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Archaeological Excavation Report

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Archaeological Excavation Report

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Summary

In September 2016 Oxford Archaeology undertook archaeological investigations on an area of land to the north of London Road on the edge of Great Glen in Leicestershire (centred on SK 6514 9809). The investigations were undertaken as part of a housing development and consisted of three parts: an open area excavation, a watching brief, and a geoarchaeological trench.

The open area excavation revealed the remains of a penannular gully dating to the Middle or Late Iron Age with a near complete ceramic jar intentionally deposited in one of its terminals. The feature almost certainly represents an Iron Age roundhouse with an accompanying structured deposit. The only other archaeological features were two plough furrows, one of which severely truncated the penannular gully, part of the medieval/post-medieval open field system of Great Glen.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake a strip, map and record excavation (Area 1), a watching brief (Area 2) and geoarchaeological trench at land off London Road near Great Glen in Leicestershire.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (Application No. 15/00912/OUT) granted in January 2016 for a residential development of up to 40 dwellings. A written scheme of investigation was produced by CgMs Consulting (2016) detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to inform the planning process.
- 1.1.3 The areas chosen for archaeological investigation were targeted over a probable Iron Age ditch located during the preceding archaeological evaluation (Area 1, Wessex Archaeology 2015), and over a balancing pond where the ground level was to be lowered (Area 2). A geoarchaeological trench was also excavated to determine the nature of a possible palaeochannel that had also been encountered during the preceding evaluation.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site lies to the north of London road on the western edge of Great Glen, a village and civil parish of Leicestershire. The proposed development covers an area of 2.4ha and is bounded to the south by London Road, and to its east by the urban extent of Great Glen (Figure 1).
- 1.2.2 The site itself slopes down from north-west to south-east where a small pond is found, from about 113m above Ordnance Datum down to 103m. The land is currently used as pasture though there are traces of ridge and furrow running from north to south visible from both the ground and aerial photography.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology of the area is the Charmouth Mudstone formation. This is overlain by a superficial deposit of diamicton or boulder clay of the Oadby Member (British Geological Survey 2017).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site is discussed in a separate desk-based assessment (CgMs 2015). The main pertinent points are summarized below.
- 1.3.2 In terms of prehistoric archaeology only a flint scatter is known in the vicinity of the site, just under 500m to the south-west.
- 1.3.3 Two nearby excavated sites are labelled on Figure 1. About 1km to the south-east of the site excavations and survey at Glen Farm on Orchard lane recorded 10th- to 11th-century earthworks and pottery as well as some residual Roman material (Martin and Sawday 1990). An evaluation (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2009) and excavation (Albion Archaeology 2011) at Stretton road, just under 1km to the north-east

recovered residual Middle to Late Iron Age ceramics at a site dominated by 1st- to 4th-century Roman enclosures and related features.

- 1.3.4 Great Glen ('Glen') was named in a 9th-century Anglo-Saxon charter and may have been a Mercian royal centre, though the place name itself probably has early origins. However, Anglo-Saxon archaeology is sparse comprising a single ceramic sherd found over 300m to the south of the site.
- 1.3.5 Ridge and furrow agriculture is evident in the topography of the site running north-south, and during the 19th century the site was located in two larger fields divided by a north-south boundary.

1.4 Previous archaeological investigations

- 1.4.1 The site was subject to a geophysical (magnetometry) survey (GSB Prospection Ltd 2015) and an archaeological evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 2015). The results of these archaeological and historical characterisations are summarised here.
- 1.4.2 Geophysical survey (GSB Prospection Ltd 2015) revealed anomalies that corresponded with ridge and furrow. Another anomaly was located along a strip in the southern half of the site, which was postulated as the channel of a former stream.
- 1.4.3 An archaeological evaluation by Wessex Archaeology (2015, see Figure 2), comprising 12 trenches, identified a ditch of probably Middle Iron Age date in trench 5, alongside a small cluster of prehistoric features in the eastern part of the site in trenches 10, 11 and 12. A ditch in trench 9 corresponded with a former field boundary known from historic mapping. In the southern part of the site a number of trenches encountered thick clays which incorporated cultural material at some depth including a struck flint flake and cereal remains. The nature of this deposit was not satisfactorily resolved during the evaluation.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The project aims and objectives, as set out in the written scheme of investigation (CgMs Consulting 2015) regarding the fieldwork were as follows:

- i. To ascertain whether any associated archaeological features survive in the immediate vicinity of the putative Iron Age ditch towards the centre of the site
- ii. To ascertain whether any associated archaeological features survive in the immediate vicinity of the possible prehistoric features in the east of the site
- iii. To investigate the possible palaeochannel to determine its nature and possible association with the archaeological features exposed
- iv. To determine the date, character, function and significance of any features encountered

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Area 1 (Figure 2) was subject to a strip, map and sample investigation. The area was stripped of topsoil and subsoil down to the level at which archaeological features were encountered, which in this case was the natural substrate. This was undertaken using a 360° machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket supervised by a qualified and experienced archaeologist. The spoil generated was removed and mounded away from the edges of the stripped area and scanned by eye and metal detector to aid the recovery of artefacts.

2.2.2 The stripped area was cleaned with hand tools (hoes and trowels) to assist the identification and interpretation of exposed archaeological features. The archaeological features exposed during this stripping and cleaning were identified, mapped and then assessed by hand excavation.

2.2.3 Area 2 was subject to a standard watching brief during topsoil stripping. This entailed a formal programme of observation and investigation during intrusive works that had the potential to disturb or destroy archaeological deposits within the area outlined in Figure 2.

2.2.4 A geoarchaeological trench (Figure 2) was excavated across the proposed channel. The sedimentary sequence was investigated and recorded by a geoarchaeologist.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the excavations are set out below with each of the three archaeological investigations treated separately. Context information is set out in Appendix A, while levels are given in Appendix B. Appendix C contains the finds data and other specialist reports.

3.2 Iron Age round house: Area 1

3.2.1 The soil sequence in Area 1 consisted of a topsoil and subsoil overlying the fairly consistent natural geology of light orangey grey and gritty clay with frequent stone inclusions. The topsoil was a dark brownish grey fine clayey silt and the subsoil was a moderately dark brownish grey fine clayey silt. In the north of Area 1 the subsoil measured 0.15m in depth. Downslope toward the south the subsoil was as deep as 0.4m.

3.2.2 Two large furrows (104 and 108 in Figure 3) ran north-south across the area. They had widths of between 4 and 6.5m, and depths between 0.3m and 0.5m. Furrow 104 was the larger of the two and also had slightly steeper sides. Their fills consisted of yellowish brown silty clays with small stone inclusions and flecks of charcoal. These features were self-evidently part of the ridge and furrow that could be observed from the ground surface and they continued both to the north and the south.

3.2.3 Curvilinear features could be observed around the middle of Area 1 which were badly truncated by furrow 104, but their line could be deduced to represent the two terminals of penannular gully 119 (Figure 3; plates 1 and 2). Five interventions were dug into the terminals (106 and 110 on the southern terminal; 113, 115 and 117 in the northern one), which can be considered together with the slot dug into the southern terminal during the evaluation of the previous year (504).

3.2.4 The far western part of the penannular gully shown in Figure 3 was only ambiguously distinguishable from the natural and it was not present to a depth that could be excavated. As such, this part of the penannular gully is essentially a projection of the likely curvature of the two terminals. This projection would give a diameter of about 10-12m and a very slightly oval shape in plan.

3.2.5 There was considerable variation in the profiles of the penannular ditch, which was probably due to its quite severe truncation by ploughing. Additionally, the northern terminal was badly disturbed where a tree stump had been removed during the excavation. The sides varied between being near vertical and gently sloping, but where the maximum depth survived on the northern terminal in slot 115 (0.36m in depth) the sides were nearly vertical and the base was concave.

3.2.6 The fills of the gully were a fairly consistent yellowish brown or grey silty clay with occasional small stone inclusions and charcoal flecks.

3.2.7 Excavation of the southern slot 110 revealed a partially intact and substantial Middle to Late Iron Age ceramic jar (Plates 3 and 4), its top truncated away by ploughing. Its poor condition meant that the base had almost entirely disintegrated and also caused

it to fragment into more than 400 sherds on lifting. Nevertheless, sufficient quantities of the vessel were observed *in-situ* to conclude with some certainty that it represented an intentional structured deposit in the terminal of a gully presumed to have been a drip gully encircling an Iron Age roundhouse. Additionally, an environmental sample taken from around the pot and its contents indicated a significant concentration of charred chickweed seeds (see Appendix C).

- 3.2.8 More detail is given on the finds from Area 1 below and in Appendices B and C, but ceramics besides those from the above-mentioned jar were recovered from the other excavated parts of the penannular gully consistent with an Iron Age date along with a burnt stone that had been used as a sharpening instrument. Burnt clay fragments were also recovered from the gully consistent with an origin from a domestic oven, alongside animal bone comprising mainly cattle and some caprine. Finally, sherds of post-medieval redware were recovered from the furrow fills.

3.3 Area 2

- 3.3.1 The watching brief in Area 2 was put in place to observe and record any archaeological deposits as the ground level was lowered for a balancing pond. Insufficient overburden was removed during these works to expose any more features potentially dating to prehistoric periods identified during the previous year's archaeological evaluation. These deposits were preserved *in-situ*.

3.4 Geoarchaeological trench

- 3.4.1 The geoarchaeological trench was excavated in the southeast corner of the site where a potential palaeochannel sequence was identified within the geophysical survey (GSB Prospection 2015) and subsequently investigated during the evaluation through test pitting (Wessex Archaeology 2015). The previous evaluation proved inconclusive as to the nature of the deposits identified south of the ridge and furrow.
- 3.4.2 The trench revealed a sequence of firm stiff blue clay at the base of the trench at a depth of 1.25m, representing the mudstone. This was overlain by yellow structure-less silty clay (boulder clay) deposits with poorly sorted sub-rounded to sub-angular cobble gravel. The upper part of the sequence was softer in nature perhaps indicating the erosion of the ridge and furrow. The prehistoric features revealed within the evaluation were sealed by this redeposited material.
- 3.4.3 No evidence of a palaeochannel sequence was identified within the trench (Plate 5). The end of the ridge and furrow clearly delineated an area of low-lying ground that was potential too wet for cultivation. The lack of any gleying within the sequence suggests that this area was not permanently waterlogged or contained flowing water.

3.5 Finds Assemblage

- 3.5.1 A small quantity of artefactual material was recovered from the features recorded in the excavation. The range of material included pottery, fired clay, burnt stone and animal bone. A fuller description of the finds can be found in Appendix B.
- 3.5.2 The vast majority of the ceramic material recovered during excavation came from the single jar (SF 1) found in the gully terminal. From elsewhere in the gully came sherds

from at least three other vessels (from context 116). The jar can be confidently dated to the mid or late Iron Age and the rest of the assemblage is consistent with this broad date range. A few sherds of post-medieval redware were also recovered from the furrow fills (contexts 105 and 109).

- 3.5.3 The gully (context 111) also contained a few fragment of fired clay probably derived from the interior wall surface of an oven. Twenty-nine pieces of burnt stone were also recovered from same context, including one piece that demonstrated its former use as a small blade sharpener.

3.6 Environmental remains

Charred Plant remains

- 3.6.1 Four environmental bulk soil samples were collected from the upper fills of the penannular gully and from the complete pot deposited within gully terminus. A small quantity of grain and chaff was recovered from these samples, which included both wheat (*Triticum* sp.) and wild or cultivated oat (*Avena* sp.) The glume wheats are a typical find for a mid-late Iron Age site and the wild plant assemblage, including seeds from dock, daisy family, buttercup and grasses are common components of grassland, field margins and arable fields.
- 3.6.2 What is more unusual is the high numbers of seeds of common chickweed (*Stellaria media*) found in and around the pot within the gully terminus. Chickweed is edible and can be used as a leaf/salad vegetable (ediblewildfood.com) as well as potentially having some medicinal value (Chiej 1988, 298; Culpeper 2007, 72). In addition, the plant is often used as bird food, especially the young shoots which are often fed to chickens and geese. Although the plant is usually assumed to be present as a weed when observed within archaeological contexts, and could have originated during the cleaning of grain or burning of turf, it would seem possible that the presence of the seeds of this plant being found within a domestic vessel at the entrance of a house may indicate some form of domestic usage.

Animal Bone Assemblage

- 3.6.3 A total of 70 animal bones were recovered from the site, all of them came from a ring gully associated with the roundhouse. Large mammal specimens, including domestic cattle (*Bos taurus taurus*) and smaller species included sheep (*Ovis aries*) and/or goats (*Capra hircus*) dominated the assemblage. Among these specimens were cranial and limb elements (from both the front and back legs), suggesting that the animals were being slaughtered on or near to the site.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Interpretation

- 4.1.1 Two groups of features were encountered in Area 1 comprising an Iron Age penannular gully and two medieval/post-medieval plough furrows.
- 4.1.2 The penannular gully can be confidently interpreted as a Middle to Late Iron Age roundhouse drip gully. The curve of the two surviving terminals of the gully can be projected to give an estimated diameter somewhere between 10m and 12m, which is typical for roundhouses of this date. The east-facing entrance is about 4m wide, which is again highly characteristic of this kind of feature. No postholes or any other features relating to standing features were observed within or outside the gully, although this is not surprising given the severe truncation caused by later ploughing. The most intriguing aspect of the feature was the deposition of a substantial Middle to Late Iron Age ceramic jar in the southern terminal of the gully at the entranceway. The deposition of special objects like this at such a location during this period is part of an established phenomenon (Hill 1995) known from elsewhere in Leicestershire (Beamish 1998; Meek *et al.* 2004). The fact that this vessel probably contained either foodstuff or a medicinal product imparts something of the meaning of such a deposit which probably occurred at the end of the structure's period of use. The burnt stone, animal bone and other ceramics recovered from the gully may well derive from domestic waste, although there is a possibility they could relate to similar ritual activity.
- 4.1.3 Given the lack of other Iron Age features identified during the evaluation it would seem that the Iron Age roundhouse in Area 1 was something of an outlier, though severe levels of truncation in the vicinity might also explain its apparent isolation. There is also a possibility that the prehistoric features to east could be associated.
- 4.1.4 Residual Late Iron Age material was found at Stretton Road to the north-east of the site, which may well have been contemporary with the roundhouse at London Road (Albion Archaeology 2011). Other similarly dated Middle to Late Iron Age settlements with circular buildings are known in Leicestershire, including at Breedon, Enderby, Hamilton, Mountsorrel, Normanton le Heath, Tixover and Leicester (Clay 2000, 3). Indeed, at Enderby – 12km to the west of the present site – seemingly intentional deposits of pottery were found at the entrance of enclosure II. In addition, a possibly contemporary human cremation was deposited to the left of the entrance of roundhouse 2, in a comparable location to the pot at Great Glen (Meek *et al.* 2004). At Wanlip, 14km to the north of Great Glen, structured deposits of quern stone, pottery and burnt bone were found just outside an enclosure (Beamish 1998, 40-1, 54-).
- 4.1.5 The excavation of the plough furrows adds little to our understanding and knowledge given that they were already visible from the ground and from aerial photography. They represent part of the open field system of Great Glen prior to its enclosure in the 19th century, and they fit a relatively well understood regional pattern (Hall 2001; Foard *et al.* 2003; 2009).

4.2 Significance

- 4.2.1 Although later Bronze Age and Early Iron Age evidence is rare in Leicestershire and Rutland, Middle to Late Iron Age settlement evidence is relatively well represented at more than 20 sites, with large scale fieldwork having taken place at Hamilton, Normanton le Heath, and Wanlip (Clay 2000, 1-2). It is probably the case that the roundhouse was an outlier of a similar settlement. As such, the findings add to a growing picture of settlement in the Middle to Late Iron Age in the East Midlands.
- 4.2.2 East Midlands Scored ware was the dominant pottery style in this region during the second half of the first millennium BC (Elsdon 1992), and it is to this type that the relatively complete vessel from Great Glen belongs. As a well-known type, the pot is not of substantial significance, and its state of preservation was very poor. However, its near complete nature, and the fact that it was found in the terminal of a roundhouse gully raises its significance substantially. Such a context is indicative of a particular ritual activity that is uncommon though nevertheless attested elsewhere such as at Enderby and Wanlip (Beamish 1998; Meek *et al.* 2004). The specific nature of such rituals is difficult to define from such evidence, though we may imagine they took place at the end of the structure's period of use, perhaps as closing deposits.
- 4.2.3 The state of truncation of the Iron Age remains at Great Glen certainly limits our knowledge and the significance of the site. Nevertheless, the finding of both a roundhouse and an associated structured deposit adds to a growing body of data from this period.

APPENDIX A CONTEXT AND LEVELS INVENTORY

Area 1							
Context No.	Type	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
101	Layer	-	-	0.25	Topsoil	None	Natural
102	Layer	-	-	0.16-0.4	Subsoil	None	Natural
103	Layer	-	-	-	Natural	None	Natural
104	Cut	6.5	-	0.31	Cut of Furrow	None	Medieval/post-medieval
105	Fill	6.5	-	0.3	Fill of [104]	Pot, CBM	Medieval/post-medieval
106	Cut	3.7	0.6	0.1	Gully terminus	None	Iron Age
107	Fill	0.6	-	0.1	Fill of [106]	Pot	Iron Age
108	Cut	4	-	0.21	Cut of Furrow	None	Medieval/post-medieval
109	Fill	4	-	0.21	Fill of [108]	Pot	Medieval/post-medieval
110	Cut	3.7	0.6	0.2	Gully terminus	None	Iron Age
111	Fill	0.5	-	0.1	Fill of [110]	Pot, animal bone, burnt stone	Iron Age
112	Fill	0.6	-	0.1	Fill of [110]	None	Iron Age
113	Cut	4.46	0.84	0.26	Cut of penannular gully	None	Iron Age
114	Fill	0.6	-	0.26	Fill of [113]	Animal bone	Iron Age
115	Cut	4.46	0.84	0.36	Cut of penannular gully	None	Iron Age
116	Fill	0.84	-	0.36	Fill of [115]	Pot, animal bone	Iron Age
117	Cut	4.46	0.8	0.26	Cut of penannular gully	None	Iron Age
118	Fill	0.8	-	0.26	Fill of [117]	Animal bone	Iron Age
119	Group	-	-	-	Penannular gully group	None	Iron Age

Geoarchaeological trench							
Context No.	Type	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1000	Layer	-	-	0-0.30	Soft to friable yellowish brown loam with frequent pebble inclusions and rootlets	-	Modern
1001	Layer	-	-	0.30-1.24	Soft mid brownish yellow massive structure-less silts / sandy clay with poorly sorted sub-rounded to sub-angular poorly sorted cobble to boulder clasts	-	Pleistocene

1002	Layer	-	-	1.24-	Stiff to firm dark bluish grey clay with coarse poorly sorted inclusions	-	
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Level heights		
Position	Height (m)	Comments
Top of ridge to west of furrow 104, north end of area 1	108.61	-
Top of ridge to west of furrow 104, middle of area 1	108.15	-
Top of ridge to west of furrow 104, south of area 1	107.82	-
Within furrow 104, north end	108.43	From top of furrow fill 105
Within furrow 104, middle	107.71	-
Within furrow 104, south end	107.71	-
Within furrow 104, south end	107.53	-
Top of ridge between furrows 104 and 108, north end	108.36	-
Top of ridge between furrows 104 and 108, middle	107.83	-
Top of ridge between furrows 104 and 108, middle	107.76	-
Top of ridge between furrows 104 and 108, south end	107.68	-
Top of ridge between furrows 104 and 108, south end	107.57	-
Within furrow 108, north end	107.72	-
Within furrow 108, middle	107.34	-
Within furrow 108, south end	107.16	-
Top of ridge to east of furrow 108, north end	108.15	-
Top of ridge to east of furrow 108, middle	107.7	-
Top of ridge to east of furrow 108, south end	107.49	-
Slot 106 in penannular gully	107.82	Group 119
Slot 110 in penannular gully	107.97	Group 119
Slot 113 in penannular gully	108.27	Group 119
Slot 115 in penannular gully	108.34	Group 119
Slot 117 in penannular gully	108.47	Group 119
Top of ridge to west of furrow 104, north end of area 1	108.61	-

APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

By Edward Biddulph

B.1.1 Some 459 sherds of pottery, weighing 2638g, were recovered from the excavation. Most of the assemblage belonged to a single jar (SF 1) and dated to the Iron Age. A few sherds of post-medieval pottery were also present. Prehistoric fabrics are defined according to the Oxford Archaeology standard. Codes identify the two principal inclusion types, ordered by importance, and the degree of fineness on a scale of 1-5, 1 being fine, 5 being coarse (Booth 2014).

Context	Sherds	Weight (g)	Description	Spot date
105	6	17	Redware body sherds, some glazed	Post-med
107	6	10	Undiagnostic sherds, one tempered with sand and occasional calcareous inclusions	Iron Age
109	1	15	Glazed redware body sherd	Post-med
111	235	1784	SF 1. Body sherds and occasional base sherds in a gritty fabric (AQ3) from single vessel, a tall jar with combed decoration	Iron Age
111	105	199	Sample 3. Body sherds from SF 1	Iron Age
111	78	251	Sample 4. Body sherds from SF 1	Iron Age
116	26	276	Body sherds in shelly fabric (SN3) from globular or ovoid jar with scored decoration	Iron Age
116	1	74	Base sherd. Mixed temper, but predominantly sand and larger quartz (or ?quartzite) fragments (AQ4)	Iron Age
116	1	12	Sample 2. Scored body sherd in sand and glauconite tempered fabric (AB3); red-brown interior surface, dark grey core, smoky exterior surface	Iron Age
TOTAL	459	2638		

Table B1: Summary of pottery form

B.1.2 Context 111, a fill within the terminus of penannular gully 119, contained the substantial remains of a single vessel, probably a tall jar. A single base sherd was observed, but otherwise all fragments were from the body of the vessel. The fabric was gritty, being predominantly sand tempered, but also containing larger quartz (or quartzite) fragments (AQ3), as well as argillaceous pellets, mica, and dark grains, probably glauconite. The pottery has a dark grey core, orange-brown margins, a red-brown or dark grey exterior surface, and a yellow-brown interior surface. The vessel is decorated with deep vertical or slightly diagonal combing.

B.1.3 Given its context and the fact that the vessel is substantially complete, the jar is likely to represent a deliberate, structured deposit.

B.1.4 At least three vessels were represented in context 116, another fill of penannular gully 119. Most of the group belonged to the same vessel, a globular or ovoid jar in a shelly

fabric (SN3) with a dark grey core and interior surface and a dark grey or yellow-brown exterior surface. A base sherd from another vessel was recorded in a gritty fabric tempered predominantly with sand and larger quartz or quartzite fragments (AQ4). A third vessel, represented by a single body sherd, was tempered with sand and glauconite inclusions (AB3), and additionally had scored decoration

B.1.5 The pottery from both contexts is characteristic of the Iron Age in the East Midlands, with the decorative techniques being consistent with a later (mid-late) Iron Age date (Elsdon 1992). The combing of the vessel of SF 1 is particularly redolent of the late Iron Age.

B.1.6 Post-medieval redware was recovered from contexts 105 and 109, both fills of furrows.

B.2 Fired clay

By Cynthia Poole

Introduction

B.2.1 A small quantity of fired clay comprising a total of 77 fragments weighing 150g (including 1 fragment 7g from sieving) was recovered from a single context (111), which formed the upper fill in the terminus of a penannular gully of Iron Age date. The fired clay is not itself dateable, but there is no reason to assume it is not contemporary with the associated pottery found with it. The material is fragmented and fairly small, though not particularly heavily abraded.

B.2.2 The fabric was characterised by its macroscopic features and with the aid of a x20 hand lens. This was composed of a sandy clay, fired to a fairly uniform orange/reddish brown colour, containing frequent fine and medium white quartz sand with rare coarse quartz sand grains and a sparse scatter of coarser soft rounded white calcareous grits 1-4mm of limestone. Macroscopically it looked similar to the associated pottery and was probably made from local clay deposits.

B.2.3 The assemblage can be divided into two groups. One consists of ten of the larger pieces (90g), which range in size from 18-50mm with a maximum thickness 31mm. They have been fired to a darker reddish brown and have a coarser texture to the fabric. None of them have any evidence of shaping remaining and they could be burnt natural clay into which an oven or hearth had been set or the outer skin of an oven structure. The second group, comprising the remaining fragments (67; 60g), are more orange or brownish orange in colour, uniformly fired and containing very few of the coarser grits present in their fabric. These are smaller 5-30mm in size and thinner at 6-16mm thick. A small number have a single flat moulded surface. They are likely to represent the interior wall surface of an oven.

B.2.4 This group of fired clay cannot be regarded as diagnostic on the basis of the surviving features, though the general character of the pieces is consistent with an oven structure, probably of domestic use. The associated carbonised plant remains may provide further evidence of function: if only fuel in the form of wood charcoal was present, this is more likely to suggest a purely domestic function for cooking and heat,

whilst the presence of carbonised grain could indicate in addition or solely a crop processing function.

B.3 Stone

By Ruth Shaffrey

- B.3.1 A total of 29 pieces of stone were submitted for analysis (4285g) from fill 111 of the penannular gully comprising burnt sandstone cobbles that have been reddened and discoloured through exposure to heat. One of these cobbles has also been used as a multi-functional processor, demonstrating wear to its two main faces as well as numerous incisions caused by sharpening small blades (a point sharpener). Such casual use of cobbles is typical of the Middle Iron Age with few purpose-made whetstones being recovered.

APPENDIX C ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Charred plant remains

By Sharon Cook

Introduction

C.1.1 Four bulk soil samples were chosen for analysis from the excavation off London Road, Great Glen, Leicestershire. Sample <1> was collected from the upper fill of a penannular gully terminus with samples <3> and <4> being derived from the internal and external soil from a pot deposited within this fill. Sample <2> was collected from the fill of a gully segment believed to be a part of the same penannular gully.

Methodology

C.1.2 The samples were processed at Oxford Archaeology using a modified Siraf-type water separation machine. The flots were collected in a 250µm mesh and heavy residues, in a 500µm mesh. The residue fractions were sorted by eye while the flot material was sorted using a low power (x10-x40) binocular microscope, for cereal grains and chaff, smaller seeds and other quantifiable remains. Identifications were carried out using standard morphological criteria for the cereals (e.g. Jacomet 2006), and by comparison with modern reference material. Assistance with identifications was given by Julia Meen. Classification and nomenclature of plant material follows Stace (2010).

Results

C.1.3 Table C1 Lists the taxa identified from each sample. The majority of flot volume consists of modern roots with only a small proportion of burnt material present. All four samples contain a small quantity of charcoal, all fragments of which are smaller than 4mm with the majority of fragments being <2mm and therefore unsuitable for wood species identification.

C.1.4 Very little flot material is present within the larger samples, sample <2> being almost completely sterile, however in the area of the deposited pot, charred wild seeds become relatively abundant.

Discussion

C.1.5 The penannular gully is believed to be the remnants of a round house with the terminus [110] representing an entranceway into the building, which may explain why sample <2> is so sterile in terms of charred remains, as the entranceway of the building is likely to have been a focus of activity and richer deposits of remains pertaining to domestic activity are typically found in these areas. The mid-late Iron Age vessel containing charred remains (SF1, sample <3>) was probably deliberately deposited near to the door.

C.1.6 The small quantity of grain and chaff, which included both wheat (*Triticum* sp.) and wild or cultivated oat (*Avena* sp.) is unremarkable, providing little information

beyond the fact that glume wheat (*Triticum dicocum/spelta*), was cultivated. Glume wheats are a typical find for a mid-late Iron Age site and the wild plant assemblage, including seeds from dock, daisy family, buttercup and grasses are common components of grassland, field margins and arable fields. The assemblage composition is similar to that observed from samples taken during the earlier evaluation of the site (Wessex Archaeology 2015). What is more unusual is the high numbers of seeds of common chickweed (*Stellaria media*) found in and around the pot within the ditch terminus. Chickweed is edible and can be used as a leaf/salad vegetable (ediblewildfood.com) as well as potentially having some medicinal value (Chiej 1988, 298; Culpeper 2007, 72). In addition, the plant is often used as bird food, especially the young shoots which are often fed to chickens and geese. Although the plant is usually assumed to be present as a weed when observed within archaeological contexts, and could have originated during the cleaning of grain or burning of turf, it would seem possible that the presence of the seeds of this plant being found within a domestic vessel at the entrance of a house may indicate some form of domestic usage.

Sample No		1	2	3	4
Context No		111	116	111	111
Feature		110	115	110	110
Description		Upper terminus fill	Single ditch fill	Internal pot fill	External pot fill
Phase		Mid Iron Age	Mid Iron Age	Mid Iron Age	Mid Iron Age
Volume (L)		40	30	5	5
Flot Volume (ml)		225	175	50	50
Cereal grain					
<i>Avena sp.</i>	oats			3	1
<i>Avena/Bromus spp.</i>	oat/brome grass			1	3
<i>Triticum sp.</i>	wheat			1	1
Cerealia	indet. cereal	1		3	
Chaff					
<i>Triticum dicocum/spelta</i>	emmer/spelt glume base			3	2
Wild species					
<i>Ranunculus sp.</i>	buttercup				1
<i>Vicia/Lathyrus sp.</i> <2 mm	vetch/vetchling/tare, etc	1			
<i>cf. Hypericum perforatum</i>	perforate st john's wort				1
<i>Rumex sp.</i>	dock			1	
<i>cf. Stellaria media</i>	common chickweed			24	40
Asteraceae undiff.	daisy family				4

<i>cf. Juncus sp.</i>	rush			1	1
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius var. bulbosum</i>	false oat grass				1
<i>Bromus spp.</i>	brome grass	1			
Poaceae undiff.	grass, small			3	1
Other					
Indet.	seed/fruit				2

Table C1: Charred plant remains summary table

C.2 Animal Bone

By Lee G Broderick

Introduction

- C.2.1 The animal bone assemblage recovered from Great Glen was small and was only associated with a single feature dated to the Iron Age being found spread through various fills of the penannular gully (fills 111, 114, 116 and 117). It was dominated by cattle specimens with sheep and/or goat also being present.
- C.2.2 A total of 70 animal bones were recovered from the site, all of them from contexts dated to the Iron Age (Table C2). The material was generally in very poor condition (Figure C1). Environmental sampling was carried out on some of the features, with the principle result of increasing the number of indeterminate fragments recovered (Table C3).
- C.2.3 Large mammal specimens, including domestic cattle (*Bos taurus taurus*) dominated the assemblage, all of which came from a ring gully associated with a roundhouse. Given the poor preservation of the identified specimens, it seems reasonable to assume that many of the large mammal and indeterminate specimens recovered were also cattle. Among these specimens were cranial and limb elements (from both the front and back legs), suggesting that the animals were being slaughtered on or near the site. Epiphyseal fusion and tooth wear data among these specimens both suggest that at least one individual survived until at least 12 months of age.
- C.2.4 The only other taxa identified in the assemblage were sheep [*Ovis aries*] and/or goats [*Capra hircus*]. The comments made about cattle can broadly be applied to sheep and goats as well – all three of the specimens were loose teeth, suggesting that they were being slaughtered nearby, and from an individual(s) which survived until more than a year old.
- C.2.5 Cattle and, especially, sheep are common on rural sites in Iron Age Britain (Albarella, 2007, Hambleton, 1999) and so their presence here in association with a rural habitation should come as no surprise. Given the small sample size it is not possible to say any more about the possible role that the animals played in the local economy.

domestic cattle	11
caprine	3
large mammal	15
Total NISP	29
Total NSP	70

Table C2: Total NISP (Number of Identified SPecimens) and NSP (Number of SPecimens) figures from the site.

	Sieved	Unsieved
Medium Mammal	1	2
Large Mammal	8	18
indet.	37	4
Total NISP	9	20
Total NSP	46	24

Table C3: Material recovered from sieved v. unsieved contexts

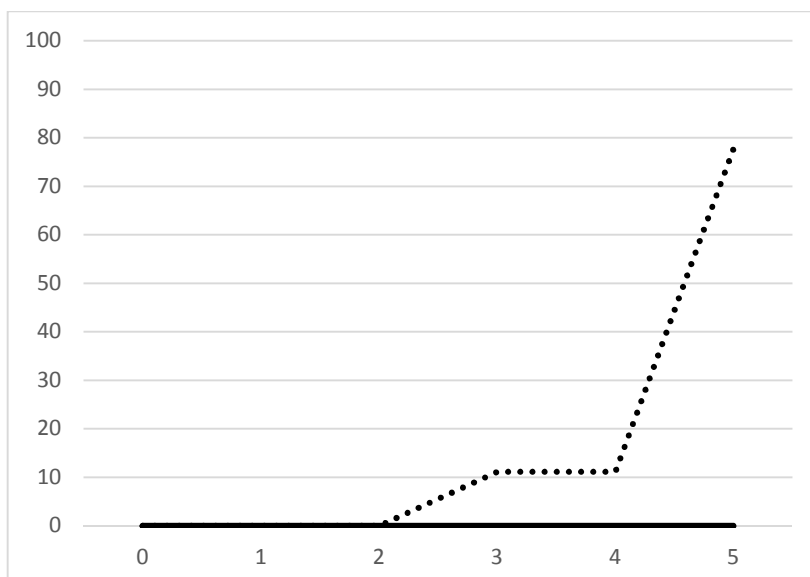


Figure C1: Condition of specimens recovered, expressed as a percentage of the total number of specimens, following Lyman (1996).

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APPENDIX E SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

Site name:	Land off London Road, Great Glen, Leicestershire
Site code:	X.A131.2016
Grid Reference	SK 6514 9809
Type:	Excavation and watching brief
Date and duration:	November 2016, 3 days
Area of Site	2.4ha
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums in due course, under the following accession number: X.A131.2016.
Summary of Results:	In September 2016 Oxford Archaeology undertook archaeological investigations on an area of land to the north of London Road on the edge of Great Glen in Leicestershire (centred on SK 6514 9809). The investigations consisted of three parts: a strip, map and record excavation (Area 1), a watching brief (Area 2), and a geoarchaeological trench.

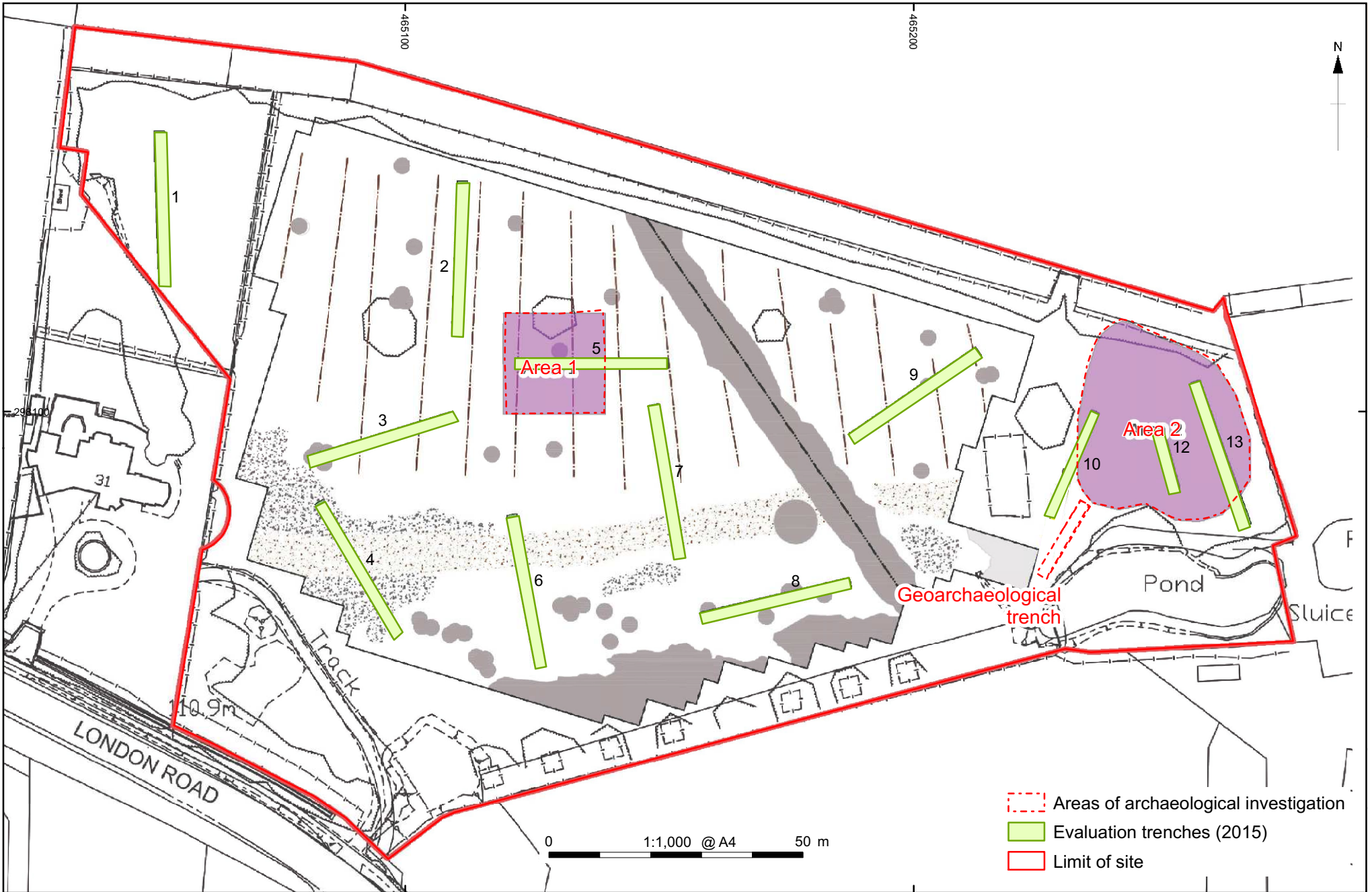
Little of significance was found in Area 2, but Area 1 was found to contain a penannular gully dating to the Middle or Late Iron Age with a near complete ceramic jar intentionally deposited in one of its terminals. The feature almost certainly represents an Iron Age roundhouse with an accompanying structured deposit. The only other archaeological features were two plough furrows, one of which severely truncated the penannular gully, part of the medieval/post-medieval open field system of Great Glen.



X:\g\Great Glen Leicestershire\010\Geomatics\03_GIS Projects\HAGG\REX_Figure1_20170504.mxd*matt.bradley*22/05/2017

(c) OpenStreetMap and contributors, Creative Commons-Share Alike License (CC-BY-SA)

Figure 1: Site location



- Areas of archaeological investigation
- Evaluation trenches (2015)
- Limit of site

Figure 2: Site layout

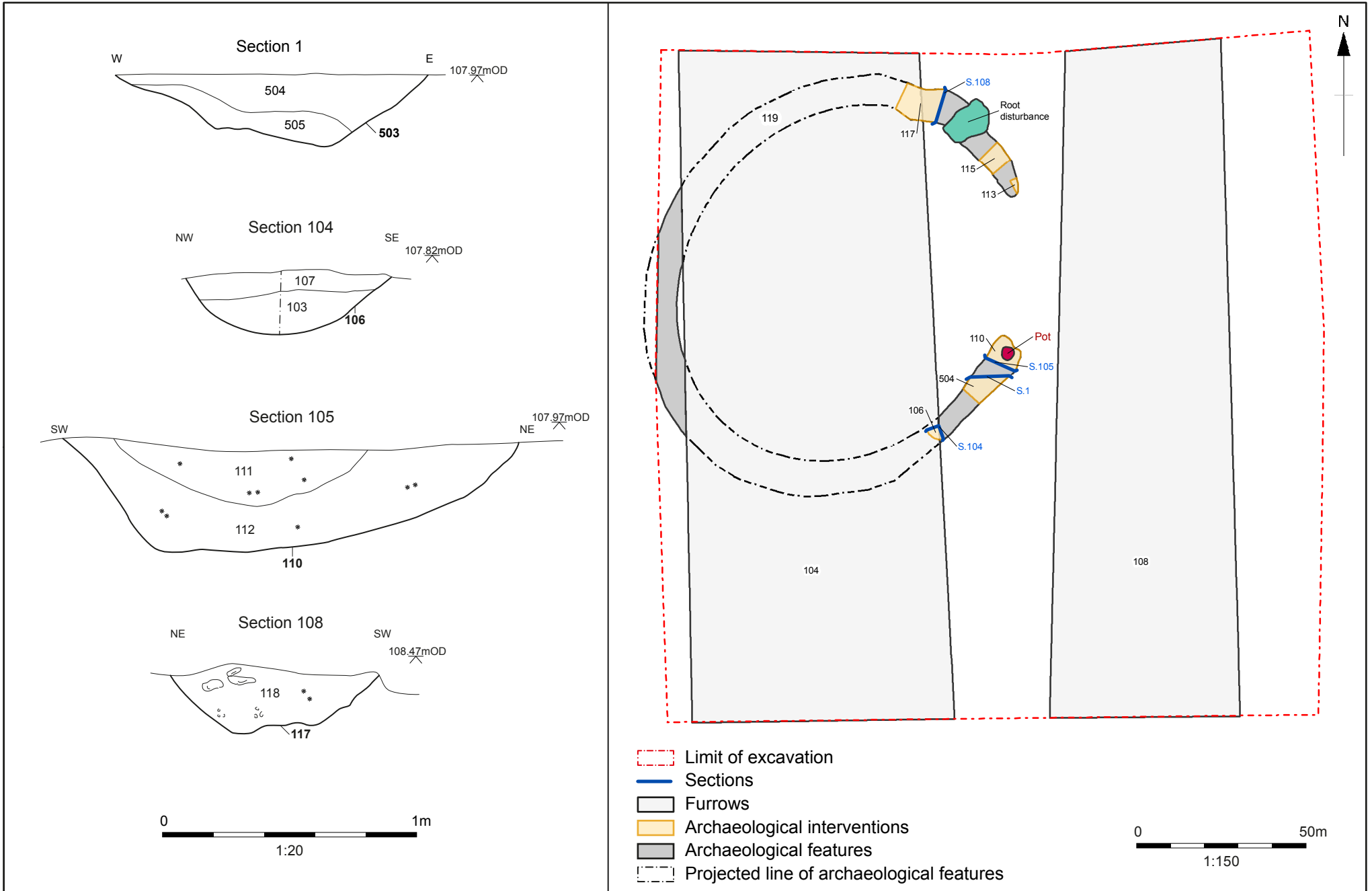


Figure 3: Archaeological features in Area 1



Plate 1: Penannular gully with view toward north (1x 2m scale)



Plate 2: Excavated roundhouse gully terminus looking south (1x1m scale)



Plate 3: Iron Age jar in-situ in gully terminal (1x0.5m scale)



Plate 4: Sherd from the Iron Age jar recovered from the penannular gully terminal



Plate 5: Geoarchaeological trench across low-lying area.



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