

Hundred Road, March, Cambridgeshire

An Archaeological Evaluation



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**Land off Hundred Road, March, Cambridgeshire:
An Archaeological Evaluation**

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An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by a team from Cambridge Archaeological Unit on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council on a 4.53ha site off Melbourne Avenue, Hundred Road, March, Cambridgeshire. The area for the proposed Highways Depot (Area 1) contained a dense cluster of archaeological features on the western side. Many of the features were provisionally dated to the Bronze Age and included at least two watering holes, a complex of inter-cutting pits and ditches, a possible enclosure, and three (Deverel-Rimbury) cremations. Amongst the cluster of features, a ditch containing a horse skeleton was also found and dated to the Romano-British period. The trenches within the area of the proposed Waste Transfer Depot (Area 2) located a truncated field-system of prehistoric (presumed Bronze Age) date and a single four-post structure in the far north-western corner. A right angled Romano-British field-system was found across Area 2 with a substantial axial drainage/boundary ditch that ran parallel to the Fen Causeway. The north-western part of Area 1 also contained part of a complex of horticultural trenches that were oriented perpendicular to the main axis.

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Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on Land off Melbourne Avenue, Hundred Road, March, Cambridgeshire, (NGR TL 410 985) between 1st July to 15th July in advance of planning applications for the construction of a Highways Depot (Area 1) and Waste Transfer Station (Area 2) by Cambridgeshire County Council. The land is formerly agricultural and lies on a terrace of the March Gravels and Till deposits (British Geological Survey 1978), covering an area of 4.53ha. The highest point was 2.76m OD towards the east of Area 2, and the lowest was towards the west in Area 1 at 1.91m OD with a difference of 0.85m.

A systematic sample of evaluation trenches was excavated across the Proposed Development Areas (PDA) in order to determine the presence/absence of archaeological remains and investigate their date, extent, character, significance and state of preservation.

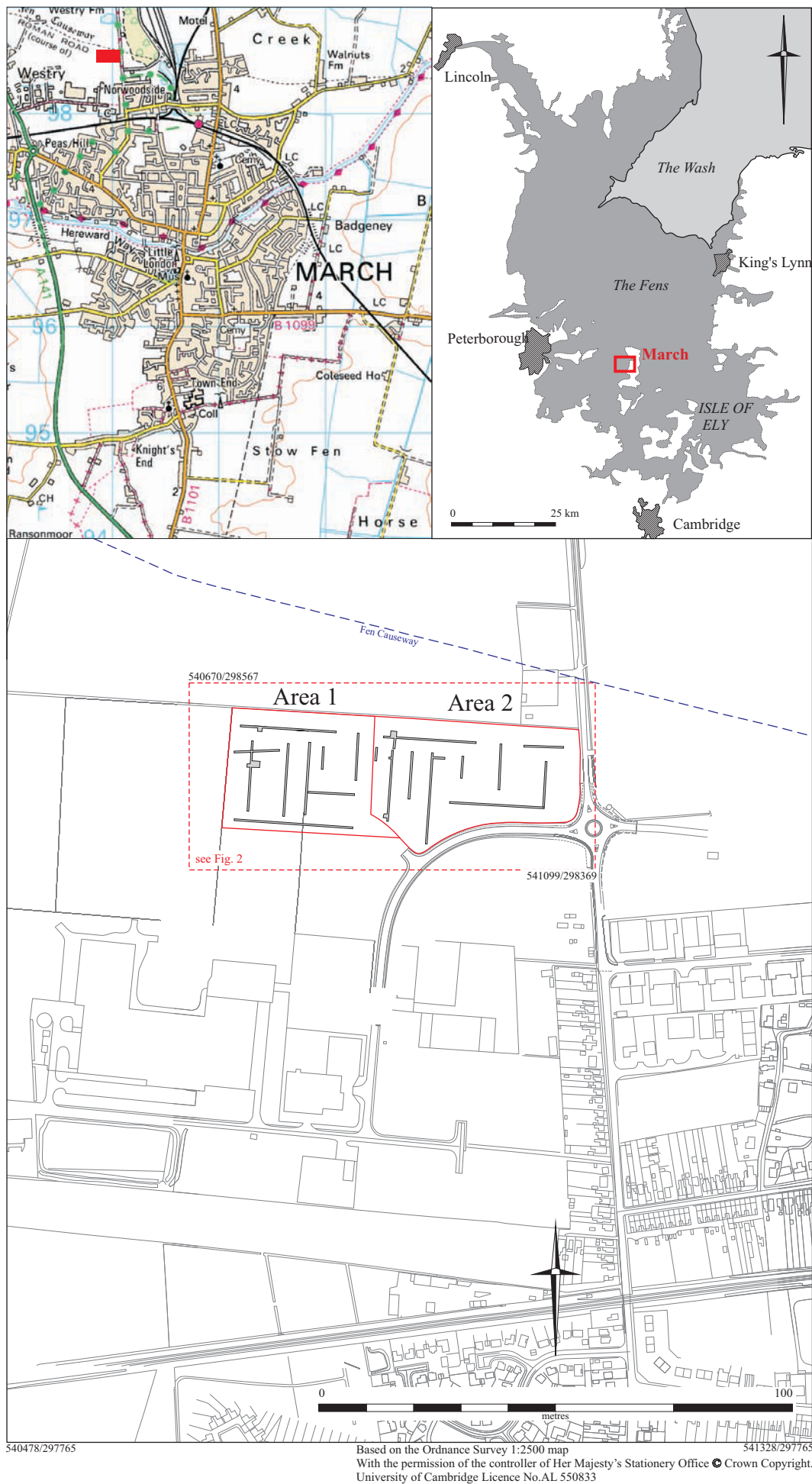
The evaluation trenches revealed evidence for Late Mesolithic/earlier Neolithic activity in the form of flint artefacts within the topsoil horizon and secondary contexts across the PDA. Within Area 1, a dense concentration of Bronze Age features was found to include large watering holes, pits, urned cremations and evidence of land enclosure. In contrast, Area 2 was primarily dominated by a Roman field system and cultivation beds aligned perpendicular to the Fen Causeway, which lies to the north of the PDA. A small number of prehistoric post holes and pits were also found along with a truncated field system.

Archaeological Background

Abundant archaeological remains are known from the surrounding landscape and previous fieldwork has revealed a widely utilised landscape with evidence of settlement spanning the last three to four thousand years.

Earlier activity from the Mesolithic period is recorded in the form of flint scatters in the vicinity of Gaul Road (Hall 1987), where finds were dominated by blades and cores with very few microliths and small blades. The confluence of the Nene and associated channels to the west would have provided a rich food resource during the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods which is reflected by the (mostly plough soil derived) flint artefacts that have been recorded throughout the landscape of the peninsula on which the PDA lies.

There were complex and varying environmental conditions around March during the Bronze Age with the rise of water levels and encroachment of the fen edge. Occupation during the Bronze Age is well represented in the form of flint assemblages, both as background activity and in three concentrations at Cherryholt (TL 40 96), Westry (TL 40 98) which was to the southwest of the PDA, and Flaggrass Hill (TL 42 99) (Hall 1987). Barrows are recorded to the southeast at Stonea (Hall 1987), in addition to a Bronze Age vessel that was found north of the station at March in 1860 (Clark 1970, 746, quoting Archaeol J 19 (1862), 364-5).



Systematic fieldwork in recent years at Whitemoor Sidings to the east of the PDA found truncated ditches, pits and post holes from the Early Bronze Age as well as gullies, large pits and post holes dated to the later Bronze Age (Hall 2004).

At the nearby site of Barn Farm (500m to the north), evidence of early land division was found in the form of a series of undated truncated ditches on a NW/SE alignment which were tentatively dated to the prehistoric period and a Roman field system dated from 1st to 3rd century AD (OAU 1995).

A field system thought to date from the Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age was recorded on land between Greek Road and Station Road, March to the south of the PDA. These linear features were thought to be for the purpose of drainage (with boundary a secondary function) due to the area becoming increasingly wet due to contemporary inundations (Kenny 2003).

By the Iron Age, environmental conditions greatly influenced the location of settlements with occupation concentrated on 'islands' such as Ely and Stonea. Two major Iron Age sites are known on the March island; one at Grandford on the most northerly tip of the island and the other on Flaggrass to the east. At The HQ site, north of the PDA, linear features were thought to representing an agricultural enclosure and possible droveway dating from the Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age. A contemporary crouched inhumation was also found on the periphery of the presumed occupation area (O'Brien 2002).

During the Roman period, the growth of peat covered the whole of the lower-lying March fens and encroached on the March Island. To the north of the PDA runs the route of the Fen Causeway, a Roman road that ran between Denver to the east and Peterborough to the west, where it joins Ermine Street. The road was built across marshy fen, linking to areas of higher ground such as the March gravel island. The road appears to have been built across the fen using layers of gravel, a construction method confirmed by a nearby evaluation at 92 Elm Road, March, where the gravel was found to overly a thin alluvial soil. Further from the PDA, a large segment of the causeway was sampled at King's Dyke West, Whittlesey during an excavation carried out by the CAU – also revealing a gravel metalled surface flanked by two ditches (Gibson 2000).

Methodology

In total, 19 trenches of varying lengths ranging from 10m to 125m were machine excavated; totalling 1,193 linear metres or 2588.63m². Fifteen trenches were machined in the first instance (Trenches 1 to 15) after which four judgemental trenches (16 to 19) together with trench extensions and 'boxed-out' areas were positioned in order to determine the extent of archaeological features and confirm stratigraphic relationships. In total, a 5.71% sample of the PDA was undertaken.

The trenches was stripped to the archaeological level using a 360° tracked excavator with a toothless ditching bucket under supervision of an experienced archaeologist. The CAU-modified version of the MoLAS recording system was used; features were planned at 1:50,

with sections drawn at 1:10. Small pits and post holes were half-sectioned, whilst linear features were sampled at appropriate intervals. Archaeological features were assigned a unique number (e.g. F.1) and each stratigraphically distinct episode (e.g. a cut, a fill) was recorded with a unique context number (e.g. [001]).

All work was carried out in strict accordance with statutory Health and Safety legislation and following the recommendations of SCAUM. The site was surveyed into the Ordnance Survey Grid and Ordnance Datum by means of a RTK GPS unit.

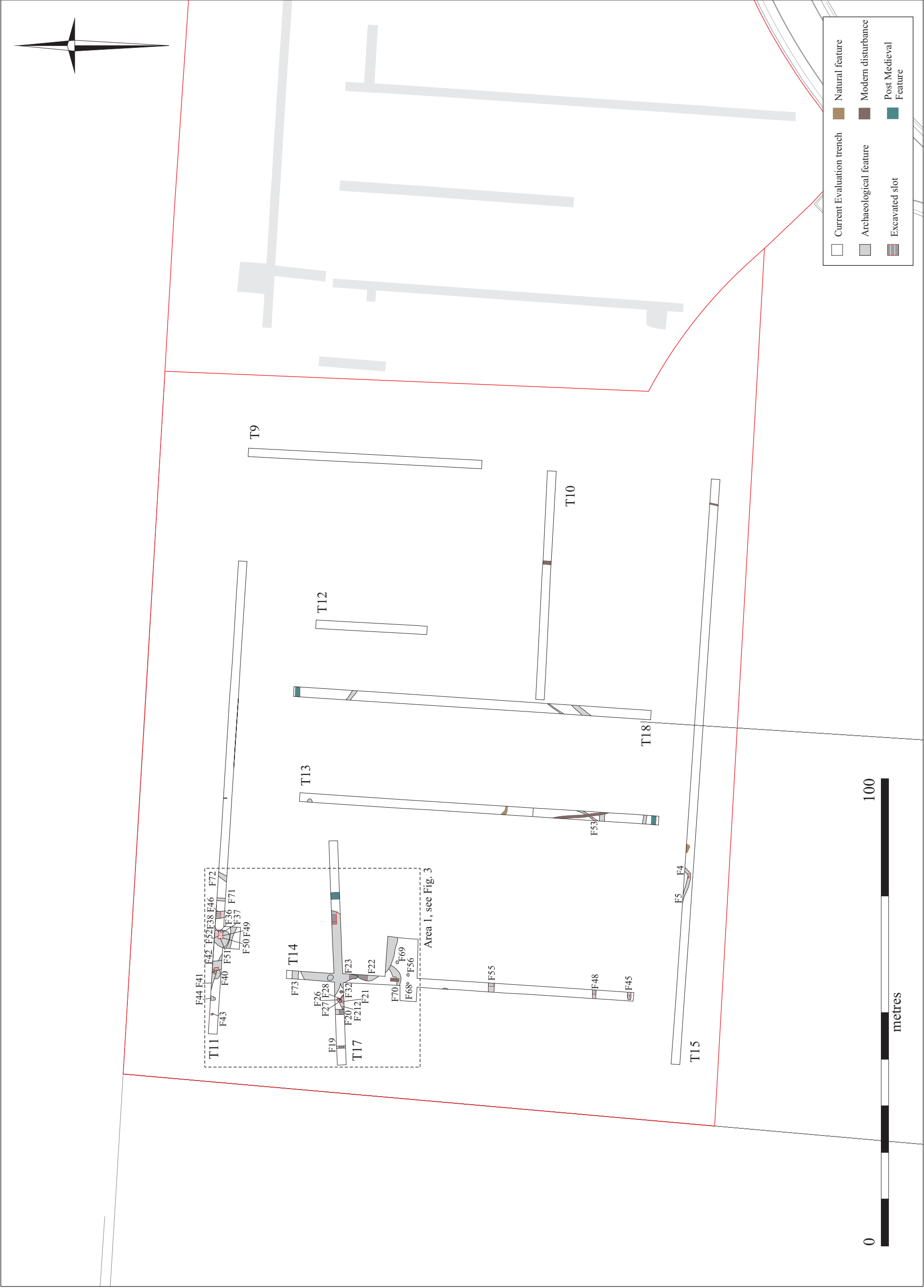
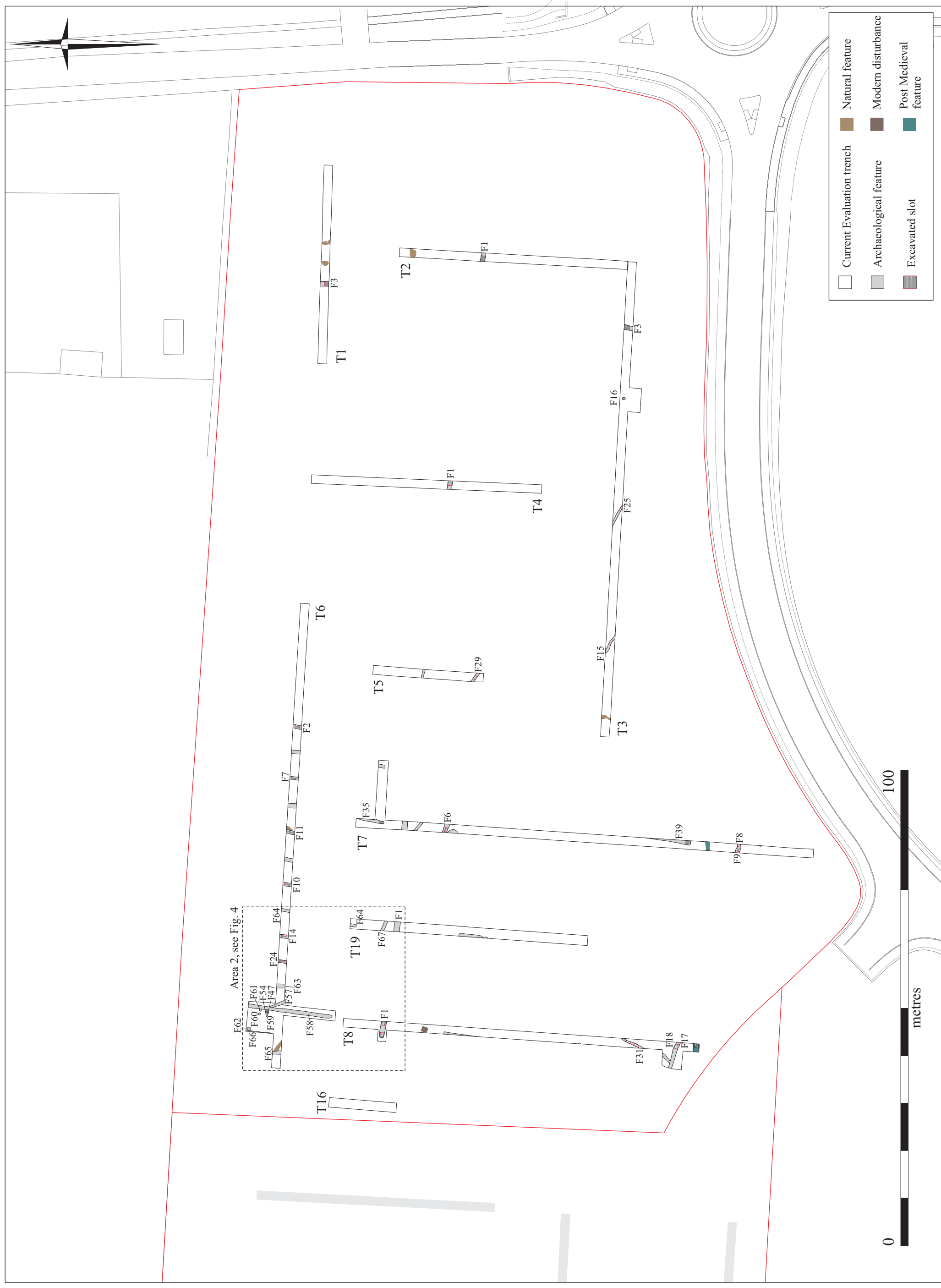


Figure 2a. Trench Plan, Area 1 (Proposed Highways Depot)

Based on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map
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Results

Archaeological features relating to at least two phases of land division were found across much of the PDA along with a cluster of settlement-related features on the western side of Area 1 and intensive horticultural/agricultural features on the eastern part of Area 2 (Figures 2 to 4).

The shallow nature of soils on the gravel terrace (typically 40-50cm, see Table 1) meant that modern plough-marks were prevalent throughout the area and had produced a mixed, disturbed layer between the interface of the natural geology and the plough soil. There was no evidence of intact subsoil, alluvial deposits or 'buried soil' as may be found at fen-edge locations. It was felt that past and recent agriculture may have truncated more ephemeral features, as evidenced by a scatter of lithic finds within later features and within the topsoil.

Area 1 – Proposed Highways Depot

This area was initially sample by seven planned trenches (9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15) and supplemented by a further two judgemental trenches (17 and 18) and two boxed-out areas in trenches 11 and 14 (see Figures 2a and 3). The total area sampled was 1289.63m² representing a 6.20 % sample of Area 1. The greater majority of sampled features were dated to the Bronze Age and consisted of 14 linear features (one of these linears was dated by pottery from mid 1st to 2nd centuries), 6 inter-cutting pits, 5 small pits, 4 post holes, 3 cremations (two of them being urned), and at least 2 phases of watering holes and 1 curved linear feature.

Bronze Age pottery was recorded from F.13 (watering hole in Trench 17), F.21 (a shallow pit in Trench 17), F.23 (a shallow pit in Trench 14) and F.27 (a posthole in Trench 17). The pots that contained two of the cremations were identified *in situ* as being of the Deverel-Rimbury tradition from the Middle Bronze Age (*Knight*, below). In addition to finds from topsoil, Flint artefacts were recovered from linear features F.36, pits F.23, F.37, F.38 and F.39 and were from two distinct technologies: Late Mesolithic/Early Neolithic and Middle to Late Bronze Age (*Billington*, below).

Environmental samples were submitted for analysis from four features; F.46 the Romano-British linear in Trench 11; F.48 a linear from Trench 14; F.51 a pit from Trench 11; and two samples from watering hole F.13 (one of them was an auger sample taken at a depth of 1.70m-1.80m). Although little residues were recovered, the results suggested a wet environment in the past and provided some evidence that waterlogged preservation in deep features would only exist at depths of below 2m from current ground level (*Ballantyne*, below)

Trench 9

This trench was on a north-south orientation and was 50m in length. No archaeological features were present.

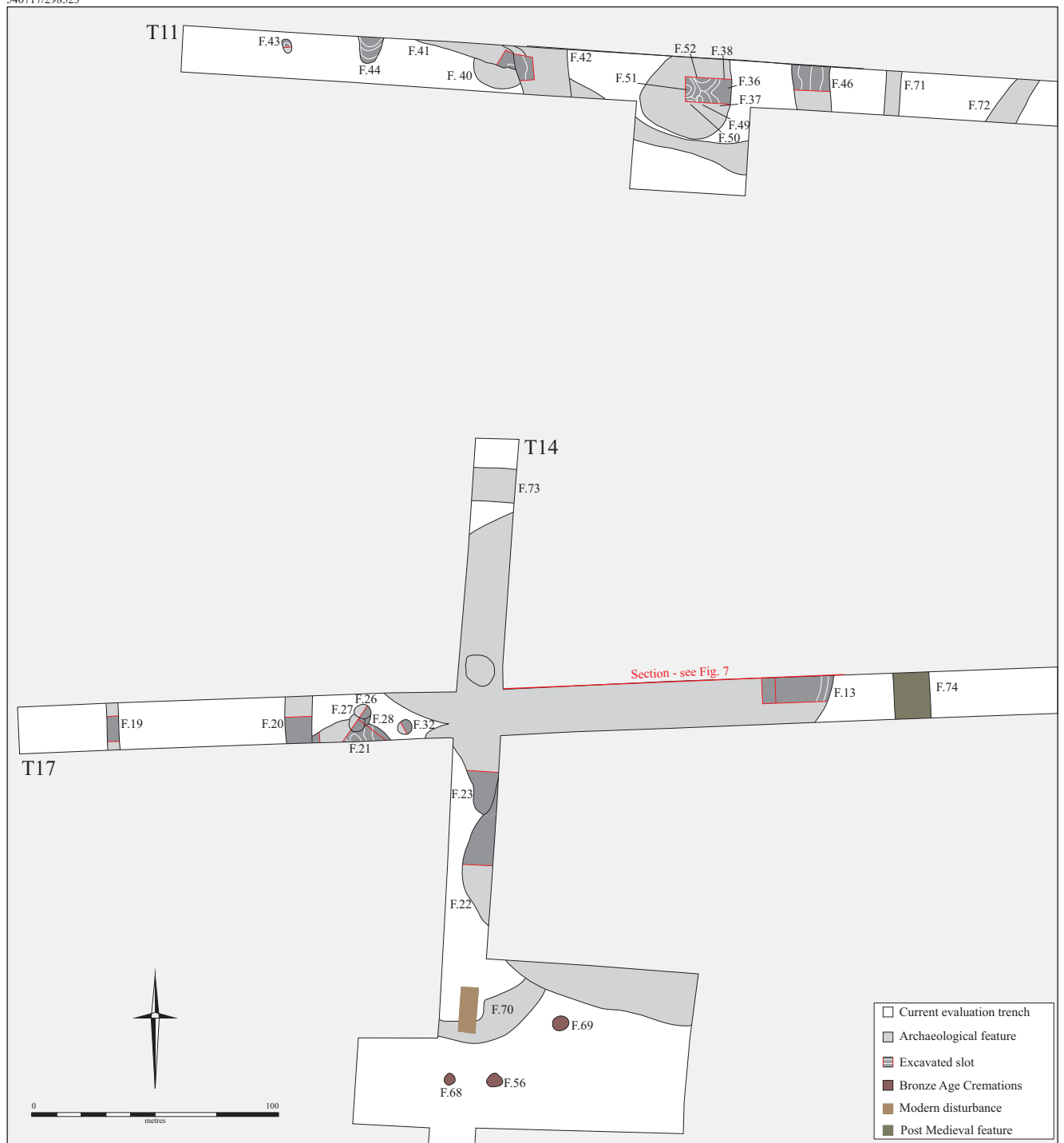


Figure 3. Prehistoric features in Area 1

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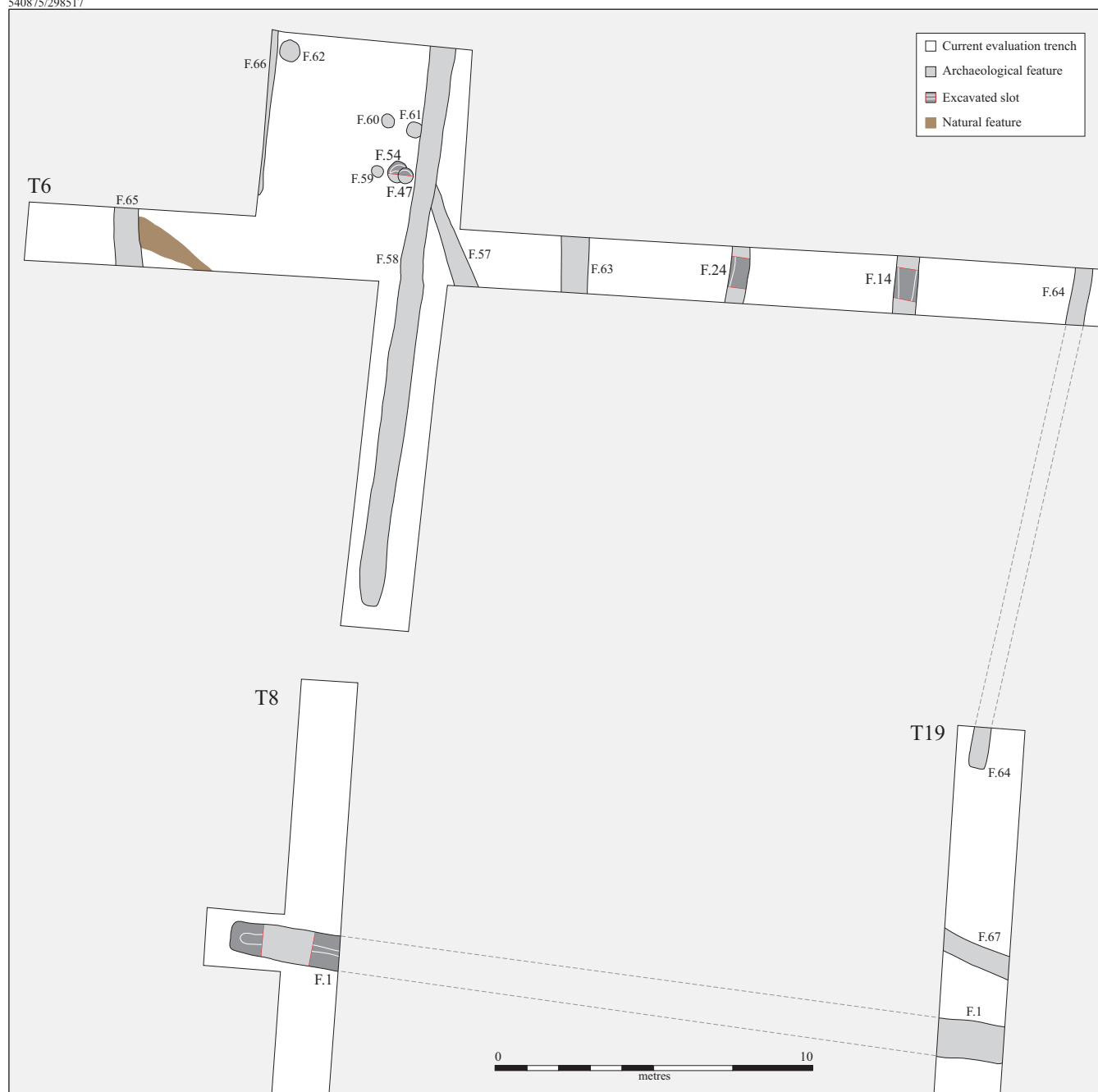


Figure 4. Roman and Prehistoric features in Area 2

Trench 10

This trench was on an east-west orientation and was 50m in length. No archaeological features were present.

Trench 11

This trench was on an east-west alignment and was 100m in length and uncovered archaeological features concentrated towards the western end. These consisted of 6 linears (4 were sampled; F.36, F.41, F.42 and F.46), a cluster of 6 inter-cutting pits; F.37, F.38, F.49, F.50, F.51 and F.52, and 1 small pit F.44 (possibly also the terminal of a linear feature).

- F.36 [113] firm and friable mid grey/brown silt with occasional gravel inclusions
[114] firm and friable light grey sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions
[115] cut 0.46m wide and 0.17m deep with moderate concave sides and concave base
[124] firm and friable mottled orange/mid grey/brown silt with occasional gravel inclusions
- F.37 [116] firm and friable very light grey with frequent gravel inclusions
[117] firm mid grey/brown sandy silt with rare gravel inclusions and rare flecks of charcoal
[118] cut 0.56m+ wide and 0.33m deep with moderate concave sides and concave base
- F.38 [127] firm and friable mixed orange/light grey silty clay
[128] firm and friable mid orange/grey sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions
[130] cut c.0.55m wide and c.0.12m deep with sloping concave sides and concave base
- F.40 [137] firm brown/orange silty sand with frequent gravel inclusions
[138] 1.70m+ by 1.70m+
- F.41 [139] firm grey sandy silt with rare gravel inclusions
[140] orange silty sand, redeposited natural with occasional gravel inclusions
[141] cut 0.66m wide and 0.25m deep with moderately sloping concave sides and concave base
- F.42 [142] firm grey clayey silt with rare gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal
[143] firm brown/orange silty sand with frequent gravel inclusions
[144] firm grey clayey silt with rare gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal
[145] moist orange silty sand with frequent gravel inclusions
[146] cut 1.92m wide and 0.25m deep with moderately steep convex sides and moderate break of slope with flat base
- F.43 was probably an animal burrow
- F.44 [149] firm dark grey/brown sandy silt with rare gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal
[150] cut 0.67m wide and 0.34m deep with steep straight sides, sharp break of slope and flat base
- F.46 [153] firm and friable dark grey silt with rare gravel inclusions
[154] firm and friable mid grey silt with rare gravel inclusions and rare flecks of charcoal
[155] firm and friable mottled mid grey/light grey/yellow sandy silt with rare gravel inclusions
[156] firm dark grey clayey silt with moderate gravel inclusions
[157] firm mid grey clayey silt with occasional gravel inclusions
[158] firm and friable diffuse mid grey/red/brown silty sand

- [159] firm mottled dark grey/mid brown clayey silt
- [160] firm mottled dark grey/orange/white clayey silt with frequent chalk inclusions
- [161] cut 1.38m wide and 0.65m deep with steep convex sides, sharp break of slope and flat base
- F.49 [119] firm and friable dark grey silt with occasional gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal
- [120] mottled mid grey/light grey/orange clayey sandy silt
- [121] firm and friable mottled orange/light grey silty clay
- [132] firm and friable light grey sandy clayey silt with rare gravel inclusions
- [122] mixed orange/red sand and gravel with light grey silt redeposited natural
- [178] cut 1.12m wide and 0.35m deep with moderately steep convex sides with moderate break of slope and flat base
- F.50 [126]
- [179] firm diffuse mottled red/brown clayey silt with rare flecks of charcoal
- [131] firm and friable mottled mid grey/red/orange silty clay with rare flecks of charcoal
- [165] firm mid grey silty clay with frequent flecks of charcoal
- [166] firm and friable mid brown sandy silt
- [167] cut c.0.58m wide and c.0.10m deep with moderately steep concave sides. moderate break of slope and flat base
- F.51 [179] firm diffuse mottled red/brown clayey silt with rare flecks of charcoal
- [131] firm and friable mottled mid grey/red/orange silty clay with rare flecks of charcoal
- [133] firm and friable mottled orange/light grey silty sand
- [168] firm and friable mid brown sandy silt clay
- [169] firm and friable mottled orange/brown/grey sandy silt
- [170] firm mid grey clay with frequent pieces of charcoal
- [171] cut 1.20m wide and 0.40m deep with moderate break of slope and flat base
- F.52 [173] firm and friable dark orange sand with rare gravel inclusions
- [129] firm and friable dark orange/grey sandy silt with rare gravel inclusions
- [174] firm and friable mid grey clayey sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions and rare flecks of charcoal
- [175] firm and friable mid brown clayey silt with frequent gravel inclusions
- [176] cut 0.40m wide and 0.36m deep with steep slightly convex sides and moderate break of slope and concave base

Trench 12

This trench was on a north-south orientation and was 25m in length. No archaeological features were present.

Trench 13

This trench was on a north-south orientation and was 77m in length. There were four features comprising three linears and a possible pit. Linear feature F.53, on a differing northeast-southwest orientation was sample excavated. The other linears were sampled in Trench 14.

- F.53 [180] firm mid grey sandy clayey silt with occasional gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal

[181] cut 0.36m wide and 0.07m deep with sloping to moderate concave sides and concave base

Trench 14

This trench was on a north-south orientation and was 72.35m in length. During initial excavation, numerous archaeological features were encountered, including an un-urned cremation. A further judgemental area was opened around this feature which located two additional urned Deverel-Rimbury cremations, both of which were planned and left *in situ*. Five linear features were uncovered in the trench, four of which were on an east-west alignment and F.45, F.48 and F.55 were sampled. In the centre of the trench, a curved ditch F.70 (adjacent to the cremations) was found to be truncated by a modern geological test pit. The backfill of the test pit was removed so that the feature could be recorded in section. The ditch was found to be 1.70m wide and c. 0.30m deep with moderately steep concave sides and a firm mid-brown/grey sandy clay silt with moderate gavel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal. Two shallow depressions F.22 and F.23 were sample excavated and thought to be part of a series of large watering holes related to nearby F.13 (see Trench 17 and Figures 3, 5). The southern extent of these large pits was established in the boxed-out area where it was demonstrated that F.22 cut linear F.70.

- F.22 [080] soft mid grey/brown sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions and burnt stone
[081] cut c.4.00m wide and 0.10m deep with sloping shallow sides and flat base
- F.23 [082] friable mid orange/brown silty sand with frequent gravel inclusions and rare burnt stones
[083] friable dark grey/brown silty sand with occasional gravel inclusions
[084] cut 1.80m+ and 1.37m+ wide and 0.34m deep with sloping to moderate concave sides and flat base
- F.45 [151] moist mottled orange/grey sandy silty clay with rare gravel inclusions and frequent flecks of charcoal
[152] cut of terminal round in plan 0.68m wide and 0.21m deep with moderately steep slightly concave sides with sharp break of slope and flat base
- F.48 [163] mottled brown/orange sandy clayey silt with rare gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal
[164] cut 0.72m wide and 0.32m deep with moderately steep concave sides and concave base
- F.55 [185] firm and friable mid grey silt with rare gravel inclusions and rare flecks of charcoal
[186] firm and friable mottled mid grey/light grey/yellow sandy silt with rare gravel inclusions
[187] firm mottled dark grey/mid brown clayey silt
[188] cut 1.57m wide and 0.86m deep with moderately steep convex sides with sharp break of slope and flat base

Trench 15

This trench was on an east-west orientation and was 125m in length. Three features were recorded including one tree throw and two conjoining linears (F.4 and F.5) that formed the corner of a possible enclosure. Fill [019] was a layer overlying both features indicating that they were contemporary.

- F.4 [019] firm mid brown silty clay

- [014] firm light grey/brown clayey silt with diffuse light brown mottling
 - [015] re-cut 0.31m wide and 0.24m deep with moderately sloping sides and flat base
 - [016] firm to friable light grey fine clayey silt with rare gravel inclusions and occasional pieces of charcoal
 - [017] mottled green/grey/brown/orange clayey silt incorporating re-deposited natural with rare gravel inclusions
 - [018] cut 0.70m wide and 0.22m deep with moderately sloping concave sides and concave base
- F.5 [021] firm and slightly friable mottled mid brown/light grey clayey silt with rare flecks of charcoal
- [022] cut 0.70m wide and 0.22m deep with moderately sloping concave sides and concave base

Trench 17

This trench was on an east-west alignment and was 48m in length, being placed across Trench 14 in order to establish the extent of discovered features. There were 4 post holes (3 of them inter-cutting; F.26, F.27 and F.28), 3 linears; F.19 and F.20 (the third was not sampled) and 1 shallow pit/midden, F.21. The fourth post hole (F.32) was moderately deep and could potentially have held a trimmed pencil-tip upright timber. In addition, a small box section and auger transect was sampled across a large pit feature (F.13) which exceeded 15 metres in diameter (Figures 3, 5). The results of the augering and excavation indicated that this was a large watering hole with a stepped profile for access on the western side and a steep sided shaft / well on the eastern side. Excavation revealed episodes of silting and slumping, and it is uncertain at this time whether it was one feature or a conglomerate of features (possible evidence of upcast material from another feature was represented by context [058]). It is possible that F.22 and F.23 in trench 14 were part of a group of watering holes that were silting up and being regularly recut.

- F.13 [057] firm to friable dark grey sandy silt with frequent gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal
- [058] firm to friable mid brown/orange sandy gravel with patches dark grey sandy silt with occasional flecks of charcoal
- [059] firm to friable dark grey/brown sandy silt with frequent gravel inclusions and occasional to moderate flecks of charcoal
- [060] firm to friable mid brown/grey sandy silt with moderate gravel inclusions and occasional to moderate flecks of charcoal
- [061] probable animal burrow, friable dark brown/grey sandy silt
- [062] firm to friable mid orange/grey/brown sandy silt with moderate to frequent gravel inclusions and occasional to moderate flecks of charcoal
- [063] firm to friable mid to dark grey/brown sandy silt with moderate to frequent gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal and slightly peaty towards the base
- [064] friable to firm mottled grey/brown/orange silty sandy gravel, redeposited natural, with occasional flecks of charcoal
- [065] cut of slot was 1.00m wide and 2.50m in length, feature had steep concave sides, the base was not reached
- F.21 [101] soft mottled dark grey/brown silty loam with dark orange sandy streaks and light orange/grey/brown sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions and frequent pieces and flecks of charcoal
- [102] cut 3.20m wide and between 0.04-0.11m deep with sloping sides and undulating base

- F.19 [085] soft mid grey/brown silty loam with friable dark orange sand with rare gravel inclusions
[086] cut 0.54m wide and 0.28m deep with moderately steep concave sides and sharp concave base
- F.20 [076] soft mid grey/brown silty clay with dark orange/brown mottling with rare gravel inclusions
[077] cut 1.22m wide and 0.36m deep with moderately steep concave sides and moderate break of slope and flat base
- F.21 [101] soft mottled dark grey/brown silty loam with dark orange sandy streaks and light orange/grey/brown sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions and frequent pieces and flecks of charcoal
[102] cut 3.20m wide and between 0.04-0.11m deep with sloping sides and undulating base
- F.26 [093] soft and friable dark red/orange sandy silt with dark grey sandy silty loam with rare gravel inclusions
[094] cut, oval in plan, 0.60m x 0.81m and 0.25m deep with moderately sloping sides, steeper on the southwest side and concave base
- F.27 [095] and [097] soft dark grey silty loam with dark orange sandy pieces and rare gravel inclusions
[096] lens of friable mid red/orange silty sand
[098] cut 0.40m x 0.90m and 0.32m deep with moderate concave sides and concave base
- F.28 [099] soft dark grey silty loam with occasional friable dark orange sandy patches and with rare gravel inclusions
[100] cut with dimensions not known and 0.30m deep with moderately steep concave sides and concave base
- F.32 [108] soft light grey silty loam with rare gravel inclusions
[109] an oval posthole 0.50m x 0.37m and 0.49m deep with steep straight and convex sides and sharply tapered base

Trench 18

This trench was 56m in length and on a north-south orientation and was excavated prior to backfilling in order to establish the extent of archaeology encountered towards the eastern part of Area 1. Three linears were recorded, two on a northeast-southwest orientation and the other on a northwest-southeast orientation.

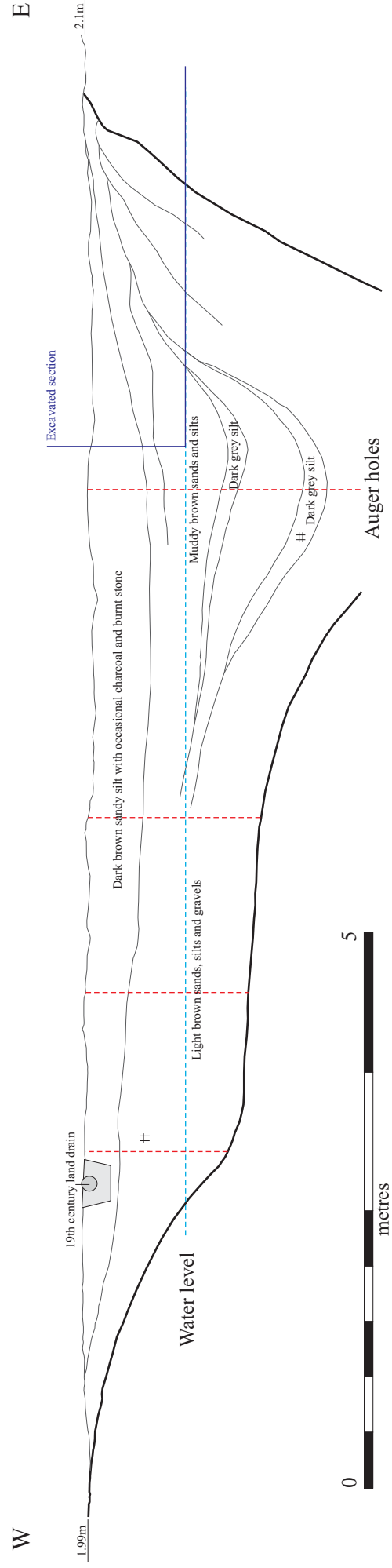


Figure 5. Sketch profile of Bronze Age watering hole F.13 based on auger transect and excavated section

Area 2 – Proposed Waste Transfer Site

This area had ten planned trenches (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) and two judgemental trenches (16 and 19). A further three boxed-out areas were cut in Trenches 3, 6 and 8 and two small trenches were pulled at right angles to Trenches 6 and 7 in order to determine the extent of features and examine stratigraphic relationships (Figure 2b). The total area examined was 1299m² representing a 5.29% sample by area.

A series of truncated linear features were found on a NE-SW (F.31) and NW-SE orientation (F.6, F.8, F.9, F.15, F.17, F.18, F.25, F.29, F.57 and F.67). Based on alignment, all features were probably part of prehistoric land division, although no dateable artefacts were recovered from excavated sections. Stratigraphic relationships provided evidence that these features pre-dated a Romano-British field system (see F.57 in Trench 6). In the boxed-out area in Trench 6, a series of post holes were recorded (F.47, F.54, F.59, F.60, F.61, and F.62) four of which appeared to formed one four-post structure (F.47, F.59, F.60 and F.61). No dateable artefacts were recovered from F.47, and the environmental sample produced little evidence of agricultural remains although charcoal, burnt flint, bone and clay were recovered (*Ballantyne* below). However; F.61 was truncated by F.58 (Roman cultivation trench), giving it a prehistoric date, most probably an example of a characteristic Bronze Age four post granary/shelter.

The predominant features recorded were dated to the Romano-British period and consisted of 2 ditches and 9 square-sided cultivation trenches. These were found on a NNE-SSW alignment, perpendicular to the Fen Causeway to the north of the PDA. Romano-British pottery, (mid 1st to 2nd century AD), was recovered from two cultivation beds F.11 and F.14 and the ditch terminal F.1 in Trench 8 (see *Anderson*, below). There appears to be no distinct clustering of flint artefacts within Area 2, with flint artefacts recovered from residual contexts in ditches F.1 and F.39 and cultivation beds F.11, F.14, and F.24. The artefacts were from two distinct technologies and dated from Late Mesolithic/Early Neolithic and Middle to Late Bronze Age (*Billington*, below).

Environmental samples were submitted for analysis from five features; three from cultivation trenches F.7, F.24 and F.39; one from field system ditch F.1; and one from post hole F.47. The majority of the samples produced little environmental evidence, although results from the cultivation trenches (F.7 and F.24) indicate that cereals were grown in the vicinity. The molluscan data suggested that the area was seasonally wet during the Romano-British period (*Ballantyne*, below).

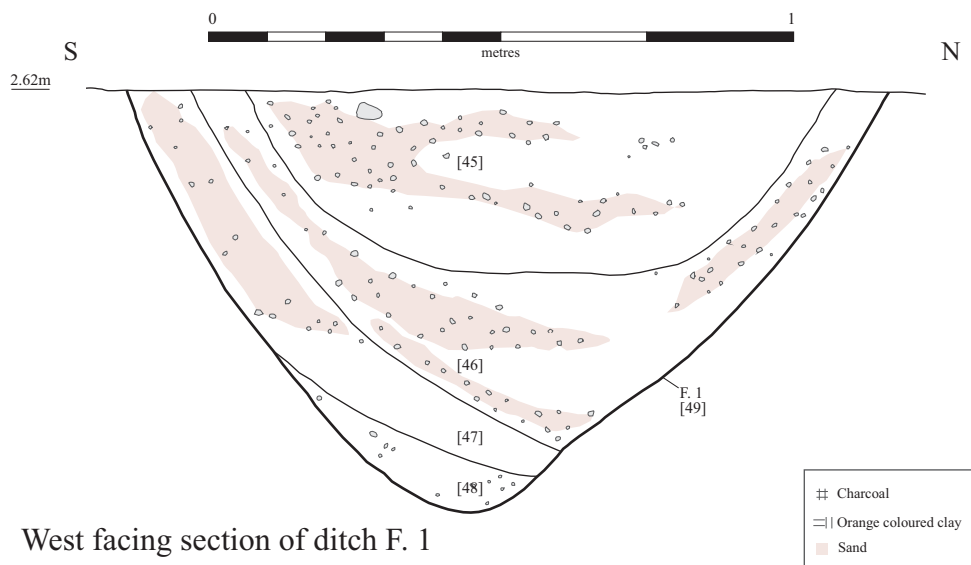
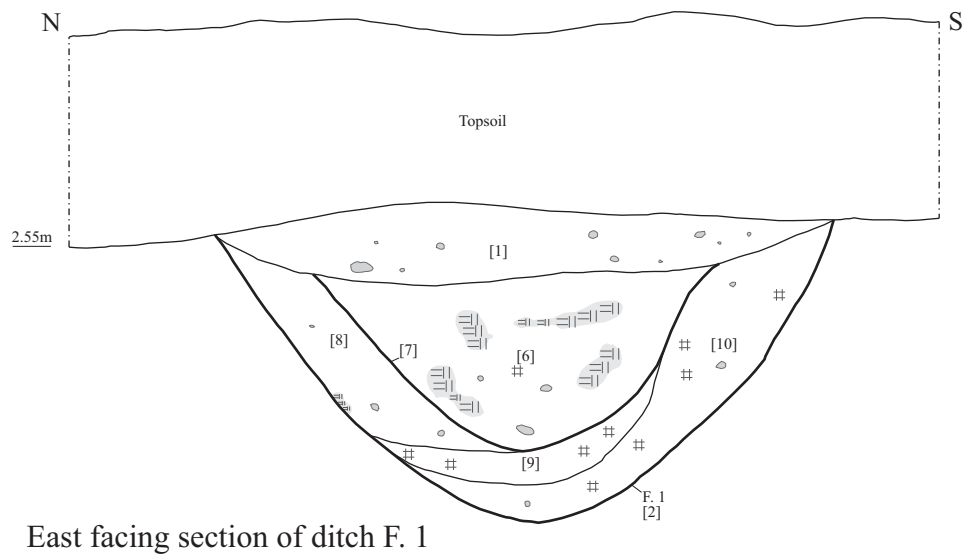


Figure 6. Sections and photograph of Romano-British boundary ditch F.1

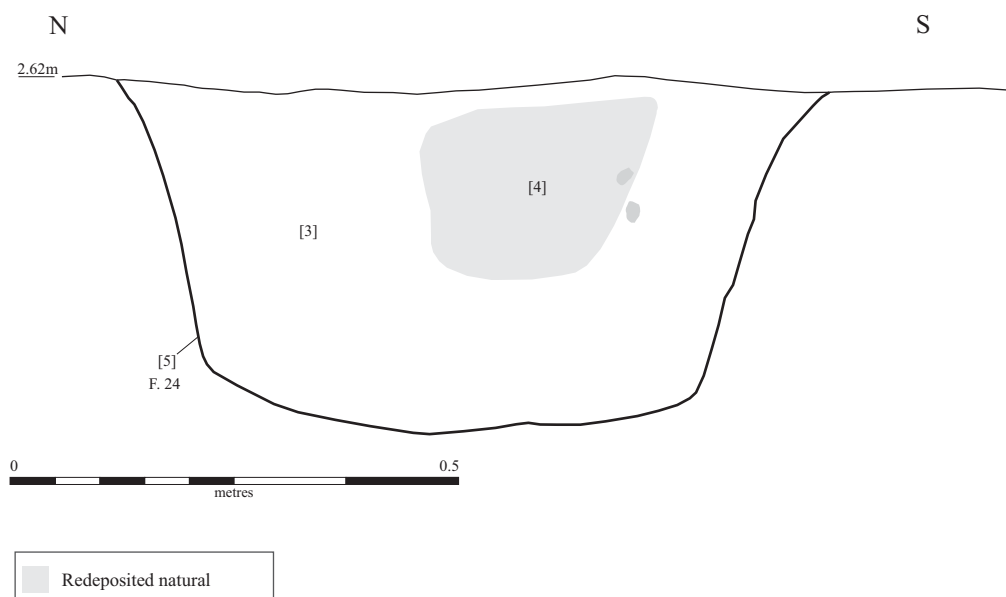


Figure 7. Section and photograph of Romano-British cultivation trench F.24

Trench 1

This trench was 40m in length and was on an east-west orientation, and contained one linear, F.3, and two tree throws; one of which was sampled with no dateable artefacts recovered. The linear was on a north-south orientation and continued southwards on the same alignment into Trench 3.

- F.3 [011] moist mottled orange/grey sandy silty clay with occasional gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal
 [012] moist mottled dark brown/orange silty sandy clay with occasional gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal
 [013] cut 1.10m wide and 0.47m deep with moderately steep straight sides and concave base

Trench 2

This trench was on a north-south orientation and 50m in length with the southern end joined to the eastern end of Trench 3. Two features were recorded within this trench; a tree throw and linear (F.1). This ditch was on an east-west orientation and continued through trenches 4, 5, and 7 and terminated in Trench 8. The feature was perpendicular to F.3 recorded in Trenches 1 and 3.

- F.1 [034] soft light grey silt with friable orange/brown sandy mottling with occasional gravel inclusions and rare flacks of charcoal
 [035] cut 0.69m wide and 0.33m deep with moderately steep straight sides and flat base

Trench 3

This trench was on an east-west orientation and 100m in length with the eastern end joining the southern end of Trench 2. There were five features recorded in this trench; three linears, one small pit and a tree throw. An area was machined around the small pit (F.16) to determine whether it was an isolated feature or whether it related to further archaeological activity; no further features were found.

Feature F.3 was situated in the eastern end of the trench and linears F.15 and F.25 were on a northwest-southeast orientation both with similar fills and profile, differing to that seen in F.3.

- F.3 [036] soft mottled light grey silt and dark orange/brown friable sand with occasional gravel inclusions and rare flecks of charcoal
 [037] cut 1.05m wide and 0.43m deep with moderately steep straight and concave sides and sharp concave base
- F.15 [068] firm to friable mid brown sandy silt with frequent gravel and rounded stone inclusions
 [069] cut 0.38m wide and 0.09m deep with sloping concave sides and concave base
- F.16 [070] firm dark grey clayey silt with rare gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal
 [071] cut 0.46m wide and 0.13m deep with moderately steep concave (east side) and convex (west side) sides with moderate break of slope and concave base
- F.25 [087] firm light grey sandy silt with moderate gravel inclusions and rare flecks of charcoal
 [088] cut 0.42m wide and 0.05m deep with sloping concave sides and uneven flat base

Trench 4

This trench was on a north-south orientation 50m in length and contained one linear. There was evidence of a re-cut suggesting that this linear re-affirmed the field system. The primary linear F.1 contained three fills and the re-cut contained two fills.

- F.1 [001] compact mid yellow/grey silty clay with moderate small and medium flint gravel
[006] compact mid grey silty clay with patches of mottled orange clay with moderate small to medium flint gravel and occasional flecks of charcoal
[007] re-cut, 0.67m wide and 0.30m deep with straight moderate sides and concave base
[008] compact mid grey silty clay with occasional mottles of friable orange clay with moderate small and medium flint gravel
[009] compact mid blue/grey silty clay with occasional small flint gravel and moderate flecks of charcoal
[010] compact mid grey silty clay with moderate small and medium flint gravel and moderate flecks of charcoal
[002] cut 1.05m wide and 0.50m deep with moderately straight sides and flat base

Trench 5

This trench was on a north-south alignment and 25m in length. There were three features recorded; two linears and one tree throw. A linear F.29 to the south of the trench was on a northwest-southeast orientation and probably relates to the linear in Trench 3 (F.25). The linear F.1 continues through this trench and was not sampled.

- F.29 [089] firm and friable light grey sandy silt with diffuse orange/brown mottling with occasional gravel inclusions
[090] redeposited natural
[091] basal fill of large sub-angular and rounded stones
[092] cut 0.55m wide and 0.22m deep with moderately steep concave sides with moderate break of slope and flat base

Trench 6

This trench was on an east-west orientation and was 100m in length. Fifteen linears were recorded within this trench; thirteen were on a north-south orientation and were deemed to be cultivation beds. One linear was on a northwest-southeast orientation and probably pre-dates the cultivation beds. Nine of the cultivation beds were sampled and recorded.

Two judgmental trenches were machined to establish the extent of a linear and to establish the relationship between one of the cultivation beds and a probable prehistoric linear (see Figures 2b, 4). The first was 12m in length on a north-south orientation on the south side towards the west end of the trench. This revealed the full extent of the cultivation trench F.58 at its terminal point. The second was a 5m x 5m area on the north side of the west end of the trench which uncovered a series of features including a four-post structure and two small pits. One of the post holes was sampled (F.47) where it cut a small pit (F.54).

- F.2 [003] moist mottled mid grey/orange sandy silty clay with occasional gravel inclusions
[004] re-deposited natural firm mottled orange/grey sandy gravel
[005] cut 0.83m wide and 0.38m deep with moderately steep sides, sharp break of slope and flat base

- F.7 [028] moist and soft grey sandy silty clay with occasional gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal
[029] cut 0.78m wide and 0.47m deep with steep concave sides, sharp break of slope and flat base
- F.10 [038] moist and soft grey sandy silty clay with occasional burnt flint inclusions and rare flacks of charcoal
[041] re-cut 0.45m wide and 0.21m deep with vertical concave and concave sides, very sharp break of slope and flat base
[039] firm orange/green/grey silty clay
[040] cut 0.95m wide and 0.30m deep with moderately steep concave sides with moderate break of slope with flat base
- F.11 [054] light to mid grey sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions and flecks of charcoal
[053] yellow silty clay
[052] brown/yellow silty sandy clay
[051] lens of grey silty sand with occasional gravel inclusions and burnt chalk
[050] cut 0.60-0.70m wide and 0.40m deep with steep near vertical straight sides with sharp break of slope and flat base
- F.14 [066] soft grey sandy silty clay with occasional gravel inclusions and rare flecks of charcoal
[067] cut 0.68m wide and 0.28m deep with steep straight sides, moderate break of slope and flat base
- F.24 [078] soft and moist grey sandy silty clay with occasional flecks of charcoal
[079] cut 0.76m wide and 0.34m deep with steep straight sides, moderate break of slope and flat base
- F.35 [110] firm light grey silty sandy clay
[111] cut of terminal, square in plan 0.63m wide and 0.20m deep with steep straight sides with sharp break of slope and flat base
- F.39 [134] firm light grey silty sandy clay iron panning
[135] soft and moist grey sandy silty clay with iron pan staining and rare flecks of charcoal
[136] cut 0.81m wide and 0.36m deep with steep near vertical sides, sharp break of slope and flat to convex base
- F.47 [162] firm mid to dark grey sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions and occasional to moderate flecks of charcoal
[182] cut circular in plan 0.35m x 0.35m and 0.21m deep with vertical straight sides, moderate break of slope and flat base
- F.54 [183] firm mottled mid grey/orange sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal
[184] cut oval in plan 0.30m x 0.40m and 0.17m deep with steep straight sides, moderate break of slope and flat base

Trench 7

This trench was on a north-south orientation and was 100m in length. A judgemental trench on an east-west orientation was machined on the west side to the north of the trench and was 12.50m in length. Eight features were recorded that included four linears on a northwest-southeast orientation (three were sampled; F.6, with F.8 and F.9 conjoining). Two ditch

terminals relating to the cultivation beds were on a NNE-SSW orientation (F.35 and F.39). In addition a linear that continued through trenches 5 and 19 was recorded, and a tree throw.

- F.6 [023] firm and friable mottled mid and dark grey clayey silt with frequent flecks of charcoal
 [024] firm and friable mid brown clayey silt with occasional gravel inclusions and rare pieces of charcoal
 [025] firm mid brown silty clay with rare flacks of charcoal
 [026] firm mid grey silty clay with occasional gravel inclusions
 [027] cut 0.98m wide and 0.22m deep with moderate straight sides and irregular flat base

- F.8 [030] firm and friable mid grey clayey silt with orange clay mottling with occasional chalk nodules and occasional gravel inclusions
 [031] cut 0.68m wide and 0.15m deep with sloping concave sides and concave base

- F.9 [032] firm and friable light grey clayey silt with diffuse yellow mottling with occasional chalk and gravel inclusions
 [033] cut 0.82m wide and 0.14m deep with sloping concave sides and concave base

- F.35 [110] firm light grey silty sandy clay
 [111] cut of terminal, square in plan 0.63m wide and 0.20m deep with steep straight sides with sharp break of slope and flat base

- F.39 [134] firm light grey silty sandy clay iron panning
 [135] soft and moist grey sandy silty clay with iron pan staining and rare flecks of charcoal
 [136] cut 0.81m wide and 0.36m deep with steep near vertical sides, sharp break of slope and flat to convex base

Trench 8

This trench was on a north-south orientation and 75m in length. Two ‘boxed-out’ areas were machined, the first aimed to establish the stratigraphic relationship between two linears (F.17/F.18 and F.31) towards the south; the northeast-southwest orientated linear (F.31) was truncated and no relationship could be established. The second area was opened to locate the terminal of linear F.1; two slots of this ditch were sampled including the terminal.

- F.1 [042] soft light grey silt with firm to friable dark orange sand and yellow/grey silt with rare flacks of charcoal
 [043] soft light grey silt with firm to friable dark orange sand
 [044] cut of terminal, square end in plan 1.15m wide and 0.58m deep with moderately steep concave sides and concave base
 [045] soft light grey silt with firm to friable orange sand with rare small gravel inclusions and rare flecks of charcoal
 [046] soft light grey/orange silty sand
 [047] soft light grey/orange sandy silt
 [048] soft dark orange sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions
 [047] cut 1.30m wide and 0.73m deep with moderately steep concave sides and sharp concave base

- F.17 [072] firm to friable mid grey clayey silt with slight diffuse orange mottling with rare gravel inclusions
 [073] cut 0.80m wide and 0.09m deep with sloping concave sides and concave base

- F.18 [074] firm dark grey silty clay with occasional gravel inclusions
[075] cut 0.74m wide and 0.13m deep with sloping concave sides and concave base
- F.31 [106] firm mottled mid grey/orange silty clay with occasional gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal
[107] cut 0.54m wide and 0.15m deep with moderate concave sides and concave base

Trench 16

This trench was on a north-south orientation and 8m in length. It was placed to locate the possible terminal of F.1. No archaeological features were present in this trench.

Trench 19

This trench was on a north-south orientation and 50m in length. It was placed between Trench 7 and Trench 8 to confirm the continuation of linears. The terminal of cultivation bed F.64 was recorded in addition to a further terminal of a linear on the same orientation as the cultivation beds. The continuation of F.1 and a prehistoric linear (F.67) were also recorded.

Discussion

Previous fieldwork in the March area has uncovered archaeological remains ranging from flint artefact scatters from the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods (perhaps reflecting short episodes of activity) through to complex field systems and settlement features from the Bronze Age and through to Roman times.

The prehistoric features within the PDA can be most closely paralleled to the Bronze Age finds from Whitemoor Sidings as well as the truncated field system ditches (with similar alignment profile and fills) that were recorded at Barn Farm to the north of the PDA. These previous finds suggest a widely utilised agricultural landscape during the Bronze Age; the alignment of the field-systems can be seen on phase plan, Figure 8. These linears were recorded throughout Area 2 and possibly continue into Area 1.

The right-angled Roman field-system within Area 2 is comparable with remains recorded on air photos at Westry to the north west and extensive remains around Flaggrass Hill to the north east (Hall 1987).

Area 1

Where artefacts were recovered, the activity within Area 1 predominantly dated to the Bronze Age and was concentrated to the northwest of the PDA, occupying some c.30% of the proposed Highways Depot (Figure 9). Amongst this feature cluster, a single Roman ditch containing a horse skeleton and several unphased features also suggested a later phase of activity.

The large feature (F.13) encountered in Trenches 14 and 17 was probably a very large watering hole or more likely at least two watering holes – large wells that have a sloping access ramp to one side of the feature. This ramp can be held in place by either a large piece of timber or several stakes to keep the deepest part of the well clear and to aid access.

The features within Area 1 have similarities to a complex of watering holes and pits excavated by CAU at Langtoft, Lincolnshire. This site had three large watering holes (one with a timber plank with pegs revetment), that were cut with subsequent smaller pits and wells dug into the slumping and silted fills (Hutton 2008). Similar features were excavated at Eye Quarry where a large watering hole had numerous smaller wells and pits cut into it after it went out of use (Patten 2004; forthcoming).

Adjacent features comprising post holes and shallow pits with domestic debris suggest that this area was intensively occupied during the Bronze Age, and close proximity to the fen edge would have provided a relatively high water table for access to the resource. A single sherd of Beaker pottery and a background scatter of Late Mesolithic / Neolithic flint also provide intriguing possibilities for the presence of earlier phases of activity.

The presence of cremations demonstrates that the PDA contained a focus for ritual activity, although the precise nature of such activity is not yet known. It is tempting to consider that the remains of the curved ditch (F.70) in Trench 14 could form part of a Bronze Age ring ditch, forming a focus for the nearby cremations. The clustering of cremations around barrows and ring ditches is known in the wider landscape, one notable example being Deeping St James to the north (French 1994). However, if the feature is part of a ring ditch, there is no explanation for why a matching ditch was not also found in the northern part of Trench 14. Furthermore, the cutting of F.70 by pit / watering hole F.23 is also problematic if the features are assumed to be from a contemporary phase.

Only future excavation work could help with research questions concerning the extent, function and phasing of watering hole and mortuary features. The possibility of recovering additional watering holes and cremations is high.

There is a possibility that organic waterlogged remains could be found in the lower depths of the large watering holes – analysis of environmental samples that were collected during augering suggested that upper layers appeared to have suffered from historic de-watering (perhaps due to the presence of a balancing pond on neighbouring land to the west). Although the feature was not bottomed, the results suggest that there may be waterlogged preservation at depths of more than 2 metres from current ground level.

Area 2

The lithic assemblage from Area 2 provides evidence of background activity from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age within or close to the PDA, although there were no concentrations of scatters in this area, the remains being found in residual archaeological

contexts. The tree throws recorded throughout the evaluation may date from an episode of prehistoric land clearance following which the field-system ditches were established throughout the landscape for the intensification of agriculture. Similar prehistoric ditches (in profile, alignment and fills) have been recorded in other evaluations and excavations within the immediate landscape.

There were at least two phases of field systems in this part of the evaluation including a truncated pre-Roman field system which probably dates to the Bronze Age. The alignments, profiles and contexts of these ditches are similar to those recorded within the immediate landscape such as those from Whitemoor Sidings to the southwest and Barn Farm to the north (Hall 2004; OAU 1995). Immediately south of the PDA, an evaluation during the construction of Melbourne Avenue revealed a truncated linear and small pit with no dateable artefacts – suggesting that prehistoric activity in this area was established but also sparse (Hatton 2004). There was evidence of prehistoric activity towards the north of Trench 6 in the form of a four-post structure and an adjacent pit. A nearby linear feature may be part a drove/ track way leading to activity to the immediate north of the PDA.

The linear features recorded in the north of the PDA (primarily in Trench 6), appear to be part of a system of cultivation trenches, perhaps associated with intensive horticulture of cash-crops during the Romano-British period. Similar features have been recorded near Addenbrookes hospital in Cambridge where they were thought to be associated with the labour intensive cultivation of plants such as asparagus, a process documented in detail by Cato the Elder (Timberlake 2007).

The environmental remains suggest an area that was periodically wet and indicate that the primary functions of main ditch features could have been drainage with boundary a secondary function. Whilst the re-cut of the substantial ditch F.1 might suggest the re-affirmation of the boundary, this most likely reflects the regular cleaning out of debris and vegetation in an important water course. There was no definitive evidence from plant macrofossils for the type of crop cultivation within the presumed cultivation trenches, although low levels of cereal grains indicate that there was arable activity in the near vicinity.

Similar features were found on comparable gravel terraces associated with a Villa estate at Fen Drayton in Cambridgeshire (Mortimer 1995). Examples of Roman viticulture associated with extensive systems of planting trenches are known from as far north as Wollaston in Northamptonshire (Brown and Meadows 2000). In this case, the cultivation trenches were associated with post-pits for staked vines, no examples of which were found within the PDA. Although the first and second centuries may have been a time of climatic amelioration highly suitable for fruit growing, the presumed high water table on the March terrace may not have been suitable for viticulture and the regular cultivation trenches may be associated with other cash crops (such as asparagus) that could be grown for a Villa estate or transported to market along the Fen Causeway.

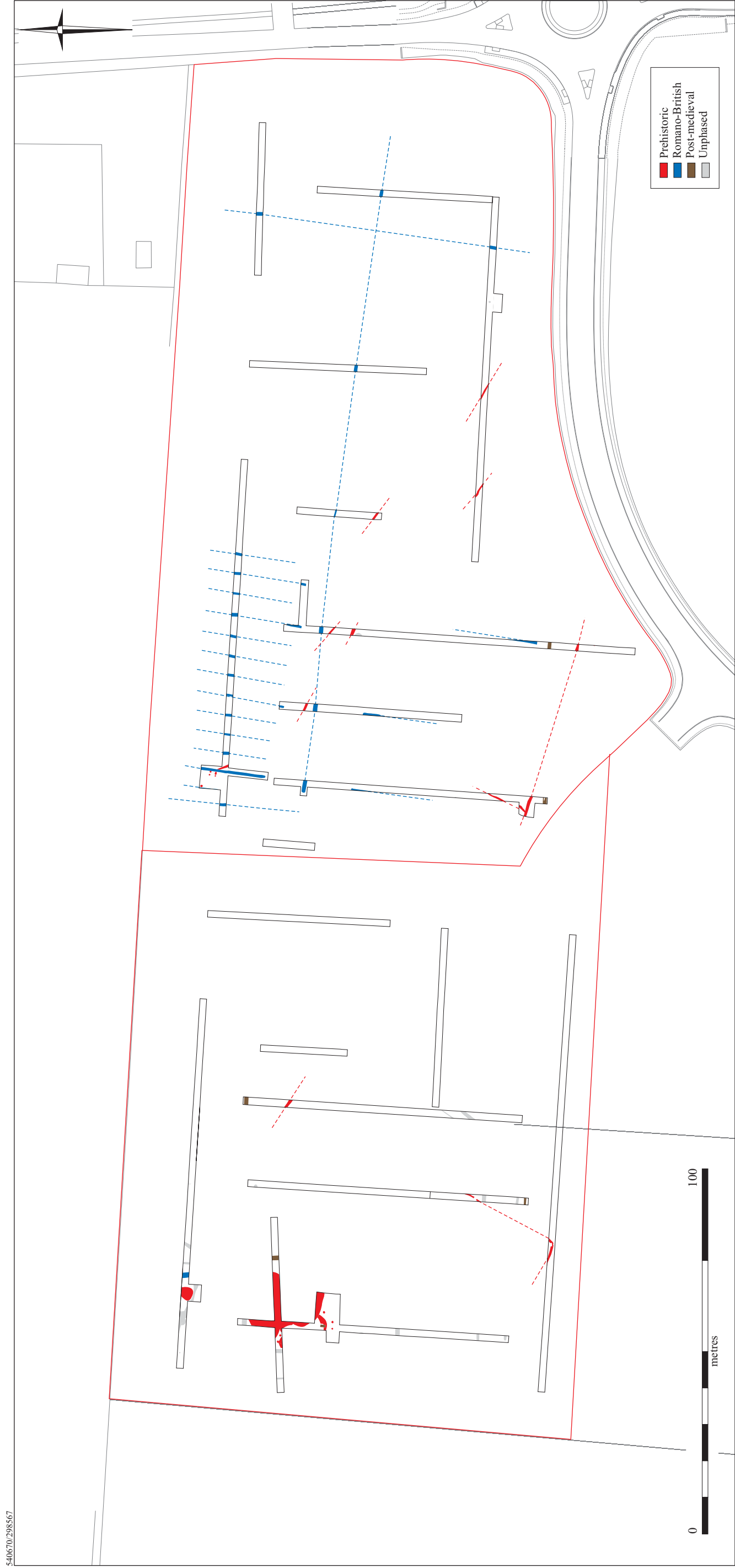


Figure 8. Features by phase

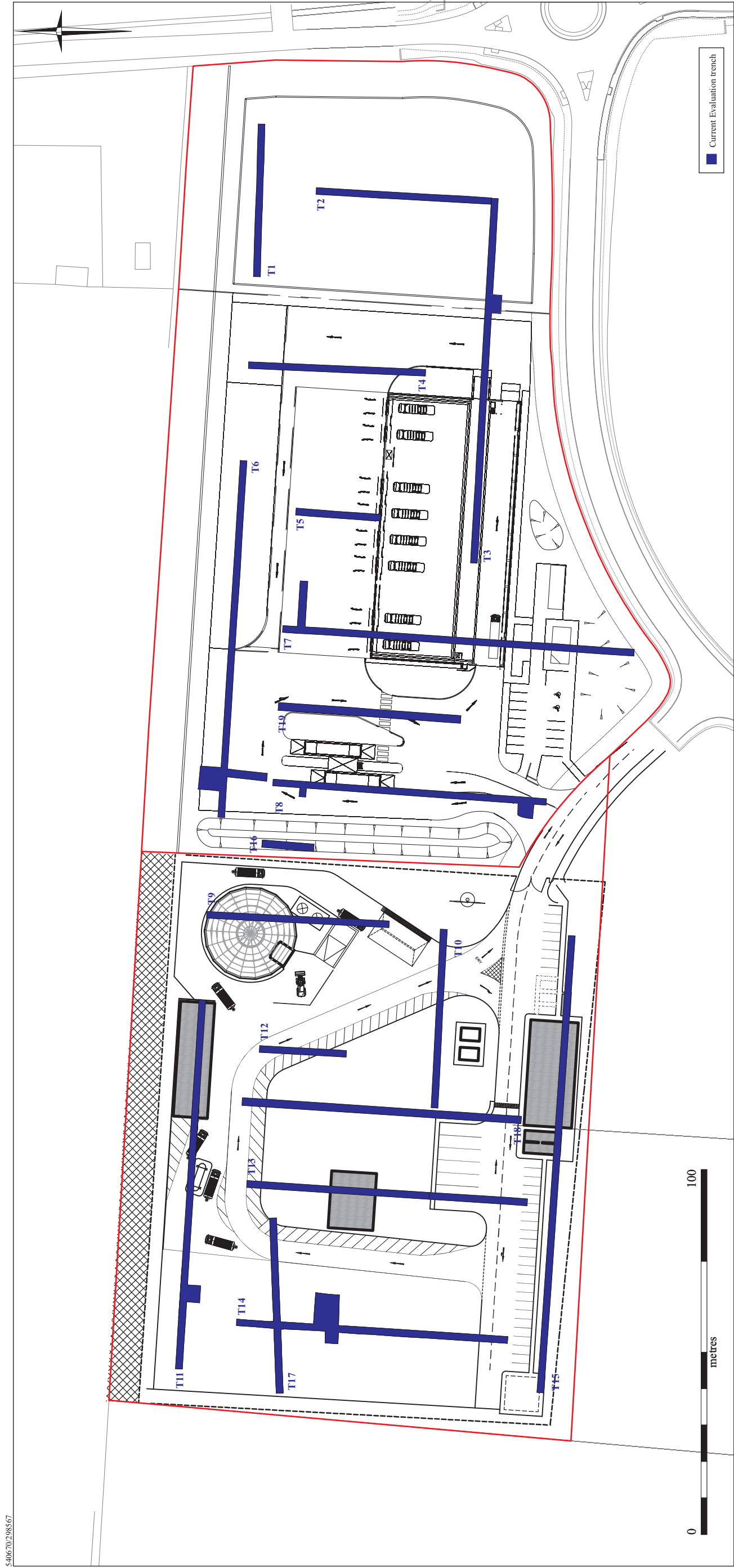


Figure 9. Trench locations overlain on future development proposals

The nature of Roman economy to the north of March has previously been described (on available evidence) as based on animal herding and the production of salt (Hall 1987), with little arable cultivation anticipated due to a high water table. Supporting this view, molluscan remains in the substantial field-system ditches do indicate a high water table and linkages to a wider system of water courses. However, the evaluation has also located evidence of intensive horticulture and cereal growing suggesting that there may be a more mixed agricultural economy than has previously been surmised.

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Appendix

Specialist Reports

An Assessment of the Environmental remains

By Rachel Ballantyne

Methodology

Thirteen bulk samples were submitted for analysis, comprising two augered samples from and F.13 (prehistoric watering hole in Trench 17); four from Romano-British cultivation beds in Trench 6, F.7, F.11, F.24 and F.39; three linear features F.1, F.46 (Romano-British linear in Trench 7 and Trench 11) and F.48 (an undated linear in Trench 14); two postholes F.32 (Trench 17) and F.47 (part of four-poster in Trench 6); and individual samples from watering hole F.13, charcoal-rich layer F.21 (prehistoric shallow pit in Trench 17) and pit F.51 (one of a cluster of pits in Trench 11).

All samples have been flotation sieved by the author, using a modified version of the Siraf tank (Williams 1973) at the CAU. Flots ($> 300\mu\text{m}$) and heavy residues ($>1\text{mm}$) have been dried, then sorted using a Leica MS5 (x6.3 – x50) binocular microscope for flots, and by eye for residues greater than 4mm. The 1–4 mm residues have not been sorted at this stage, but kept for future reference. Full raw data is summarised in Table 1 at the end of this report. Nomenclature follows Stace (1997) for most plants; however for wheat and barley the traditional classifications in Zohary and Hopf (2000) have been followed.

Preservation

Charring has preserved all plant remains. There is no clear evidence of waterlogging, although snail shells of aquatic and semi-aquatic (slum) taxa are present in a number of features. The few untransformed plant seeds are not therefore fully distinguishable as intrusive, or the remains of once-waterlogged contexts; two likely once-waterlogged contexts are the elder seeds (*Sambucus nigra*) in the base of pit F.51 (Trench 11), and fragments of bramble seeds (*Rubus* Subgen. *RUBUS*) at 1.7-1.8m auger depth in watering-hole F.13 (Trench 17).

The few charred cereal grains are heavily puffed, distorted and abraded, thus precluding close identification. The often low densities of charred plant macrofossils and wood charcoal, and their poor condition, suggests these items are displaced in time and space from their original charring context, and could sometimes be reworked from earlier contexts.

Results

The following descriptions are structured by trench.

Trench 6

Two samples from cultivation beds [28] F.7 and [78] F.24 have produced contrasting results. In F.7 there are low density charred plant remains of cereal grain, chaff and wild seeds; these are in-fact the richest remains identified across the thirteen samples. There are single grains of barley (*Hordeum vulgare* sensu lato), wheat (*Triticum* sp.), and one glume base (chaff item) of emmer wheat (*Triticum dicoccum*).

In F.24 (cultivation bed) there is only one hulled wheat grain (*Triticum dicoccum/spelta*), and no chaff or wild seeds. Both samples have comparable low amounts of wood charcoal, and low amounts of snail shell. Most of the snails are terrestrial and do not provide more specific habitat information, however a small number of *Lymnaea truncatula* in F.7 suggest that this location was seasonally wet.

The small mollusc sample from [51] F.11 (cultivation bed) was found to contain fragments of *Trichia hispida/striolata* and *Cepaea nemoralis/hortensis*. Both snail types are terrestrial, and found in a wide range of habitats. This sample was accidentally wet-sieved over 1mm mesh without flotation, although no large to medium charcoal was recovered. Finally, posthole [162] F.47 (part of four-poster in Trench 6) included only very low amounts of fine charcoal, however there are numerous small artefact inclusions of burnt bone, worked flint, burnt flint and burnt clay.

Trench 7

Cultivation bed [135] F.39 includes one unidentifiable cereal grain and a small unidentifiable seed. There is very low amount of wood charcoal, no small artefacts, and one *Bithynia* sp. snail shell suggests past flooding.

Trench 8

Linear feature [46] F.1 (Romano-British field system) has a low amount of charcoal, plus worked flint and burnt flint. There are numerous semi-aquatic snail shells of *Lymnaea truncatula*, *Aplexa hypnorum* and *Anisus leucostoma*; all of which flourish in ponds, ditches and other small bodies of water that may dry out seasonally.

Trench 11

Linear feature [159] F.46 (Romano-British field system) has one sheep's sorrel seed (*Rumex acetosella*), a plant found more commonly upon light soils rather than the silty clays at Hundred Road. There is almost no charcoal, and one or two fragments of burnt flint and bone.

Pit base [170] F.51 (one of a complex of inter-cutting pits) is relatively rich in wood charcoal, burnt bone and unburnt bone. One charophyte oogonium ('seed' case) and numerous untransformed seeds of elder suggest there may have once been standing water in this feature.

Trench 14

Linear feature [163] F.48 (undated linear) has low amounts of charcoal, and untransformed seeds that are clearly recent in origin. Numerous fragments of small stems, probably rhizomes, are unusual and may represent charred turfs or another uprooted resource. There are numerous snail shells, which are dominated by aquatic taxa such as *Bithynia tentaculata*, *Bithynia leachii* and *Planorbis planorbis*. As a group, these species show that slow running water was once present continuously in this feature, probably linked to a larger body of water nearby (possibly through flooding events).

Trench 17

Both samples from watering hole F.13 - an auger sample of 1.7-1.8m depth, and a bulk sample from fill [62] – contain only very low amounts of fine charcoal. The deeper auger sample includes bramble seeds that are possible remains of waterlogging. The higher [62] includes artefacts of burnt bone, worked flint, burnt flint and burnt clay.

Charcoal-rich [101] F.21 (shallow Bronze Age pit) contains relatively high quantities of wood charcoal, with one worked flint. Posthole [108] F.32 (tapered posthole) includes one barley/wheat grain, plus a low amount of wood charcoal and burnt flint.

Conclusions

The generally low quantities of charred plant remains and snail shells render all conclusions tentative. Although worked flint has been recovered from a number of samples, the majority of charred grain, chaff and seeds are associated with the three probable Roman cultivation beds F.7, F.24, F.39 – suggesting that crop processing activity may have been undertaken locally during this phase. The range of crop species is ambiguous at present; due to the poor preservation and low quantities recovered. Barley and hulled wheat were grown together throughout the Neolithic to early medieval periods in Britain (at which point hulled wheats were superseded by bread wheat); the one emmer wheat glume base in F.7 points to a prehistoric date, but this is unsupportable with only one chaff fragment from across all thirteen samples.

The snail assemblage suggests that there were episodes of flooding and standing water in cultivation trenches F.7 and F.39, and linear features F.1 and F.46; in contrast, linear feature F.48 contained slow flowing water. Stratigraphic analysis may reveal whether these habitat differences are linked to long-term changes in water-table, or simply the depth of features. It can be observed already that quality of snail shell preservation increases with proximity to the alkaline water-table.

Recommendations

No further work is required upon the samples in this assemblage, unless a more detailed identification is desired of the charred stems/rhizomes in F.48.

All types of charred plant remain and snail shell are in low densities, so future bulk sampling must try to collect at least 15–20 litres of sediment (in this report the average volume is 10 litres, excluding the augered samples) to address any questions regarding past activities or local environment.

Traces of once-waterlogged seeds in two features indicate that the water-table is lower now than previously; although some of this waterlogging could actually post-date many of the excavated features, the snail assemblage illustrates some contemporaneity. The auger results from watering-hole F.13 suggests that if any waterlogged remains exist on site are likely to be below 2m depth at this location.

The cultivation trenches would be worth sampling for pollen analysis – similar lines of enquiry at Wollaston, Northamptonshire, have provided compelling evidence for viticulture (Brown et al. 2001). Although the damp fen-edge location at Hundred Road suggests a different type of cultivation may be represented here, the associated sediments may include trapped pollen from the original cultivars.

Trench		6	6	6	6	7	7	11	11	14	17	17	17	17
Feature		F.7	F.11	F.24	F.47	F.1	F.39	F.46	F.51	F.48	F.13	F.13	F.21	F.32
Context		[28]	[51]	[78]	[162]	[46]	[135]	[159]	[170]	[163]	-	[62]	[101]	[108]
Sample Number		<1>	<2>	<4>	<11>	<10>	<8>	<12>	<14>	<13>	<3>	<5>	<6>	<7>
Feature Type		cultivation trench	mollusc sample	cultivation trench	posthole	linear feature	cultivation trench	linear feature	pit base	linear feature	auger sample	watering hole	charcoal-rich/midden	posthole
Sample Volume/ Litres		8	?	9	1.5	7	17	8	8	20	0.07	16	9	9
Fraction of flot (>0.3mm) sorted		1/1	-	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1
Fraction of residue (>4mm) sorted		1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1
Taxonomic Name	English name/ mollusc habitat													
CHARRED CEREAL GRAINS														
<i>Hordeum vulgare sensu lato</i> grain	barley grain	1												
<i>Triticum dicoccum/ spelta</i> grain	emmer/spelt wheat grain			1										
<i>Triticum</i> sp. grain	wheat grain	1												
<i>Hordeum/Triticum</i> sp. grain	barley/wheat grain													1
cereal indet. grain		1					1							
CHARRED CEREAL CHAFF														
<i>Triticum dicoccum</i> Schübl. glume base	emmer wheat chaff	1												
CHARRED NON-CEREAL SEEDS AND FRUITS														
<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	sheep's sorrel							1						
medium <i>Vicia/Lathyrus/Pisum</i> sp. (3-4mm)	vetch/wild pea/pea	1												
<i>Anisantha</i> c.f. <i>sterilis</i> (L.) Nevski	barren brome	1												
small seed indet.							1							
Charophyte oogonium	green algae 'seed'								-					
CHARCOAL														
charcoal volume/ millilitres		< 1 ml.		< 1 ml.	1 ml.	1 ml.	< 1 ml.	< 1 ml.	3 ml.	< 1 ml.	< 1 ml.	< 1 ml.	3 ml.	< 1 ml.
large charcoal (>4mm)					+	+	-		+	-			+	
med. charcoal (2-4mm)		-		+	+	+	+		++	+		-	++	-
small charcoal (<2mm)		+		++	+++	++	++	-	+++	++	+	+	+++	+
- woody stem fragments		-						-						
- fine stem/rhizome fragments										++				
- charred concretion										+				
ARTEFACTS >4mm														
bone		-						-	-	-				
burnt bone		+			-				+			-		
worked flint				+	-	-				+			-	
burnt flint				-	+	-		-		+	+	+		-
burnt clay				+								-		
OTHER BIOLOGICAL ITEMS, EXCLUDING MOLLUSCS														
coleoptera elytra	beetle wing-case										-			
UNTRANSFORMED PLANT ITEMS														
<i>Betula pendula</i> Roth	silver birch	- u												
<i>Chenopodium album</i> L.	fat hen									- u				
<i>Atriplex prostrata</i> Boucher ex DC./ <i>patula</i> L.	common/spear-leaved orache									- u				
<i>Rubus</i> Subgen. <i>RUBUS</i>	bramble										- w			
<i>Veronica hederifolia</i> L.	ivy-leaved speedwell			- u										
<i>Sambucus nigra</i> L.	elder								+ w					
<i>Picris echioides</i> L.	bristly oxtongue	- u												
<i>Poa</i> sp. floret	meadow-grass flower head											- u		
Poaceae culm fragments	grass stems											+		
intrusive roots		+ u		++ u	+ u	+ u	++ u	+ u	+ u	++ u		+ u	+ u	+ u
AQUATIC SNAILS														
<i>Bithynia tentaculata</i> (L.)	quiet rivers & still but large waters									++				
<i>Bithynia tentaculata</i> (L.) operculum(s)	quiet rivers & still but large waters									+				
<i>Bithynia leachii</i> (Sheppard)	quiet rivers & still but large waters									-				
<i>Bithynia</i> sp.							-							
<i>Planorbis planorbis</i> (L.)	ponds and ditches									+				
<i>Hippeutis complanatus</i> (L.)	most hard water environments									-				
SEMI-AQUATIC SNAILS														
<i>Lymnaea truncatula</i> (Müller)	shallow waters & flooded pastures	+				++								
<i>Aplexa hypnorum</i> (L.)	ponds and ditches					-								
<i>Anisus leucostoma</i> Millet	seasonal ponds and ditches					+++		-						
TERRESTRIAL SNAILS														
<i>Cochlicopa lubrica</i> (Müller)/ <i>lubricella</i> (Porro)	catholic					-			-	++				
<i>Vertigo pygmaea</i> (Draparnaud)	dry, grassy places; occ. marshes			-					-	++				
<i>Lauria cylindracea</i> (da Costa)	shady places	-			-					++				
<i>Vallonia exentrica</i> Sterki/ <i>pulchella</i> (Müller)	open, damp and/or dry habitats	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
<i>Cepaea nemoralis</i> (L.)/ <i>hortensis</i> (Müller)	variable: woods, grassland, hedges	-	-											
<i>Trichia hispida</i> (L.)/ <i>striolata</i> (Pfeiffer)	catholic			-		+				+				
<i>Cecilodes acicula</i> (Müller)	burrowing snail; probably intrusive				-									
thick mollusc shell indet. fragments											+			

Table 1: Results of the environmental bulk samples, Hundred Road, March (HRM08)
KEY: - 1 or 2 items, + less than 10 items, ++ 10 to 50 items, +++ more than 50 items
u untransformed, probably modern w untransformed, probably once-waterlogged

An Assessment of the Flint

By Lawrence Billington

The site produced 33 worked flints (< 290g) in addition to 30 unworked burnt flint chunks (< 86g). The majority of the burnt chunks (23) were very small fragments retrieved from bulk sampled deposits. Of the worked pieces, five were recovered from the topsoil or surface of the site following machining whilst the remaining 28 were recovered from features. The raw material was generally a dark grey flint free of large inclusions or flaws. When present, cortex was off white with a worn and abraded appearance. The composition of the assemblage by feature is shown in Table 2.

Feature No.	Trench No.	Secondary Flake	Tertiary Flake	Secondary Blade	Tertiary Blade	Single Platform Core	Multi Platform Core	Chunk	Chip	Unworked Burnt Chunk	Totals
1	4, 8	4	1						1	1	7
3	1, 3	1		1				1			3
4	15							1			1
11	6							1		2	3
13	17								1	4	5
14	6							1			1
21	15								1		1
23	14		1			1					2
24	6							1	2	2	5
32	17									6	6
36	11		1							1	2
37	11									3	3
38	11				1						1
39	7								2		2
46	11									2	2
47	6								1	5	6
48	14	1							1	4	6
49	11	1						1			2
Surface			2			1	1				4
Topsoil			1								1
Totals		7	6	1	1	2	1	6	9	30	63

Table 2. Types and quantities of flint by feature

The features

Of the 27 worked flints from features, 14 were recovered from linears forming part of a Romano-British field system, features F.1 and F.3; Romano-British field system linears, F.11, F.14 and F.24; Romano-British cultivation beds. The material appears to be chronologically mixed. A secondary blade and large narrow flake, both from F.3 show evidence for platform preparation, acute platform angles and systematic routines of working generally associated with later Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic technologies. In contrast a group of three squat, broad flakes from F.1 exhibit traits more suggestive of a later prehistoric date, characterised by an expedient technology showing little concern with systematic working and with frequent knapping errors, including stepped fractures on the dorsal surfaces of flakes and in one case a hinged termination.

Four struck flints were recovered from a sequence of intercutting features, potentially of prehistoric date, in Trench 11, comprising ditch F.36 and pits F.37, F.38 and F.49. Again two distinct technologies can be recognised, one concerned with the systematic production of narrow flakes and blades represented by two pieces from F.36 and F.38, the other characterised by an expedient technique producing irregular broad flakes, well illustrated by a large crude flake from F.49. As before, these traits could indicate later Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic flintwork, mixed with substantially later material, most likely of Middle or Late Bronze Age origin.

A shallow pit containing prehistoric pottery, F.23, also produced two worked flints that appear to represent a different technology to the two broad traditions identified above. One piece is a single platform core on a small elongated nodule. The flint is badly flawed but remaining blade scars indicate the attempted removal of narrow flakes, although platform preparation is absent. The second piece is the broken proximal end of a broad but thin flake on which the striking platform has been carefully faceted. This flake has the characteristics of later Neolithic technologies and the core could also be comfortably attributed to this period.

Unstratified

A single worked flint was retrieved from the topsoil removed during site machining and a further four from the stripped surface of the site. Three of these were tertiary flakes. Two were narrow flakes with acute platform angles and prepared platforms comparable to the potentially later Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic material discussed above. The third was an undiagnostic broad flake with no evidence of systematic working with a hinge termination.

Two cores were recovered from the surface of the site. Both show use as single platform blade cores, with narrow, parallel sided flake scars. Both appear to have suffered plough damage, although a series of small flakes and failed removals in the form of stepped fractures and incipient cones of percussion on one piece suggest an unstructured attempt at producing flakes following the systematic reduction of the core. Despite this, both cores offer good evidence of a structured blade based technology attributable to later Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic flint working.

Summary

The small assemblage of worked flint recovered can be readily separated into two technologically distinct groups, one associated with systematic core working geared towards the production of narrow flakes and blades, the other with the expedient and unstructured production of broad flakes. The former group is most likely to derive from later Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic activity, the latter group from the Middle to Later Bronze Age. Much of the material is clearly residual, especially those pieces recovered from the Romano-British field system. The mixed nature of the assemblages from the other probably prehistoric features suggests that the early material is likely to be residual whilst the later flint work may be contemporary with at least some of the features which have produced prehistoric pottery.

An Assessment of the Prehistoric Pottery

By Mark Knight

The prehistoric pottery comprised 27 sherds weighing 33g (MSW 1.32g). The condition of the material was poor with most pieces being small lumps or crumbs without any obvious distinguishing features beyond fabric type. Exceptions included a small abraded sherd from shallow pit F.21 in Trench 17 which retained a single pinched or ‘crow’s-foot’ decoration on its external surface and an applied horizontal cordon from cultivation bed F.11 in Trench 6. A single piece from cultivation bed F.2 in Trench 6 and some pieces from the surface of watering hole F.13 were made of a compact sandy fabric that could actually be of Roman origin although other pieces from F.13 were almost definitely prehistoric. Fabrics include hard with abundant finely crushed burnt flint from F.23, medium hard with common small grog from shallow depression F.21 in Trench 14, and hard and compact with frequent rounded quartz sand from F.13. Fragments of pottery recovered from cremation F.56 was Deverel-Rimbury¹.

Feature No.	Context No.	Trench No.	Number	Weight (g)
2	3	6	1	1
11	162	6	8	8
13	57	17	5	4
13	62	17	1	1
13	surface	14	6	11
21	101	17	3	4
23	83	14	1	3
27	95	17	2	1
Totals	8	-	27	33

Table 3: Assemblage Breakdown of the prehistoric pottery

Tiny sherds and crumbs are difficult to interpret beyond fabric type and therefore any diagnosis has to be tentative. The decorated sherd from the shallow pit F.21 belongs to a rusticated Beaker whereas the remaining pieces can only be described as probably Bronze Age.

¹ This was examined prior to finds processing, after which the fragments disintegrated due to their poor quality.

An Assessment of the Roman Pottery

By Katie Anderson

Introduction

A total of eleven sherds, weighing 120g were recovered from four features (F.1 and F.46; field system linear, and F.11 and F.14; cultivation beds). All the pottery was examined and details of fabric, form EVE and date were recorded, along with any other information deemed to be important.

Results

The pottery was comprised of coarseware fabrics, all of which are likely to have been made locally, including sandy micaceous wares and shell-tempered wares, both common in this region. Only two vessels forms were identified, a large shell-tempered beaded jar and a small everted rim jar or beaker from cultivation bed F.14. The only other diagnostic sherd was a base sherd, with a diameter of 12cm, also from F.14. The forms and fabrics suggest an earlier Roman date of mid 1st-early 2nd century AD.

Feature No.	Context No.	Trench No.	Number	Weight (g)
1	43	8	1	12
11	54	6	1	2
14	66	6	7	95
46	153	11	1	2
46	154	11	1	9
Totals	5	-	11	120

Table 4; Assemblage breakdown of the Romano-British pottery

Conclusion

The majority of the sherds were from the cultivation beds, and similar features from Clay Farm in south Cambridge have produced pottery of the same date (Anderson in Timberlake forthcoming).

An Assessment of the Faunal Remains

By Krish Seetah

Introduction

A small assemblage of bone was analysed from the site of Hundred Road, March, Cambridgeshire. A total of 427 fragments were recorded from four contexts (F.3 and F.46; field system linears, F.23; a shallow pit, and F.50; one of the cluster of inter-cutting pits) and weighed 701g. Further fragments of bone were recovered during the environmental flotation process from five contexts (F.7, F.13, F.47, F.48, and F.51) and weighed 5g collectively.

Preservation

Preservation of the material was moderate with some surface erosion. One fragment was calcined. The majority of the bones (424 fragments and weighed 695g), were recovered from F.46 [156] with only one fragment each recorded from the other three contexts. Of the total fragment count, 67 (45%) could be identified to the element level. Of this, 17 (11%) fragments were further identified to species.

Method

The zooarchaeological investigation followed the system implemented by Bournemouth University with all identifiable elements recorded (NISP: Number of Identifiable Specimens) and diagnostic zoning (amended from Dobney & Reilly 1988) used to calculate MNE (Minimum Number of Elements) from which MNI (Minimum Number of Individuals) was derived. Aging of the assemblage employed fusion of proximal and distal epiphyses (Silver 1969). Identification of the assemblage was undertaken with the aid of Schmid (1972), Cohen & Serjeantson (1996) and reference material from the Cambridge Archaeological Unit, the Grahame Clark Zooarchaeology Lab, Department of Archaeology, Cambridge and the Zoology Museum, Cambridge. Taphonomic criteria including indications of butchery, pathology, gnawing activity and surface modifications as a result of weathering were also recorded when evident.

Results

The evaluation produced a small assemblage of faunal remains with the majority of the remains recovered from one context (F.46; Romano-British ditch). All identifiable fragments would appear to be from one individual horse, and with two exceptions, all were from the axial skeleton: a fragment of axis, four mandibular fragments (including a portion of symphysis) and to loose teeth (seven incisors and three lower molars). The remaining elements were a complete calcaneus and a carpel. The individual would appear to have been an older animal, as the molar wear was extensive. Furthermore, of the bones identified to element, nine were vertebral fragments. Assuming that these were from the same individual, it is interesting to note that one of these fragments showed pathological change in the form of 'lipping'. This would support the notion that this was an older animal, and possibly that the animal had been used for traction purposes resulting in skeletal changes.

Tables

Feature No.	Context No.	Trench No.	Number	Weight (g)
3	36	1	1	1
7	28	6	4	1
13	62	17	2	1
23	83	14	1	14
46	156	11	424	695
47	162	2	2	1
48	163	14	1	1
50	165	11	1	1
51	170	11	9	1
Totals	8		445	716

Table 5; Assemblage breakdown of the faunal remains

Table 6: Trench descriptions

Trench No.	Location of measurement	Length	Orientation	Depth (max)	Depth of topsoil	Depth of plough diffused layer
1	0m east	40m	E-W	0.37m	0.39m	0.03m
1	20m centre	x	x	0.46m	0.34m	0.06m
1	40m west	x	x	0.45m	0.30m	0.08m
2	0m north	50m	N-S	0.42m	0.34m	0.04m
2	25m centre	x	x	0.46m	0.35m	0.06m
2	50m south	x	x	0.41m	0.33m	0.05m
3	0m east	100m	E-W	0.52m	0.36m	0.12m
3	25m	x	x	0.45m	0.33m	0.06m
3	50m centre	x	x	0.45m	0.30m	0.07m
3	75m	x	x	0.40m	0.30m	0.05m
3	100m west	x	x	0.42m	0.30m	0.04m
4	0m north	50m	N-S	0.42m	0.285m	0.08m
4	25m centre	x	x	0.50m	0.36m	0.09m
4	50m south	x	x	0.42m	0.35m	0.04m
5	0m north	25m	N-S	0.43m	0.34m	0.04m
5	25m south	x	x	0.49m	0.36m	0.08m
6	0m east	100m	E-W	0.51m	0.35m	0.08m
6	25m	x	x	0.48m	0.36m	0.07m
6	50m centre	x	x	0.54m	0.37m	0.09m
6	75m	x	x	0.51m	0.36m	0.07m
6	100m west	x	x	0.49m	0.37m	0.07m
7	0m north	100m	N-S	0.49m	0.37m	0.07m
7	25m	x	x	0.51m	0.37m	0.06m
7	50m centre	x	x	0.48m	0.36m	0.05m
7	75m	x	x	0.43m	0.36m	0.03m
7	100m south	x	x	0.61m	0.57m	0.07m
8	0m north	75m	N-S	0.45m	0.33m	0.08m
8	25m	x	x	0.44m	0.32m	0.07m
8	50m	x	x	0.51m	0.34m	0.09m
8	75m south	x	x	0.42m	0.30m	0.03m
9	0m north	50m	N-S	0.44m	0.32m	0.07m
9	25m	x	x	0.45m	0.33m	0.08m
9	50m south	x	x	0.41m	0.33m	0.05m
10	0m east	50m	x	0.42m	0.30m	0.08m
10	25m centre	x	x	0.47m	0.35m	0.06m

10	50m west	x	x	0.45m	0.35m	0.05m
11	0m east	100m	E-W	0.51m	0.39m	0.06m
11	25m	x	x	0.49m	0.36m	0.04m
11	50m centre	x	x	0.53m	0.36m	0.10m
11	75m	x	x	0.39m	0.33m	0.06m
11	100m west	x	x	0.54m	0.33m	0.10m
12	0m north	25m	N-S	0.41m	0.31m	0.06m
12	25m south	x	x	0.48m	0.33m	0.07m
13	0m north	77m	N-S	0.50m	0.34m	0.05m
13	25m	x	x	0.44m	0.35m	0.04m
13	50m	x	x	0.45m	0.35m	0.04m
13	73m south	x	x	0.44m	0.33m	0.05m
14	0m north	72m	N-S	0.55m	0.34m	0.07m
14	15m	x	x	0.48m	0.35m	0.07m
14	25m	x	x	0.50m	0.30m	0.04m
14	50m	x	x	0.50m	0.33m	0.09m
14	72m south	x	x	0.44m	0.31m	0.05m
15	0m east	125m	E-W	0.45m	0.35m	0.05m
15	25m	x	x	0.46m	0.30m	0.06m
15	50m	x	x	0.53m	0.33m	0.06m
15	75m	x	x	0.54m	0.37m	0.08m
15	100m	x	x	0.50m	0.37m	0.05m
15	125m west	x	x	0.43m	0.34m	0.04m
16	0m north	8m	N-S	0.45m	0.30m	0.05m
16	8m	x	x	0.40m	0.30m	0.07m
17	0m east	48m	E-W	0.38m	0.33m	0.05m
17	20m centre	x	x	0.34m	0.31m	0.03m
17	48m west	x	x	0.34m	0.30m	0.04m
18	0m north	56m	N-S	0.44m	0.33m	0.06m
18	30m	x	x	0.46m	0.36m	0.05m
18	56m south	x	x	0.44m	0.34m	0.06m
19	0m south	50m	N-S	0.43m	0.35m	0.07m
19	25m centre	x	x	0.43m	0.35m	0.06m
19	50m north	x	x	0.45m	0.36m	0.07m

Table 6. Depth of overburden by trench