

# Proposed extension to Dorey's Pit, Steeple, Church Knowle and Arne parishes, Dorset

Centred on NGR SY91458441

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

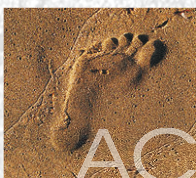
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Prepared by:  
Steve Robinson

On behalf of:  
Imerys Minerals Ltd

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AC archaeology

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# PROPOSED EXTENSION TO DOREY'S PIT, STEEPLE, CHURCH KNOWLE AND ARNE PARISHES, DORSET

## Centred on NGR SY91458441

### Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

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#### Summary

*An archaeological evaluation of part of the proposed quarry extension at Dorey's Pit, Dorset (SY91458441), was carried out by AC archaeology Ltd during December 2011. Three trenches near New Hall Farm, revealed no evidence for any archaeological activity. Two further trenches, across existing field boundary banks to the north, were also excavated. One of these boundaries forms the parish boundary between Arne and Church Knowle. No dating evidence was recovered for either boundary, although a review of historic maps indicates that the both are likely to be of post-Medieval date; the parish boundary probably being the later of the two, having been constructed after 1843.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report sets out the results of an archaeological evaluation of part of a proposed quarry extension at Dorey's Pit, Dorset (centred on NGR SY91458441). The location of the site is shown on Fig.1.
- 1.2 The work was carried out by AC archaeology Ltd during November 2011. It was undertaken on behalf of Imerys Minerals Ltd in order to provide supporting information, prior to the determination of a planning application for a ball clay extraction on land to the south of the present quarry. It was requested by the Mineral Planning Officer, Dorset County Council following consultation with the Dorset County Council Senior Archaeologist.
- 1.3 The proposed extraction area comprises approximately 34.4 hectares. Much of this area has previously been the subject of archaeological investigations, only c.1.5 hectares was evaluated for this report. The land is currently in agricultural use. The topography comprises generally level ground and lies at around 20m OD, with the underlying geology comprising tertiary sands, clays and gravels of the Poole formation.

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A desk study undertaken of the site (Cottam 2009) identified a single Scheduled Monument within the proposed extraction area. Known as Three Lords Barrow (Scheduled Monument no. 28327), this feature comprises a Bronze Age burial mound. A further four Bronze Age burial mounds lie within 500m of the proposed extraction area. Part of the parish boundary of Arne and Church Knowle which comprises a bank and ditch also lies within the extraction area and is considered to be important under the Hedgerow Regulations of 1997. No non-designated heritage assets have been recorded.

**2.2** An extensive archaeological evaluation was undertaken across the proposed extraction area in 1995 (Cotton and Cox 1995). A range of subsoil phenomena were observed, in almost all cases fully explicable in terms of recent land use practices or wholly natural processes. No features of archaeological origin were found and no artefacts pre-dating c. 1850 were discovered.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

**3.1** The evaluation comprised three machine-excavated trenches (Fig. 1; Tr1 – Tr3), each measuring 30m x 1.6m in plan, and two hand-excavated trenches (Fig. 1; Tr4 - Tr5). Trenches 1 – 3 were situated in fields adjacent to New Hall Farm; Trenches 4 and 5 were situated across two closely-spaced field boundaries, both comprising earthen banks, to the north. All trench positions were approved prior to commencement by the Dorset County Council Senior Archaeologist.

**3.2** All soil removal was undertaken under the control and direction of the Site Archaeologist. Topsoil and overburden were removed by mechanical excavator (Trenches 1 – 3), using a wide toothless bucket, and ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural subsoil was exposed. Trenches 4 and 5 were hand-excavated to a depth where natural subsoil was exposed.

**3.3** All deposits revealed were recorded using the standard AC archaeology pro-forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 1*. Detailed sections were produced at 1:10 and 1:20. All site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

**3.4** The archive has been prepared using the site code ACW406.

### **4. RESULTS**

#### **Machine-excavated trenches**

**4.1** Trenches 1 – 3 revealed a shallow depth of topsoil directly overlying natural sand/clay and gravels. No archaeological features or artefacts were present. All trenches are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: Summary of observations in machine-excavated Trenches**

<b>Trench</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Depth below ground</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	100	0-300mm	Topsoil. Dark grey brown sandy loam.
	101	300mm +	Natural subsoil. Mottled sand ranging from light grey to dark brown. Occasional flint gravels >200mm.
2	200	0-300mm	Topsoil. Dark grey-brown sandy loam.
	201	300mm +	Natural subsoil. Yellow-brown sandy clay with grey mottling. Sparse flint gravels.
3	300	0-270mm	Topsoil. Dark grey-brown sandy loam.
	301	270mm +	Natural subsoil. Yellow-brown sandy clay with sparse flint gravels and heathstone pieces.



**Plate 1: Trench 1  
viewed from the  
southwest**



**Plate 2: View of Trench 2 from the  
northeast**



**Plate 3: View of Trench 3 from the northwest**

### Hand-excavated trenches

#### **Trench 4** (Section, Fig. 2a; Plates 4 & 5)

- 4.2** This trench was aligned north to south and measured 4.5m x 0.7m in plan. It was positioned across a field boundary comprising a low bank and associated ditch. Due to the presence of dense vegetation and tree roots, as well as a barbed wire fence, the trench was only excavated enough to show the bank make-up and associated deposits as well as the general soil sequence. The recorded deposit / layer sequence is summarised in Table 2. No artefacts were recovered.

**Table 2: Trench 4 deposit / layer sequence**

Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation
400	0 – 300mm	Dark grey-brown sandy loam	Topsoil.
401	0 – 650mm (max.)	Maximum width of 2.1m and composed of mixed grey-brown/yellowish brown sandy clay and gravels containing much root disturbance.	Earthen bank composed of both re-deposited topsoil and natural subsoil.
402	0 – 350mm (max)	Dark brown humic clayey sand with occasional small gravels.	Ditch fill.
403	0 - 350mm	Gentle sloping profile and flatish base with a width of at least 1m.	Ditch cut associated with adjacent south bank 401.
404	650 – 800mm (max.)	Same as context (400).	Buried topsoil.
405	300 - 400mm	Light grey with yellow mottling, sandy clay with sparse gravels	Unclear whether interface between topsoil and natural subsoil or possible buried soil horizon ?
406	400mm +	Yellow / grey sandy clay / gravels	Natural subsoil.



**Plate 5: View of Trench 4 from the east. Scales 1m & 0.2m**

**Plate 4: View of Trench 4 from the south. Scales 1m & 0.2m**

**Trench 5** (Section Fig. 2b; Plate 6)

**4.3** This trench was aligned north to south and measured 5m x 0.7m in plan. It was positioned across a field boundary comprising a low bank, with enough of the trench length to incorporate any associated ditch. The recorded deposit / layer sequence is summarised in Table 3. No artefacts were recovered.

**Table 3: Trench 5 deposit / layer sequence**

Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation
500	0 – 100mm (max)	Mainly composed of humic leaf litter and grass	Ground surface.
501	100 – 500mm (max.)	Maximum width of 3.2m and composed of mixed grey-brown/yellowish brown sandy clay and gravels containing much root disturbance.	Earthen bank composed of both re-deposited topsoil and natural subsoil.
502	100 – 500mm (max)	Dark brown humic clayey sand with occasional small gravels.	Ditch fill.
503	100 - 500mm (max)	Steep sloping profile and rounded base with a width of approximately 1.2m.	Ditch cut associated with adjacent south bank 501.
504	100 – 350mm (max.)	Light brown clayey sand with occasional small gravels.	Buried topsoil.
505	350 - 500mm	Light grey with yellow mottling, sandy clay with sparse gravels	Unclear whether interface between topsoil and natural subsoil or possible buried soil horizon ?
506	500mm +	Yellow / grey sandy clay / gravels	Natural subsoil.



**Plate 6: View of Trench 5 from the north.  
Scales 2m & 0.2m**

## **5. COMMENT**

- 5.1** The trench evaluation has identified no significant archaeological deposits on the site. Trenches 1 - 3 provided no evidence for subsoil archaeological features.
- 5.2** Trenches 4 and 5 have provided a description of the formation of two similar earthwork boundary banks, both with ditches on their north sides. A re-examination of historic maps provides evidence for the development of these two features and supports an explanation of their unusual juxtaposition that has created a very small, triangular, field remnant.
- 5.3** The most northerly bank, examined by Trench 5, is first shown on the Church Knowle Tithe Map (Fig. 3) as part of the northern boundary of an isolated field parcel, typical of many reclaimed from the heath in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Neither the northern nor western boundaries of that field parcel respect the line of the respective parish boundaries; of Arne-Church Knowle and Steeple-Church Knowle, which are shown at that date as passing through the field. Moreover, the field boundaries are shown as solid lines, whereas the parish boundaries are shown as discontinuous lines (and actually cross the turnpike road to the east). It is clear that the cartographer has sought to indicate that there are no physical parish boundaries visible in the vicinity, but that the fields are represented by physical (earth bank and hedge, or even fence) structures. This is in common with many local parish boundaries where prominent landscape features, such as the Three Lords Barrow, were (and still are) used as parish boundary reference points and where physical representation of the full course of the boundary was (and is) not necessary.
- 5.4** At some time after 1843 (and certainly by the publication of the 1st Ordnance Survey map in 1889) it became necessary to establish a physical demarcation of the line of the Arne-Church Knowle parish boundary and a small strip of the field was consequently isolated and, presumably, left

uncultivated thereafter. There seems to have been no such need to establish a permanent line for the Steeple-Church Knowle parish boundary, to the south, which remains to this day as unmarked throughout much of its course.

- 5.5** This explanation would therefore indicate that the parish boundary bank in this location postdates 1843 and is the later of the two boundaries. The two banks do not seem to have been used as a trackway, as was once thought.

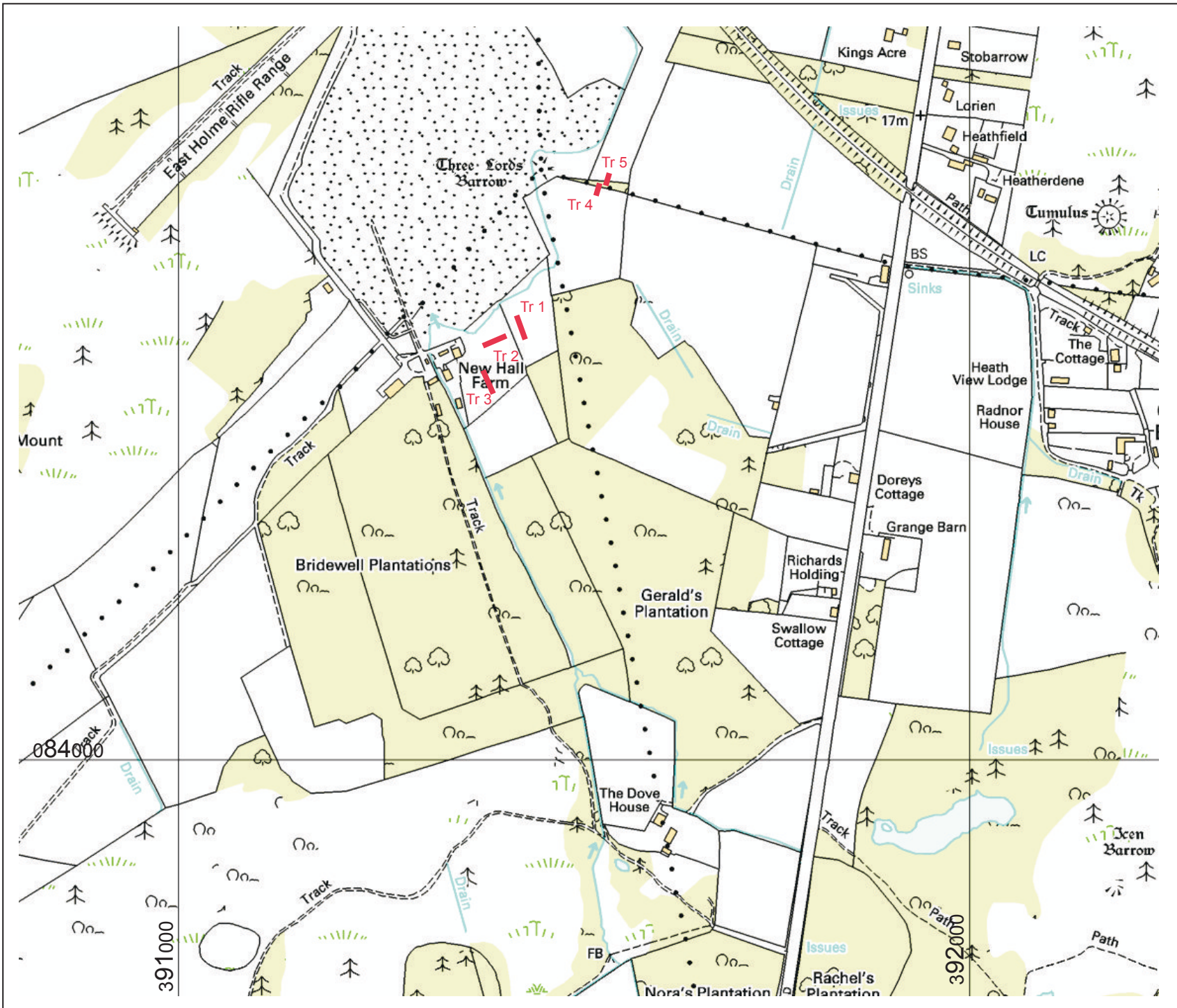
## **6. REFERENCES**

Cottam, S., 2009 '*Proposed extension to quarry, Dorey's Pitt, Creech Bottom, Dorset- centred on NGR SY91458441 – Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Assessment*'. Unpublished client report by AC archaeology ref. ACW203/1/0. September 2009

Robinson, S. 2011 '*Proposed extension to quarry, Dorey's Pit, Creech Bottom, Dorset – centred on NGR SY91458441: Project design for archaeological evaluation*' Unpublished report by AC archaeology no. ACW406/1/0, October 2011

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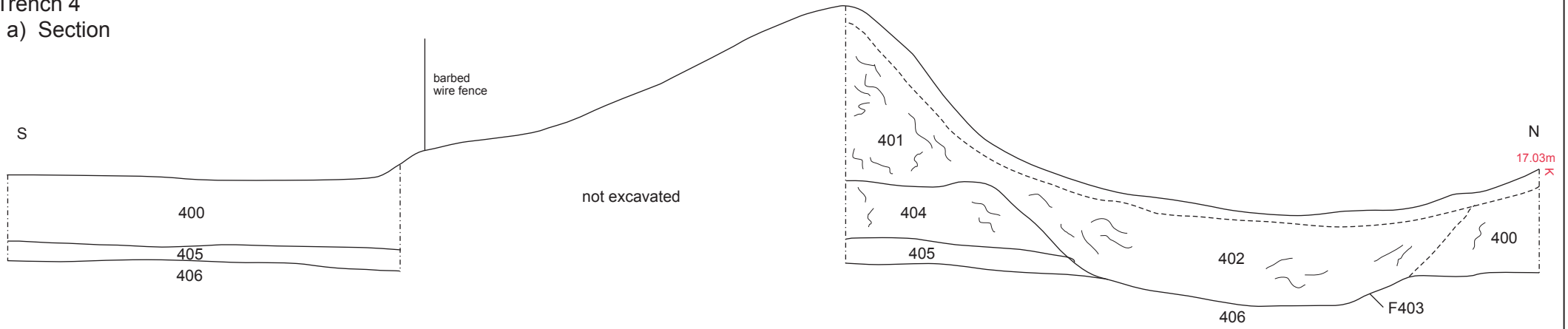
— Evaluation Trench

PROJECT  
Dorey's Pit Extension

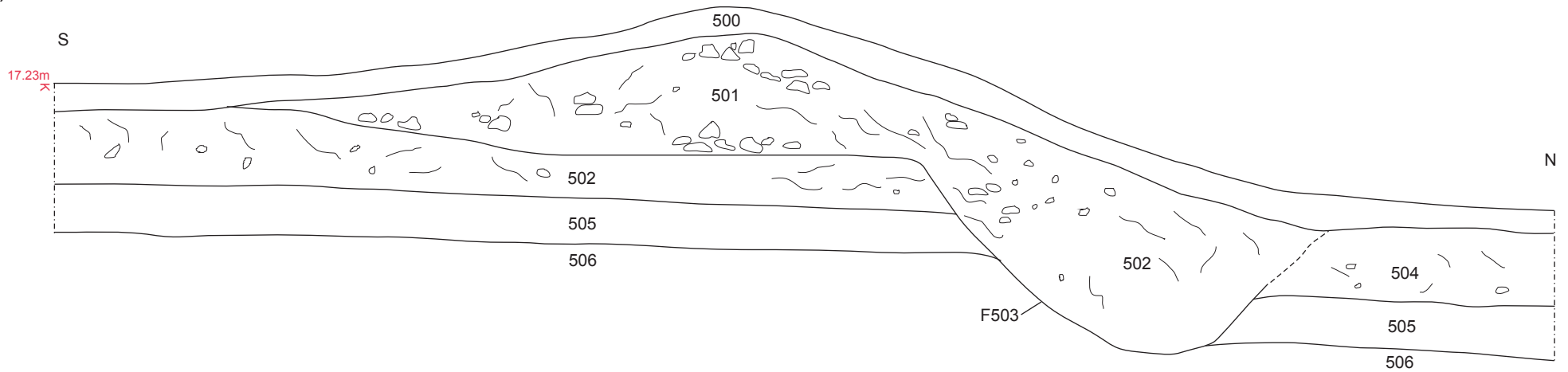
TITLE  
Fig. 1:  
Trench layout

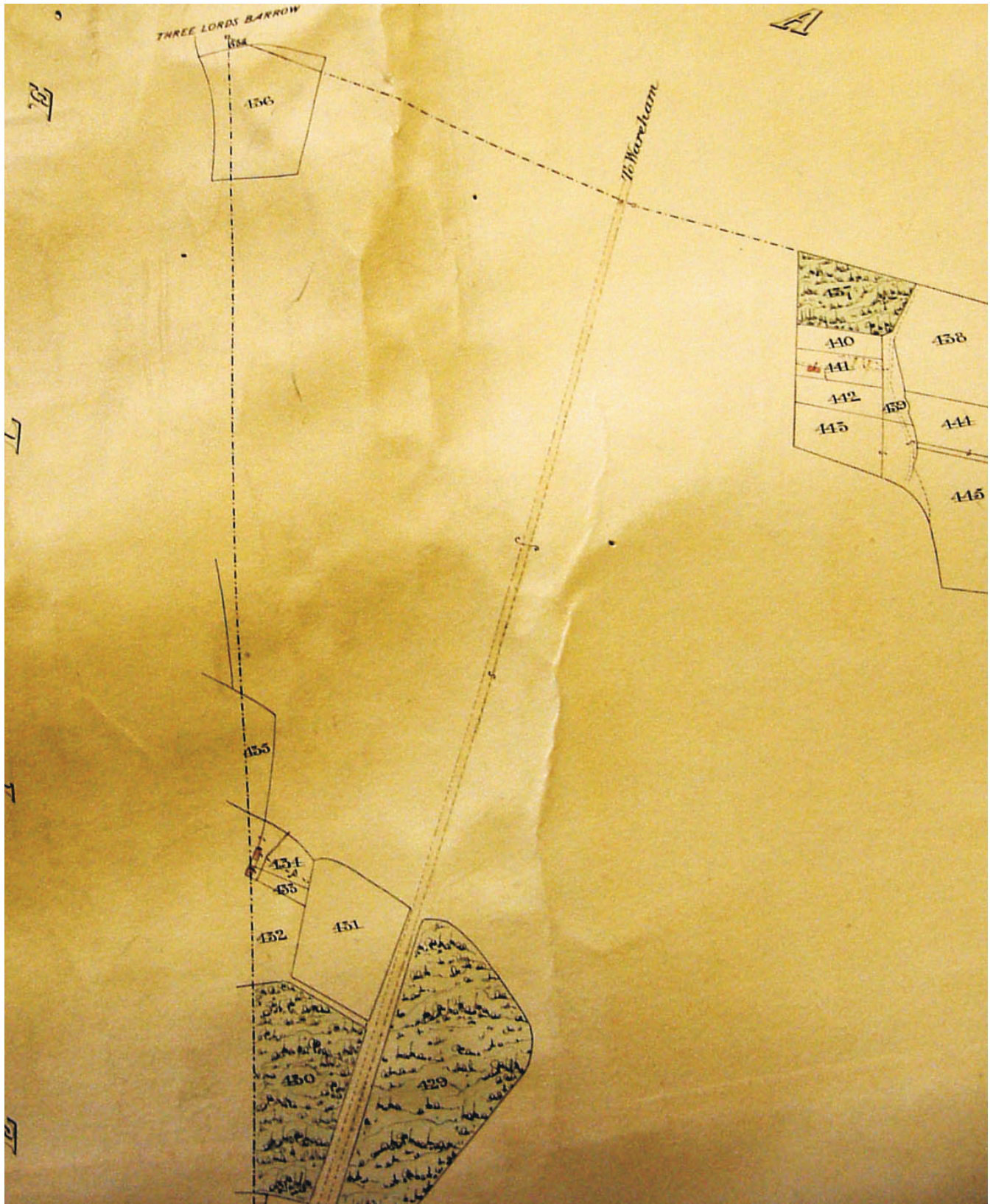


Trench 4  
a) Section



Trench 5  
b) Section





### Wiltshire Office

AC archaeology Ltd  
Manor Farm Stables  
Chicklade  
Hindon  
Nr Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP3 5SU

Telephone: 01747 820581  
Fax: 01747 820440

### Devon Office

AC archaeology Ltd  
Unit 4, Halthaies Workshops  
Bradninch  
Nr Exeter  
Devon  
EX5 4LQ

Telephone/Fax: 01392 882410

[www.acarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.acarchaeology.co.uk)