

LAND TO THE NORTH OF OLD RYDON LANE, EXETER

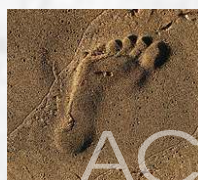
Results of Archaeological Excavation

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archaeology

NEOLITHIC AND BRONZE AGE ACTIVITY AT OLD RYDON LANE, EXETER

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Excavations at Old Rydon Lane, Exeter exposed evidence of prehistoric activity. Finds of Neolithic date included a rare flint axe and one of stone, the former from a tree throw pit, and cremated human bone from a pit. Bronze Age pottery was recovered from a ring ditch and field boundaries of Bronze Age date showed a continuation in activity of that date previously recorded in adjacent areas.

INTRODUCTION

Archaeological investigations on land at Old Rydon Lane, Exeter (centred on NGR SX 9580 9060; Fig. 1), were carried out by AC archaeology between October 2012 and January 2013. The work was commissioned by Barratt Homes (Exeter Division) Ltd and was undertaken in response to a condition attached to the outline planning permission by Exeter City Council in advance of residential development. The excavations revealed prehistoric features largely dating to the Neolithic and Bronze Age with minor evidence for activity in the Late Iron Age or Romano-British periods. For the most part these features had been significantly truncated by later ploughing, somewhat reducing the survival of features other than those, such as ditches, which had been deeply dug originally.

The site covered approximately 6.5 ha of rough agricultural land and lay to the north of Old Rydon Lane and 4.3 km to the south-east of Exeter city centre at a height of between 24-28 m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology of the site consists mainly of Permian sands of the Heavitree Breccia Formation, alongside a small outcrop of Dawlish Sandstone on the southern edge of the site (BGS 2018).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site under investigation, as well as the surrounding land, had been subjected to considerable previous archaeological work accompanying development or proposed schemes. A desk-based assessment of the area was carried out in 2006 and concluded that there was high potential for prehistoric activity (JMHS 2006). Subsequent geophysical survey and trial trenching on the site recorded ditches and several possible pits thought to be of prehistoric date (Gilbert 2007).

Excavations to the south, on the site of the former Royal Naval Supply Depot (RNSD) and at Newcourt Drive, exposed Neolithic pits, an Early Bronze Age pit and Bronze Age field boundary ditches (Pearce *et al.* 2011; Farnell and Fairclough forthcoming), at least one of which projected towards the investigation area and was exposed within the site boundary during trial trenching. To the north, excavations in advance of the construction of Newcourt Way exposed a Bronze Age enclosure and post-built roundhouse structure (Gilbert 2012), Bronze Age ditches at the neighbouring site to the north-east (Gillard *et al.* forthcoming) and beyond this to the north, extensive remains of prehistoric activity have been uncovered in the Digby area (Quinnell and Farnell 2016).

EXCAVATION RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

Six excavation areas (A-F) of varying sizes, identified in the previous works of being of high archaeological potential, were investigated (Fig. 2). Removal of topsoil and subsoil overburden in areas A and C-F exposed prehistoric remains of the Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age date (Figs 3-7). Excavation of Area B exposed no archaeological features or deposits. The overlying deposits across the site consisted of a topsoil of light grey to dark brown silty sand ranging in depth from 0.10 m - 0.30 m and a thin 0.05 m - 0.15 m thick subsoil of light brownish grey silty sand over a natural subsoil consisting of a mixed yellow/red/orange sand with gravel inclusions. The results of Areas A and C-F are presented below by chronological phase. A small selection of medieval and post-medieval finds and features are presented in the Appendix to this report.

NEOLITHIC

There were a few features that could definitely be dated to the Neolithic and across the site a large number of tree throw pits may belong to this period.

A sherd of Early Neolithic pottery in association with cremated human bone came from pit F3044 in Area C (Fig. 4). The pit was sub-circular in plan measuring 0.40 m in diameter by 0.13 m deep. It had a symmetrical profile with shallow concave sides down to a rounded base (Fig. 8a). A single fill (3045) of dark reddish brown to dark brown silty clay sand, a sample of which contained no cremated human bone, indicating that the fill was not collected at the same time as the bones; no cortical long bone was present meaning that it was not suitable for radiocarbon dating. Adjacent to the pit on the north-east side were four small possible stakeholes (F3065, F3073, F3081 and F3083). They measured 0.06 m in diameter by 0.05-0.11 m deep with distinctive steep sides and rounded to V-shaped bases. They were filled with the same material as the pit. These features may mark the position of a small structure, but alternatively they may represent small animal burrows, which post-date pit F3044 as there is a fifth feature (F3092) which cuts the edge of the pit. This feature had a sub-circular to lozenge shape in plan with an asymmetrical profile and sharp and undercutting sides and was filled with an organic rich fill with charcoal and small cremated bone fragments and appears to represent an animal burrow.

The tree throws were identified by their irregular shapes and mixed fills which largely comprised of redeposited natural silty sands; two of the tree throws in Area D contained finds of Neolithic date (Fig. 5), including a flint axe from F4092 (S2, of Middle or Late Neolithic date) and Middle Neolithic Peterborough Ware pottery P1 from F4110. Tree throw pit F4092 measured 2.70-3.10 m in diameter by 0.65 m deep and had an asymmetrical profile with irregular sides and base (Fig. 8c). It contained six fills (4093-7) and (4150), including redeposited natural silty sands (4094), (4095) and (4150), with the axe coming from uppermost fill (4097) which contained no organic material suitable for radiocarbon dating. Tree throw pit F4110 was an irregular oval in shape with a longest dimension of 1.64 m by 0.80 m deep (Fig. 8b). It had three fills (4111-3) with the upper fill (4111) containing a sherd of Peterborough pottery P1. A second axe (S1) of Neolithic type, this time of stone of uncertain origin, was recovered from a ditch (F3041) of Bronze Age date, but may have been displaced from a former tree throw hollow. A Peterborough sherd P2 was redeposited in Bronze Age ditch F6009.

BRONZE AGE

Bronze Age ring ditch F1013

Ring ditch F1013 in Area A was 9m in diameter, with the ditch measuring between 0.94-1.77 m wide and 0.37-0.52 m deep with an asymmetrical profile of steep inner edge and shallow sloping outer edge with a rounded base (Figs 3, 9, 10 and 11). Five segments were excavated ([1015], [1016], [1019], [1048] and [1077]). Several segments contained fills with evidence of burning. In [1016] five contexts (1039, 1040-2 and 1046) were identified measuring between 0.07-0.19 m thick with deposits (1039), (1040), (1042) and (1046) having a dark orangey, reddish brown silty sand that appeared to illustrate repeated dumps of heated material. Between the burnt fills was a 0.25 m thick dark brown organic silty sand (1041) with charcoal fragments which contained a worked flint. Segment [1077] also contained distinctive fills associated with burning with three deposits (1086-8) of mid-yellow, orange to brown silty sand at the base of the feature with above these two thin 0.06-0.11 m thick deposits (1089-90) of very dark reddish brown silty sand with charcoal fragments. Deposit (1014) in [1015] was 0.47 m thick and consisted of mid brown sandy silt which contained 20 sherds of pottery dating to the Bronze Age and three similar sherds were also identified in fill (1067) of [1048], a 0.12 m thick, mottled orange brown silty sand, which also contained a sheep/goat tooth.

Enclosed by the ring ditch were five pits (F1203, F1205, F1207, F1209, F1211). The only artefact came from pit F1203 which was sub-circular in plan measuring 0.36 m long by 0.30 m wide by 0.19m deep with a U-shaped profile (Fig. 9b). It had a single fill (1202) consisting of mid brown sandy silt which contained a sherd of Middle Bronze Age pottery. The remaining pits (F1205, F1207, F1209 and F1211) were circular or sub-circular with diameters between 0.27 m - 0.60 m and depths of 0.12 m - 0.24 m. They all had single fills similar to pit F1203, except pit F1211, which was cut by F1209 and contained a deposit with the appearance of having been heated, which consisted of mottled yellow/red/brown sandy silt and contained a fire cracked stone.

Bronze Age field boundary ditches

The boundary features in Areas C-F dated to the Bronze Age illustrated a continuation of the pattern of fields identified in previous and subsequent excavations adjacent to the north and south of the site (Gilbert 2007; Gilbert 2012; Pearce *et al.* 2011; Farnell and Fairclough forthcoming; Gillard *et al.* forthcoming) and in the area more generally (see Quinnell and Farnell 2016). In common with the Upper RNSD site to the south there appears to have been a significant amount of re-cutting and, therefore, maintenance of the boundaries once created.

A north-east to south-west aligned ditch (F3041) was found in the south of Area C and continued into Area D where it terminated (segments [3036], [3046], [3072], [3107]) (Figs 4 and 5). It measured 1.04 m - 1.50 m wide by between 0.50 m - 0.92 m deep (Figs 12a-c). The profile was largely symmetrical with steep to very steep sides and a V-shaped base. The excavated segments revealed a sequence of up to four fills. The basal deposits (3037), (3038), (3049) and (3050) ranged from 0.10 m - 0.30 m thick and were typically light reddish brown silty sands, which relate to initial slumping of the edges of the feature. Above the slump deposits were more extensive organic horizons (3039) and (3048) up to 0.40 m thick with a light reddish brown sandy clay and humic residue. Deposit (3039) contained seven sherds of pottery including P3 and part of P4 dated to the Bronze Age: there were also two pieces of clay tobacco pipe which casts significant doubt on the security of this context. Ditch fills also contained worked flint artefacts and further Bronze Age sherds. The ditch terminal of F3041 was located in Area D (segments [4091] and [4100]) and contained 21 sherds of Bronze Age pottery including P5 and part of P4, flint flakes and a stone axe of Neolithic date which was residual in fill (4088); also in this context

was a small piece of modern glass which is regarded as intrusive as the ditch terminal was in an area complicated by the digging of later pits.

To the south-east of the ditch terminal (F3041) in Area D was a short length of ditch (F4117) which appeared to be orientated in relation to the Bronze Age ditch terminal, forming a right angle with a gap. It measured 0.43 m wide by 0.25 m deep with a symmetrical profile, concave sides and a rounded base (Fig. 12d). The fill was a reddish brown sandy silt, but no finds were recovered.

Ditch F4019 was a distinctive L-shape within Area D (Figs 5 and 13). It was orientated north-west to south-east for approximately 27 m, before turning north-east for 24 m where, after a gap of 3 m, the line was continued as ditch F4077 for a further 16 m before turning to the south-east as it exited the excavation area. Together F4019 and F4077 form part of a ditch which can be traced from previous archaeological recording to the north and south. Part of it (F4019) was previously interpreted as an outer enclosure ditch for the Bronze Age enclosure which was partly explored in the area adjacent to the north (Gilbert 2012). It is now clear that this, with ditch F4077, is a field boundary rather than an outer enclosure ditch. It measured between 0.79 m - 1.33 m wide by 0.23 m - 0.39 m deep with a V-shaped profile (Figs 12k-m). The fills were typically mid to dark brown sandy silt to sandy clay. Fill (4176) located close to the south-west corner contained a sherd of pottery dated to the Iron Age. The termini [4202] and [4127], which may represent a former gateway, were excavated but no finds or special deposits were present.

A further substantial Bronze Age ditch (F5047/F6009) was aligned north-west to south-east and passed through Area E and terminated in Area F in close proximity to a right-angled ditch (F6045) which is probably also of Bronze Age date (Figs 6 and 7). Ditch F5047/F6009 measured between 1.00-1.70 m wide by 0.50-0.80 m deep. It generally had steep sides and a narrow rounded base with up to two fills (Fig. 12e-g). The primary fill (5032/5035) consisted of reddish brown sandy silt clay slumped natural from the ditch sides. A secondary fill (5031/5034) consisted of a mid brownish grey sandy silty clay. At its north-west end only a single fill (5003) was present and contained seven worked flints. At the south-east end, in Area F, the ditch had a sherd of Middle Neolithic Peterborough Ware in a secondary fill (6008). This sherd was in good condition, but should certainly be regarded as residual in this context.

Ditch F6045 in Area F was aligned north-east from the terminal of ditch F6009 for 14 m before turning sharply to the south-east for 40 m (Figs 7 and 14). The profile of the feature varied considerably along its length (Fig. 12h-j). At the south-western end (segment [6014]) it measured 1.90 m wide by 0.20 m deep with a symmetrical profile with steep sides down to a rounded base. It contained a single fill (6013) of dark yellowish brown clayey silt. At the point the ditch turned [6024] it measured 1.54 m wide by 0.25 m deep with gradual sloping sides and a rounded base and contained two fills (6025-6). The primary fill (6025) consisted of light brown silty sand and contained two worked flint fragments. The upper fill (6026) consisted of mid brown silty sand. Midway down the length of the south-east arm [6048] the ditch increased in width to 2.32 m and depth to 0.61 m. The profile remained symmetrical but the sides had become much steeper and the base flatter. At this point, three fills (6049-51) were observed. The primary fill (6051) consisted of light brown, orange mottled silty sand. Secondary fill (6050) was a mid brown silty sand and the upper fill (6049) was mid to dark brown silty sand. At the south-east end of the ditch [6034] it became 4.50 m wide by 0.60 m deep with steep sides down to a flattish, irregular base. Here it contained a single fill (6033) of mid brown clayey silt and contained a worked flint flake alongside a sherd of post-medieval pottery; the latter should be regarded as intrusive and is likely to have entered the top of the feature by deep ploughing in the modern period. However, the lack of ceramic dating evidence makes the dating of this to the Bronze Age extremely tentative. The presence of a number of worked flint flakes and the overall relationship with other dated boundaries would indicate a Bronze Age date and, in addition, ditch F6045 was disturbed by a more recent tree throw hollow (F6073).

A number of other smaller boundary features appear to respect ditch F6045, many of them appearing to be maintaining the established boundary line by the cutting of new ditches, perhaps to provide material for refurbishing an associated hedgebank, for which no evidence survived. They include short lengths of ditch F6012, F6016, F6019, F6027, F6036, F6038, F6040, F6046, F6052, F6056, F6064 and F6080 (Fig. 7). There was no dating evidence from these but their relationship with ditch F6045 indicates that they are contemporary. The only dating evidence came from a separate pit or ditch terminal F6018 which was only partially revealed in the excavation area. This had a single fill (6017) consisting of dark greyish brown silty clay which contained 19 sherds of pottery dated to the Bronze Age and probably all derived from a single vessel. Ditch F6019 was represented by a terminal only, but may be an extension to the west of ditch F6045, it contained no finds.

To the west of ditch F6045 a small hearth was identified and was formed of two pits F6077 and F6078 that together measured 1.75 m long by 0.60 m wide. Pit F6078 measured 0.85 m by 0.65 m and 0.17 m deep with rounded edges a rounded base and a distinctive reddish brown fill (6076) with charcoal and ash inclusions (Fig. 12o). Burning had taken place *in situ* as the underlying sandy natural (6002) was significantly heat affected. Intercutting pit F6078 on the south-western side measured 1.10 m by 0.60 m and 0.07 m deep and had a shallow profile and flat base. It had a single fill (6075) of reddish brown silty clay with highly degraded charcoal and ash. Given the shape and nature of the fill, this second pit is likely to have been a rake out channel for the main hearth pit, F6077. No artefacts were found within the fill of either feature and due to its isolated position further analyses were not pursued.

Pit (Fig. 12)

Pit (F1070) in Area A was circular in plan with a diameter of 0.56 m by 0.20 m deep (Fig. 12n). It had a single fill (1069) of light grey silty sand which contained a pottery sherd dated to the Bronze Age and a piece of worked flint.

LATE IRON AGE OR ROMANO-BRITISH

The evidence for Late Iron Age or Romano-British activity on the site comprised two pits (F1172 and F3020) in Areas A and C, also a sherd from (4179) infill of F4019 where it is presumably intrusive and another from subsoil in Area B.

Pit F1172 in Area A was sub-circular in plan and measured 1.35 m long by 0.85 m wide by 0.38 m deep (Figs 3 and 15a). It had two fills (1170-1). Upper fill (1170) contained a sherd of pottery of Late Iron Age or Roman date.

Large pit F3020 in Area C measured 4 m long by 1.70 m wide by 0.45 m deep with steep sides and flat base (Figs 4 and 15b). It had a single fill (3019) consisting of mixed pale red, yellow and brown clayey sandy silt which contained a single sherd of pottery of Late Iron Age or Roman date and a piece of worked flint.

UNDATED FEATURES

The undated features are presented below by excavation area.

Area A (Fig. 3)

Pond F1159

A former pond was located to the south-west of ring ditch F1013 and measured 27 m by 13 m and 0.24 m deep. It had a shallow bowl shape profile with very shallow edges to an uneven rounded base. It was filled by two distinctive deposits (1156) and (1166). Deposit (1156) was a 0.16 m deep yellowish grey and green coloured silty sand clay with extensive iron and manganese mottling. Overlying this was

deposit (1166) a bluish grey and yellow clayey silt with iron and manganese mottling and nodules. These deposits are typical of sedimentation in an area of standing water and the inclusions of iron and manganese suggest a highly variable water table. A worked flint was recovered from deposit (1156). The pond feature was surrounded by a number of pits.

Pits

Surrounding the pond feature were 25 pits, 12 of these were located between the pond F1159 and the ring ditch F1013 (see Fig. 10). These were aligned roughly north-west to south-east and had a range of physical characteristics and fills. The largest of these pits (F1052, F1056, F1073, F1113, F1116, F1128 and F1131) had roughly sub-circular shapes in plan and ranged in size from 1.00 m to 2.40 m in diameter by 0.17 m to 0.60 m deep. The deepest pits (F1052, F1056, F1073 and F1131) contained two to three fills including a 0.21 m to 0.27 m thick, mid yellow to brown silty sand (1051 and 1055), and yellow sandy silt (1130). All seven of the large pits however, contained a highly distinctive dark red to purple sandy silt fill (1049), (1053), (1071), (1112), (1115), (1127) and (1129). Two smaller pits (F1079 and F1220) measuring under a metre in diameter and 0.14 m - 0.17 m deep also contained a distinctive deposit of reddish brown silty sandy clay. Three of the pits (F1064, F1076 and F1139) measured between 1.50 m - 2.00 m in diameter by 0.30 m - 0.84 m in depth and contained distinctive recuts. The recuts were considerably smaller features between 0.42 m - 0.65 m in diameter by 0.20 m - 0.30 m deep. These contained a range of fills including yellowish brown clay silty sands, mid brown sandy silts and the red, purple sandy silt deposits.

To the north-west of the pond was a concentration of five large pits and five small pits. The five large pits (F1029, F1035, F1056, F1110 and F1126) had irregular, sub-circular and ovoid shapes in plan and measured between 0.70 m by 2.4 m in diameter by 0.32-0.47 m deep. These features contained a number of fills including grey to red brown clay silts with plastic consistency and small sandstone and ironstone inclusions (1028), (1033) and (1034). The upper fill of F1056 also contained a reddish, purple sandy silt deposit (1053) similar to the pits on the north-east side of the pond, but it was considerably shallower, and only 0.10 m was found, with no dating evidence. The five smaller pits (F1020, F1023, F1025, F1027 and F1070) ranged in size from 0.12-0.56 m by 0.10-0.31 m deep with oval to sub-rounded shapes in plan with moderately steep sides and rounded bases. They typically contained fills with a mid-brown silty sand texture. Pit F1070 contained a Bronze Age sherd and is discussed above, there were no finds from the other pits adjacent to the pond.

Tree throws F1160, F1175 and F1197

Three pit-like features were identified across Area A and are interpreted as tree throws. These ranged in size from 1.12-2 m by 0.22-0.47 m deep with amorphous, ovoid shapes in plan with irregular asymmetrical profiles and moderately steep edges, breaks of slope and bases. These features contain a range of heavily mixed fills consisting of mid brown and reddish grey silty sands and light to dark brown silty clay sands. The upper fill (1177) in F1175 contained a piece of worked flint.

Area C (Fig. 4)

The undated features in Area C comprised four pits and 24 pit-like features interpreted as natural tree throw hollows.

Pits F3070, F3104, F3106 and F3140

Pit F3070 was sub-rectangular in shape and measured 1.87 m long by 1.46 m wide by 0.45 m deep and contained a single fill (3069) which consisted of a mid brown silty sandy clay. Pit F3104 was oval in shape and measured 1.10 m long by 0.70 m wide by 0.21 m deep and also contained a single fill (3103) which

consisted of a reddish brown sandy silt. It cut neighbouring shallow pit F3106. Pit F3140 measured 0.85 m in diameter by 0.15 m deep with steep sides and a flattish base. It contained a single fill (3139) which consisted of a very dark brown silty loam with frequent charcoal inclusions. There were no finds from these pits.

Tree throws F3010, F3016, F3024, F3025, F3027, F3030, F3032, F3042, F3052, F3053, F3056, F3058, F3060, F3068, F3076, F3080, F3086, F3087, F3091, F3096, F3102, F3123, F3129 and F3132

Area C contained 24 pits interpreted as tree throw hollows as they were very irregular sub-circular shapes in plan and asymmetrical profiles. There were 15 larger hollows which measured between 1 m - 4 m long by 0.50 m - 1.75 m wide by 0.10 m - 0.65 m deep. Nine smaller ones measured 0.20 m - 0.90 m in diameter by 0.05 m - 0.20 m deep. There were no finds from these features.

Area D (Fig. 5)

Undated features in Area D comprised two groups of postholes and 14 pit-like features interpreted as natural tree throw hollows.

Postholes F4104, F4131, F4133, F4135 and F4137

A group of five small postholes were identified within the centre of the excavation area close to a number of tree throws (F4101, F4110, F4123 and F4061). They exhibited a similar size and shape, ranging from 0.28 m - 0.56 m in diameter and 0.08 m - 0.26 m deep with steep sides and flattish base. The postholes contained single fills of dark reddish brown to greyish brown silty sands to sandy clays. No finds were present and no pattern in the arrangement of the postholes could be discerned.

Postholes F4161, F4166 and F4168

A group of three postholes was identified in the south-west part of the excavation area. They formed a line with a roughly north-east to south-west orientation between 1 m - 1.60 m apart. They measured between 0.65 m - 0.84 m in diameter by 0.22 m - 0.56 m deep with steep sides and rounded bases. Postholes F4161 and F4166 were filled with a mid-grey silty sand. Posthole F4168 however, contained three fills including a light greyish brown silty sand primary deposit (4171), a light brown silty sand (4170) and a 0.29 m deep mid to dark brown silty sand upper fill (4169). There were no finds from these postholes.

Tree throws F4014, F4043, F4048, F4056, F4061, F4079, F4092, F4101, F4107, F4109, F4110, F4115, F4123 and F4180

The 14 features interpreted as tree throw hollows were identified across Area D. Hollows F4092 and F4110 contained Neolithic finds and are discussed above, the only other find from these features was a worked flint from F4115. The hollows ranged in size from 1.40 m - 3.10 m in diameter by 0.26 m - 0.80 m deep.

Area E (Fig. 6)

Undated features in Area D comprised a group of postholes and 10 pit-like features interpreted as natural tree throw hollows.

Postholes F5012, F5014, F5016, F5018 and F5020

Five possible postholes were identified in the south-west of Area E. Four of the postholes (F5012, F5014, F5016 and F5018) formed a north-west to south-east alignment over a length of 15 m and a right-angle from the south-east end post (F5016) to the south-west takes in posthole F5020 at a distance of 5 m.

These features ranged in size from 0.40 m - 1.20 m in diameter by 0.08 m - 0.30 m deep and had two types of fills; F5012 and F5014 contained a mid brownish red clayey silt fill and F5016, F5018 and F5020 contained a mid brownish grey clayey silt. Three worked flint flakes were recovered from F5018 and comprised the only finds from this group.

Tree throws F5006, F5008, F5010, F5022, F5024, F5026, F5028, F5038, F5040 and F5041

The 10 features interpreted as tree throw hollows were identified across Area E. They ranged in size from 1.10 m - 3.80 m in diameter by 0.18 m - 0.40 m deep. Two worked flint flakes from the upper fill (5044) of F5041 were the only finds recovered from these features.

Area F (Fig. 7)

All features present in Area F have been discussed above.

THE FINDS

PREHISTORIC POTTERY

By Henrietta Quinnell *with petrographic comment by Roger Taylor*

The assemblage, 87 sherds 1292 g, consists of two Early Neolithic sherds 18 g, two Middle Neolithic Peterborough sherds 84 g, 79 Bronze Age sherds 1158 g, and four Late Iron Age/Roman sherds 32 g.

The Early and Middle Neolithic pottery is presented in Table 1.

Context	Description	Sherds/weight	Comment
3045	Fill pit F3044 Area C	1/3	Early Neolithic
4111	Upper fill of tree throw F4110 Area C	1/10	Peterborough P1
6000	Area F topsoil	1/15	Early Neolithic
6008	Primary fill ditch F6009 Area F	1/74	Peterborough P2
Totals		4/102	Early Neolithic 2/18, Peterborough 3/84

Table 1: Early and Middle Neolithic pottery in Permian breccias vein quartz fabric

Early Neolithic

The sherds from (3045) and that from (6000) are in a thin version of Permian breccias vein quartz fabric described below. That from (3045) is a simple rim from a small vessel, that from (6000) a body sherd from a thin-walled bowl. Pit F3044, from which the rim comes, also contain some cremated human bone. The general character of these thin sherds suggests the Early Neolithic, with the fabric similar to that of the Middle Neolithic sherds. There are now at least four other sites in the Exeter area known with Early Neolithic pottery, St Loye’s (Quinnell forthcoming), Pinn Brook (Quinnell 2016a), Topsham Road, Exeter (Quinnell 2016b) and Hayes Farm (Wood 2014), all with small quantities of crushed vein quartz fabrics sourced fairly locally.

Middle Neolithic

P1 (Fig. 16) (4111) in tree throw F4110. Body sherd, fabric as P2, with close set but random finger nail impressions.

P2 (Fig. 16) (6008) in ditch F6009, presumed redeposited. Neck and shoulder from bowl, diameter 290 mm. Neck with one surviving row of whipped cord impressions: shoulder has close-set rows of whipped cord impressions which become less organised down its length. The general shape and decoration suggest the Mortlake sub-style of Peterborough ware.

Petrology (6008) *Quartz* – transparent to translucent colourless and occasionally brown stained angular to abraded and sub-rounded grains, 0.05-1 mm; *vein quartz* – white opaque to translucent and colourless transparent, angular to sub-angular grains, some showing crystal surfaces and transverse vein structure, 0.5- 6.1 mm, some grains show possible thermal fracturing; *feldspar* – a scatter of white generally soft altered grains angular, 0.05-1 mm, rarely 4.5 mm; *rock fragments* – silvery micaceous slate, tabular with angular margins, 1.0 – 2.0 mm, fine siliceous light grey sandstone, 0.5 – 1 mm, chert, angular medium grey, 1.2 mm, altered rounded greyish buff very fine-grained granitic rock with biotite, 7.4 mm, some other indeterminate dark fine-grained igneous fragments; *biotite* – sparse dark brown to black cleavage flakes, 0.1 - 0.5 mm; *tourmaline* – rare, black sub-angular vitreous grain, 0.1 mm. *Comment.* A granite derived fabric with tempering sand and clay probably from the Permian breccias, with substantial proportion of coarsely crushed vein quartz added. There is difficulty in distinguishing between the crushed vein quartz and other quartz temper in the lower size range. Moderate coarse inclusions.

About fifteen sites in Devon have now produced Peterborough pottery, generally in small quantities and sourced from fairly local materials (see Quinnell and Taylor 2012). Mortlake material from Slade Farm, Ottery St Mary and Fengate sherds from Hems Valley, Staverton are recently published (Quinnell 2012). Recent work nationally suggests that the Mortlake and Fengate styles were broadly contemporary with a currency of c. 3400-2900 cal BC (e.g. Marshall *et al.* 2009; Lynch 2008). The largest Devon assemblage, still small in national terms, is that from Castle Hill, Honiton (Laidlaw and Mephram 1999), which contains both Mortlake and Fengate substyles. The quantities of pottery found on Devon sites is generally small as at Old Rydon Lane.

In the Exeter area there are now three other sites, all with material from pits. At Digby Site 5, about a kilometre to the north of the Old Rydon Lane site, a pit produced scrappy Peterborough sherds associated with a Middle Neolithic radiocarbon date (Wk-27668 4575 ± 30 BP, 3500 – 3110 cal BC) (Quinnell and Farnell forthcoming). The Topsham site dug in the 1970s produced three sherds with probable Fengate affinities (Smith 1975). A pit with probable Mortlake material has been excavated at Pinn Brook (Quinnell 2016a).

Bronze Age

The Bronze Age pottery is presented in Table 2.

Fabrics

All the material originates from clay derived from local Permian breccias with added crushed basalt. This is similar to Middle Bronze Age Fabric 6 on the Digby sites (Taylor in Quinnell and Farnell forthcoming) and to the fabric of that date from the site dug adjacent to the north (Raymond 2012).

Petrology (1013) Sparse coarse inclusions. *Rock fragments* – buff weathered soft sub-angular finely feldspathic fragments, some with brown altered ?pyroxene/olivine phenocrysts, probably basaltic lava, 0.2 - 5.0 mm; quartz – sparse colourless translucent to white grains, 0.1 - 0.5 mm; *feldspar* – sparse

white altered sub-angular grains, 0.05 - 0.15 mm; *mica* – muscovite as a scatter of cleavage flakes, 0.05 - 0.1 mm; *matrix* – finely sandy/silty and micaceous clay, mineral components mainly quartz, feldspar and mica less than 0.05 mm. *Comment.* Finely sandy clay derived from local Permian breccia augmented with crushed weathered basalt. The relatively large igneous fragments cause the unevenness of the surfaces and the cracking around them at the surface. The examination of a sherd from (4098) confirmed this as a variant fabric with smaller inclusions.

Illustrated vessels

P3 (Fig. 17) (3039) fill ditch F3041 [3036]. Rim with internal and external expansion, 220 mm diameter, horizontal fine cord impressed lines, parallel twist, below rim. A Trevisker Middle Bronze Age form.

P4 (Fig. 17) (3039) and (4089) fills ditch F3041. Body sherds from large vessel c. 355 mm diameter, with elongated imperforate lug. A second identical lug, almost certainly from P4, comes from (3039): this is a fill some distance away but in a continuation of the same ditch. Although lacking a girth cordon broadly comparable to the vessel published from the Royal Naval Stores Depot associated with Wk-27026 2966 ± 30 BP calibrating to 1380-1120 BC and Wk-27025 3090 ± 30 BP calibrating to 1430 – 1270 BC (Quinnell 2011). The material excavated on the site adjacent to the north (Raymond 2012, fig. 9, P1) also has similarities and is of identical fabric.

Context	Description	Sherds/weight	Comment
1013	Fill of ring ditch F1013 Area A	4/25	Simple expanded rim of Trevisker type
1014	Fill of ring ditch F1013 Area A	20/37	Sherds very similar to those from (1013)
1067	Fill of ring ditch F1013 Area A	3/3	Body sherds
1069	Fill of pit F1070 Area A	1/2	Body sherd
1202	Fill pit F1203 Area A	1/6	Body sherds
3039	Fill of ditch F3041 Area C	1/15	Trevisker rim P3
3039	Fill of ditch F3041 Area C	6/156	Trevisker lug probably part of P4
3047	Fill of ditch F3041 Area C	1/6	Body sherd
4088	Fill of ditch terminal F4091 Area D	2/20	Fine variant of fabric, very slight cordon
4089	Fill ditch terminal F3041 Area D	7/555	Simple slightly expanded rim from closed plain Trevisker vessel c 150mm diameter. Remaining sherds including lug from P4
4098	Fill ditch F3041 Area D	14/129	7 sherds 109 g P5 Remaining sherds from similar vessel with slightly different rim. Both are in variant of fabric with small inclusions
6017	Fill of pit or ditch terminal F6018 Area F	19/204	Fabric with small inclusions, probably all same vessel
Totals		79/1158	

Table 2: Details of sherds of Bronze Age Trevisker-related ceramics.

P5 (Fig. 17) (4098) fill ditch F3041 [4100]. Simple slightly biconical vessel with flat-topped rim, 150 mm diameter, seven conjoining sherds, line of slight finger nail impressions around girth. Rim from a similar vessel present. Both vessels probably Trevisker. A similar vessel, but without the decoration, was found in a presumed Middle Bronze Age ditch on the site adjacent to the north (Raymond 2012, fig. 9, P3).

Comment

Pottery on Middle Bronze Age sites in the Exeter area tends to occur in small quantities, to be generally made of locally sourced materials, and have affinities with the Trevisker ceramic tradition which occurs in more abundant quantities on Cornish sites. Trevisker ceramics developed in Cornwall during the Early Bronze Age and occur at this period in Devon. But the field ditch contexts of the Old Rydon Lane material place most of this assemblage firmly in the Middle Bronze Age. However the simple expanded rims of Trevisker type found in ring ditch F1013 contexts could be of either Early or of Middle Bronze Age date. A similar rim was found on a plain vessel holding a cremation within a ring ditch at Digby Site 5 with an associated date of Wk-27667 3099 ± 30 BP calibrating to 1440 – 1260 BC.

The frequent occurrence of vessels with little decoration is very much a feature of the area. Cord impression decoration, as with P3, does occur but appears not to be common: the closest published parallel for this is Crabtree Farm, Exminster (Quinnell 2014, 53). The predominantly plain tradition of the Exeter area may be regarded as Trevisker-related (Quinnell 2012, 161) although Raymond (2012) argues for influence from the Deverel-Rimbury tradition of Dorset. As further sites in the Exeter area are discovered and published, the distinctive characters of its Middle Bronze Age ceramics should become more clearly defined.

Iron Age

The Late Iron Age or Roman ceramics are presented in Table 3.

Context	Description	Upper Greensand derived	Poole Harbour	Comment
1170	Upper fill of pit F1172 Area A		1/16	Very small base with a dimple on the outside
2001	Area B subsoil		1/4	Body sherd
3019	Fill of pit F3020 Area C	1/3		Body sherd
4176	Fill of ditch F4019 [4177] Area D	1/9		Body sherd
Totals		2/12	2/20	

Table 3: Late Iron Age or Roman ceramics by sherd number and weight.

Fabrics

Upper Greensand derived. Petrology. (3019) Common moderate inclusions. *Quartz* – transparent colourless to translucent angular to well-rounded with some polished grains, 0.1-0.8 mm, rarely 1.2 mm and 2.0 mm; *chert* – white, rarely brown and grey, angular and sub angular fragments, 0.5-2.0 mm; *feldspar* – rare soft altered rounded grains, 0.2 mm; matrix – smooth finely micaceous clay. *Comment.* An Upper Greensand derived fabric from East Devon.

Poole Harbour – Durotrigian/SE Dorset BB1.

Comment

The two sherds of Poole Harbour fabric from Areas A and B may be either Durotrigian Late Iron Age material or belong to the Roman period. The two Upper Greensand body sherds are most likely to belong to the later Iron Age. This fabric is among those used in the Late Iron Age Plain Ware assemblages

from St Loye's, Exeter (Quinnell forthcoming) and Gatcombe Ash, Branscombe (Quinnell and Reed 2012).

LITHICS

By Henrietta Quinnell

Stone axe

S1 (Figs 18 and 19) (4088) tertiary fill of linear F3041. Axe, 103 x 53 x 31 mm, 270 g. Ground almost to a polish but with the third nearest the butt only slightly smoothed down and showing remnant dressing peck marks. Cutting edge sharp, showing very little wear. This axe was cored by the Implement Petrology Group of the South West Federation of Museums and Art Galleries, numbered DEV 183 1977, and the thin section examined by their Petrologist Roger Taylor.

Petrology. *Feldspar* – mainly as much altered, sericitised, laths up to 0.9 mm long. Rarely traces of twinning occur visible which, in one instance indicated a composition of sodic andesine (extinction angle 15 degrees). *Pyroxene* – purple brown non-pleochroic irregular grains of augite up to 2 mm and scattered smaller grains. In some grains chlorite penetrates along the cleavage and appears to be replacing augite. *Chlorite* – clear bright green irregular areas, mostly non pleochroic or weakly pleochroic green to pale brown up to 1.5 mm across. Interference colours are commonly anomalous dark blue-reddish brown but some transverse sections show cleavage and first order interference colours. Chlorite also forms diffuse greenish areas and some is associated with clusters of magnetite grains. *Opaque ore* – occurs as more or less equidimensional grains mainly about 0.1 mm occasionally up to 0.3 mm. Some grains show partial crystal form indicative of magnetite. Ore is distributed more or less uniformly through the rock. *Apatite* – occasional prismatic crystals up to 0.2 mm long and related hexagonal cross sections. *Comment.* The section shows relict ophitic igneous texture with pyroxene enclosing feldspar laths without any indication of deformation. The grain size is on the borderline between dolerite and gabbro. The group classification and source of the axe are uncertain. The presence of augite gives some resemblance to Group I, but there is no evidence of amphibole in this rock. It does not therefore, resemble any of the Cornish groups and it is best described as a metasomatically altered gabbro. The degree of alteration suggests a possible source from East Cornwall or West or South Devon where deformation is less intense but there has been some exposure to metasomatic alteration, perhaps associated with mineralisation. *Note.* The section appears to be of greater thickness than the standard 30 μ , as a result the mineral colours are darker than normal and there is a general lack of clarity.

Ditch terminal [4091] F3041 contains Middle Bronze Age pottery. Unless this has disturbed an earlier feature, this axe may be out of place chronologically. There are instances of axes appearing in later contexts, for example in a Middle Bronze Age posthole in a hut circle at Heatree on Dartmoor (Quinnell 1991, fig. 7.7), where they can either be regarded as chance residual occurrences or as more deliberate deposition of artefacts which had some special meaning. Outside Devon Roe (nd) has assembled a number of ground/polished stone axes in later contexts across Southern England, most of which are broadly of Middle Bronze Age date.

Most ground stone axes from Devon are surface finds. Part of a ground greenstone axe was found in a pit with Peterborough sherds at Topsham (Jarvis and Maxfield 1975, 247, fig. 17) but this appears to be the only other example from an excavated site in Devon apart from those from causewayed enclosures, including with these the site on Hazard Hill (Houlder 1963, 26). There is a complete example from a Neolithic causewayed ditch at Raddon (Gent and Quinnell 1999, 53-55) but

most of the 16 examples listed for Hembury are broken (Clough and Cummins 1988, 148-150) as are the four recorded for High Peak (Smith 1966, 51, fig. 9). Roe (1999) has brought together a useful list of stone axes in pits with Late Neolithic Grooved Ware associations in England and Wales, but there is currently nothing comparable for other periods.

Flint axe

S2 (Figs 18 and 20) (4097) from tree throw F4092 and the only find from the feature. 150 x 73 x 24 mm, 250 g. Ground to produce cutting edge which shows little wear; the grinding peters out further up the axe, and is only visible on the tops of the ridges between flake detachments at the butt end. The flint used is 10YR 6/1 grey fading down to patches of 8/3 very pale brown and appears generally similar to better quality pieces among the pale grey flint used at the possible causewayed enclosure site at High Peak (Quinnell 2013). In shape the axe conforms to the Seamer type, with a flared blade, concave sides and grinding/polishing mainly on the blade; this type of axe has its earliest associations with Middle Neolithic ceramics (Field 2011, 164). The axe therefore dates to the Middle or Late Neolithic. The flint axe appears to be the only complete flint axe to have been found in a stratified context in Devon; the axes found are usually broken and worked as cores, surviving only as fragments.

There is no overall list of flint axes, whole or in part, found in Devon, and this find provides the opportunity to provide a brief summary. For the Early Neolithic, all the causewayed enclosure sites except Membury in Devon, confirmed or suspected, have fragments mostly from reworking: Hembury 20 (Liddell 1935, 152), High Peak one (Smith 1966, 51), Raddon one (Tingle 1999, 34) and Hazard Hill two (Houlder 1963, 26). For the Later Neolithic, Field (2011, 167) lists three complete Seamer type axes from Devon, from Bridford, Throwleigh and North Tawton and another comes from Rackleigh Farm, East Worlington (Pearce 1975, fig. 1). Other complete but not closely dateable axes come as surface finds from Spreacombe, Morteheo and Frittscombe, Stokenham (Miles 1976, 13, 15), from Landcross (Meade 1985), from Chudleigh Cricket Ground (Pearce 1975) and four partially reflaked examples from an extensive surface scatter at Salcombe Hill, Sidmouth (Pollard and Luxton 1978, fig. 4, 46-49). The majority of flint axes found during field walking are reworked fragments, for example at Nether Exe (Silvester *et al.* 1987, fig. 9, nos 98-9) or at sites in the Tiverton area (Quinnell *et al.* 2015).

The lithic assemblage

The assemblage consists of 73 pieces weighing 1209 g; of these six are chert: this is apart from the flint axe discussed above. Five come from topsoil/subsoil/unstratified contexts. There is one piece from (4111) with Peterborough pottery. Five contexts, (1069), (3039), (3047), (4088) and (4098), have Bronze Age pottery and a total of 13 pieces: only (3039) has five pieces and (4098) four. The remainder of the assemblage 54 pieces come from cut features without associated prehistoric material. The assemblage has therefore been categorised in Table 4 as a single unit.

Sixty six pieces are flint, of which 25 have a slightly waterworn nodular chalk cortex indicating an origin in East Devon residual flint in clay: only one has a pebble cortex indicating a riverine source. This flint is quite varied in colour and quality. The flake from (4111) in association with Peterborough sherd P1 is pale grey, large and good quality. However the small assemblages from fills (3039) and (4098) of Middle Bronze Age ditch F3041 are of poor quality mottled flint. Some of the flint however is dark grey and of very good quality. Greensand chert sources to East Devon while the single Portland chert flake comes from Dorset. The large number of cortical flakes suggest on-site working, as do the core preparation and trimming flakes: the latter include several core rejuvenation pieces. The presence of soft hammer retouch flakes indicates on-site tool making. Only five pieces were burnt.

	Flint	Chert	Notes
Cores	1	1	Flint core single platform, chert core patinated and little worked
Core fragments	1	1	
Core preparation and trimming	15	2	
Flakes	11 9*	1	3 flakes are from soft hammer retouch
Flakes, broken	11 3*	1 1* 1PC	1PC broken probably burnt Portland chert
Flakes, retouched	2		
Blades, broken	2 1*		
Tools	10		End scraper, broken knife*, piercer*, knife*, serrated flake 70mm, end/both sides scraper, notched flake*, petit tranchet arrowhead, end scraper, end/side scraper
Totals	66	6 Greensand chert 1 Portland chert	

Table 4: Details of the lithic assemblage. * indicates usewear/edge damage

There is a minimal blade component which suggests little activity in the area until the Neolithic. The complete flakes are both of the narrow class generally considered Early Neolithic and the broad flake group generally considered Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age. The large serrated flake (1177) probably belongs to the Neolithic, while the scrapers have a broad range through the Neolithic and the Early Bronze Age. The piercer (1157) has a long date range but is one of the tool types which is regularly found in the Middle Bronze Age for example at the Hayne Lane enclosure near Honiton (Bellamy 1999). The petit tranchet arrowhead (4064) with inverse retouch only is a type recently demonstrated to start in the middle of the 4th millennium BC and have a strong presence in the subsequent centuries (Cleal 2012), thus potentially contemporary with the Peterborough ware from the site; it was a residual find from pit F4065, which also contained a piece of clay tobacco pipe and modern glass. Otherwise the material is generally similar to the spread found on other excavations in the immediate area, notably at land adjacent to the north of the site (Anderson-Whymark and Gilbert 2012) and on nine sites in the Digby area of Exeter a little further to the north (Bayer forthcoming).

CREMATED HUMAN BONE

By Charlotte Coles

A total of 14 g of burnt human bone was recovered from fill (3045) in pit F3044 and associated with a sherd of Neolithic pottery. McKinley (1994) calculated that the remaining bone after a body has been cremated weighs between 2.5 - 3 kg. Therefore, the bone represents only an extremely small proportion of the potential skeleton if the remains are from an adult. The bone ranges in size from 1 - 21 mm. Only eight of the pieces were identifiable and these are all cranium fragments. It was not possible from these fragments to ascertain age or sex of the individual or to calculate minimum number of individuals.

The colour of cremated bone can vary from a charred black through blue/grey to a pure white (also known as calcined bone), with the change in colour largely based on the temperature of the pyre. The colouration of the bone was assessed using Shipman *et al.* (1984, 307-25) and found to be pure white indicating that the remains were consistently burnt at temperatures higher than 940 degrees C.

It was possible to determine whether the body was fleshed or skeletonised at the time of burning by studying the types of fracture patterns present on the bones. The fracture patterns identified are longitudinal with occasional transverse lines, which indicates that the remains were fleshed at the time of cremation (McCarthy 2010).

PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

By Cressida Whitton

A number of (38) bulk samples were recovered during the excavation and seven priority samples were selected and processed by standard flotation using a siraf-type tank and 250 μ mesh. Residues were sieved over 5.6 mm, 2 mm and 500 μ mesh sieve nest. Between 50 and 100 per cent (depending on size) of the dried sample flot, was sorted for charcoal and charred ecofacts under a stereo-binocular microscope (10 – 30 x magnification) and finer residues (2 mm and 500 μ) were also scanned for charred ecofacts. The 5.6 mm coarse residue was hand-sorted for artefacts and ecofacts using an illuminated hand lens. The results of the sample assessment indicate that environmental potential was generally low, with preservation of charred ecofacts poor and the flots were generally small and not charcoal-rich, containing only a few charred plant macrofossils, including seeds of wheat/barley and oat/rye types, weed seeds and/or indeterminate ecofacts. Surprisingly, sample 10, from the fill (3045) of pit F3044, did not contain any cremated or unburnt bone, which indicates that the cremated human bone was probably put straight into the pit, rather than the fill as a whole being derived from a cremation pyre.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

NEOLITHIC

The identification of over 60 large tree throws, although mostly undated apart from an occasional lithic, probably indicates a wooded landscape prior to the Bronze Age. That a flint axe head of Middle to Late Neolithic type should be deposited in one of the tree throws is unlikely to be fortuitous and was probably deliberately deposited in the hollow formed by the fallen tree; the stone axe may have been displaced in antiquity from a similar context. Another tree throw pit contained a sherd of Early Neolithic pottery and cremated human bone. In Britain generally, the deliberate use of tree throws for the depositing of objects is a phenomenon typical of the Neolithic, the purpose of which has been much debated (see e.g. Evans *et al.* 1999; Anderson-Whymark and Thomas 2012). In Devon, examples of deposition of artefacts in tree throws and pits dating to the Neolithic has increased tremendously in recent years (see Leverett and Quinnell 2010 and references therein). Pottery of Late Neolithic Grooved Ware type and associated dates of Wk-27023, 4129 \pm 30 BP calibrating to 2880-2580 BC and Wk-27024 4064 \pm 30 BP calibrated to 2850-2480 BC for a tree throw pit at the neighbouring Upper RNSD site suggests a continuing tradition of material being incorporated within these natural hollows (Pearce *et al.* 2011).

The small deposit of cremated human bone was not of sufficient quantity or quality to provide information on age, sex or number of people represented. The bone deposit is dated by association with Early Neolithic pottery. Although cremation as a funerary practice in the Early Neolithic of South-West Britain is attested by finds from Long Barrows in Somerset and Wiltshire (see Pollard and Healy 2008, 100) it is not a common find from pits until the Bronze Age. In Devon, the only published example of cremated bone from a site of Neolithic date is from the passage grave at Broadsands, although even here it could not be established that this was a primary deposit in this tomb (Sheridan *et al.* 2008).

BRONZE AGE

The physical character and date of the ring ditch is suggestive of a Bronze Age barrow feature which due to the soft nature of the geology and intensity of later agricultural practice has undergone extreme truncation, thus removing any evidence for a central mound. The diameter of the ring ditch was 9 m which compares well with the smallest of the four excavated in the vicinity of Hayes Farm, Clyst Honiton and the five Digby sites that were all under 10 m in internal diameter. (Simpson *et al.* 1989; Hart *et al.* 2014; Quinnell and Farnell 2016; see discussion in Rainbird forthcoming). The variations in the fills found in the ditch also assists with this interpretation. There were areas of uniform material present as a result of the natural degradation and deposition of sands from the ditch edges, there were however distinctive burnt deposits and charcoal lenses on the southern side of the ditch; these may have originated from erosion of a central mound and possibly been part of funerary activity for which the monument was created. It is interesting to note however, that these deposits are not associated with the areas of the ring ditch where the numerous pottery fragments were found, which were largely on the north-western and eastern sides.

The pottery from the ring ditch, although part of the broader Trevisker tradition, is of a type which could be of Early, rather than Middle, Bronze Age date and in this regard would not be out of place in a funerary context (Quinnell 2012, 156). In the Digby area only one of the five ring ditches had cremations in pits and in all cases where plough truncation had occurred any burials in mounds would not have survived (Quinnell and Farnell 2016). No human remains were found at the Old Rydon Lane ring ditch and despite our general expectation that barrows are sepulchral monuments, the evidence from Cornish barrow excavations has shown that their primary function may not necessarily be as edifices for receiving human remains. Henrietta Quinnell (Miles 1975) noted for Cornish sites that mounds could be built without burials and that cremations appear to be token or partial in the majority of sites where they are found. Similar conclusions have more recently been drawn from excavations of Bronze Age cairns on Stannon Down, Bodmin Moor, where deposition of special objects and the marking of special places in the landscape may have been as, or more, important than providing a place for the remains of the dead (Jones 2006). In this regard, Owoc (2008) has noted that features related to barrows may be used as markers to commemorate significant directions; such markers can include evidence for burning. She notes (*ibid.* 69) that 'in South-Western Britain Builders referenced the midsummer, midwinter and equinoctial sunrises and sunsets, as well as northerly and southerly directions.' In regard to this it should be noted that the evidence for burning was on the south side of the ring ditch, although the significance of this direction was not established in the local context. The ditch itself as a location for special rites, occasionally involving the deposition of 'nests' of fragmented pottery, has also been noted in Cornwall (Nowakowski 2007).

The field boundary ditches show that the site is within a broader area of land division established in the Middle Bronze Age. They form part of a rectilinear field pattern identified to the south at the neighbouring RNSD and Newcourt Drive sites (Pearce *et al.* 2011; Farnell and Fairclough forthcoming) and to the north at Newcourt Way where the best evidence for contemporary settlement is located (Gilbert 2012; Gillard *et al.* forthcoming). A little further to the north various prehistoric ditches including a possible droveway at Clyst Heath, were exposed during excavations around the Digby Retail Park (Quinnell and Farnell 2016). In contradiction to the findings in the Digby area a little further to the north (Quinnell and Farnell 2016), Pearce *et al.* (2011, 47 and fig. 15) opined that the pattern of fields established in the Bronze Age may have been responsible for the regular pattern of rectangular fields covering the immediate area as revealed in historic mapping; what have been termed 'relict' landscapes, fossilising the pattern of fields established in prehistory, have been shown to exist in other parts of Britain (see examples in Williamson 2008; also Fleming 2008, 176-85). Locally, Fleming (2008, 44 and fig. 18) has shown that on the margins of the upland the Dartmoor reaves, established in the

Middle Bronze Age, have provided the template for the pattern of upstanding field boundaries of medieval or post-medieval date. Although there is some doubt as to the veracity of this observation in regard to the Old Rydon Lane area of Exeter (Henrietta Quinnell, *pers. comm.*) it may be noted here that some support for the longevity of use of this field pattern, or elements of it, might be supported by the current project in that there is substantial re-cutting of the earlier field boundary ditches leading to the incorporation of later material from the Iron Age through to the post-medieval periods and displacement of earlier objects. However, both here, and in the Digby area to the north, the general paucity of finds dated to the Romano-British period would argue against a continued use of this landscape from the Bronze Age through to the post-medieval period.

APPENDIX – LATER FEATURES AND FINDS

POST-MEDIEVAL/MODERN HEDGEBANK

Situated in the centre of Excavation Area D was a former hedgebank (F4020/F4021) marked by parallel ditches which were orientated north-west to south-east. Both ditches had a single fill typically a red to grey brown silty clay which contained four pieces of glass, 37 sherds of post-medieval/modern pottery, 10 clay tobacco pipe fragments, a piece of slag, four pieces of slate, two pieces of mortar, three pieces of oyster shell and small numbers of bones representing sheep/goat, cattle and pig. The hedgebank is of post-medieval type and its orientation matches that of the historic field pattern and it was present on 25-in Ordnance Survey mapping until 1933.

Other features dated by later finds were uncommon; pit F1132 in Area A, contained post-medieval pottery and pits F4016 and F4065 in Area D contained modern glass, with F4065 also containing a piece of clay tobacco pipe stem.

Context	Context description	Pottery description
1000	Topsoil, Area A	1 x delft, 1 x creamware
1005	Fill of pit F1006, Area A	1 x delft
1133	Primary fill of pit F1132, Area A	1 x delft
1134	Primary fill of pit F1132, Area A	1 x unknown import
1135	Gully in deposit (1136) upper fill of tree throw F1138, Area A	1 x creamware
2001	Subsoil, Area B	1 x porcelain, 3 x creamware
3000	Topsoil, Area C	1 x South Somerset, 2 x creamware
4004	Hedgebank F4020/F4021, Area D	1 x modern flowerpot
4005	Hedgebank F4020/F4021, Area D	4 x creamware
4022	Topsoil, Area D	1 x creamware
4033	Hedgebank F4020/F4021, Area D	1 x imported stoneware, 1 x creamware
4142	Hedgebank F4020/F4021, Area D	4 x North Devon ware, 2 x creamware, 1 x unknown coarseware
4172	Hedgebank F4020/F4021, Area D	1 x westerwald
4187	Hedgebank F4020/F4021, Area D	1 x stoneware
4196	Hedgebank F4020/F4021, Area D	3 x creamware
4199	Hedgebank F4020/F4021, Area D	9 x creamware
4200	Hedgebank F4020/F4021, Area D	13 x creamware
6033	Subsoil, Area F	1 x North Devon ware
Unstrat		3 x North Devon ware
Unstrat Area E		1 x westerwald, 1 x Totnes ware

Table 5: Post-medieval pottery by context

MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY

By Charlotte Coles

Medieval Pottery

A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from fill 4142, this is an externally glazed jug sherd, in Exeter fabric, dating from the 14th-15th centuries; it was residual in a ditch of post-medieval hedgebank F4020/F4021.

Post-medieval pottery

A total of 61 sherds of post-medieval pottery was recovered from the site with 45 of these recovered from 15 secure contexts with the remainder recovered from either overlying deposits or surface finds. These are presented in Table 5.

The majority of the pottery is creamware and other post 1750 pottery. There are several sherds of imported wares, including westerwald and delft, these date to the late 17th-18th centuries, the local coarseware from the assemblage are mostly North Devon ware and date from the 18th-19th centuries.

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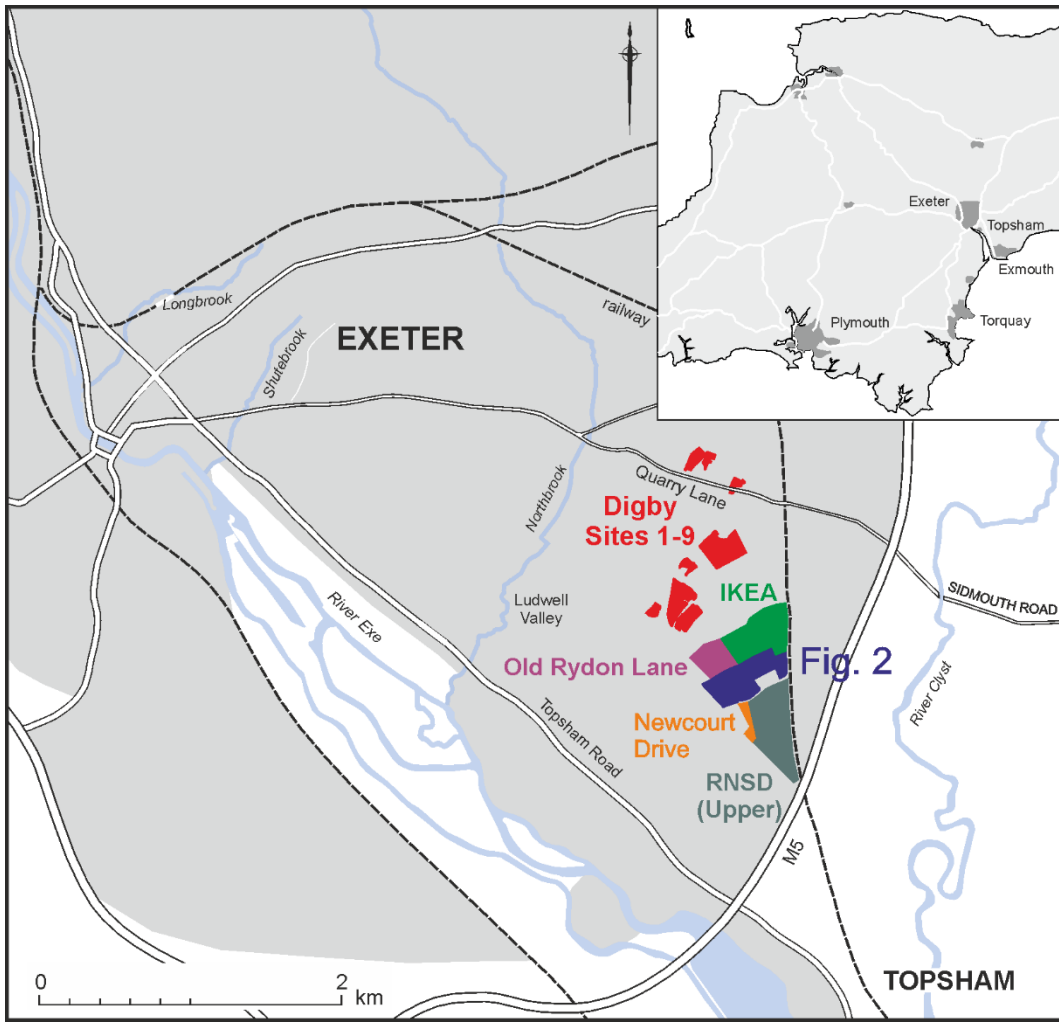


Fig 1: Location of site

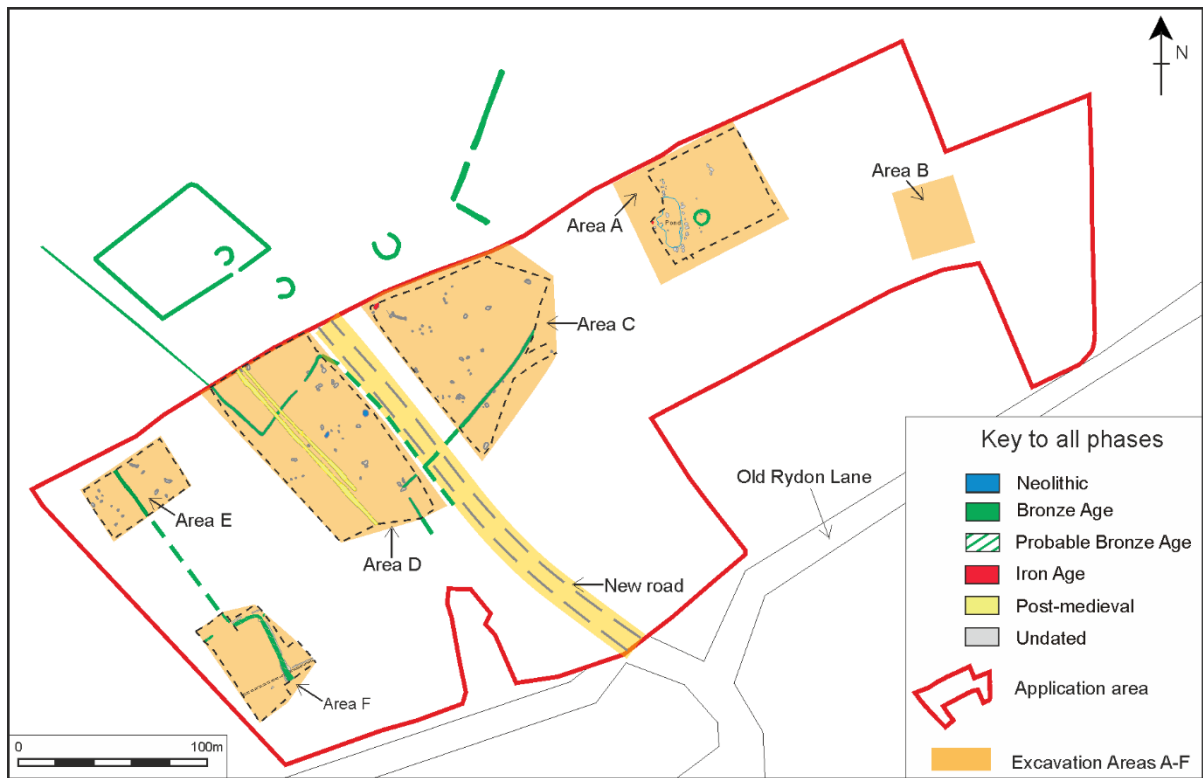


Fig. 2: Location of excavation areas with features from neighbouring sites shown (Gilbert 2012 and Gillard *et al.* forthcoming)

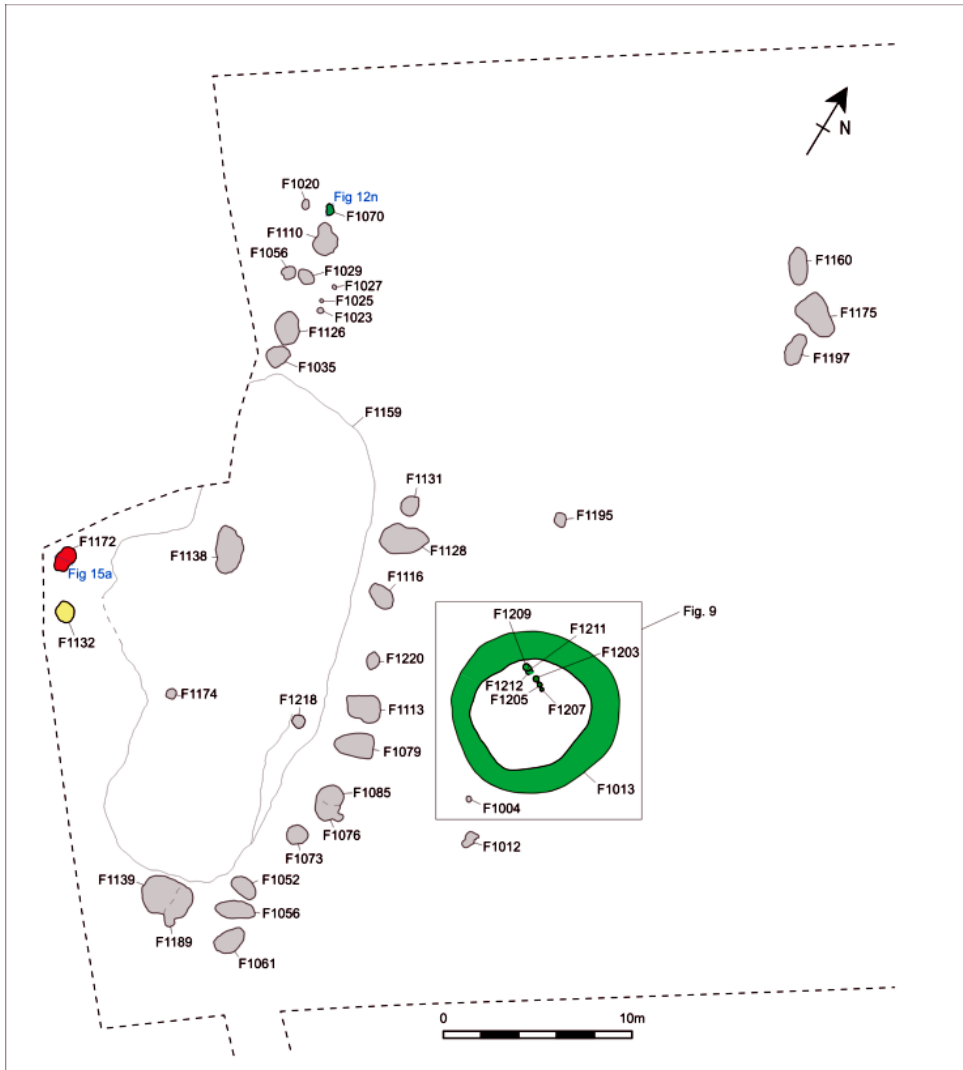


Fig. 3: Detailed plan of Area A

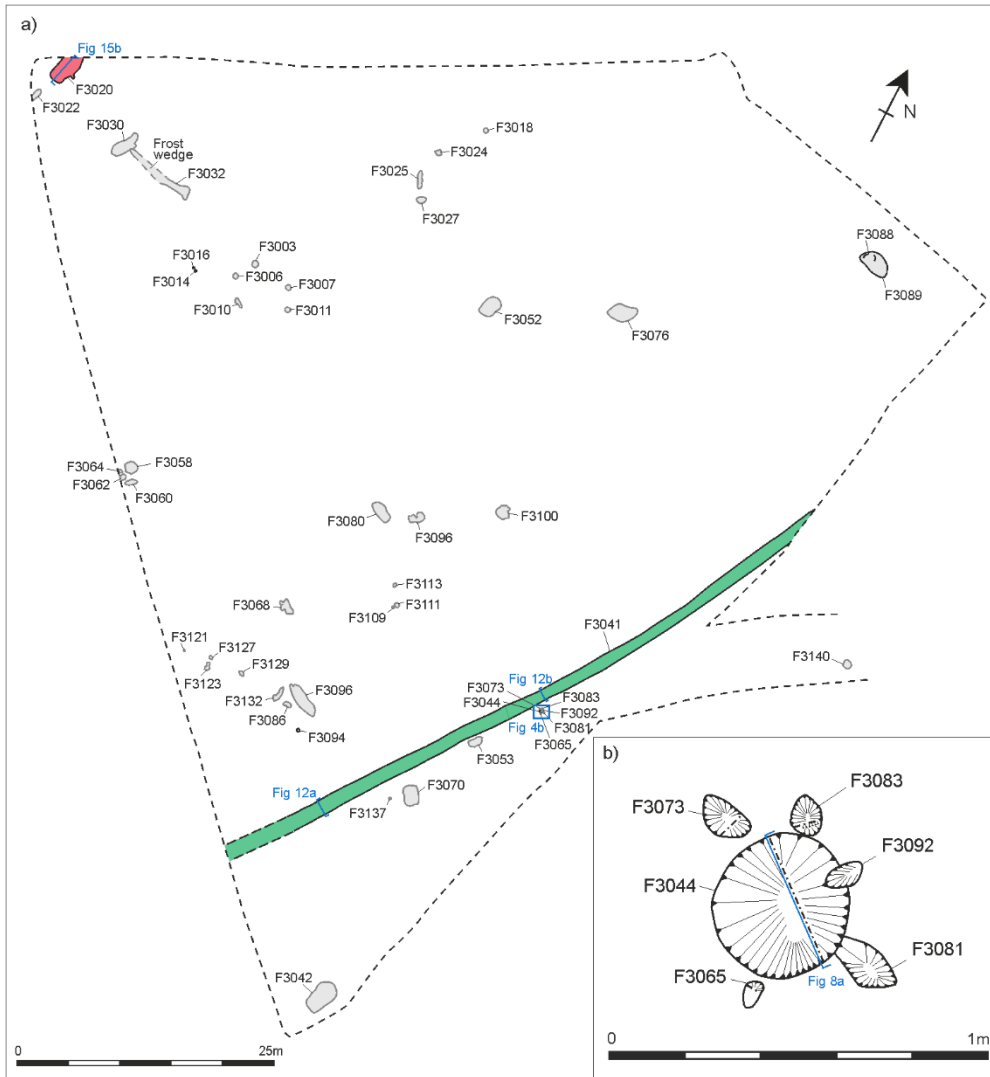


Fig. 4: Detailed plan of Area C

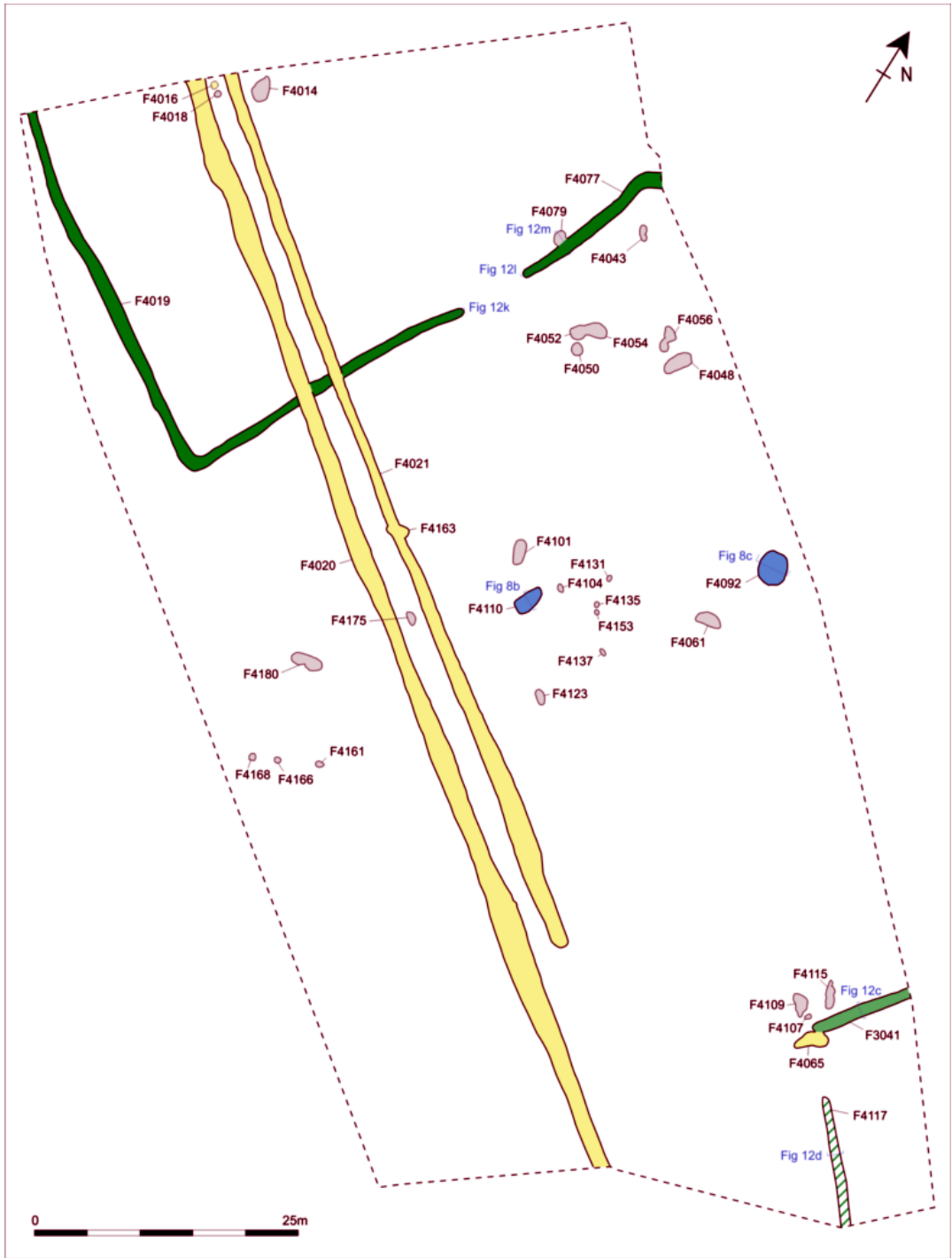


Fig. 5: Detailed plan of Area D

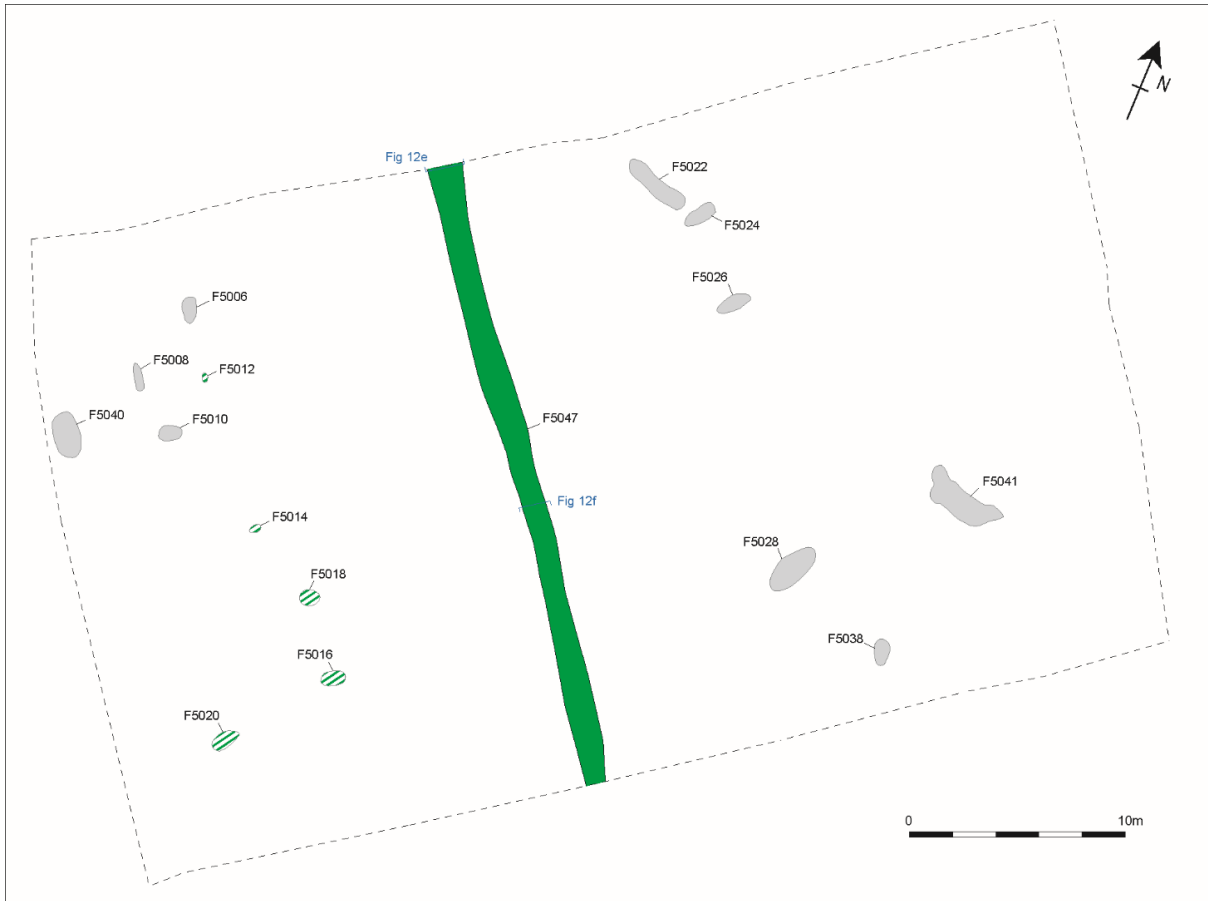


Fig. 6: Detailed plan of Area E

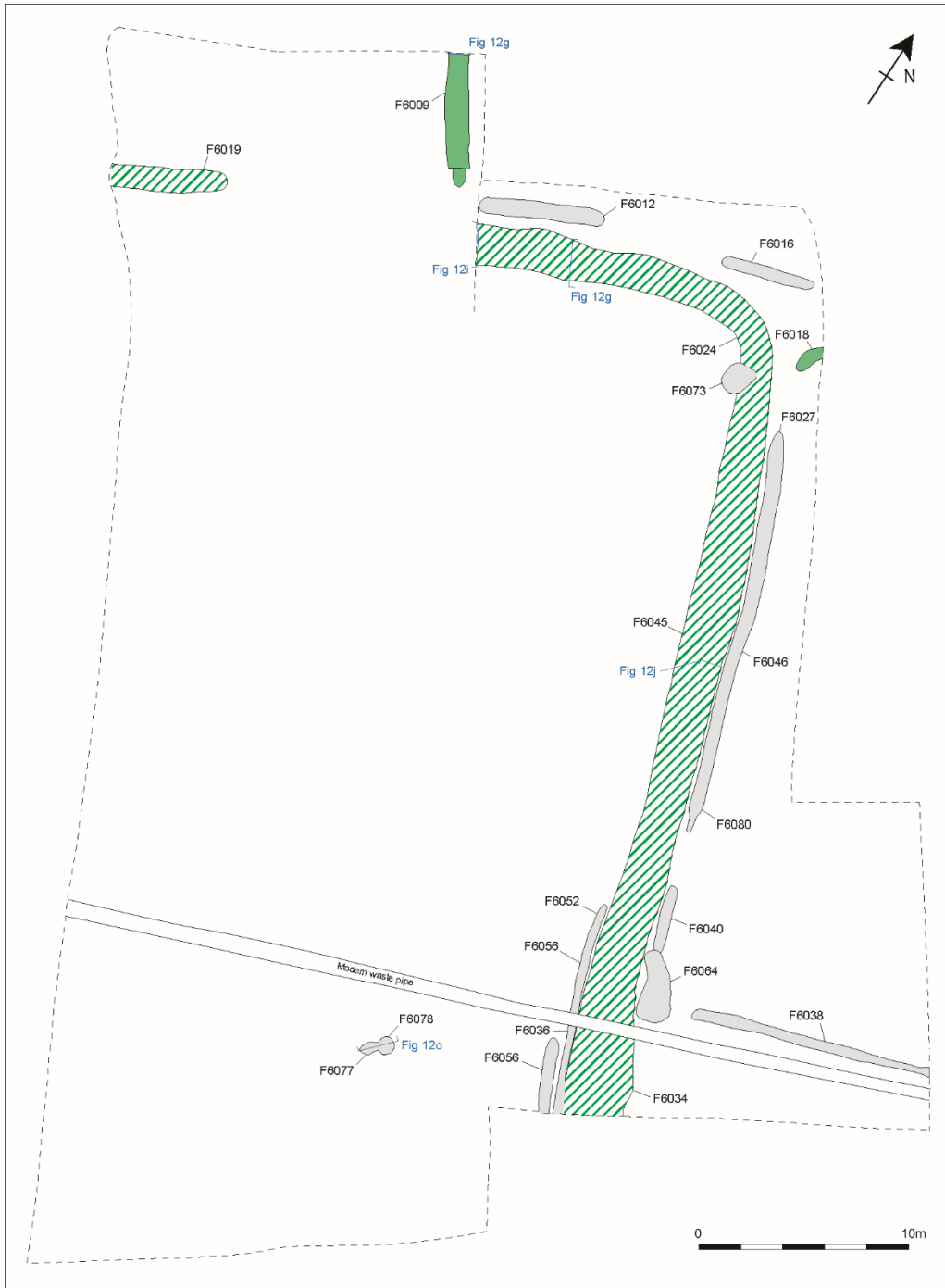


Fig. 7: Detailed plan of Area F

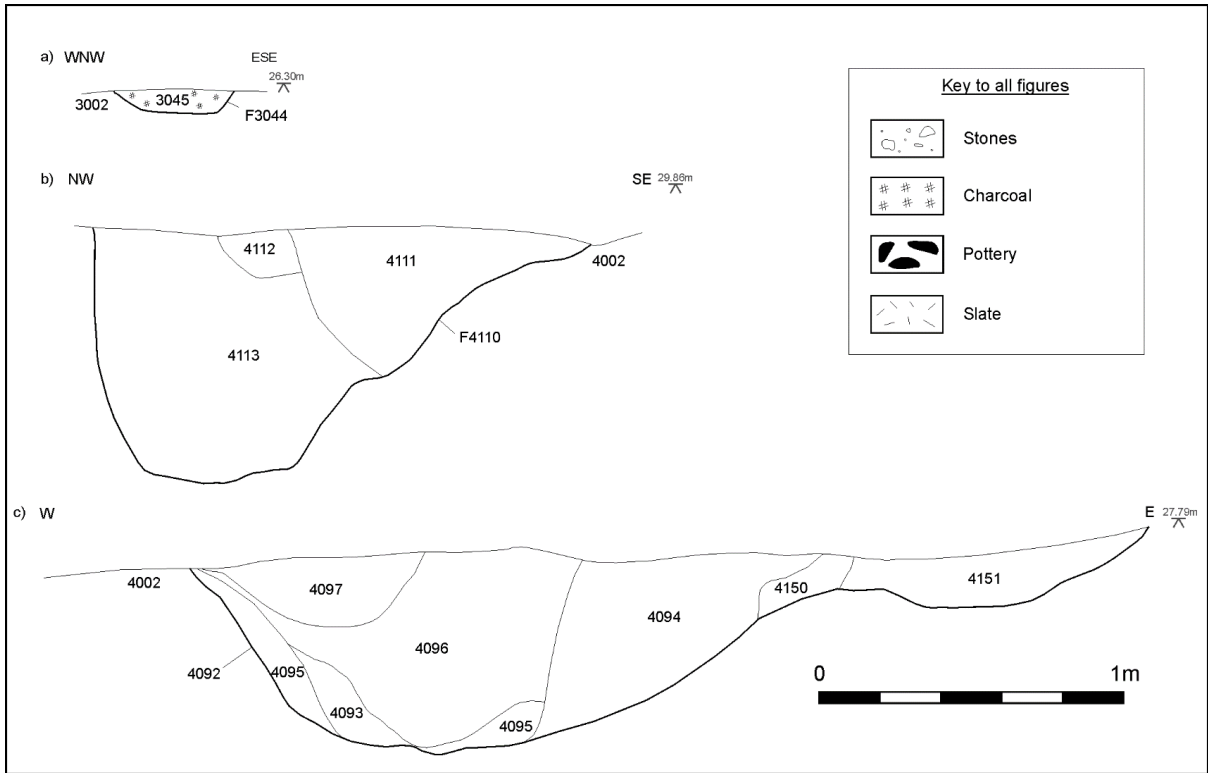


Fig. 8: Features containing Neolithic finds

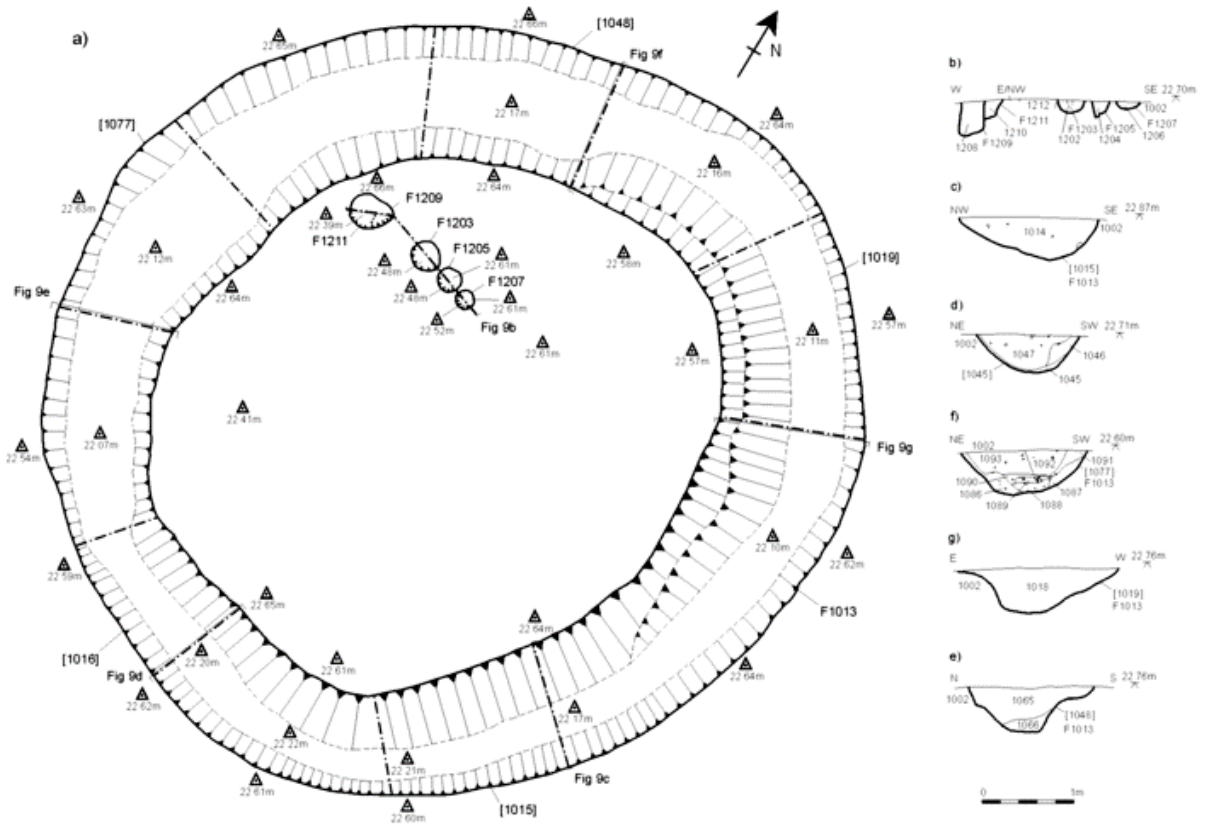


Fig. 9: Plan and sections of Bronze Age ring ditch F1013



Fig. 10: Area A, work in progress, looking north, with ring ditch F1013 middle right [AC archaeology]



Fig. 11: Bronze Age ring ditch F1013, looking northeast (scales 1m and 0.5m). The dark patch passing through the centre is the location of a trench belonging to the earlier evaluation phase [AC archaeology]

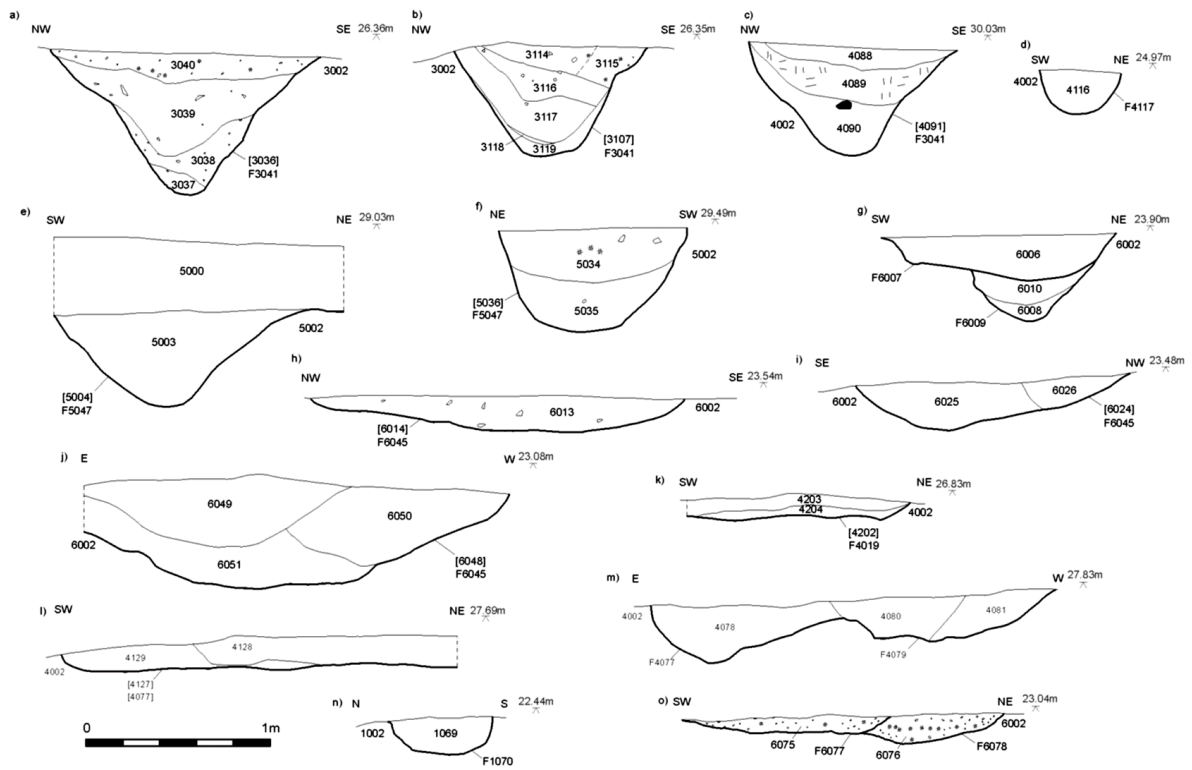


Fig. 12: Sections of Bronze Age boundary ditches and pits



Fig. 13: Area D, Middle Bronze Age ditch F4019, looking northeast [AC archaeology]



Fig. 14: Area F, ditch F6045 (right), looking southeast (scale 1m) [AC archaeology]

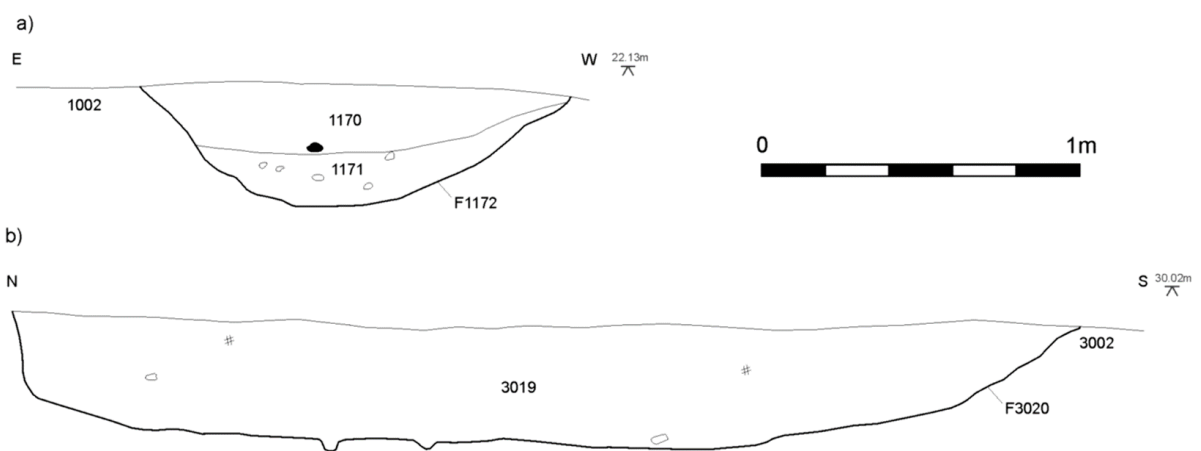


Fig. 15: Sections of Iron Age or Romano-British period pits

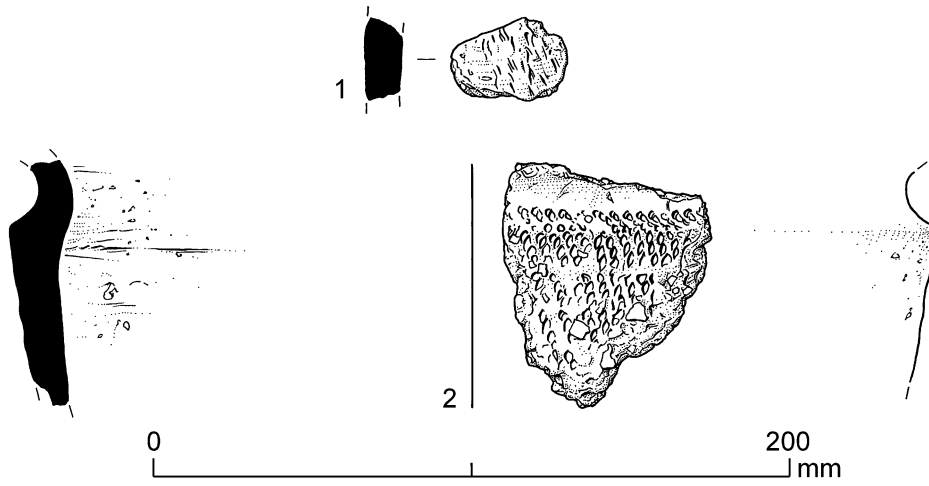


Fig. 16: Neolithic pottery. P1-2 Peterborough sherds. Drawn by Jane Read

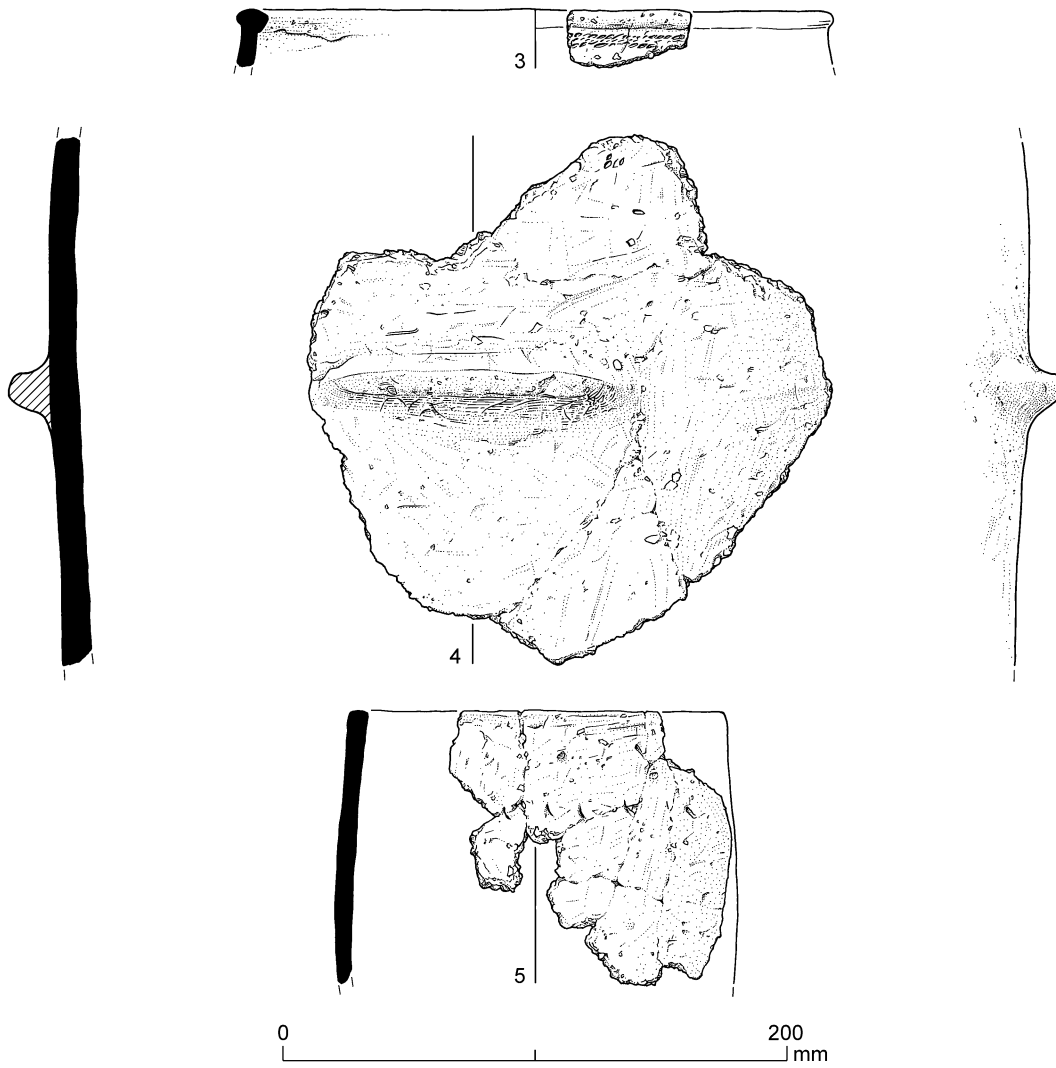


Fig. 17: Middle Bronze Age pottery. P3-5 Trevisker sherds. Drawn by Jane Read

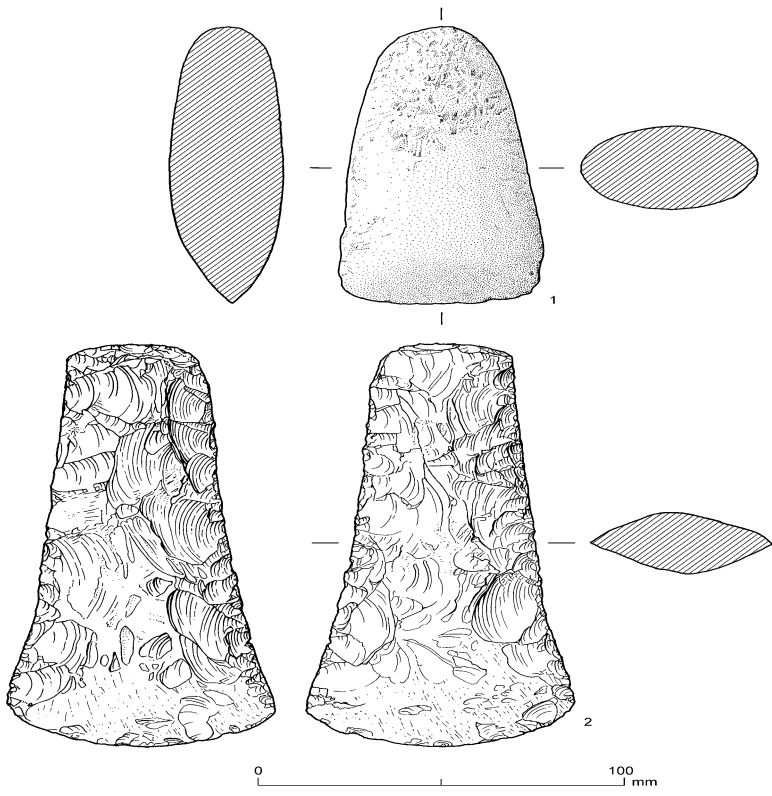


Fig. 18: Axes. S1 stone axe, S2 flint axe. Drawn by Jane Read



Fig. 19: S1 stone axe [AC archaeology]



Fig. 20: S2 flint axe [AC archaeology]

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