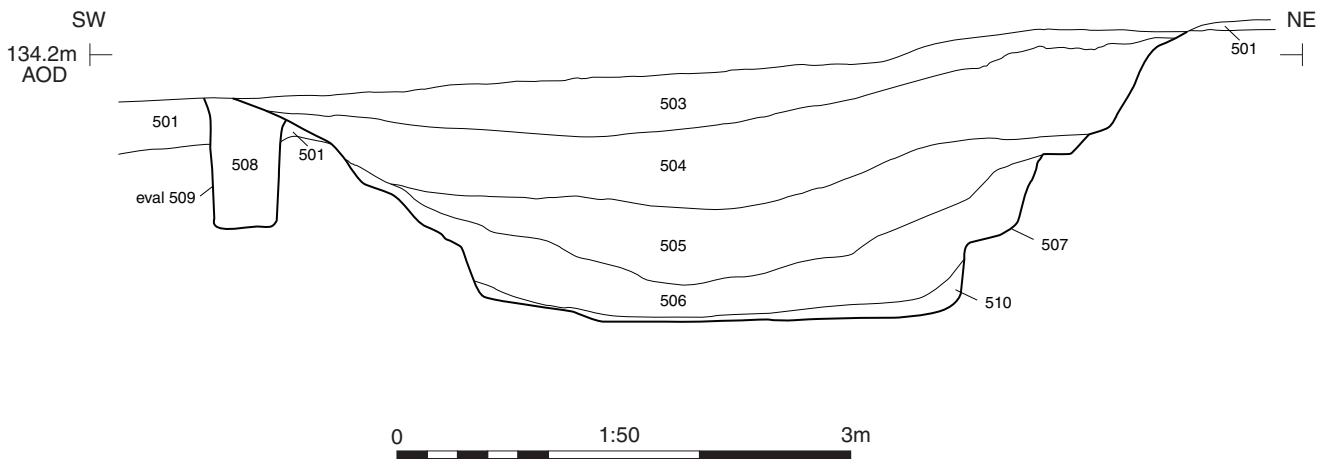


Figure 6: Undated pit 206 and Middle to Late Bronze Age ditch A, sections.



Figure 7: Ditch A, looking north west (scale 2m).



Figure 8: Ditch B, looking north-east (scale 2m) and Middle Bronze Age Cremation pit 2009 looking north west (scale 0.2m).



Figure 9: Undated pit 206, looking north east (scale 0.4m).

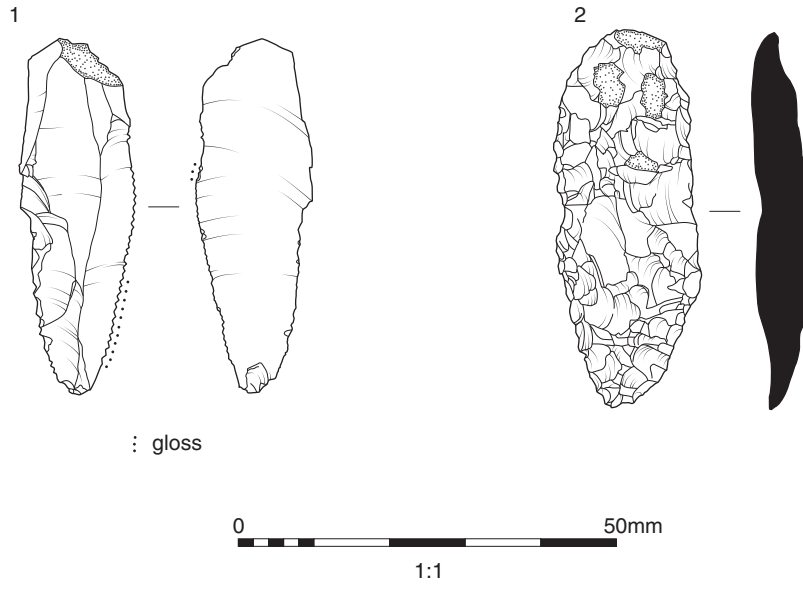


Figure 10: Worked flint.

Andover Office

Stanley House
Walworth Road
Andover
Hampshire
SP10 5LH

t: 01264 347630

Cirencester Office

Building 11
Kemble Enterprise Park
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 6BQ

t: 01285 771022

Exeter Office

Unit 53
Basepoint Business Centre
Yeoford Way
Marsh Barton Trading Estate
Exeter
EX2 8LB

t: 01392 826185

Milton Keynes Office

Unit 8 - The IO Centre
Fingle Drive
Stonebridge
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK13 0AT

t: 01908 564660

e: enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

