

**CESTERSOVER FARM
RUGBY
WARWICKSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

For

DULAS LTD


CA PROJECT: 3310
CA REPORT: 10235

JANUARY 2011

CESTERSOVER FARM
RUGBY
WARWICKSHIRE

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| date | 07 January 2011 |
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CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| SUMMARY | 2 |
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| 2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-5) | 6 |
| 3. DISCUSSION..... | 8 |
| 4. CA PROJECT TEAM | 9 |
| 5. REFERENCES | 9 |
| APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS..... | 10 |
| APPENDIX B: THE FINDS..... | 12 |
| APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM | 13 |

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)
- Fig. 2 Trench location plan, showing archaeological features (1:500)
- Fig. 3 Trench 4; section and photograph (1:20)
- Fig. 4 Trench 5; section and photograph (1:20)
- Fig. 5 Trench 7; section and photograph (1:20)

SUMMARY

Project Name: Cestersover Farm
Location: Rugby, Warwickshire
NGR: SP 5043 8175
Type: Excavation
Date: 14 December 2010
Planning Reference: R/10/1613
Location of Archive: To be deposited with the Warwickshire Museum
Site Code: CFR10

An archaeological excavation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in December 2010 at Cestersover Farm, Rugby. Eight trenches were excavated.

Four of the eight trenches contained features which appeared to be ditches associated with the deserted medieval village (DMV) of Cestersover. Three of the ditches appear to correspond to plot boundaries within the DMV visible on aerial photographs. The fourth ditch is probably an internal division and/or drainage feature within a plot. Two sherds of Roman pottery recovered from these features are abraded and therefore thought to be residual.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In December 2010 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological excavation for DULAS Ltd. at Cestersover Farm, Rugby (centred on NGR: SP 5043 8175; Fig. 1). The excavation was undertaken to investigate and record any archaeological features encountered during the construction of a meteorological mast.
- 1.2 Planning permission for the erection of an 80m high meteorological mast for a temporary period of up to 36 months was granted by Rugby Borough Council (ref: R/10/1613), conditional on a programme of archaeological work being undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Ms Anna Stocks, Planning Archaeologist, Warwickshire Museum Field Services, archaeological advisor to Rugby Borough Council and with a subsequent detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2010a) and approved by Ms Stocks. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008), the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006). It was monitored by Ms Stocks.

The site

- 1.3 The site is located on agricultural land to the north of Junction 1 of the M6 Motorway, and to the west of the A5 (Figs 1 and 2). Cestersover Farm is located adjacent to the site. The village of Churchover is situated to the south-east on the southern bank of the River Swift, which flows in a general north-east to south-west direction to the south of the site. The site lies at approximately 110m AOD, with the land sloping down to the River Swift to the south-east.
- 1.4 The site is approximately 40ha in area and land use is divided between pasture and arable.
- 1.5 The underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as Blue Lias Formation mudstone and limestone, overlain by Oadby Member clay of the Anglian era (BGS 2010). A yellowish brown clay was encountered across the site.

Archaeological background

- 1.6 An archaeological and cultural heritage assessment of the site of a proposed wind farm that includes the present site has been prepared by CA. A full description of the archaeological and historical background of the site can be found in the assessment (CA 2010b), a brief summary of which is presented below.
- 1.7 The site of the deserted medieval village of Cestersover is located in the central area of the site, to the south of the present buildings comprising Cestersover Farm. The placename *Cester* is potentially indicative of a Roman settlement site. However, an alternative origin of the name has been suggested. The site was reportedly previously known as *Thester-Over*. *Thester* is thought to be a mutation of the *easter*, i.e. east of, in this case east of Monks Kirby.
- 1.8 The earthworks of the medieval village previously comprised a Scheduled Monument, but were subsequently de-Scheduled on 17/04/2001. The reason for this alteration in designation, as confirmed by English Heritage, was due to the loss of the extant earthworks within the site during the post-war period due to ploughing.
- 1.9 A manor house is known to have existed at Cestersover in 1448, and licence to fortify this manor was granted in 1467. The existing main house at Cestersover Farm is predominantly of post-medieval construction, but presumably replaced the earlier, medieval building as it is surrounded by a moat (now in-filled). It is also possible that it comprises a re-build or re-modelling of the earlier structure, and may potentially contain medieval elements. A medieval chapel is also recorded at the site of Cestersover Manor, and is first recorded in 1221 as being next to the manor. The chapel was still extant in 1776, when it is mentioned by Stukeley in contemporary documentary sources, although by this date it had been converted into a barn. No medieval elements have been identified in the present farm buildings. Earthworks identified as elements of medieval fishponds are located to the west of the manor house.
- 1.10 The site of the deserted medieval village of Cestersover is located to the south of the former manor. In the medieval period, the manor, village and lands of Cestersover were in the possession of the Waver family. Cestersover appears to have been depopulated in a very short space of time at the end of the 15th century and beginning of the 16th century, in this case largely due to the then Lord of the Manor

Henry Waver. Many villages at this time were forcibly cleared by landowners to allow enclosure of common lands, and conversion of former arable land to the generally more profitable sheep pasture. Cestersover appears to have comprised a fairly sizeable village on the small hill in this location, and earthworks representing a road running south from the manor, flanked by house plots, are visible on 1940s aerial photographs. These earthworks have since been ploughed out and no extant remains are visible, although the features are also visible as crop-marks on more recent aerial photographs (WHER record 3500). A transcription of the village earthworks from aerial photographs was published by C.J. Bond in the *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society* in 1974 (see Fig. 2).

Archaeological objectives

1.11 The objectives of the archaeological works were to:

- record the nature of the main stratigraphic units encountered
- assess the overall presence, survival and potential of structural and industrial remains
- assess the overall presence, survival, condition and potential of artefactual and ecofactual remains

1.12 The specific aims of the work were to:

- record any evidence of past settlement or other land use
- recover artefactual evidence to date any evidence of past settlement that may be identified
- sample and analyse environmental remains to create a better understanding of past land use and economy

Methodology

1.13 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of 8 trenches (Trench 7 measured c. 3m in length and 0.9m in width, all other trenches measured c. 3m in length and 0.65m in width), in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). The trenches were

located at the anchor points for tension wires associated with the construction of the mast. No trench was required at the mast location as the base of the mast was supported on wooden blocks laid on the existing ground surface. Trenches were set out by the client using GPS and were later surveyed using a Leica 1200 series SmartRover GPS in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual* (2009).

- 1.14 All trenches were excavated by 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* (2007).
- 1.15 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* (2003) and no deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation* (1995).
- 1.16 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with Warwickshire Museum along with the site archive. 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.

2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-5)

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the excavation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively.
- 2.2 A dark brown clayey silt topsoil approximately 0.2m in depth and mid greyish brown subsoil ranging from 0.1m to 0.3m in depth were encountered across the site. Features were found in Trenches 4, 5, 7 and 8, whilst Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 6 were blank.

Trench 4 (Figs 2 & 3)

- 2.3 The natural substrate 402 was encountered at approximately 0.4m below present ground level (bpgl). It was cut by feature 403, which appeared to be a ditch but given the limited area of excavation this could not be proven. The cut was steep sided and contained a single fill, 404. A piece of abraded probable Roman pottery and several animal bone fragments were recovered. This was sealed by subsoil 401 and topsoil 400.

Trench 5 (Figs 2 & 4)

- 2.4 In Trench 5 the natural substrate 502 was recorded at c. 0.45m bpgl. It was cut by ditch 503 which ran north-west to south-east. It contained a single fill, 503, from which a single piece of probable Roman pottery and a few fragments of animal bone were retrieved. Only one side of the ditch could be seen in the trench and the section dug revealed a moderately sloped side and what appeared to be a U-shaped base, although as the feature continued beyond the limit of excavation this cannot be verified. The ditch was sealed by subsoil 501 and topsoil 500.

Trench 7 (Figs 2 & 5)

- 2.5 The natural substrate 702 was recorded at a depth of c. 0.3m bpgl. It was cut by ditch 703 which ran approximately east-west. It was filled by deposit 704 which contained two pieces of animal bone. Only one side of the ditch was visible within the trench, it appeared to have a gentle sloping side but extended beyond the limits of the trench. This was also sealed by subsoil 701 and topsoil 700.

Trench 8 (Fig. 2)

- 2.6 Natural substrate 802 was encountered at c. 0.3m bpgl. It was cut by feature 803, which appeared to be linear in nature however the limited area in which it was seen meant this could not be fully ascertained. It was filled by 804 from which no finds were recovered. The feature was recorded in plan only as the depth of the feature made it unsafe to enter. The feature was greater than 2.5m in width and was up to 1.8m deep. It was sealed by subsoil 801 and topsoil 800.

The Finds Evidence

- 2.7 Pottery, probably of Roman date, together with quantities of animal bone and charcoal were recovered from three deposits (appendix B).
- 2.8 Two pottery sherds in a similar fossil shell-tempered fabric were identified from ditch fills 404 (fill of 403) and 505 (fill of 503). Shell-tempered fabrics are common throughout the Iron Age and Roman periods across an area encompassing Northamptonshire and North-East Warwickshire. The shell inclusions are fine and well-sorted and a Roman date is likely. The sherd from ditch fill 404 is abraded and may be re-deposited.
- 2.9 Animal bone was recovered from three deposits and totalled 12 fragments, weighing 278g. The species identified were horse and chicken, the remainder was more fragmented but can be described as sheep-sized limb bones. The horse radius and ulna from deposit 704 the fill of ditch 703 shows signs of gnawing by dogs.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Features which appeared to be ditches were identified in four of the eight trenches. The limited size of these trenches makes interpretation difficult. The ditches identified in Trenches 7 and 8, 703 and 803, appear to be on the same alignment and, using the evidence from the aerial photographs, seem to align with an east/west boundary ditch between plots. The ditch in Trench 4, 403, was only partially excavated due to the limitations of the trench, but did appear to be steep-sided and deep. The single sherd of Roman pottery recovered from the fill of this ditch was abraded and therefore is likely to be residual. Ditch 403 appears to be part of the rear boundary of the DMV based on the aerial photographic evidence.
- 3.2 The ditch identified in Trench 5, 503, is quite different to the other ditches identified in Trenches 4, 7 and 8. Although only partly visible, ditch 503 was quite shallow with moderately sloped sides. A single sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from the fill of this ditch. Ditch 503 is located centrally along the eastern edge of a plot. It is therefore possible that this ditch represents an internal division within the plot, although it could have some other function such as drainage.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Alexandra Wilkinson, assisted by Jonathan Boon. The report was written by Alexandra Wilkinson and Diarmuid Ó Seaneachain. The illustrations were prepared by Lorna Gray. The finds report was compiled by Angela Aggujaro. The archive has been compiled by Alexandra Wilkinson, and prepared for deposition by James Johnson. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2010 Geology of Britain Viewer
http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html

Bond, C.J. (1974) *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society*, Vol. **85**, 94

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2010a *Cestersover Farm Rugby, Warwickshire, Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Excavation*

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2010b *Bransford Bridge Wind Farm, Written Statement, Archaeology and Cultural Heritage*, unpublished report

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1

| No. | Type | Description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|-------|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 100 | Layer | Topsoil: Dark brown clayey silt | | | 0.16 | |
| 101 | Layer | Subsoil: Mid greyish brown silty clay | | | 0.1 | |
| 102 | Layer | Natural: Mid yellowish brown clay | | | | |

Trench 2

| No. | Type | Description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|-------|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 200 | Layer | Topsoil: Dark brown clayey silt | | | 0.16 | |
| 201 | Layer | Subsoil: Mid greyish brown silty clay | | | 0.1 | |
| 202 | Layer | Natural: Mid yellowish brown clay | | | 0.3 | |

Trench 3

| No. | Type | Description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|-------|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 300 | Layer | Topsoil: Dark brown clayey silt | | | 0.2 | |
| 301 | Layer | Subsoil: Mid greyish brown silty clay | | | 0.15 | |
| 302 | Layer | Natural: Mid yellowish brown clay | | | | |

Trench 4

| No. | Type | Description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|-------|---|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 400 | Layer | Topsoil: Dark brown clayey silt | | | 0.1 | |
| 401 | Layer | Subsoil: Mid greyish brown silty clay | | | 0.3 | |
| 402 | Layer | Natural: Mid yellowish brown clay | | | | |
| 403 | Cut | Cut of ditch | | >1.5 | >1 | |
| 404 | Fill | Fill of 403: Dark greenish brown silty clay | | >1.5 | >1 | RB? |

Trench 5

| No. | Type | Description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|-------|--|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 500 | Layer | Topsoil: Dark brown clayey silt | | | 0.25 | |
| 501 | Layer | Subsoil: Mid greyish brown silty clay | | | 0.2 | |
| 502 | Layer | Natural: Mid yellowish brown clay | | | | |
| 503 | Cut | Cut of ditch | | >0.54 | 0.29 | |
| 504 | Fill | Fill of 503: Dark greyish brown silty clay | | >0.54 | 0.29 | RB |

Trench 6

| No. | Type | Description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|-------|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 600 | Layer | Topsoil: Dark brown clayey silt | | | 0.2 | |
| 601 | Layer | Subsoil: Mid greyish brown silty clay | | | 0.1 | |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|-------|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| 602 | Layer | Natural: Mid yellowish brown clay | | | | |
|-----|-------|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|

Trench 7

| No. | Type | Description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|-------|--|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 700 | Layer | Topsoil: Dark brown clayey silt | | | 0.2 | |
| 701 | Layer | Subsoil: Mid greyish brown silty clay | | | 0.08 | |
| 702 | Layer | Natural: Mid yellowish brown clay | | | | |
| 703 | Cut | Cut of ditch | | >1.3 | 0.62 | |
| 704 | Fill | Fill of 703: Mid brownish grey clayey silt | | >1.3 | 0.62 | |

Trench 8

| No. | Type | Description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|-------|---|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 800 | Layer | Topsoil: Dark brown clayey silt | | | 0.2 | |
| 801 | Layer | Subsoil: Mid greyish brown silty clay | | | 0.12 | |
| 802 | Layer | Natural: Mid yellowish brown clay | | | | |
| 803 | Cut | Cut of ditch | | >2.5 | c. 1.8 | |
| 804 | Fill | Fill of 803: Mid greyish brown silty clay | | >2.5 | c. 1.8 | |

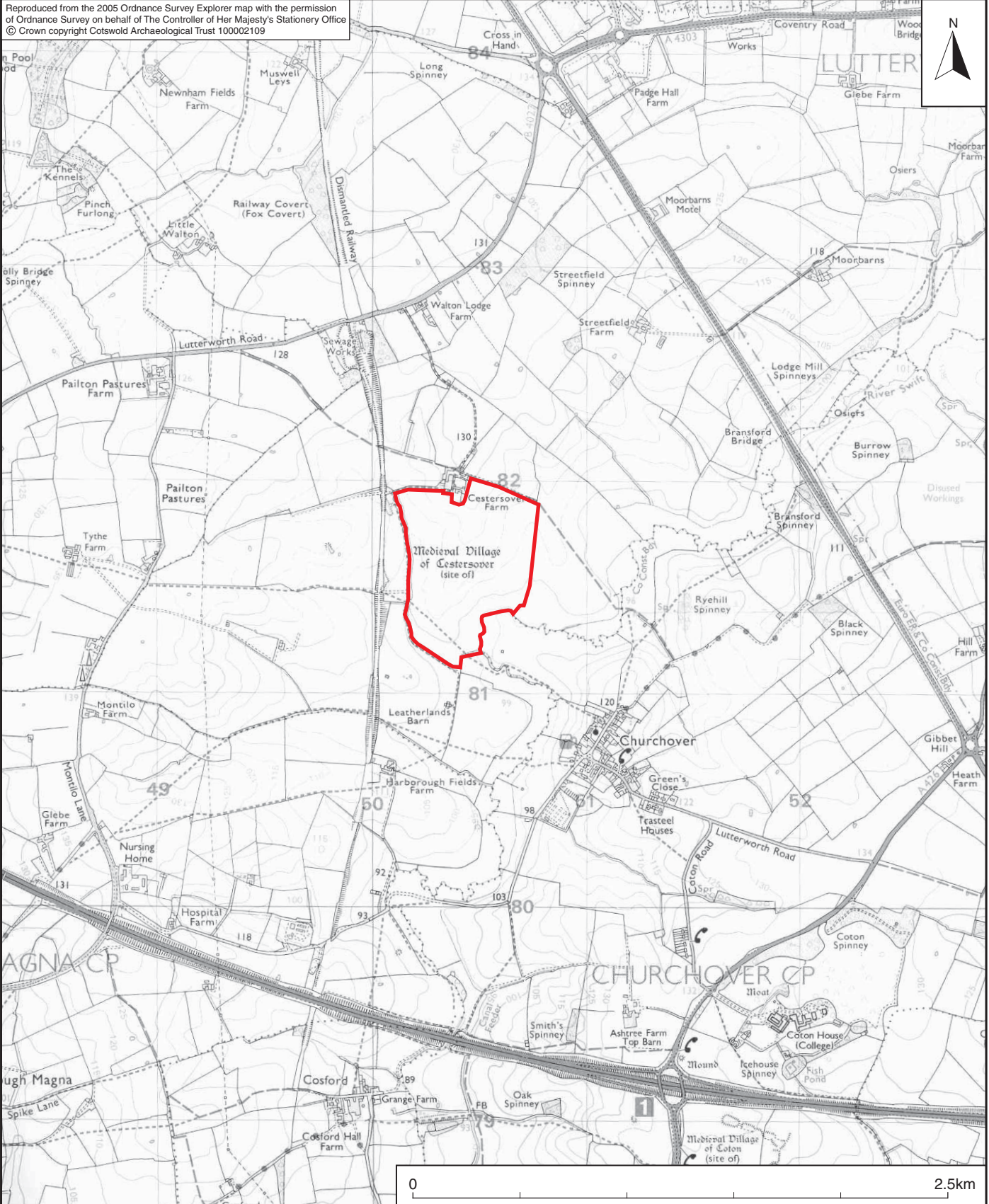
APPENDIX B: THE FINDS


| Context | Description | Count | Weight | Date |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 404 | Roman pottery: shell-tempered (abr) | 1 | 4 | RB? |
| | Animal bone: chicken | 7 | 4 | |
| 504 | Roman pottery: shell-tempered (abr) | 1 | 6 | RB |
| | Animal bone: sheep-sized | 3 | 16 | |
| | Charcoal | 2 | <1 | |
| 704 | Animal bone: horse | 2 | 258 | - |

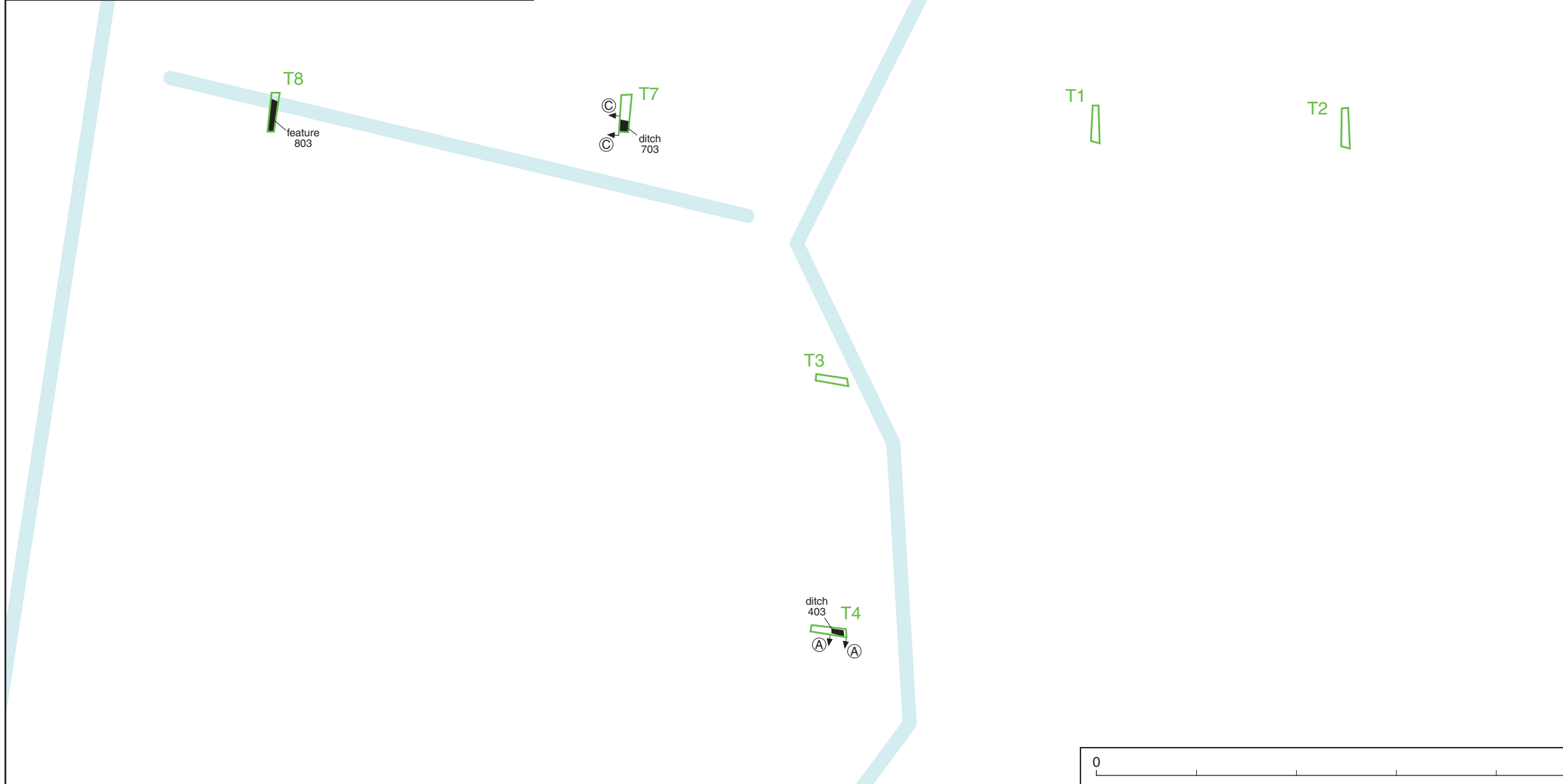
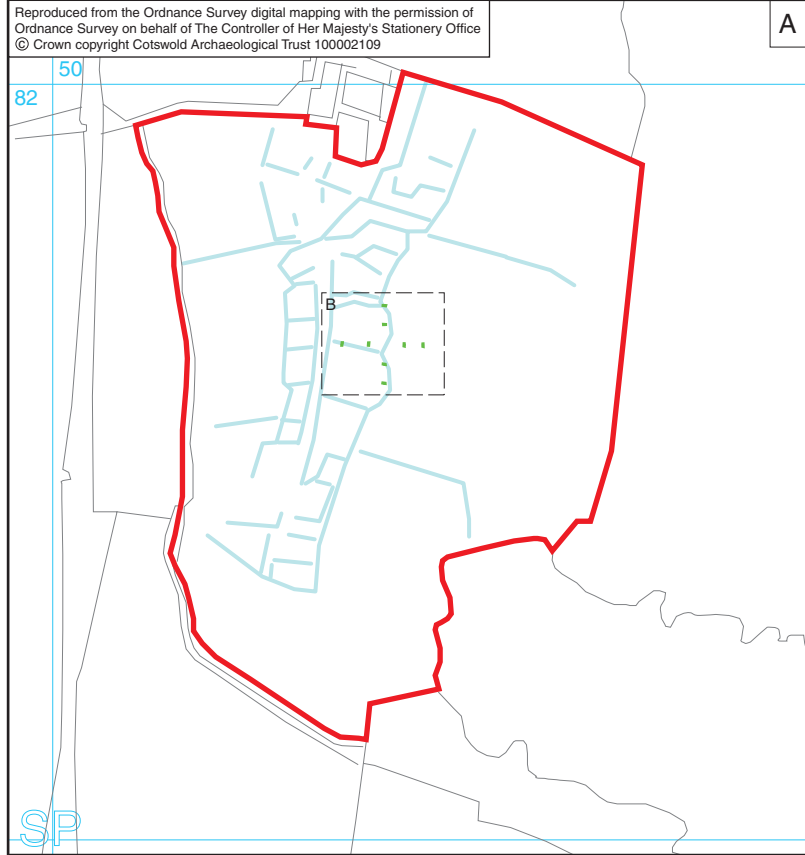
APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

| PROJECT DETAILS | | |
|--|--|--|
| Project Name | Cestersover Farm, Rugby, Warwickshire | |
| Short description (250 words maximum) | <p>An archaeological excavation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in December 2010 at Cestersover Farm, Rugby. Eight trenches were excavated.</p> <p>Four of the eight trenches contained features which appeared to be ditches associated with the deserted medieval village (DMV) of Cestersover. Three of the ditches appear to correspond to plot boundaries within the DMV visible on aerial photographs. The fourth ditch is probably an internal division and/or drainage feature within a plot. Two sherds of Roman pottery recovered from these features are abraded and therefore thought to be residual.</p> | |
| Project dates | 14 December 2010 | |
| Project type | Excavation | |
| Previous work | Unknown | |
| Future work | Unknown | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | |
| Site Location | Cestersover Farm, Rugby, Warwickshire | |
| Study area (M ² /ha) | 40ha | |
| Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference) | NGR: SP 5044 8175 | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | |
| Name of organisation | Cotswold Archaeology | |
| Project Brief originator | Warwickshire Museum Field Services | |
| Project Design (WSI) originator | Cotswold Archaeology | |
| Project Manager | Richard Young | |
| Project Supervisor | Alexandra Wilkinson | |
| MONUMENT TYPE | None | |
| SIGNIFICANT FINDS | None | |
| PROJECT ARCHIVES | | |
| | Intended final location of archive | Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc) |
| Physical | Warwickshire Museum | Pottery, animal bone, |
| Paper | Warwickshire Museum | Context records, trench sheets, registers, WSI and background information, excavation report |
| Digital | Warwickshire Museum | Digital photographs and digital mapping |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | |
| CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2010 <i>Cestersover Farm, Rugby, Warwickshire: Archaeological Excavation</i> . CA typescript report 10235 | | |

Reproduced from the 2005 Ordnance Survey Explorer map with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office
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|--|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|
|  COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY | | | |
| PROJECT TITLE Cestersover Farm, Rugby Warwickshire | | | |
| FIGURE TITLE Site location plan | | | |
| DRAWN BY | SCALE | PROJECT NO. | FIGURE NO. |
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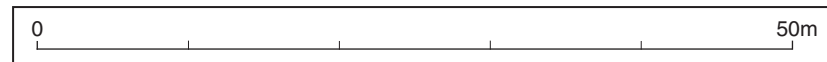


- site
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- LTC street, crofts and tracks associated with Cestersover DMV (ploughed out; after Bond 1974)



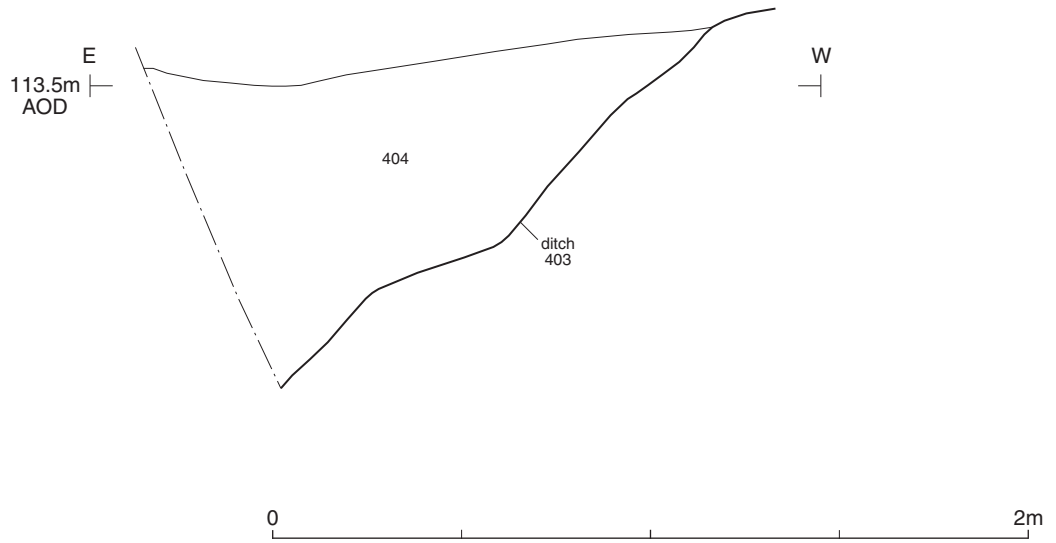
PROJECT TITLE
**Cestersover Farm, Rugby
 Warwickshire**

FIGURE TITLE
**Trench location plan, showing
 archaeological features**



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|----------|----------|-------------|------------|
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Trench 4; section AA



View looking south, showing ditch 403. Scale 1m



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Cestersover Farm, Rugby
Warwickshire

FIGURE TITLE

Trench 4; section and photograph

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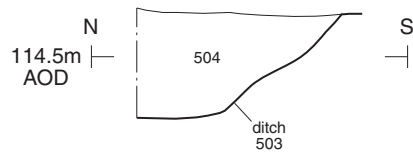
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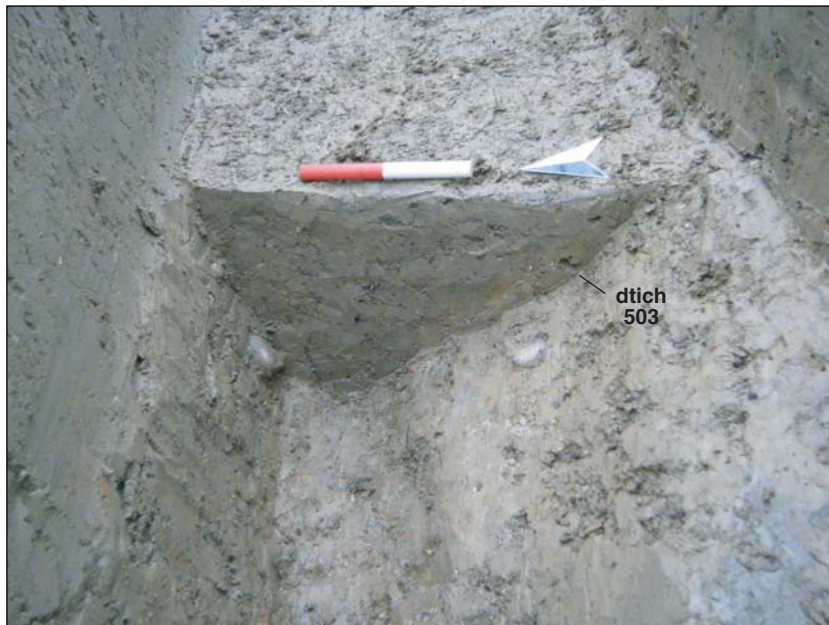
FIGURE NO.

3

Trench 5; section BB



View looking east, showing ditch 503. Scale 0.2m



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Cestersover Farm, Rugby
Warwickshire

FIGURE TITLE

Trench 5; section and photograph

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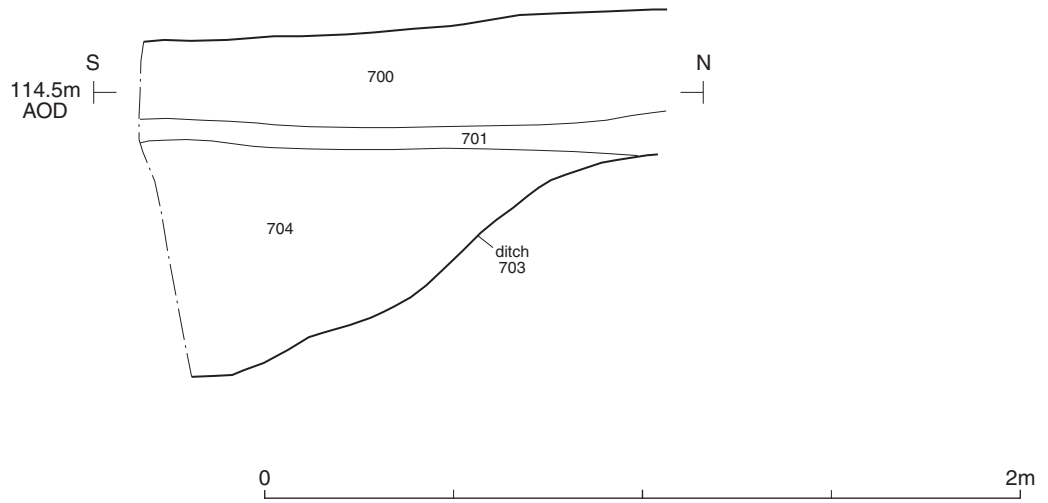
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3310

FIGURE NO.

4

Trench 7; section CC



View looking west, showing ditch 703. Scale 1m



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Cestersover Farm, Rugby
Warwickshire

FIGURE TITLE

Trench 7; section and photograph

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PROJECT NO.

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FIGURE NO.

5