

LAND AT RIVERSIDE (EAST OF STEAMER QUAY ROAD), TOTNES, DEVON

Centred on NGR SX 8104 5981

Results of Archaeological Excavations

South Hams District Council Planning Reference:
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Appeal Reference: APP/K1128/A12/2179204/NWF
(Condition 14)

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AC archaeology

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Summary

An archaeological excavation on land at Riverside (East of Steamer Quay Road), Totnes, Devon (SX 8104 5981), was undertaken by AC archaeology during September 2014 and June-July 2015. Three areas were excavated centred on a series archaeological features identified during previous trial trenching.

Evidence for background prehistoric activity dating from the Mesolithic through to the Early Bronze Age was identified. No in situ features were securely dated to this period, although a number of natural tree throws could be associated with this phase of activity. A pit furnace for iron working excavated during the earlier trial trenching has subsequently been radiocarbon dated to the 4th-6th centuries AD. Evidence for limited agricultural activity dating from the Romano-British through to the modern period was also recorded. Finds recovered comprise small quantities of pottery dating from the prehistoric through to the post-medieval period, several metal objects, ceramic building material, glass, clay tobacco pipe and prehistoric worked flint, including a barbed and tanged arrowhead.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

- 1.1 Presented here are the results of second stage archaeological mitigation, comprising a strip, map and sample excavation in advance of development of agricultural land at Riverside (east of Steamer Quay Road), Totnes, Devon (SX 8104 5981). The work was undertaken as a condition (14) of planning consent following an appeal (ref. APP/K1128/A12/2179204/NWF), as advised by the Archaeology Officer, Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (DCCHET).
- 1.2 The investigations were undertaken by AC archaeology during September 2014 and June-July 2015 and were commissioned by Linden Homes and Galliford Try.
- 1.3 The site comprises two fields on the southern edge of the town, situated to the east of the River Dart and Steamer Quay Road and directly to the south of residential developments around Parkers Way and Culverdale. The site is situated between c. 50m and 10m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), with the highest ground located in the eastern field and the land then falling away gently to the north and more steeply to the west towards the river.
- 1.4 The underlying solid geology comprises Mudstone, Siltstone, Limestone and Sandstone of the Nordon Formation (British Geological Survey Online Viewer).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A desk-based archaeological assessment (Gent and Manning 2011) and subsequent geophysical survey (Carey Consulting 2011) were initially undertaken for the site. The assessment identified only limited evidence for archaeological activity, with the main interest being the field name 'Old Ditch' on the parish tithe apportionment of 1841. The geophysical survey recorded a number of linear anomalies which mainly relate to former field boundaries shown on historic maps. In addition, a curvilinear anomaly in the eastern field was thought to represent buried evidence for a prehistoric enclosure.
- 2.2 Subsequent trial trenching (Hughes *et al.* 2012) comprised the machine-excavation of 10 trenches totalling 520m in length, with each trench 1.6m wide. Trenches were positioned to target anomalies identified during an earlier geophysical survey. The work identified evidence for early ironworking dated to c. 4th-6th centuries AD. Also present was what could be evidence for undated settlement in the northwest part of the site, as well as a series of linear

features relating to post-medieval and earlier land division and drainage. Very few artefacts were recovered, with many of the features clearly having been damaged by later ploughing.

3. AIMS

- 3.1 The principal aims of the archaeological excavation were to record, prior to development, any significant archaeological deposits, features and finds which may be revealed or disturbed by the groundworks for the proposed development in those areas identified as of interest based on the results of the previous trial trench evaluation.

4. METHODOLOGY (Fig. 2)

- 4.1 This phase of work comprised the archaeological excavation of three areas within the development site, undertaken in accordance with a project design (Valentin 2014) approved by DCCHEAT. These areas were centred on features highlighted during an earlier phase of archaeological trial trenching (Hughes *et al.* 2012). Topsoil and subsoil were removed in level spits using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket, under the supervision of a suitably qualified archaeologist. Machine excavation ceased at the level at which natural subsoil and archaeological deposits were exposed.
- 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 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate. All levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS – AREA A (Detailed plan Fig. 3 and sections Fig. 4; Plates 1-3)

- 5.1 This area measured approximately 30m x 30m and was centred on a small early pit furnace (Evaluation context number F102; Hughes *et al.* 2012) dated by radiocarbon method to the c. late 4th-6th centuries AD (see below). Natural subsoil (context 102) comprised highly variable degraded siltstone and was exposed at a depth of approximately 0.44m below current levels. This was overlain by 0.10m of agricultural subsoil (101) consisting of brown silty loam and 0.33m of topsoil (100) consisting of greyish-brown sandy loam. A number of linear and discrete archaeological features was recorded together with tree throw/vegetation features and some of natural origin. Three conjoining sherds of probable Middle Bronze Age pottery were recovered from subsoil layer 101.

5.2 Linear features

Ditch F109 was aligned NW-SE, measured at least 25.8m long by 0.25m-0.56m wide and 0.03m-0.16m deep and had a rounded terminus at its SE end. Four sections were excavated across this feature ([103], [105], [107], and [124]). The ditch had a slightly variable profile with shallow to moderate concave sides and a slightly undulating base. It contained a single fill of brown sandy silt. No finds were recovered.

Ditch F128 was aligned NE-SW, measured at least 13.5m long by 0.85m wide and 0.28m deep. The ditch had been very heavily truncated by ploughing and petered out at its SW end. It had a very shallow profile and a flat base and contained a single yellowish-brown clayey silt fill (129). No finds were recovered.

Ditch F131 was aligned NE-SW, measured at least 29m long by 0.40m-0.50m wide and 0.08m-0.10m deep. Two sections were excavated ([112], [114]). The ditch had a generally consistent

profile, with moderate upper breaks of slope, moderately sloping sides and a flat base. It contained a single yellowish-brown silty clay fill and no finds were recovered.

5.3 Pits

Pit F110 was oval in plan and measured 1m long by 0.80m wide and 0.25m deep. The pit had sharp upper breaks of slope, steep straight sides and a flat base. It contained a single fill (111) of reddish-brown sandy silt. No finds were recovered.

Pit F117 was sub-oval in plan, measured 0.45m long by 0.38m wide and 0.14m deep. The pit had sharp upper breaks of slope, moderately sloping to vertical sides, rounded lower breaks of slope and a rounded base. It contained a single fill (116) of dark reddish-brown silty loam. No finds were recovered.

Possible pit F122 was poorly defined as it was cut by ditch F109. It measured a maximum of 1.08m in diameter and in section was up to 0.35m deep. It contained a single fill (123) of light yellowish-brown silty clay. One piece of prehistoric worked flint was recovered.

5.4 Tree throws

Feature F120 had a highly irregular shape in plan, with very irregular sides and base. It measured approximately 0.95m long by 0.42m wide and 0.60m deep and contained a single silty sandy clay fill (121). No finds were recovered. It was cut by ditch F109.

6. RESULTS – AREA B (Detailed plan Fig. 5 and sections Figs 6-9; Plates 4-6)

6.1 This area measured approximately 60m x 40m and was situated where the evaluation identified evidence for potential prehistoric land division in the form of a number of ditches (Hughes *et al.* 2012). Natural subsoil (1002) was exposed at a maximum depth of 0.44m below current levels. This was overlain by 0.10m of brown silty loam agricultural subsoil (1001) and 0.33m of topsoil (1000), composed of greyish-brown sandy loam. A number of linear and discrete archaeological features were recorded, together with tree throw/vegetation features. Three pieces of worked flint of Late Neolithic - Early Bronze Age date were recovered from the topsoil.

6.2 Linear features

Ditch F1028 was aligned approximately N-S, measured at least 29m long by 0.60-1.35m wide and 0.43-0.68m deep. Four sections were excavated across it ([1012], [1016], [1026], and [1029]). The ditch had a generally consistent profile with moderate upper and lower breaks of slope, steeply sloping slightly convex sides and a concave base. It contained two fills, with the lower fill consisting of yellowish-brown sandy clay loam and the upper fill a yellowish-brown sandy silt. A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from the lower fill. It was cut by pit F1014.

Ditch F1076 was aligned approximately N-S, measured at least 2.50m long by 0.60m wide and 0.05m deep, ending in a narrow irregular terminus to the south. It had moderate upper and lower breaks of slope, shallow sloping sides and a flat base. The ditch contained a single fill (1077) of yellowish-grey clay. No finds were recovered. It was cut by pit F1078.

Ditch F1116 was aligned approximately E-W, measured at least 5m long by 0.57m wide and 0.22m deep. Two sections were excavated across it ([1038], [1040]). The ditch had a generally consistent profile with sharp upper breaks of slope, rounded lower breaks of slope, shallow sloping sides and a rounded base, ending in a very shallow rounded terminus at its eastern end. It contained a single fill of reddish-brown silty clay. No finds were recovered. It was cut through subsoil layer 1001.

Ditch F1117 was aligned approximately E-W, measured 6.40m long by 0.95m wide and 0.30m deep. Two sections were excavated across it ([1049], [1051]). Although the ditch narrowed considerably at its eastern end, the recorded profile was generally consistent with sharp upper breaks of slope, rounded lower breaks of slope, shallow sloping sides and a rounded to flattish base. The ditch had a very shallow and slightly rounded terminus at each end. Each section contained a single fill of reddish-brown silty clay. No finds were recovered.

Ditch F1118 was aligned approximately E-W, measured at least 17m long by 1.23m wide and 0.60m deep. Three sections were excavated across it ([1005], [1007], and [1009]). The ditch had a generally consistent profile, with sharp upper and lower breaks of slope, moderately sloping sides and a rounded base, ending in a shallow rounded terminus at its eastern end. Each section contained a reddish-brown silty clay fill. A single piece of worked flint and six sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered from the upper fill 1003 of segment [1005].

Ditch F1119 was aligned approximately E-W, measured at least 10m long by 0.47m wide and 0.12m deep. Two sections were excavated across it ([1057], [1062]). The ditch had a generally consistent profile with sharp upper breaks of slope, rounded lower breaks of slope, shallow sloping sides and a rounded base. It contained a single fill of dark reddish-brown silty clay. No finds were recovered.

Ditch F1120 was aligned approximately E-W, measured at least 7.40m long by 1.25m wide and 0.28m deep. Two sections were excavated across it ([1045], [1114]). The ditch had a generally consistent profile with moderate upper and lower breaks of slope, moderately sloping sides and a flat base, ending in an irregular sub-square terminus at its westerly end. It contained a single fill of light brownish-yellow silty clay. No finds were recovered.

6.3 Pits

Pit F1010 was circular in plan and measured 1.60m in diameter and 0.37m deep. The pit had moderate upper and lower breaks of slope, moderately sloping irregular sides and an irregular flat base. It contained a single fill (1011) of yellowish-brown sandy silt. No finds were recovered.

Pit F1014 was oval in plan and measured 1.80m long by 1.50m wide and 0.22m deep. The pit had moderately sharp upper and lower breaks of slope, moderately step slightly concave sides and a flat base. It contained a single fill (1015) of dark brown sandy silt. No finds were recovered.

Pit F1033 was excavated during the earlier phase of trial trenching (see Hughes *et al.* 2012 – F506). It measured up to 1m wide and 0.40m deep, but was cut by ditch F1028.

Pit F1078 was sub-oval in plan, measured 1.03m long by 0.79m wide and 0.31m deep. The pit had moderately sharp upper and lower breaks of slope, moderately steep sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a series of silty clay fills (1079-1081). Burnt clay was in the upper two fills. The pit cut ditch F1076 and deposit 1075 consisting of light yellowish-grey clayey silt which filled a depression in the natural subsoil (1002).

6.4 Quarry pit

Quarry pit F1085 was sub-circular in plan, measured 2.70m long, 2.20m wide and at least 1.20m deep. The pit had sharp upper breaks of slope, near vertical stepped sides and contained three fills (1106-8). The lowest exposed fill (1108) comprised greyish-brown silty clay. This was overlain by fill 1107, consisting of dark brown sandy silt, possibly representing deliberate backfill of the feature. This was sealed by a fill (1106) of light reddish-brown silty clay. One bifacial flint core was recovered from fill 1107.

6.5 Tree throws and other natural features

Feature F1019 was circular with a diameter of 1.15m and 0.26m deep. It had sharp upper breaks of slope, concave sides and an undulating base. It contained a single light yellowish-brown silty sand fill (1020). No finds were recovered.

Feature F1023 was sub-oval in plan, measured 3.64m long by 1.33m wide and 0.37m deep. It had sharp upper breaks of slope, variably sloping but generally steep sides and an irregular base. The feature contained a single fill (1022), from which a large dump of charcoal and a single piece of prehistoric worked flint were recovered.

Feature F1041 was sub-square in plan and measured 2m long by 1.25m wide and 0.25m deep. It had asymmetric shallow sides and a concave base. It contained two fills (1042 and 1047). Primary fill 1047 consisted of pale yellowish-brown silt. This was sealed by an upper fill (1042) of pale reddish-brown sandy silt. No finds were recovered from this feature and it is interpreted to be natural in origin.

Feature F1052 was sub-oval in plan and measured 1.52m long by 0.63m wide and 0.14m deep. It had an irregular undulating profile and contained a single fill (1053) of pale reddish-brown silty clay. No finds were recovered.

Feature F1054 was sub-circular in plan with a diameter of 1.67m and depth of 0.28m. It had an irregular undulating profile and contained a single fill (1055) of reddish-brown silty clay loam. One piece of prehistoric worked flint was recovered.

Feature F1058 refers to a group of features recorded during the earlier phase of trial trenching (see Hughes *et al.* 2012 – features F516, F520, F523). Initially recorded as two possible ditches and a posthole, further investigation during this phase of work indicates that these features are interpreted to be a tree throw and not of archaeological origin. No finds were recovered.

Feature F1065 was sub-rectangular in plan and measured 2.70m long by 0.75m wide and 0.27m deep. It had an irregular undulating profile and contained a single fill (1066) of reddish-brown silty clay loam. A single piece of prehistoric worked flint was recovered.

Feature F1067 was sub-oval in plan and measured 1.30m long by 0.50m wide and 0.12m deep. It had gently sloping sides and an irregular base and contained a single fill (1068) of light reddish-brown silty clay. No finds were recovered.

Features F1069, F1071, and F1073 were a series of intercutting features with irregular profiles. All three contained similar silty clay fills (1070, 1072, 1074). No finds were recovered.

Feature F1082 was oval in plan and measured 1.70m long by 1.43m wide and 0.45m deep. It had moderate upper and lower breaks of slope, moderately sloping straight to convex sides and a concave base. It contained two fills (1084-1085). No finds were recovered.

Feature F1086 was irregular in plan and measured 6.40m long by 2.40m wide and 0.36m deep. It had a shallow gradual profile and flat base. It contained three silty clay fills (1087-1089). Post-medieval pottery was recovered from the lowest fill (1087) with worked flint recovered from the upper fill (1099).

Feature F1090 was oval in plan and measured 1.70m long by 1.25m wide and 0.22m deep. It had an asymmetric profile with a very steep side to the NE, shallow sloping and irregular side to the SW and an irregular base. It contained a series of grey to yellowish-grey silty clay and clay fills (1091-1093) derived from re-deposited and bioturbated natural subsoil. These were sealed by a final fill (1094) of dark orangey-grey silty clay with common large charcoal

fragments and pieces of burnt shillet. No finds were recovered. It was cut by a modern water pipe.

Feature F1095 was sub-rectangular in plan and measured 3m long by 0.80m wide and 0.08m deep. It had a shallow profile, with an irregular base and contained a single fill (1096) composed of light yellowish-grey silty clay derived from the overlying subsoil. No finds were recovered.

Features F1097 and F1099 were a pair of intercutting tree throws. Feature F1097 had an irregular oval plan, steep sides and a flat base. It contained two greyish-yellow silty clay fills (1098 and 1101). Feature F1099 had an irregular shape in plan, steeply sloping sides and a flat base but had been severely bioturbated. It contained a single dark yellowish-grey silty clay fill (1100). Fills of both were sealed by a single upper fill (1102) derived from the overlying subsoil. No finds were recovered.

Feature F1103 had an irregular oval plan and measured 1.45m long by 0.80m wide and 0.38m deep. It had moderately sharp breaks of slope, moderately steep to steep convex sides and a flat base. It contained two yellowish-grey silty clay fills (1104-1105). No finds were recovered.

Feature F1109 was sub-oval in plan and measured 3.55m long by 2.44m wide and 0.61m deep. It had irregular breaks of slope, irregular sides and an irregular base. It contained a sequence of four silty clay fills (1110-1113). A barbed and tanged arrowhead of Early Bronze Age date was recovered from fill 1112 and a worked flint flake from fill 1113.

7. RESULTS – AREA C (Detailed plan Fig. 10 and sections Figs 11-13; Plates 7-9)

7.1 Area C was located at the lower edge of the site adjacent to Steamer Quay Road. This area measured approximately 50m x 25m and was located where previous trial trenching had uncovered evidence for potential medieval settlement and land division (Hughes *et al.* 2012). Natural subsoil (2003) was of a highly variable pale yellow to brown silty clay with bands of shillet gravels. This was exposed at a maximum depth of 0.76m below current levels in the southern corner of the site. The natural subsoil was overlain by 0.20m of brown clay colluvium (2002), which in turn was below 0.26m of agricultural subsoil (2001), consisting of pale yellow brown silty clay and 0.30m of modern brown silty clay topsoil (2000). The thickness of layers shallowed out significantly north of ditch F2062, with only shallow topsoil and agricultural subsoil with a total depth of c. 0.30m present. A number of linear and discrete archaeological features were recorded, together with tree throw/vegetation and natural erosion features. A single piece of prehistoric worked flint was recovered from colluvial subsoil 2002.

7.2 Linear features

Ditch F2050 was aligned approximately NW-SE and measured at least 3m long by 0.77m wide and 0.22m deep. It had sharp upper breaks of slope, moderately sloping concave sides and a flat base. It contained a single fill (2051) of dark greyish-brown silty clay. No finds were recovered.

Ditch F2062 was aligned approximately NE-SW, measured at least 17m long by 0.45m wide and 0.06m deep. Three sections were excavated across it ([2004], [2033], and [2071]). The ditch had been completely truncated by ploughing at its NE end and was only visible in section at segment [2004]. It had a generally consistent profile, with gradual upper and lower breaks of slope, shallow irregular sides and concave base. It contained a single fill of yellowish-brown to greyish-brown silty clay. Post-medieval pottery, clay pipe stems and a medieval penny were recovered from the fill (2034) of segment [2033].

Ditch F2063 was aligned approximately NE-SW and measured at least 29.5m long by 1.46m wide and 0.75m deep. Two sections were excavated across it ([2006], [2035]). It had a

generally consistent profile with a sharp upper break of slope on its NW edge, moderately steep, slightly convex sides, a gradual lower break of slope and a concave base. The ditch was cut along its SE edge by re-cut F2064 (see below). Segment [2006] contained a single fill (2007) of yellowish-brown silty clay and segment [2035] contained a fill (2036) of reddish-brown clay. No finds were recovered.

Ditch F2064 was aligned approximately NE-SW and measured at least 29.5m long by 2.66m wide and 0.46m deep. Two sections were excavated across it ([2012], [2037]). It had a generally consistent profile with a moderate upper break of slope on its NW edge, steep concave sides, gradual lower break of slope and a wide flat base. It had a fill of greyish-brown to yellowish-brown silty clay, which contained modern plastics, brick and metalwork which were not retained. In addition, a clay pipe stem, two sherds of post-medieval pottery and three objects of iron were retained. Ditch F2064 is a re-cut of ditch F2063.

Ditch F2065 was aligned approximately N-S and measured approximately 18m long by 1.18m wide and 0.63m deep. Three sections were excavated across it ([2010], [2029], and [2058]). The ditch had a broadly consistent profile with moderate-sharp upper breaks of slope, moderately steep straight to slightly concave sides and a rounded to flat base. Segments [2029] and [2058] contained single fills of greyish-brown silty clay (2030) and dark yellowish-brown sandy silty loam (2059) respectively. The profile in segment [2010] survived to a greater depth and had a more complex fill sequence comprising a primary fill (2011) of pale yellowish-brown clay, overlain by two brown silty clay fills (2015-2016). This section also showed that the feature was cut from the level of colluvial subsoil 2002. No finds were recovered.

Ditch F2066 was aligned approximately NE-SW and measured at least 14.50m long by 0.48m wide and 0.14m deep. Two sections were excavated across it ([2008] [2017]). The ditch had a generally consistent profile with moderately sharp breaks of slope, steep sides and a flat base. It contained a single fill of dark greyish-brown silty clay. The section of segment [2008] showed that this feature was cut from the level of colluvial subsoil 2002. No finds were recovered. Ditch F2066 cut tree throw F2019.

7.3 Postholes

Posthole F2039 was located approximately 1m east of ditch F2065 and was circular in plan with a diameter of 0.25m by 0.12m deep. It had sharp upper and lower breaks of slope, steep sides and an irregular base and contained a single fill (2040) of dark greyish brown silty clay. No finds were recovered.

Posthole F2041 was located approximately 1m east of ditch F2064 and was circular in plan with a diameter of 0.27m by 0.16m deep. It had sharp upper and lower breaks of slope, steep sides and an irregular base and contained a single fill (2042) of dark greyish brown silty clay. No finds were recovered.

Posthole F2045 was cut into the top of unexcavated modern feature 2049 (see below), was circular in plan with a diameter of 0.50m by 0.21m deep. It had sharp upper and lower breaks of slope, steep sides and a rounded base and contained a single fill (2046) of yellowish-brown sandy silt loam. No finds were recovered.

Posthole F2047 was cut into the top of unexcavated modern feature 2049 and was circular in plan with a diameter of 0.30m by 0.21m deep. It had sharp upper and lower breaks of slope, steep sides and a flat base. It contained a single fill (2048) of brown silty loam. No finds were recovered.

7.4 Pits

Pit F2023 was sub-rectangular in plan and measured 4.90m long by 2.0m wide and 0.66m deep. It had moderate to sharp upper breaks of slope, gradual lower breaks of slope, steep

concave sides and a concave base. It contained two brown clay fills (2024 and 2026). No finds were recovered. It cut ditch F2065.

7.5 Large stones in shallow cuts

Three large angular limestone boulders were recorded approximately 1.0-1.5m east of ditch F2065. All three were set into shallow cuts (F2060, F2061 and F2068) in the natural subsoil. Modern china was recovered from beneath the stone in F2060, which had been displaced during the stripping of the site.

7.6 Unexcavated layer

Unexcavated layer 2049 was irregular in plan and measured approximately 2m across. It consisted of brown sandy silty loam containing fragments of coke and coal. Postholes F2045 and F2047 and probable unexcavated postholes 2075 and 2076 were cut into the top of this feature.

Probable postholes 2075 and 2076 were roughly circular in plan, with diameters of 0.20m and 0.30m respectively. Both contained fills of brown silty loam and were cut into modern layer 2049. No finds were recovered.

7.7 Tree throws and other natural features

Feature F2019 was very irregular in plan and measured 1.93m long by 1.11m wide and 0.29m deep. It had sharp breaks of slope, irregular sides and an irregular base and contained a single fill (2020) of dark greyish-brown silty clay. This fill was cut by ditch F2066. No finds were recovered.

Feature F2021 was irregular in plan and measured 2.40m long by 1.90m wide and 0.41m deep. It had moderate to sharp upper breaks of slope, moderately steep very irregular sides and an irregular undulating base and contained a single fill (2022) of dark brown clay. No finds were recovered.

Feature F2031 was irregular in plan and measured 0.98m long by 0.81m wide and 0.14m deep. It had sharp upper breaks of slope, shallow sides and an uneven base. It contained a single fill (2032) of greyish-brown silty clay. No finds were recovered.

F2054 was linear in plan, was aligned approximately NE-SW and measured approximately 8m long by 2.48m wide and 0.14m deep. It had gradual upper and lower breaks of slope, shallow concave sides and an undulating flat base. It contained a fill of yellowish-brown silty clay (2055). A hammerstone in the form of a granite river cobble and a broken bladelet or microlith of possible Mesolithic to Neolithic date were recovered from this fill. This feature is interpreted as representing a shallow erosion channel in the natural subsoil.

F2067 was slightly curvilinear in plan, aligned approximately N-S, and measured 11.30m long by 1.50m wide and 0.20m deep. Two sections were excavated across it ([2052] [2056]). It had a generally consistent profile with moderate upper breaks of slope, shallow-moderate concave sides and an irregular base. It contained a fill (2053/2057) of yellowish-brown sandy silt to loamy clay. A flint blade of probable Late Neolithic date was recovered from the very base of fill 2053 in segment [2052]. F2067 was cut by ditch F2064. This feature is thought to represent a shallow erosion channel in the natural subsoil.

Feature F2069 was irregular broadly oval in plan and measured 1.39m long by 0.92m wide and 0.19m deep. It had gradual to moderate upper and lower breaks of slope, irregular shallow to moderate concave sides and an irregular base. It contained a single fill (2070) of pale yellowish-brown silty clay. No finds were recovered.

8. THE FINDS by Kerry Kerr-Peterson, Naomi Payne and Henrietta Quinnell

8.1 Introduction

All finds recovered on site during the excavation have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. They have been quantified according to material type within each context and the assemblage scanned to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented. The assemblage consists of small quantities of pottery dating from the prehistoric through to the post-medieval period, several metal objects, ceramic building material, glass, clay tobacco pipe and prehistoric worked flint, including a barbed and tanged arrowhead. The worked flint is summarised in Table 1, the pottery in Table 2 and the metal and other finds in Table 3.

8.2 Coin

A silver penny of Edward I was recovered from context 2034, fill of ditch F2062. The coin is an early example of a long cross Class 4 dating from AD 1282 or just after (Robert Webley, *pers. comm.*). It is not quite complete and has been double-struck. The context also contained two pieces of post-medieval clay tobacco pipe stem and four sherds of post-medieval pottery, so the coin is residual.

8.3 Worked flint

A total of 16 pieces (93g) of worked flint was recovered from 13 contexts. A summary of this material is provided in Table 1.

Context	Context description	Description of worked flint
123	Fill of pit F122	1 x broken tertiary flake
1000	Area B topsoil	1 x primary flake 2 x end scrapers
1003	Fill of ditch F1118	1 x broken retouched flake
1022	Primary fill of tree throw F1023	1 x broken secondary flake
1055	Fill of tree throw F1054	1 x broken secondary flake
1066	Fill of natural hollow F1065	1 x secondary flake
1089	Fill of natural hollow F1086	1 x secondary flake 1 x broken tertiary flake
1107	Fill of quarry pit F1085	1 x core fragment with compacted surfaces
1112	Fill of tree throw F1109	1 x barbed and tanged arrowhead
1113	Fill of tree throw F1109	1 x secondary flake
2002	Colluvial subsoil	1 x broken tertiary flake
2053	Fill of natural gully F2067	1 x broken probable blade
2055	Fill of natural gully F2054	1 broken bladelet or microlith

Table 1. Summary of worked flint

Much of the flint was derived from Area B, including six pieces recovered from separate tree throw features. The assemblage consists of a variety of blue/grey, light grey cherty flint and dark grey/brown flint with examples of both pebble and nodule cortex. There are nine waste flakes, a core fragment, a retouched flake, two scrapers, a probable blade and a small bladelet fragment or microlith. The finest piece is a small barbed and tanged arrowhead from tree throw F1109 (Plate 10). The arrowhead, which measures 22mm by 20mm, has been invasively retouched across both surfaces. One barb is missing. It is the only piece which can be reasonably closely dated, in this case to the Early Bronze Age. The remaining pieces are indicative of the generalised use of the landscape in prehistoric times.

Area	Context	Context description	Pre-historic pottery		Medieval pottery		Roman pottery		Post-medieval pottery	
			No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
	Unstrat.	Unstratified							3	34
A	100	Topsoil							8	71
A	101	Subsoil	3	54						
B	1000	Topsoil							7	57
B	1003	Fill of ditch F1118					6	90		
B	1013	Fill of ditch F1012			1	3				
B	1087	Primary fill of natural hollow F1086							1	3
C	2001	Subsoil			4	19			19	134
C	2034	Fill of ditch F2062							4	11
C	2036	Fill of ditch F2063							1	17
C	2038	Fill of F2064							2	36
C	F2060	Cut for limestone boulder							3	2
Total			3	54	5	22	6	90	48	365

Table 2: Pottery finds by context

8.4 Prehistoric pottery by Henrietta Quinnell

Three conjoining rim sherds weighing 54g are much eroded. They appear to be in a gabbroic fabric, originating in the Lizard in Cornwall, possibly with the addition of some non-gabbroic material. The rim is flat-topped with an external expansion and comes from a thick-walled large vessel. There are one or two possible incised lines on the exterior. The rim comes from a Trevisker vessel of the Early or Middle Bronze Age. A Middle Bronze Age date and derivation from settlement related debris is most likely from its context. Trevisker style ceramics are the main Middle Bronze Age pottery in South Devon with a sizeable assemblage known from Kents Cavern in Torquay (Silvester 1986).

8.5 Romano-British pottery

Six sherds (90g) of Romano-British pottery were recovered from context 1003, the upper fill of linear ditch F1005. All the sherds are from the same South Devon Micaceous Reduced Ware conical flanged bowl dating from c. AD 250-400. Many of the sherds have traces of sooting on their exterior surface. Five of the sherds conjoin to form part of the rim and neck of the vessel.

8.6 Late medieval and post-medieval pottery

A total of 54 sherds (387g) of late medieval and post-medieval pottery was recovered from 10 contexts. Five body sherds of late medieval or early post-medieval (15th to 17th century) wheel-thrown Totnes-type pottery were recovered. One was from context 1013, fill of pit F1012 and the other four from the subsoil in Area C. A further 24 glazed Totnes-type sherds dating from c 1500-1750 were recovered from Area A topsoil, Area C subsoil, and contexts 2034 (fill of ditch F2062), 2036 (fill of ditch F2063), and 2038 (fill of cut F2064). There were also two further unstratified sherds from Area B. All of the post-medieval Totnes-type sherds are body sherds and it is not possible to distinguish any particular forms. The remaining sherds date from the 18th or 19th centuries. They consist of industrially-produced white wares, transfer-printed wares and stoneware.

Area	Context	Context Description	Metal		Worked stone		Glass		CBM		Clay tobacco-pipe	
			No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
A	100	Topsoil	1	7			1	4	1	151		
B	1000	Topsoil					3	14				
C	2001	Subsoil							1	30		
C	2034	Fill of ditch F2062	1	1							2	3
C	2038	Fill of F2064	3	37							1	4
C	2055	Fill of natural gully F2054			1	717						
Total			5	45	1	717	4	18	2	181	3	7

Table 3: Metal and other finds by context

8.7 Worked/utilised stone

Context 2055, fill of natural gully F2054, produced a broadly ovoid granite cobble (717g). One end is flattened, suggesting possible use as a hammerstone. There is another area of wear at the opposite end. Hammerstones can have a date range from prehistoric times until comparatively recently, although the only other find from this context, an incomplete flint bladelet or microlith, suggests a prehistoric date in this case.

8.8 Metalwork

Four pieces of iron (44g) were recovered from two contexts. A nail was recovered from topsoil in Area A. Context 2038, fill of F2064, a recut of F2063, produced three iron objects including a nail and two unidentified fragments. The iron finds are all post-medieval in date.

8.9 The other finds

The remaining finds were all post-medieval or modern in date. They included four fragments (18g) of bottle glass from the topsoil in Areas A and B, a fragment of roof tile (151g) from the topsoil of Area A, a fragment of brick (30g) from the subsoil in Area C and three clay tobacco pipe stems (7g) from context 2034 (fill of ditch F2062) and context 2038 (fill of F2064).

9. RADIOCARBON DATING *by Paul Rainbird*

9.1 Samples were taken from all features with organic material present. The majority of these were not processed further as their contexts were regarded as natural in origin or could be shown to be recent. Only pit furnace F102, excavated during the evaluation phase, was deemed appropriate for radiocarbon dating, as its lowest fill (105) was sealed by deposits of furnace lining and slag. A single piece of charcoal was selected and submitted for AMS dating to the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre. The AMS radiocarbon date and the result is given in Table 4. Calibration of the result has been achieved using the data set published by Reimer *et al.* (2013) and performed using the program OxCal4 (on-line at: c14.arch.ox.ac.uk). The calibrated date range cited is that with 95.4% confidence and has been rounded out to the nearest 10 years.

9.2 Results

The result from the charcoal of 1620±30BP calibrates to cal AD 380-540 at 95% probability, and indicates a late Romano-British or post-Roman/Early Medieval date for the sample. Locally the centuries following the end of the Roman government of southern Britain is a poorly understood period and this date means that the pit furnace can be added to a small corpus of

sites, including Hazard Farm near Totnes which can be identified as belonging to this period only by radiocarbon dating (see Pears and Rainbird 2014, 67).

Deposit	Context	Material	Lab no.	Result BP	$\delta C^{13\text{‰}}$	Calibrated result
Lowest fill of pit furnace F207	105	Charcoal	SUERC-41557	1620±30	-24.5	AD 380-540

Table 4: Radiocarbon result

10. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT by Cressida Whitton

10.1 Three samples have been assessed for environmental potential. All had moderate to frequent oak-based heartwood charcoal pieces (mostly small < 1cm fragments). Samples 2 and 3 came from charcoal-rich dumps in small pits. Sample 2 (1022) was the fill of a probable natural tree-throw (F1023) and contained no charred plant macrofossils. Sample 3 (1080) from pit F1078 was a charcoal-rich fill/dump, but had no evidence for *in situ* burning. A single piece of prehistoric worked flint was found in pit F1023.

10.2 Sample 1 (116) was the fill of F117 which was a small isolated pit, located close to the pit furnace identified in the evaluation phase and dated by radiocarbon method to the late Romano-British or post-Roman period. This sample had the most potential and contained frequent charcoal pieces (250+) of mostly heartwood oak, but also a small number of roundwood twigs. The charcoal in this sample was generally large (ie 25% 2-4cm+ fragments), but did not contain any domestic charred seeds or grain. Present within the sample were frequent pieces of clinker, indicating that it is likely to be of 19th century or later date.

11. DISCUSSION

11.1 Prehistoric

Many features attributed to natural processes were recorded across the site. Several of these contained material of prehistoric date. The presence of a barbed and tanged arrowhead, other worked flints and evidence of *in situ* burning in two of the tree throw pits provides an indication of limited prehistoric activity. Middle Bronze Age pottery (three conjoining pieces) was recovered from overlying deposits. However, no archaeological features were dated to the prehistoric period and this fits with the current understanding of the evidence for only scattered prehistoric activity in the River Dart valley to the south and east of Totnes (Pink 2014).

11.2 Romano-British

Six sherds of locally produced pottery of late Romano-British date were recovered from ditch F1118 in Area B and it is possible that this feature represents evidence for small-scale land division dating to this period (c. mid-3rd to 4th century AD). A series of short linear features on the same alignment and parallel to F1118, located to the north (F1116 and F1119) and one to the south (F1120) may be associated with F1118, although this association was not firmly established. However, the Romano-British pottery represents only two sherds from a single pot and are much abraded so it is significant to note these ditches lay perpendicular to long boundary ditch F1028 which contained a sherd of medieval pottery; most probably this provides the earliest date for the square field formed by F1118, F1119, F1028 and F1120. Ditch F1028 was a clear feature marking a former field boundary in the geophysical survey results and matches a field boundary to the east that was extant until at least the 1970s. Ditch F1076 was undated. Ditch F1116 was cut from the level of subsoil and must be more recent, but tellingly it follows the same orientation indicating that this pattern was still extant when the ditch was cut.

Totnes is regarded as a late Saxon establishment (Dyer and Allen 2004) although some finds of the period are known from the town (Devon HER MDV41986). The possibility of a significant

settlement of Romano-British date in the vicinity of Totnes, at the lowest bridging point of the River Dart has found recent support in the excavation of a Roman road at Ipplepen, 7.5km to the northeast, which heads in the general direction of Totnes (MDV81301). The evidence does not, however, indicate intensive use of the site during this period and is rather more characteristic of small scale rural activity.

11.3 Post-Roman/Early medieval

In Area A, the shallow linear features may represent remnants of a small field system, possibly with more than one phase. All features had, however, been heavily truncated by ploughing. No finds were recovered from any of the ditches so it was not possible to date them with any certainty although the pit furnace recorded during the previous trial trenching was located within the area enclosed by these features. It is possible, therefore, that the gullies are contemporary with the pit furnace (i.e. 4th-6th century AD) although this association is tentative. Ditch F131 is a component of a pattern of field boundaries interpreted from the geophysics results.

Post-Roman/early medieval sites are difficult to identify in the absence of radiocarbon dates. The pit furnace on its own is of simple type and typologically could have dated from the Iron Age period to late Saxon times. Totnes is regarded as being founded in the Late Saxon period, probably during the 10th century AD, and there has been no previous evidence of post-Roman/early medieval activity on the site of the later town.

11.4 Medieval and post-medieval

As noted above, the square field formed by F1116, F1118, F1119, F1028 and F1120 in Area A is probably medieval at the earliest.

A small quarry pit excavated in Area B is likely to be of post-medieval date and may relate to small scale clay or shale gravel extraction.

In Area C ditches F2062, F2063, F2066 correspond with field boundaries recorded during the previous trial trenching and at that time were tentatively dated to the medieval period (Hughes *et al.* 2012). It is now clear, despite the recovery of the medieval coin from F2062, that these features are post-medieval in date and share their orientation with the extant field boundary to the north. The presence of late 20th century refuse in re-cut F2064 of ditch F2063 indicates that this boundary persisted into relatively recent times; indeed, it is shown on historic mapping from the 1841 tithe map until the 1970s. The series of large stones set in shallow cuts may represent the remnants of a hedgebank or wall associated with ditch F2065. The presence of post-medieval pottery in one of the cuts suggests that this boundary would have been of relatively recent date. Ditch F2065 pre-dated large pit F2023 and may have promoted the development of erosion gully F2054. Two postholes and two unexcavated postholes recorded in deposit 2049 are of post-medieval/modern date, although their function remains unclear. They are located in close proximity to erosion gully F2067.

During medieval and post-medieval times the area was used as fields for agricultural purposes. Many of the field boundaries have been removed up to very recent times to provide larger fields that have been used for agricultural purposes. This modern agricultural use has caused damage to the archaeological remains through ploughing, particularly in Area A at the highest point of the site.

11.5 Undated

The remainder of the features are undated. Many of these can be ascribed to natural processes or limited agricultural activities.

12. CONCLUSIONS

- 12.1** Evidence uncovered during excavation hints at a background level of activity during much of the prehistoric period (Mesolithic–Early Bronze Age). However, no features were securely dated to this period although the presence of worked flint and Middle Bronze Age pottery fits with the current understanding of scattered prehistoric activity in the area.
- 12.2** Romano-British period activity has long been suspected as having a focus in the Totnes area. This has yet to be matched by archaeological finds. The evidence for iron working and possibly fields on the slope above the River Dart may be added to the small corpus of archaeological traces for this and the subsequent post-Roman period.
- 12.3** A number of medieval and early post-medieval field boundaries were also recorded. One of these is likely to have persisted into the modern period. Evidence relating to this phase was limited to agricultural activities.

13. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 13.1** The finds, paper and digital archive are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. The finds and paper archive will be offered to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, but if they are unable to accept this, then it will be dealt with under their current accession policy. A temporary reference number of **RAMM 14/48** has been assigned by the Royal Albert Memorial Museum.
- 13.2** An online OASIS entry has been completed using the unique identifier **222572**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

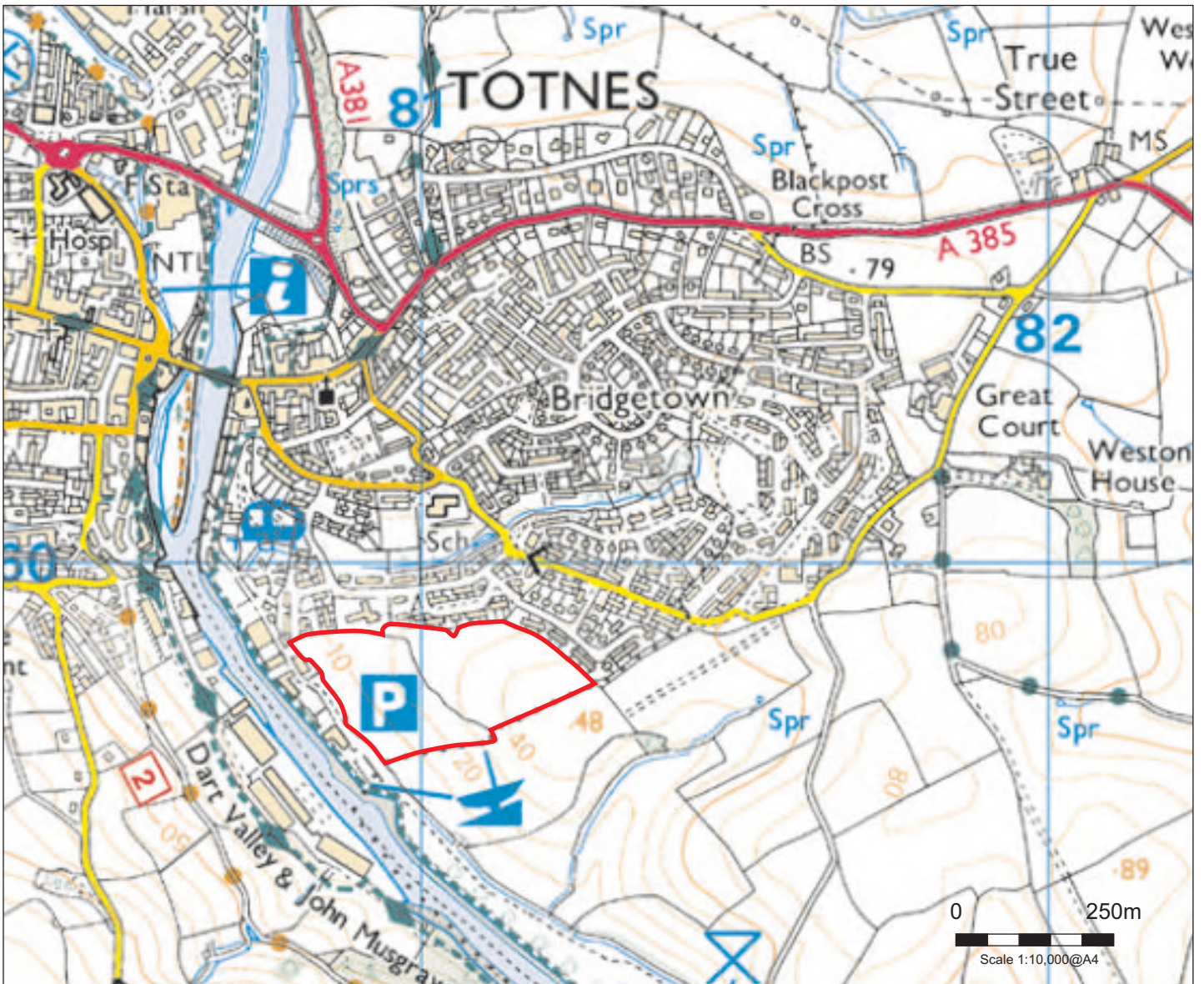
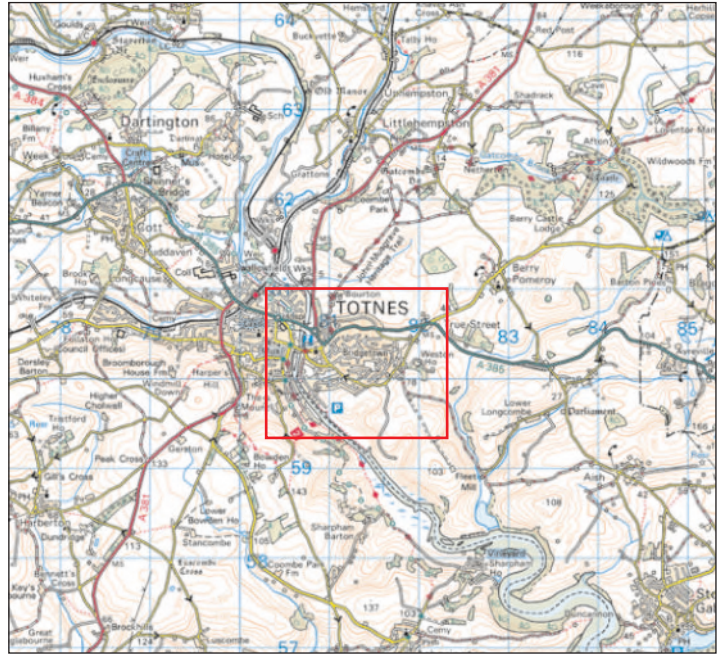
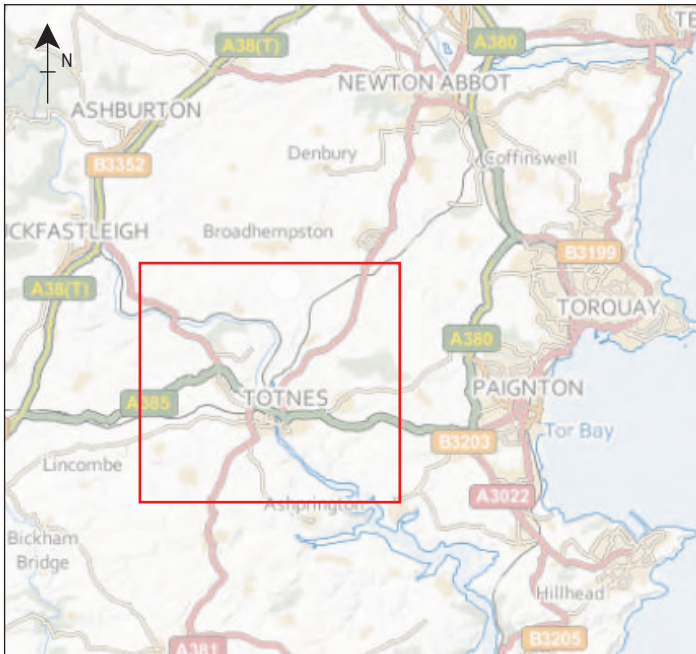
14. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 14.1** The excavation was commissioned by Adam Davis of Linden Homes and Mark Edwards of Galliford Try. The fieldwork was undertaken by Alex Farnell, Ben Pears, William Smith, Jon Hall, Stella De Villiers, Paul Cooke, Naomi Kysh, Chris Caine, Laura McArdle, Lluís Bermudo, Chris Blatchford and Lewis Ernest. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Sarnia Blackmore. The input from Graham Tait and Stephen Reed, Devon County Council Archaeology Officers, is duly acknowledged.

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PROJECT

Land at Riverside (East of Steamer Quay Road), Totnes, Devon



TITLE


Fig. 1: Location of site



Study area



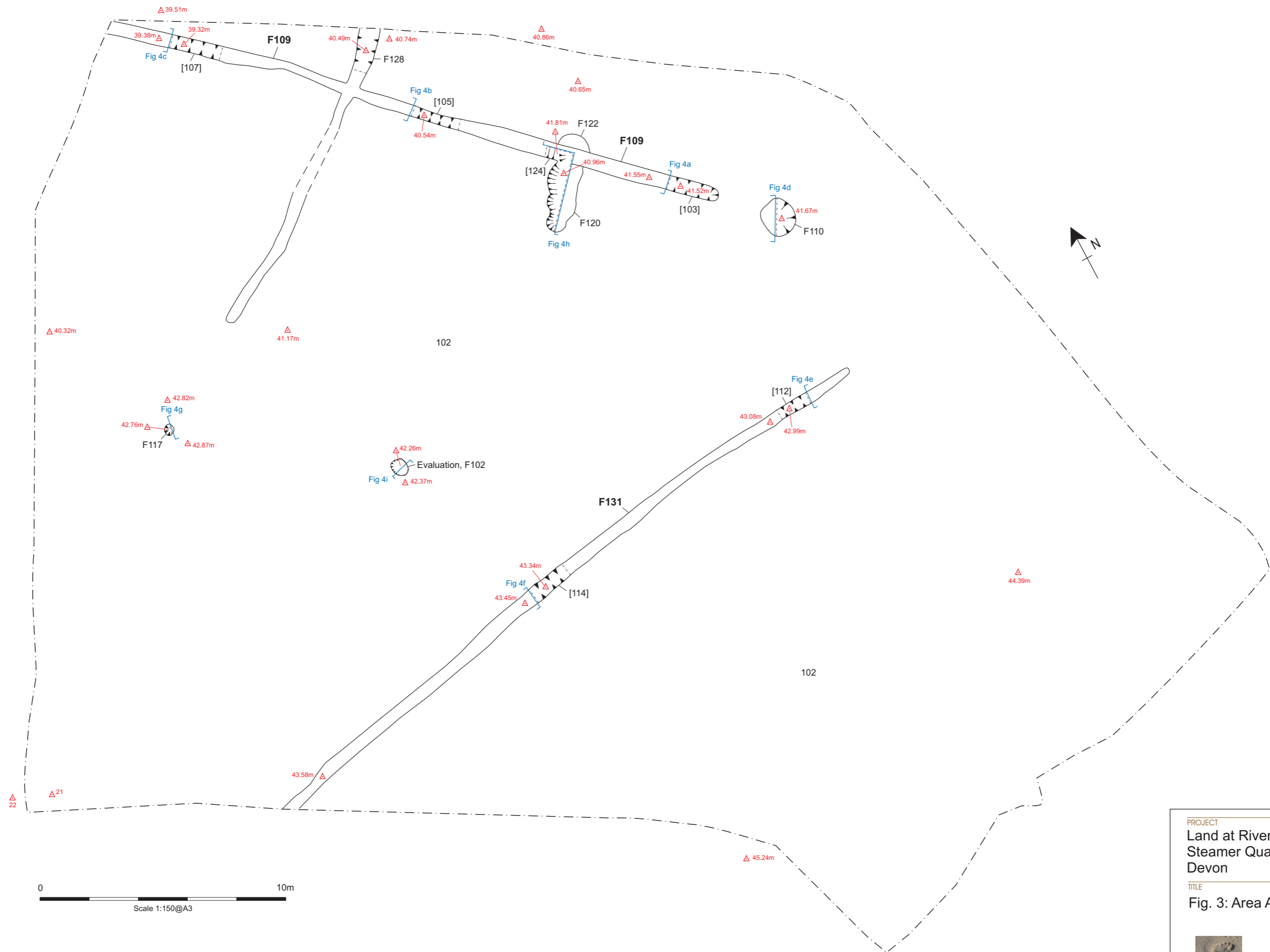
 Archaeological features
 Evaluation trenches

0  50m
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PROJECT
 Land at Riverside (East of Steamer Quay Road), Totnes, Devon


TITLE
 Fig. 2: Areas A, B and C, plan





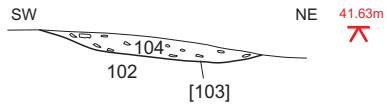
PROJECT
Land at Riverside (East of Steamer Quay Road), Totnes, Devon

TITLE
Fig. 3: Area A, plan



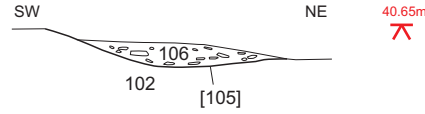
Ditch F109

a) Section of segment [103]



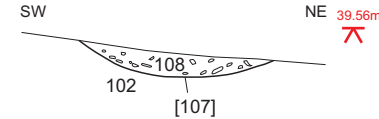
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b) Section of segment [105]

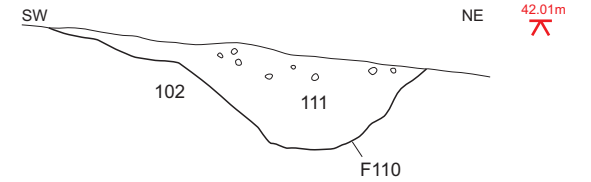


Ditch F109

c) Section of segment [107]

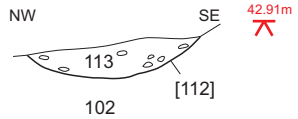


d) Section of pit F110



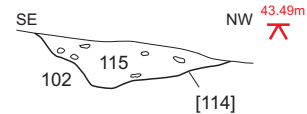
Ditch F131

e) Section of segment [112]

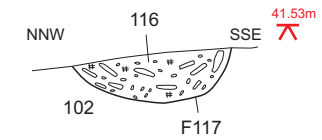


Ditch F131

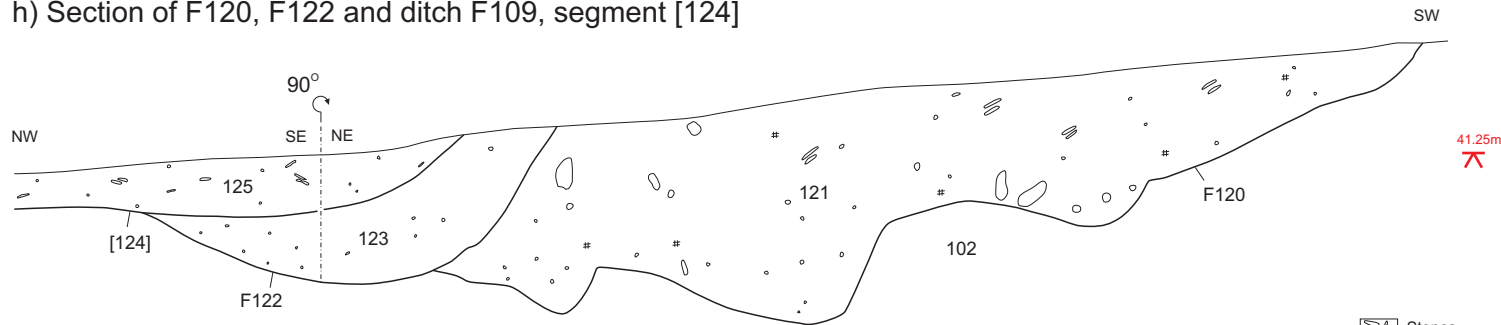
f) Section of segment [114]



g) Section of F117

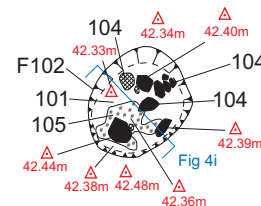


h) Section of F120, F122 and ditch F109, segment [124]

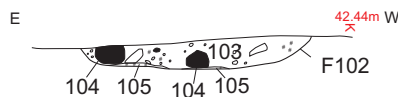


- Stones
- Charcoal
- Fired clay
- Slag

j) Plan of pit furnace F102 from Trench 1, evaluation



i) Section of pit furnace F102 from Trench 1, evaluation

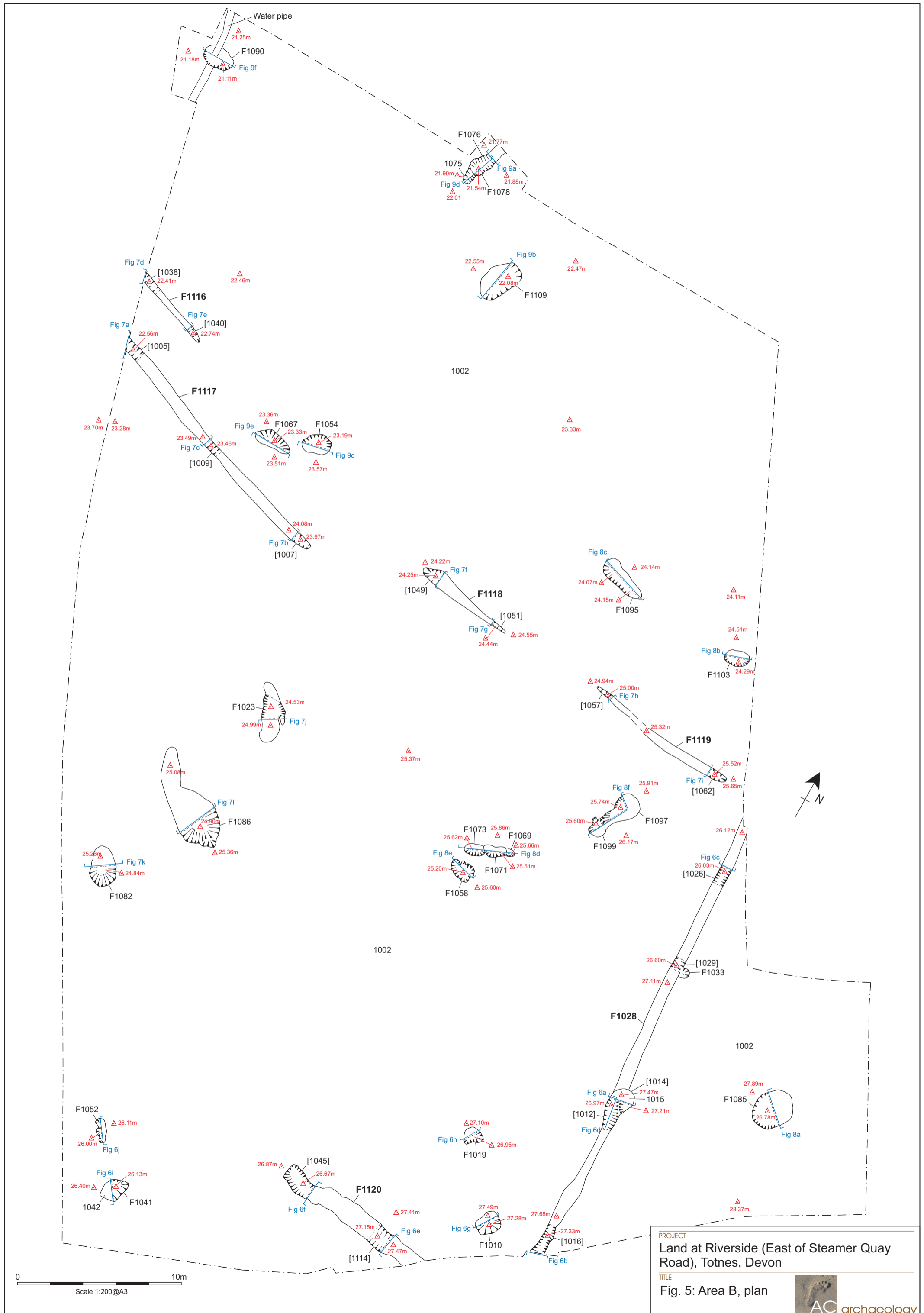


PROJECT
Land at Riverside (East of Steamer Quay Road), Totnes, Devon

TITLE
Fig. 4: Area A, sections and plan and section from trench 1, evaluation

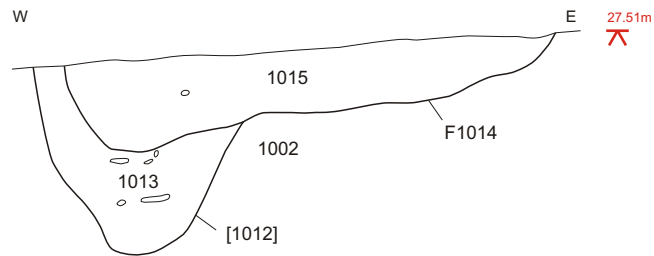


AC archaeology



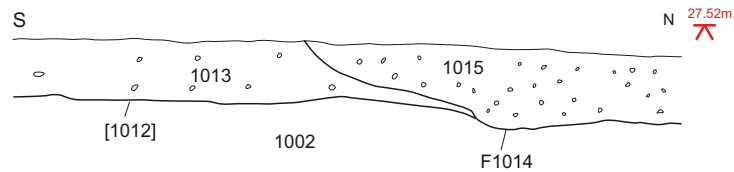
Ditch F1028

a) Section of segment [1012] and F1014



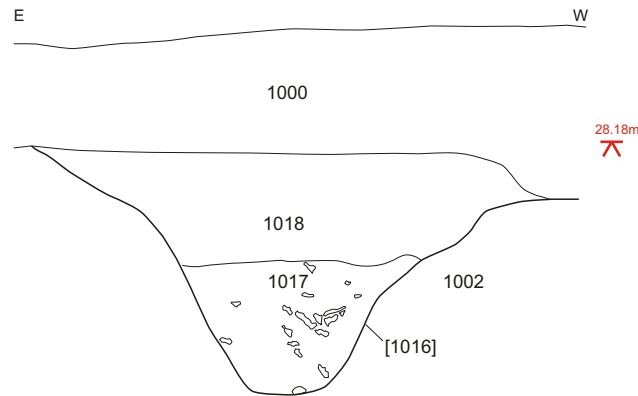
Ditch F1028

d) Section of segment [1012] and F1014



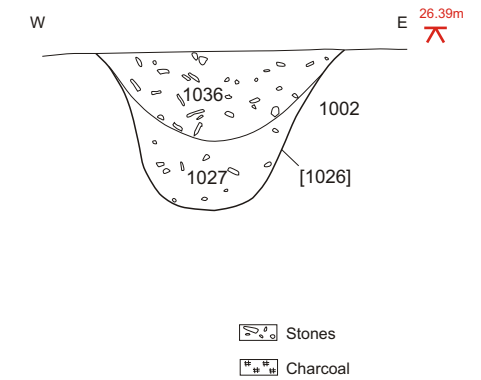
Ditch F1028

b) Section of segment [1016]



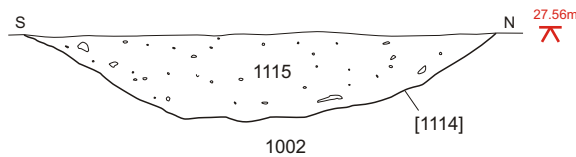
Ditch F1028

c) Section of segment [1026]



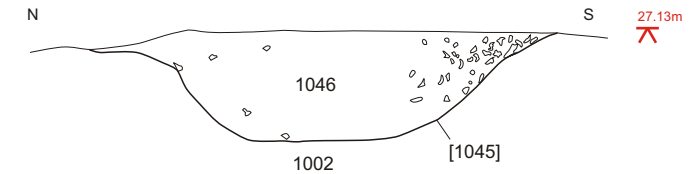
Ditch F1120

e) Section of segment [1114]

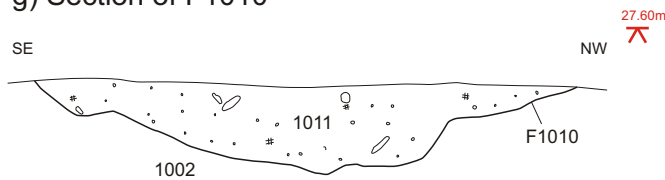


Ditch F1120

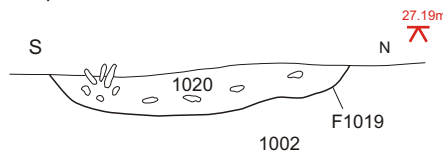
f) Section of segment [1045]



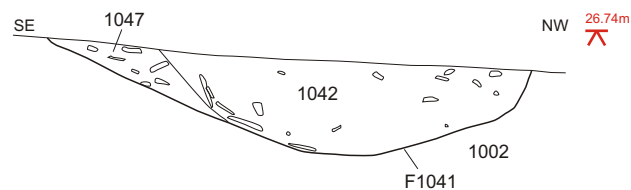
g) Section of F1010



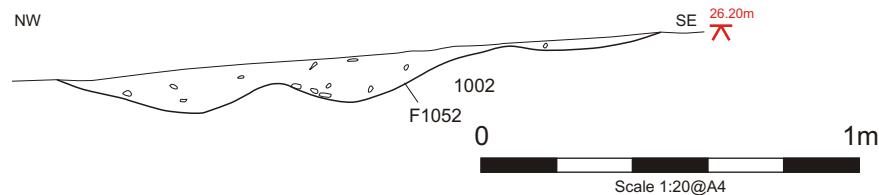
h) Section of F1019



i) Section of F1041



j) Section of F1052



PROJECT

Land at Riverside (East of Steamer Quay Road), Totnes, Devon

TITLE

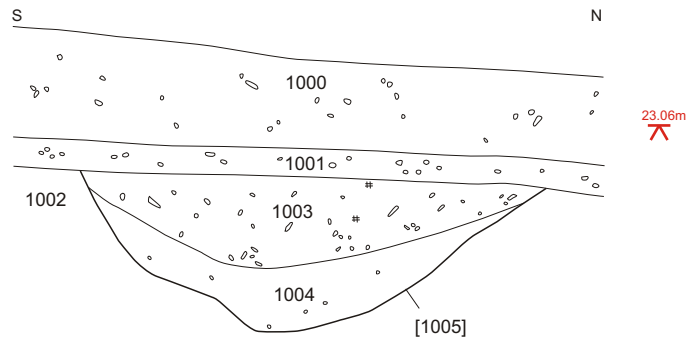
Fig. 6: Area B, sections



archaeology

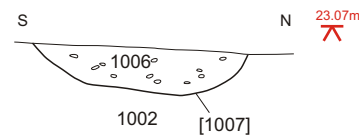
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a) Section of segment [1005]



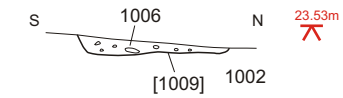
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b) Section of segment [1007]



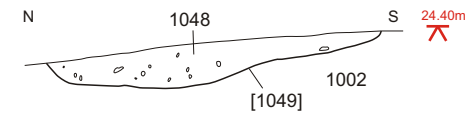
Ditch F1117

c) Section of segment [1009]



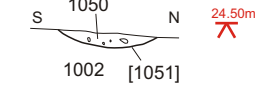
Ditch F1118

f) Section of segment [1049]



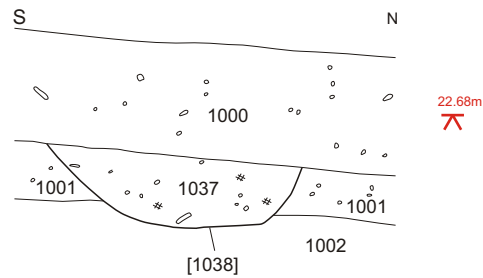
Ditch F1118

g) Section of segment [1050]



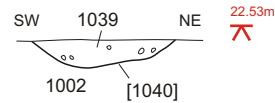
Ditch F1116

d) Section of segment [1038]



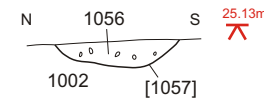
Ditch F1116

e) Section of segment [1040]



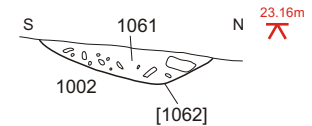
Ditch F1119

h) Section of segment [1057]



Ditch F1119

i) Section of segment [1062]



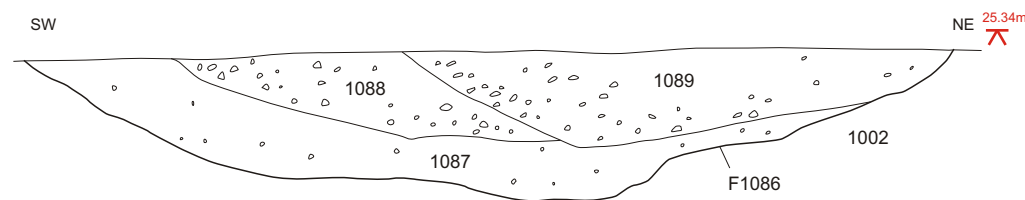
j) Section of F1023



k) Section of F1082



l) Section of F1086



Stones
 Charcoal



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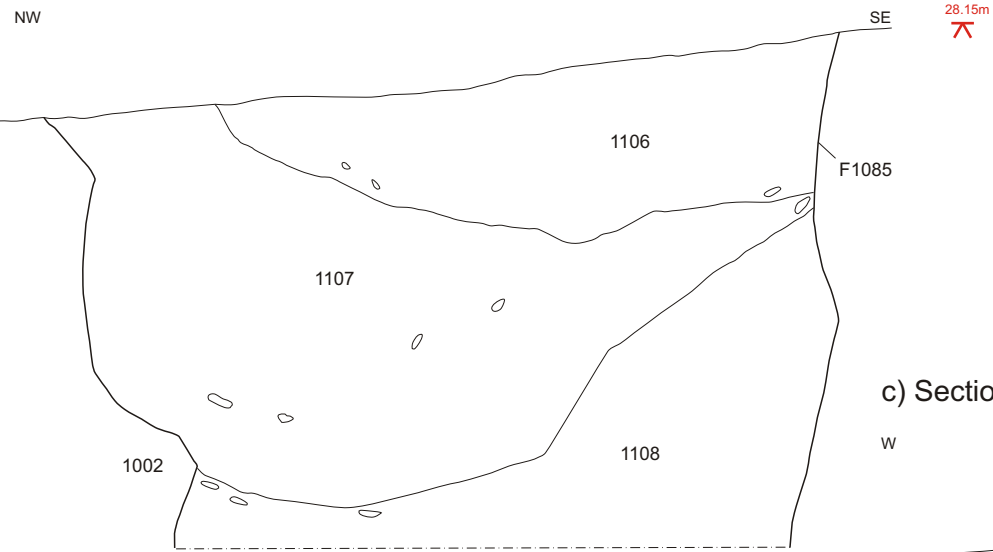
TITLE

Fig. 7: Area B, sections

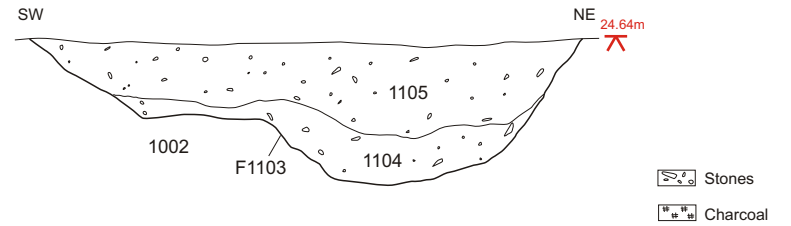


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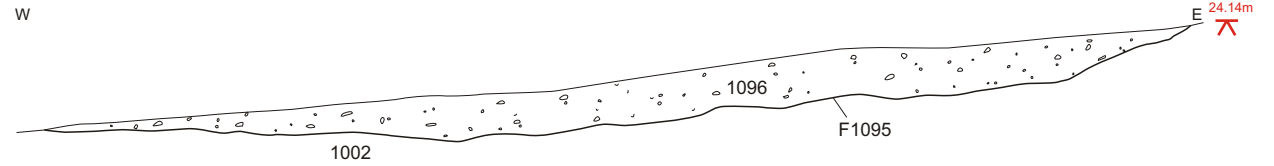
a) Section of F1085



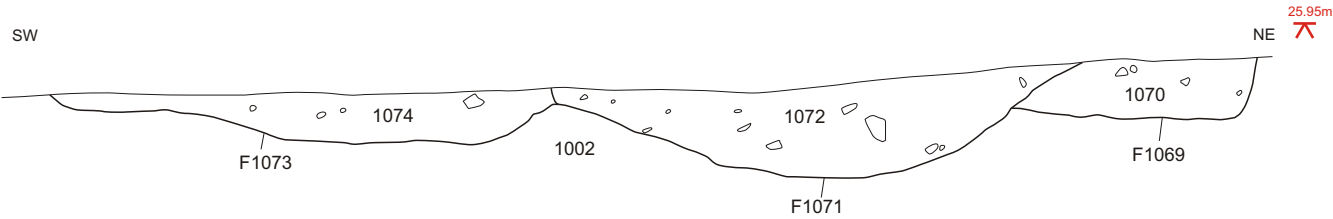
b) Section of F1103



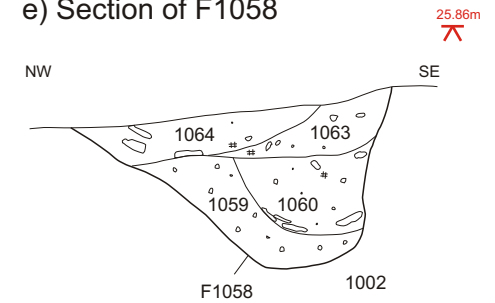
c) Section of F1095



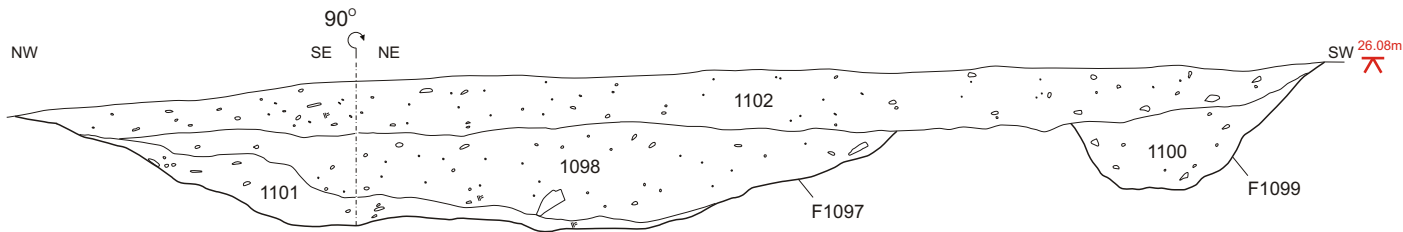
d) Section of F1069, F1071 and F1073



e) Section of F1058



f) Section of F1097 and F1099



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Land at Riverside (East of Steamer Quay Road), Totnes, Devon

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Fig. 8: Area B, sections

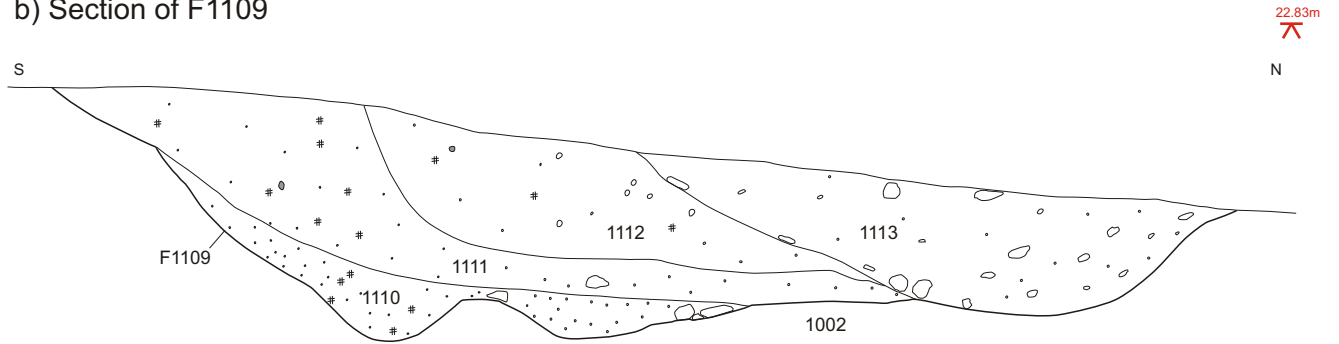


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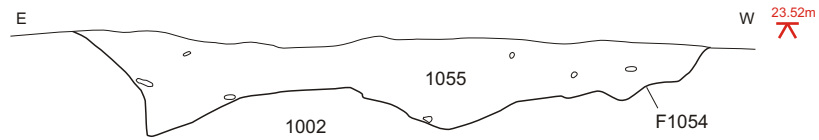
a) Section of F1076



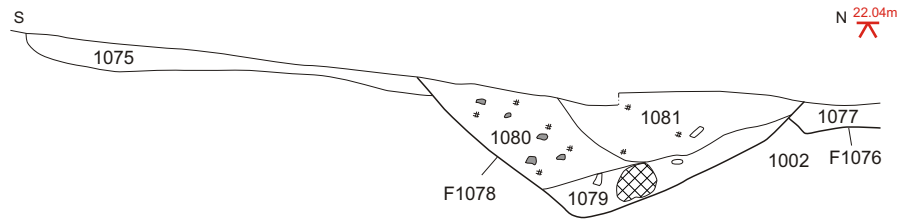
b) Section of F1109



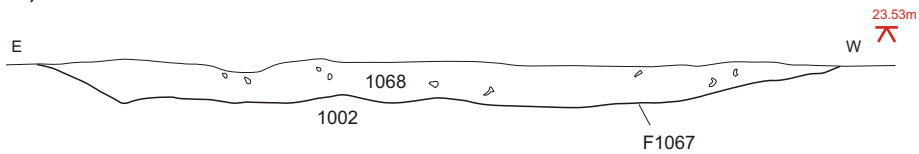
c) Section of F1054



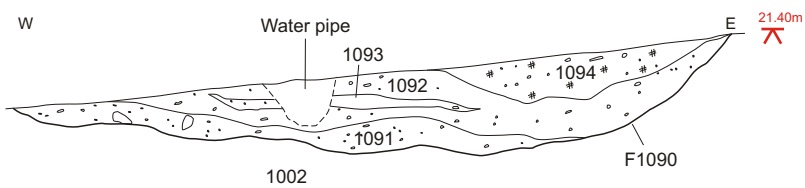
d) Section of layer 1075, gully F1076 and pit F1078




e) Section of F1067



f) Section of F1090



-  Stones
-  Charcoal
-  Burnt clay
-  Redeposited natural



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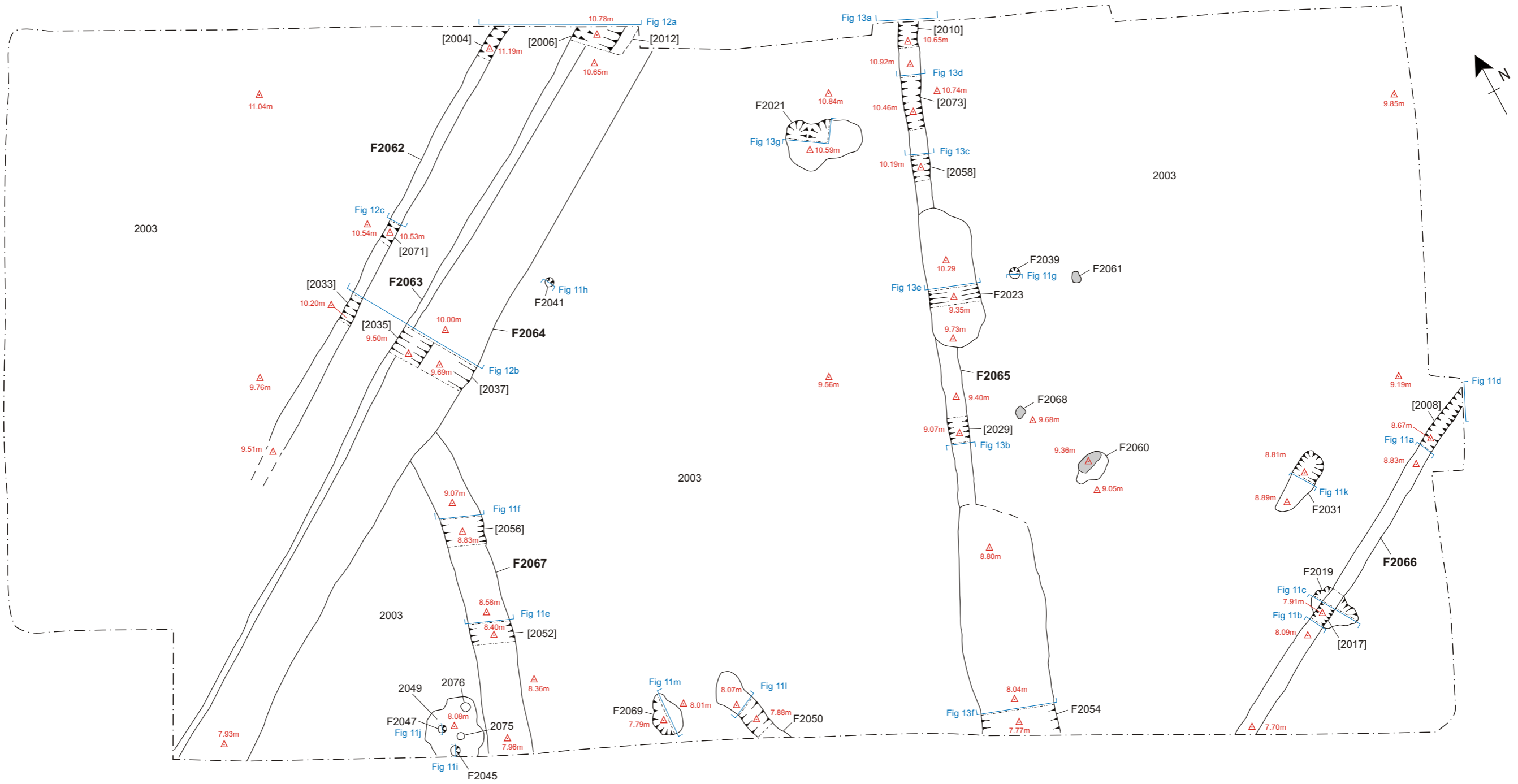
Land to the east of Steamer Quay Road, Bridgetown, Totnes, Devon

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Fig. 9: Area B: Sections



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Limestone boulders

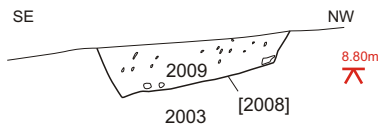
PROJECT
 Land at Riverside (East of Steamer Quay Road), Totnes, Devon

TITLE
 Fig. 10: Area C, plan



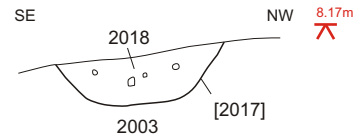
Ditch F2066

a) Section of segment [2008]



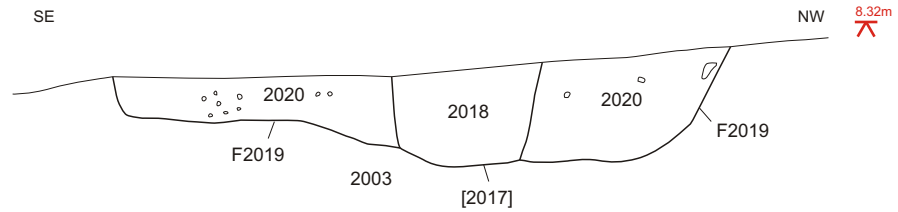
Ditch F2066

b) Section of segment [2017]



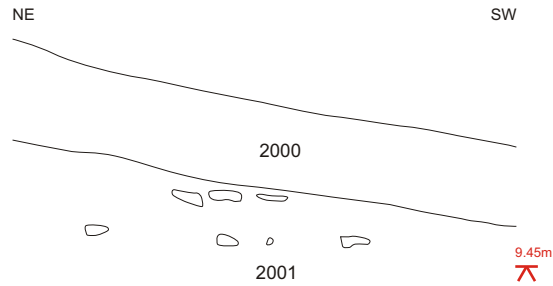
Ditch F2066

c) Section of segment [2017] and F2019



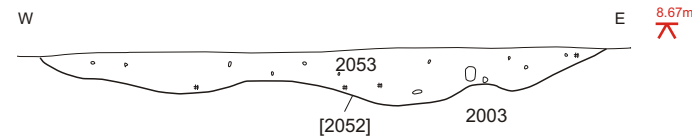
Ditch F2066

d) Section of segment [2008]



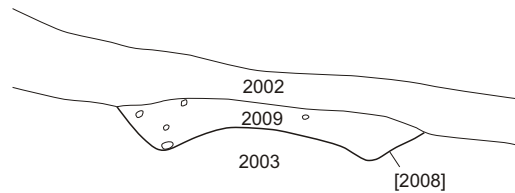
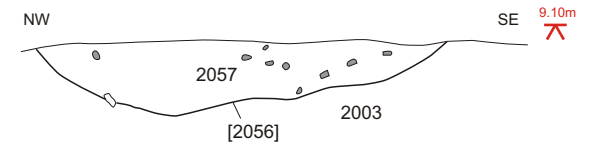
Ditch F2067

e) Section of segment [2052]

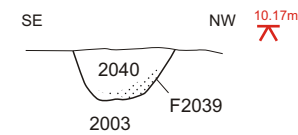


Ditch F2067

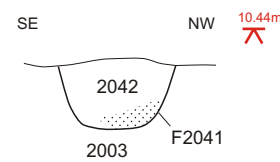
f) Section of segment [2056]



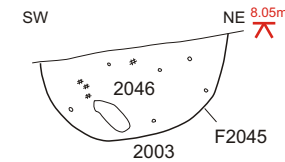
g) Section of posthole F2039



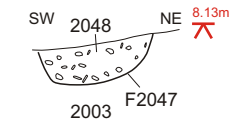
h) Section of posthole F2041



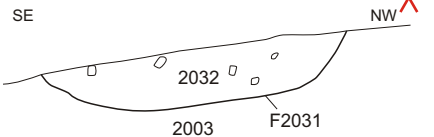
i) Section of Posthole F2045



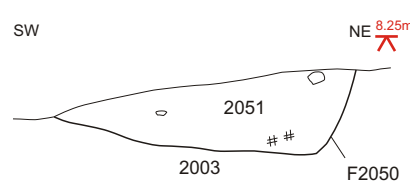
j) Section of posthole F2047



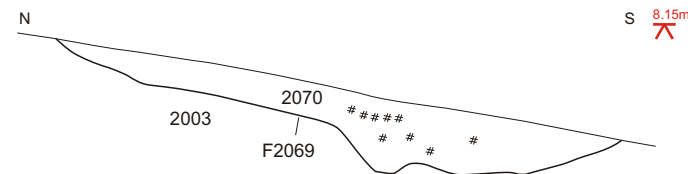
k) Section of F2031



l) Section of F2050



m) Section of F2069



- Stones
- Charcoal
- Manganese
- Chalk flecks



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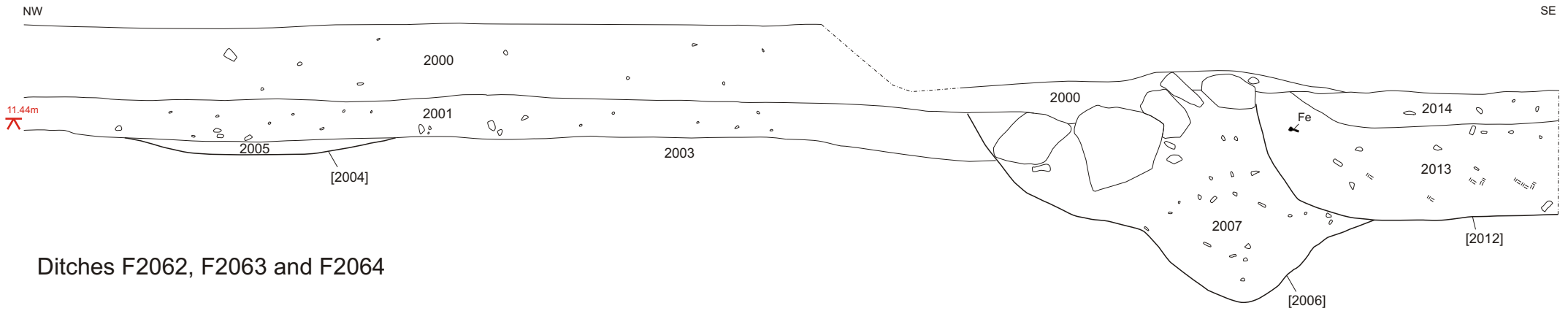
Fig. 11: Area C, sections



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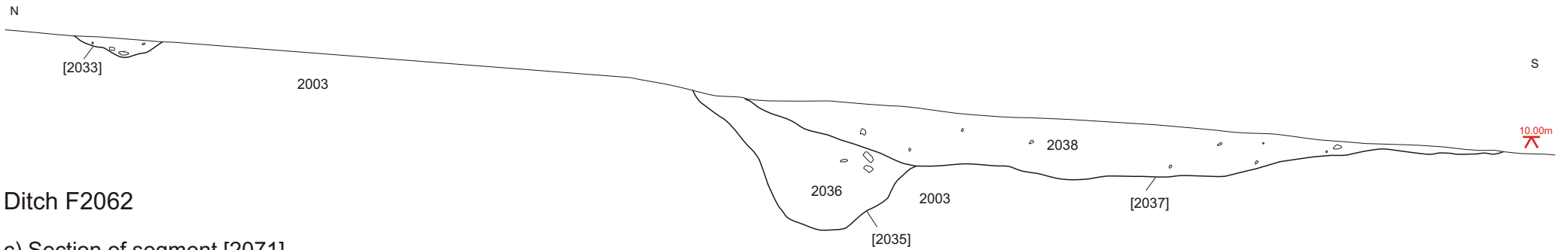
Ditches F2062, F2063 and F2064

a) Section of segments [2004], [2006] and [2012]



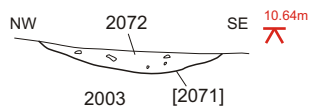
Ditches F2062, F2063 and F2064

b) Section of segments [2033], [2035] and [2037]



Ditch F2062

c) Section of segment [2071]



-  Stones
-  Charcoal



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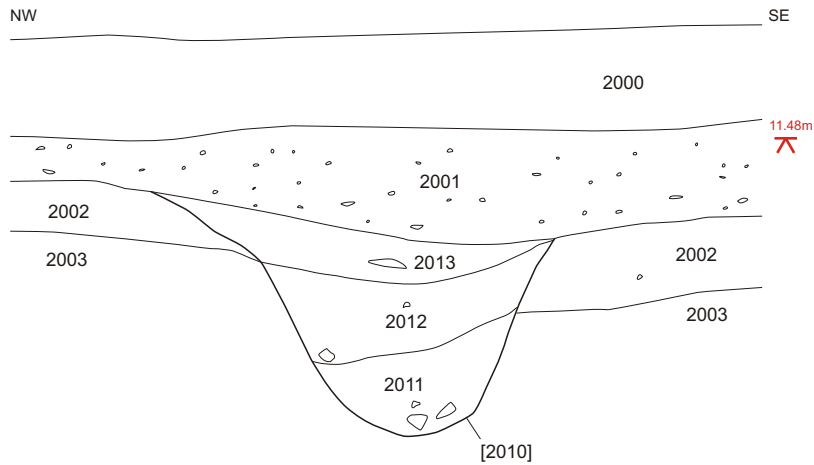
Fig. 12: Area C, sections



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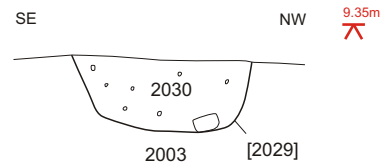
Ditch F2065

a) Section of segment [2010]



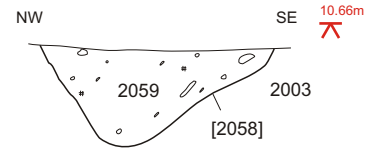
Ditch F2065

b) Section of segment [2029]



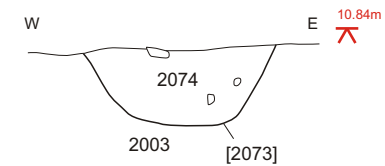
Ditch F2065

c) Section of segment [2058]



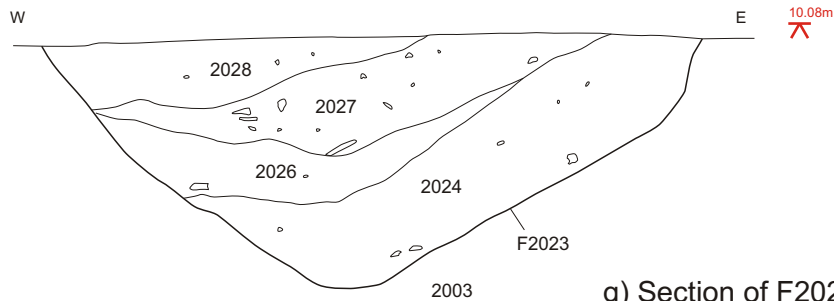
Ditch F2065

d) Section of segment [2073]

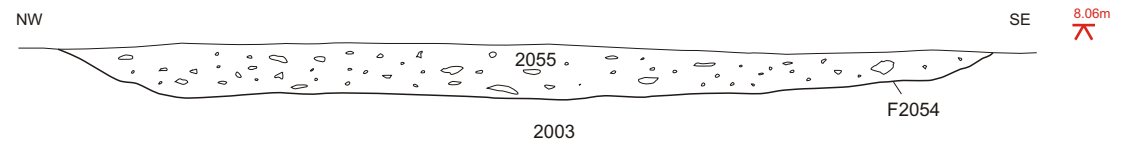


- Stones
- Charcoal
- Burnt clay
- Redeposited natural

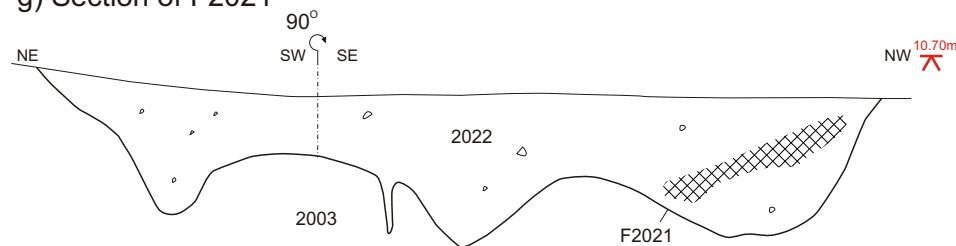
e) Section of F2023



f) Section of F2054



g) Section of F2021



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Fig. 13: Area C, sections



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Plate 1: Area A, looking northwest



Plate 2: Area A, ditch F109, looking northwest
(scale 0.4m)



Plate 3: Area A, pit F117, looking east-northeast (scale 0.4m)



Plate 4: Area B, looking northwest



Plate 6: Area B, ditch F1028, looking north (scale 0.4m)



Plate 5: Area B, tree throw F1023, looking southeast (scale 1m)



Plate 7: Area C,
looking northwest



Plate 8: Area C,
ditches F2062, F2063
and F2064, looking
northeast (scale 2m)

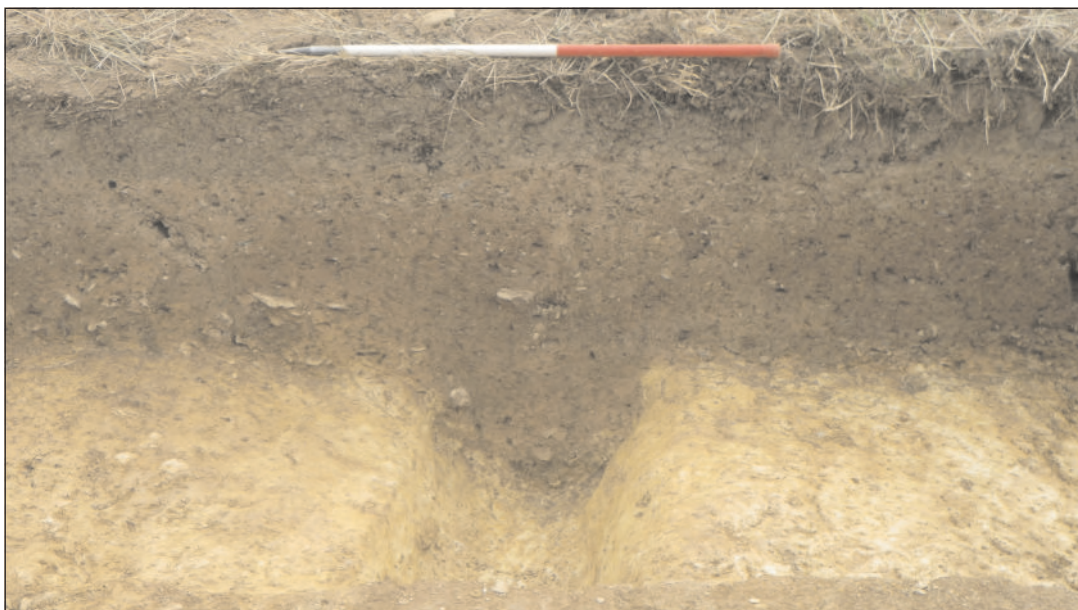


Plate 9: Area C, ditch
F2065, segment
[2010], looking
northeast (scale 1m)

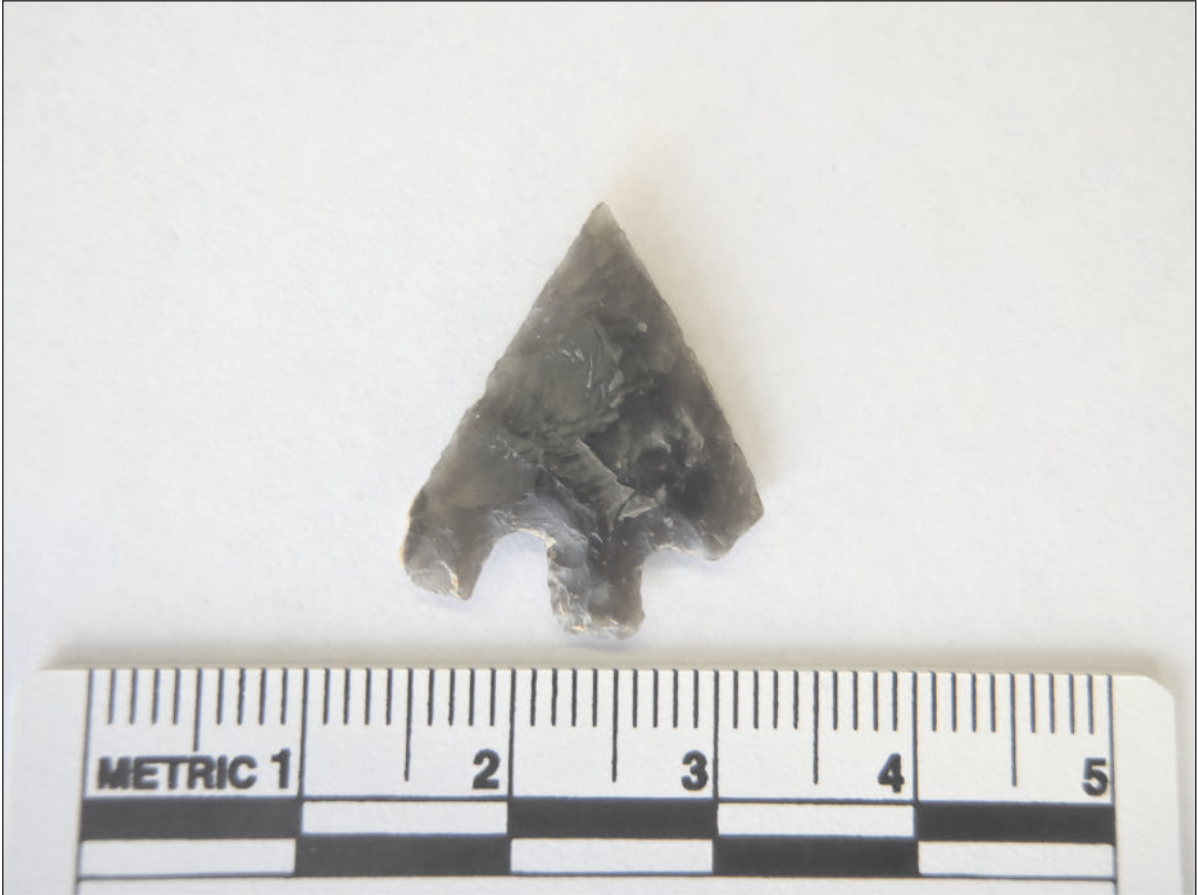


Plate 10: Early Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowhead from tree throw F1109, Area B

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