

# LAND AT BOWHAY FARM, SHILLINGFORD ABBOT, DEVON

Centred on NGR SX 8943 8874

## Results of an Archaeological Trench Evaluation

---

Prepared by:  
Alex Farnell  
and  
Paul Rainbird

On behalf of:  
CgMs Consulting Ltd

Report No: ACD772/1/0

Date: October 2013



AC archaeology

---

# LAND AT BOWHAY FARM, SHILLINGFORD ABBOT, DEVON

Centred on NGR SX 8943 8874

## Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

---

### CONTENTS

	<i>Summary</i>	
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Archaeological background	1
3.	Aims	2
4.	Methodology	2
5.	Results	2
6.	Discussion	3
7.	Conclusions	4
8.	Archive and OASIS	4
9.	Acknowledgements	4
10.	References	4

### List of figures

- Fig. 1: Location of site  
Fig. 2: Trench locations in relation to the geophysical survey results. Archaeological features recorded in the trenches are shown in black  
Fig. 3: Trench 8, plan and sections  
Fig. 4: Trench 9, plan and sections

### List of plates

- Plate 1: General view of the site, looking northeast  
Plate 2: Northeast-facing section of ditch F805  
Plate 3: Northeast-facing section of ditch F904  
Plate 4: Charcoal-rich deposit (907), looking south

Appendix 1: Tabulated trench descriptions

## Summary

*An archaeological trench evaluation carried out on land at Bowhay Farm, Shillingford Abbot, Devon (centred on SX 8943 8874) was undertaken by AC archaeology during September 2013. The proposed development area occupies approximately 21.8 hectares of grass pasture and arable farmland on sloping ground at between approximately 90m - 110m aOD.*

*The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of six trenches totalling 323m in length, with each trench measuring 1.50m wide. These were positioned to target anomalies identified by a previous geophysical survey..*

*Two features of possible archaeological interest were recorded during the evaluation. Each comprised a narrow gully cutting natural subsoil, with no associated finds. They may represent sides of a small rectangular and undated possible stock enclosure identified by geophysical survey. No internal features were exposed. Two prehistoric worked flints and a small number of post-medieval pottery sherds were recovered from overlying layers and from the ditch of a post-medieval hedgebank.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

- 1.1 This document sets out the results of an archaeological trench evaluation undertaken ahead of a possible application for outline planning permission for a proposed solar farm development on land at Bowhay Farm, Shillingford Abbot, Devon (centred on SX 89437 88746). It reports on the archaeological works required by Teignbridge District Council, as advised by the Devon County Historic Environment Team (hereafter DCCHET).
- 1.2 The archaeological works were commissioned by CgMs Ltd and carried out by AC archaeology on the 24th to the 26th September 2013.
- 1.3 The investigation area comprises two fields (Fields 1 and 2), located on sloping ground down from the north to south. The site currently comprises grass pasture and arable land and lies at between approximately 90m-110m aOD. The underlying geology is Breccia of the Alphington Formation. A third field (Field 3) was originally part of the proposed application area, but this has now been excluded.

### 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The area of proposed development has been subject to an archaeological desk based assessment and a geophysical survey (Bedford 2012).
- 2.2 The location of Bowhay Farm is regarded as the probable site of a medieval farmstead included in the Domesday Manor of Shillingford Abbot, located 1.6km to the east (Devon HER ref. MDV16172). Adjacent to the east of Bowhay Farm cropmarks of a field system of possible prehistoric or Romano-British date have been recorded (MDV52101). To the north of the study area parallel linear features recognised as cropmarks have been interpreted as trackways of possible prehistoric date (MDV79706, National Monument Record ref. NMR1046207 and NMR1046208).
- 2.3 The geophysical survey identified two magnetic anomalies of potential archaeological interest. A series of narrow linear anomalies forming a broadly rectangular enclosure located in the southwest corner of the study area and an anomaly consisting of wide linears forming a partial rectangular enclosure to the east of the site. A number of former field boundaries and

numerous additional magnetic anomalies of probable natural or geological origin were also identified.

### **3. AIMS**

- 3.1** The aims of the trench evaluation were to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features, deposits or finds within the site. The results of the work as set out in this report will be reviewed and used to inform any subsequent mitigation and whether or not the significance and state of survival of any archaeological remains on the site is great enough to influence the layout of the proposed development should planning consent be obtained.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1** The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of six trenches totalling 323m in length, with each trench measuring 1.50m wide (Fig. 2). Trenches were positioned to target areas where anomalies were indicated by the geophysical survey. The removal of soil overburden was undertaken under the control and direction of the site archaeologist.
- 4.2** All features and deposits revealed were recorded using the standard AC archaeology proforma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2* (revised August 2012). Detailed sections or plans were produced at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate. All site levels relate to a temporary benchmark to the rear of Bowhay Farm and were given a nominal value of 100m.

### **5. RESULTS (Figs 2-4; Plates 1-4; Appendix 1)**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The evaluation revealed generally low level results and few finds, with only Trenches 8 and 9 containing features of possible archaeological interest. These are described below. The overlying layer sequence was generally consistent across the site, comprising between 0.12-0.20m of topsoil, above between 0.18-0.55m of agricultural subsoil, which in turn was above a natural subsoil of degraded breccia and clay. All of the trenches and contexts are summarised in tabulated form in Appendix 1. Please note that planned Trenches 1-3 were not excavated as the area is currently excluded from the scheme. The relevant plans and sections are included as Figs 3-4.

Finds recovered from the evaluation trenches were very limited with two pieces of prehistoric worked flint, three sherds of post-Medieval pottery, a piece of glass, a fragment of clay tile and a fragment of animal tooth, with the majority derived from overlying contexts. They are described below and in Appendix 1.

#### **5.2 Trench 8**

This trench measured 60m in length, was aligned NE–SW and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.55m. A pair of shallow linear ditches (F803 and F805) were revealed at the west end of the trench. A third linear feature (F807) was revealed at the east end of the trench.

Ditch F803 was 1.4m wide and 0.1m deep. It was N-S aligned with a shallow bowl-shaped profile and contained a single fill (804) with no finds.

Ditch F805 was 1.4m wide and 0.18m deep. It was N-S aligned with a shallow bowl-shaped profile and contained a single fill (806) with finds of a fragment of sheep tooth, a rough flint flake and a piece of modern blue glass.

Gully F807 was N–S aligned and measured 0.6m wide and 0.15m deep. Its profile was asymmetrical with a moderately sloping concave west side with a gradual break of slope to a concave base and a straight, shallow sloping east side, becoming moderately steep with a gradual break of slope into the base. It contained a single fill (808) with no finds.

### 5.3 Trench 9

This trench measured 63m in length, was aligned E–W and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.7m. Two linear features (F904 and F905) were revealed in the trench along with a thin, amorphous spread of charcoal rich material (907) exposed below a natural colluvial layer (908) at the far eastern end of the trench.

Ditch F904 measured 0.65m wide and 0.19m deep and was NE–SW aligned. It had a U-shaped and regular profile. It contained a single fill (903) with no finds.

Ditch F905 measured 0.6m wide and 0.09m deep and was NW–SE aligned. Its profile was a wide, very shallow, U-shape. It contained a single fill (906) with no finds.

Deposit 907 of charcoal rich sandy clay, approximately 0.08m thick and 2.5m across, was exposed below colluvial layer (908) at the far eastern end of the trench. There was no evidence of *in-situ* burning and it contained small fragments of degraded roofing slate and two tiny fragments of glazed pottery of medieval or more recent date.

## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The northwest and northeast sides of an enclosure identified by the geophysical survey are possibly represented by linear features F904 and F905 in Trench 9, each consisting of a narrow and shallow ditch, in-filled with largely redeposited natural subsoil. These features have been heavily truncated; most probably by modern ploughing. The southern two sides were outside of the area of excavation, but were identified by geophysical survey.. The enclosure measures very approximately 35m by 45m and, in the absence of any internal features, it is possible that it is the remains of a stock pound of unknown date.
- 6.2 Parallel ditches F803 and F805 represent the remnants of a former hedgebank boundary bisecting this field as depicted on Ordnance Survey mapping as recently as 1964.
- 6.3 Gully F807 corresponds to a linear anomaly identified through geophysical survey observed to meander across the site on an approximate NW–SE orientation. It is probably a natural gully related to drainage.
- 6.4 The geophysical anomaly forming an assumed partial rectangular enclosure to the east of the site was tested in Trench 4 and was not located.



## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1** The main reasons for undertaking the evaluation was the presence of two possible enclosures identified in the geophysical survey. An undated rectangular possible stock enclosure might be present in the southwest corner of the site, but that in the southeast was not present.
- 7.2** The pair of flint artefacts indicates a background of general prehistoric activity, but no evidence of trackways or field systems of prehistoric or Romano-British date were identified.
- 7.3** This evaluation has established a general paucity of archaeological features and finds in the area of the proposed development.

## **8. ARCHIVE AND OASIS**

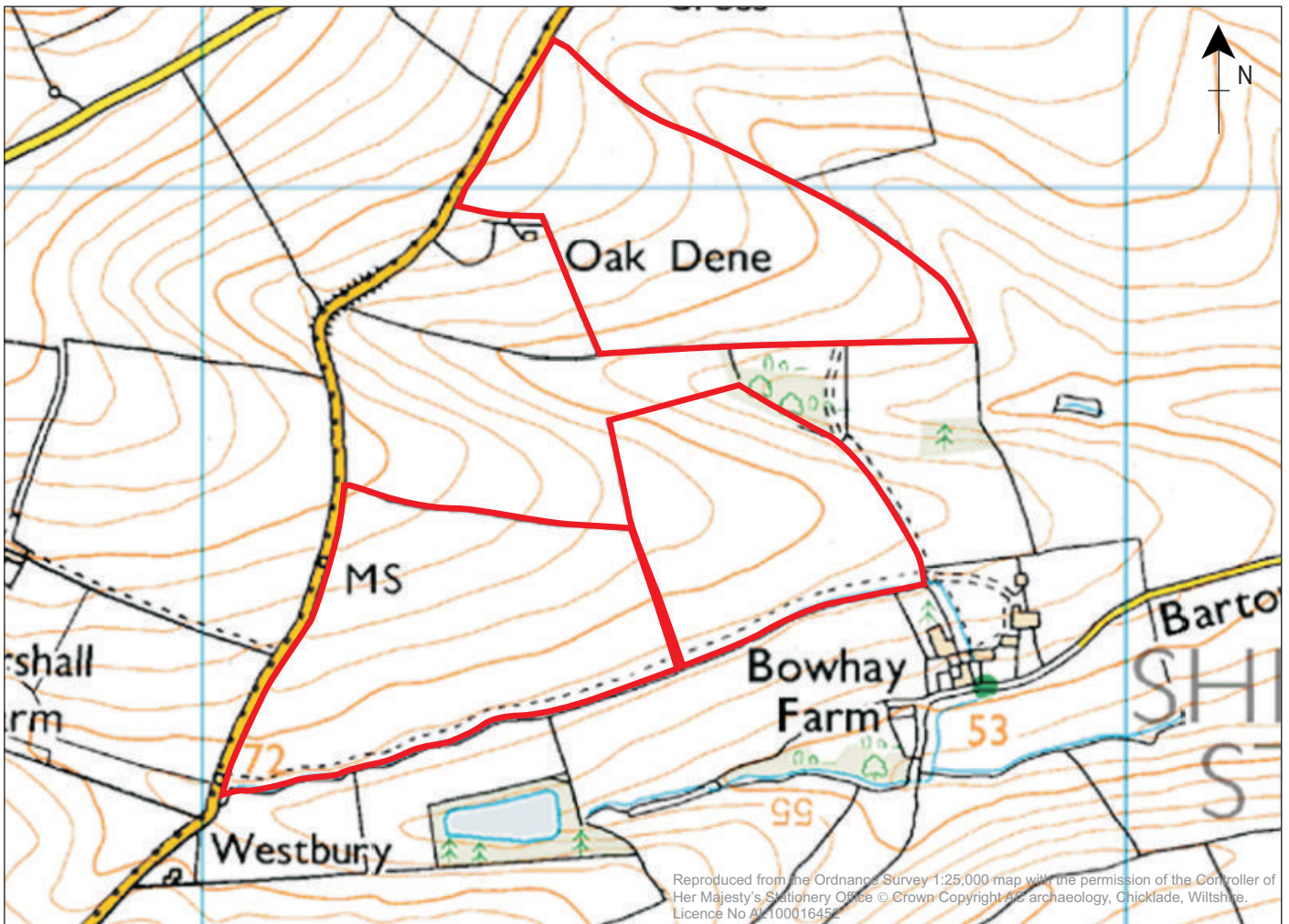
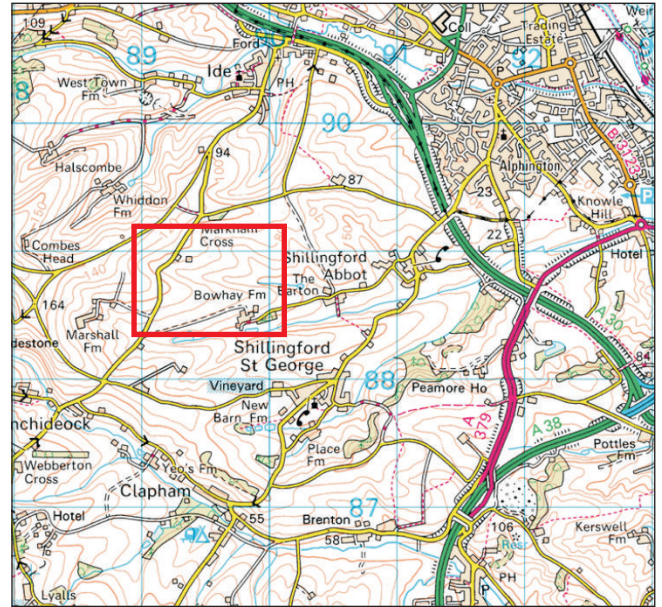
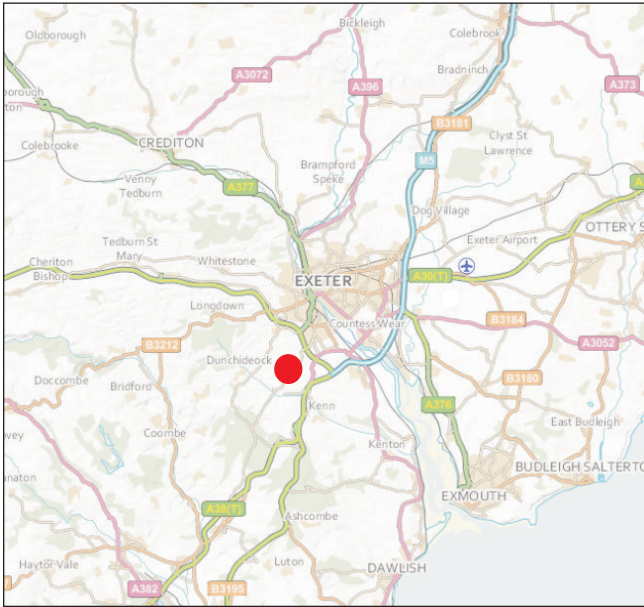
- 8.1** The paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. It will be held until the need for any further archaeological work on the site is established and whether the creation of a digital archive for deposition at the Archaeology Data Service is required. If further work is not required and, as the results were largely negative and assuming the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter will not accept the archive, then it will be discarded.
- 8.2** An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier 160630, which includes a digital copy of this report.

## **9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 9.1** The evaluation was commissioned by Will Bedford of CgMs Consulting Ltd. The site work was undertaken by Alex Farnell and Jon Hall, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Elisabeth Patkai. The collaborative role of Stephen Reed, DCCHET Archaeology Officer is duly acknowledged.


## **10. REFERENCES**

Bedford, W. 2012, *Archaeological Desk Based Assessment: Bowhay Farm, Shillingford Abbot, Exeter*. CgMs Consulting Client Report ref. WB/14067.



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright © AC archaeology, Chicklade, Wiltshire. Licence No AL100016452



 Location of site

PROJECT  
Land at Bowhay Farm, Shillingford Abbot, Devon

TITLE  
Fig. 1: Site location





Evaluation trenches  
with archaeological  
features



PROJECT

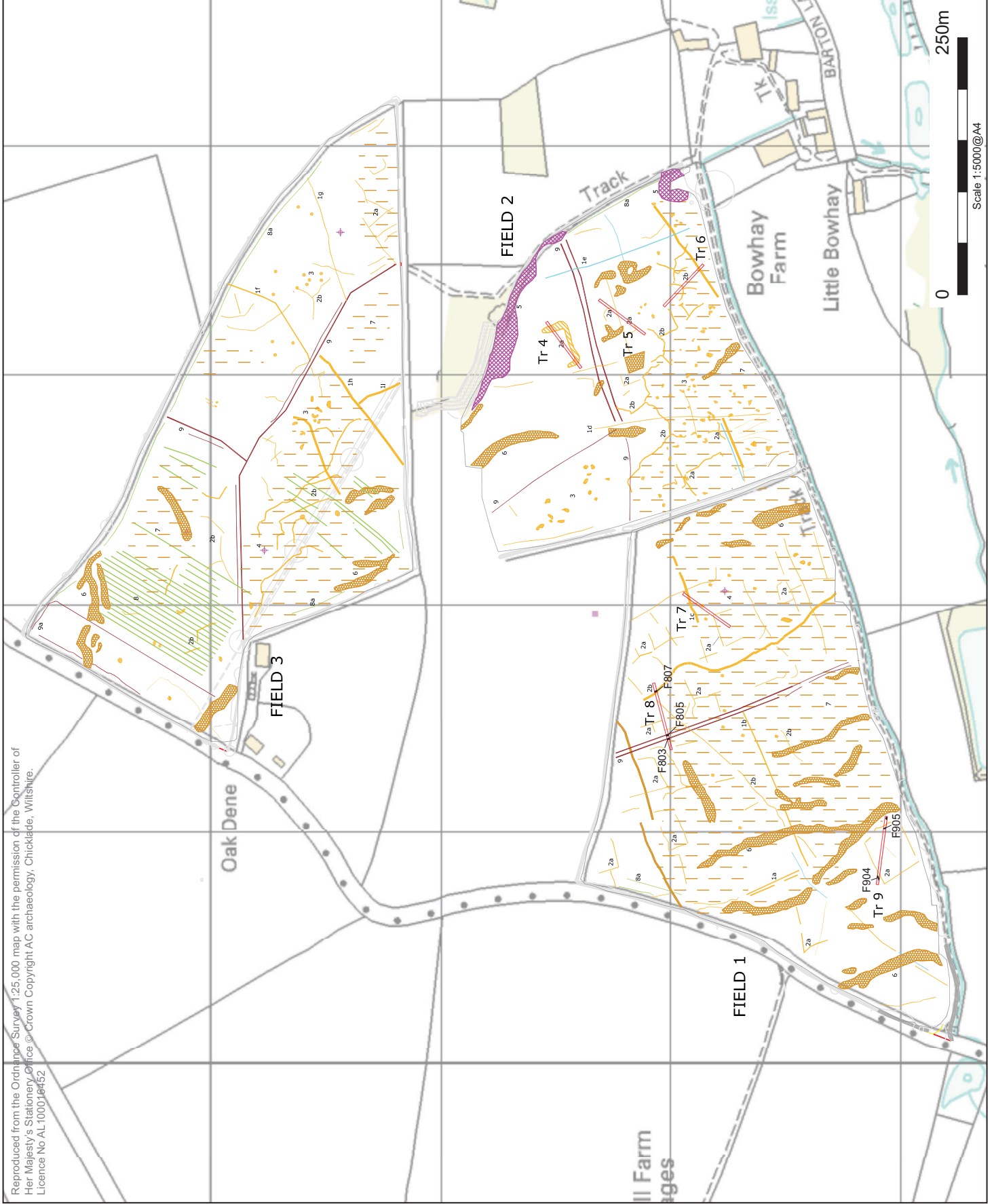
Land at Bowhay Farm,  
Shillingford Abbot, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 2: Trench locations  
in relation to the  
geophysical survey  
results. Archaeological  
features recorded in the  
trenches are shown in  
black

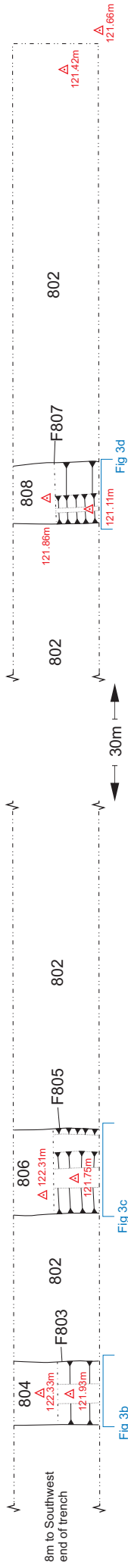


AC archaeology

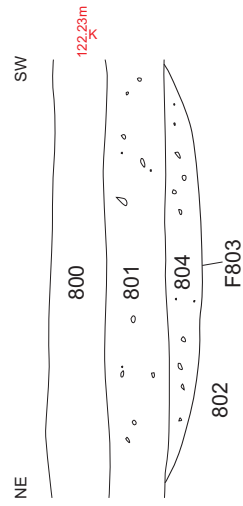




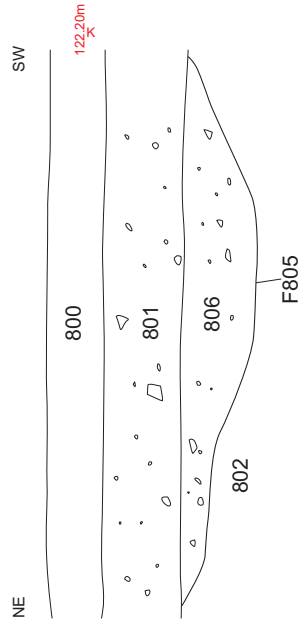
a) Trench 8, Plan



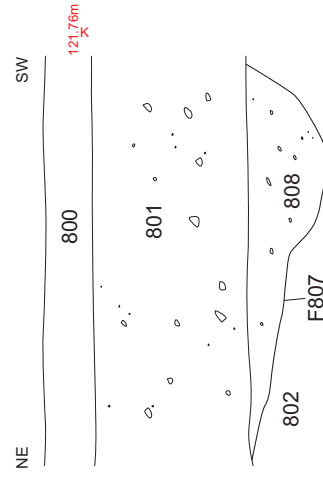
b) Section of F803



c) Section of F805



d) Section of F807



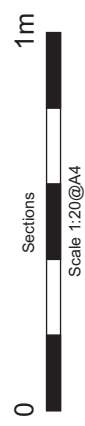
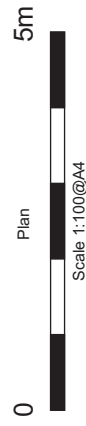
Key to figures



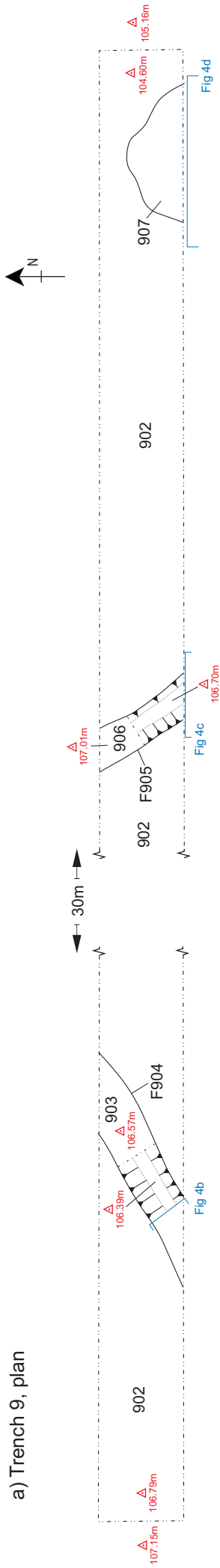
Stones



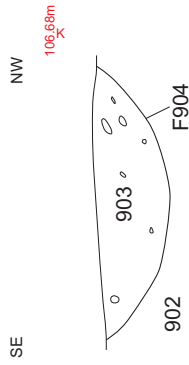
Charcoal



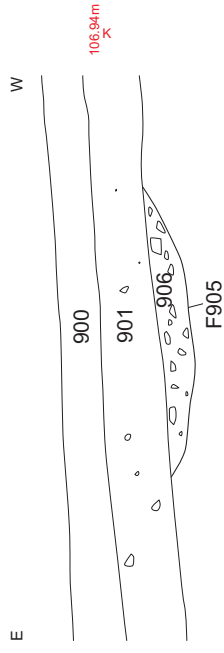
a) Trench 9, plan



b) Section of F904



c) Section of F905



d) Section through deposit 907

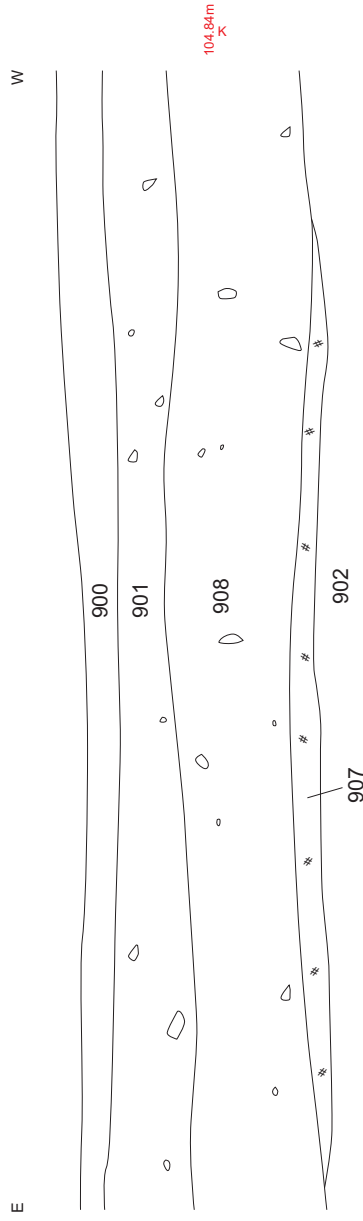




Plate 1: General view of the site, looking northeast



Plate 2: Northeast-facing section of ditch F805 (scale 1 m)



Plate 3: Northeast-facing section of ditch F904 (scale 0.3m)



Plate 4: Charcoal-rich deposit 907, looking south (scale 1 m)



# Appendix 1

Tabulated trench descriptions

**APPENDIX 1: TABULATED TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS**

<b>Trench 4</b>			<b>Length</b>	<b>Width</b>	<b>Alignment</b>
			50m	1.5m	NE-SW
<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>		
400	Red sandy clay loam. Two sherds of post-medieval pottery, one of which was Bristol/Staffordshire slipware of 18 <sup>th</sup> century date and a piece of modern grey slipped white ware.	0-0.15m	Topsoil		
401	Dark reddish brown sandy clay	0.15-0.40m	Agricultural Subsoil		
402	Red degraded breccia and clay	0.40m+	Natural subsoil		

<b>Trench 5</b>			<b>Length</b>	<b>Width</b>	<b>Alignment</b>
			50m	1.5m	NE-SW
<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>		
500	Red sandy clay loam	0-0.12m	Topsoil		
501	Dark reddish brown sandy clay	0.12-0.30m	Agricultural Subsoil		
502	Red degraded breccia and clay	0.30m+	Natural subsoil		

<b>Trench 6</b>			<b>Length</b>	<b>Width</b>	<b>Alignment</b>
			50m	1.5m	NW-SE
<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>		
600	Red sandy clay loam. It contained a fragment of tile and a rough flake of flint.	0-0.15m	Topsoil		
601	Dark reddish brown sandy clay	0.15-0.70m	Agricultural Subsoil		
602	Red degraded breccia and clay	0.70m+	Natural subsoil		

<b>Trench 7</b>			<b>Length</b>	<b>Width</b>	<b>Alignment</b>
			50m	1.5m	NE-SW
<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>		
700	Red sandy clay loam	0-0.20m	Topsoil		
701	Dark reddish brown sandy clay	0.20-0.40m	Agricultural Subsoil		
702	Red degraded breccia and clay	0.40m+	Natural subsoil		

**APPENDIX 1: TABULATED TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS**

<b>Trench 8</b>			<b>Length</b>	<b>Width</b>	<b>Alignment</b>
			60m	1.5m	NE-SW
<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>		
800	Red sandy clay loam	0-0.15m	Topsoil		
801	Dark reddish brown sandy clay	0.15-0.40m	Agricultural Subsoil		
802	Red degraded breccia and clay	0.40m+	Natural subsoil		
803	Cut of linear	0.40-0.50m	Hedgebank ditch		
804	Red clay silt sand	0.40-0.50m	Fill of F803		
805	Cut of linear	0.40-0.58m	Hedgebank ditch		
806	Red clay sand	0.40-0.58m	Fill of F805		
807	Cut of linear	0.40-0.60m	Natural drainage gully		
808	Red clay sand silt	0.40-0.60m	Fill of F807		

<b>Trench 9</b>			<b>Length</b>	<b>Width</b>	<b>Alignment</b>
			63m	1.5m	E-W
<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>		
900	Red sandy clay loam	0-0.20m	Topsoil		
901	Dark reddish brown sandy clay	0.20-0.40m	Agricultural Subsoil		
902	Red degraded breccia and clay	0.40m+	Natural subsoil		
903	Red brown sandy clay	0.40-0.59m	Fill of F904		
904	Cut of linear	0.40-0.59m	Enclosure ditch		
905	Cut of linear	0.40-0.49m	Enclosure ditch		
906	Mid red brown sandy clay	0.40-0.49m	Fill of F905		
907	Mid reddish brown sandy clay with frequent charcoal fragments and flecks	0.40-0.48m	Deposit		
908	Dark red brown sandy clay with occasional small to med angular stones	0.40-0.76m	Natural deposit		



### Devon Office

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

Telephone/Fax: 01392 882410

### Wiltshire Office

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

Telephone: 01747 820581  
Fax: 01747 820440

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