

NEW SOLAR FARM, BULKWORTHY, TORRIDGE DEVON

(Centred on NGR SS 4047 1476)

Results of an Archaeological Trench Evaluation

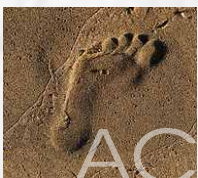
Torrige District Council Planning Ref: 1/1177/2015/FULM
(Condition 12)

Prepared by:
Stuart Randall

On behalf of:
Ecotricity (Next Generation) Ltd

Report No: ACD1926/2/0

Date: February 2020



archaeology

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Client	Ecotricity (Next Generation) Ltd
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Checked by	John Valentin
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The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC archaeology and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

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Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology during January 2020 ahead of construction of a new solar farm on land at Bulkworthy, Torridge, Devon (NGR SS 4047 1476). Investigations comprised the machine-excavation of three trenches totalling 110m in length, with each 1.8m wide. These were positioned to target anomalies identified by a previous geophysical survey.

No evidence for archaeology was found during the work, with one of the geophysical anomalies corresponding with the position of a naturally-formed combe and others relating to variations in the natural geology.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology during January 2020 ahead of construction of a new solar farm on land at Bulkworthy, Torridge, Devon (SS 4047 1476; **Fig. 1**). The investigations were required as a condition (12) of planning consent granted by Torridge District Council, following consultation with the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (hereafter DCCHET).
- 1.2** The site lies within the parish of Bulkworthy, some 670m northeast of Town Farm. It comprises three fields covering 14.6 hectares, located on a broadly south facing slope, dropping from c. 160m aOD (above Ordnance Datum) in the north to c. 130m aOD to the south (Plates 1 and 2). It is bounded to the north by an unnamed road, to the west by a small area of woodland, and to the south by a stream. To the east it is surrounded by further agricultural fields. The underlying solid geology comprises sandstone of the Bude Formation (British Geological Survey Online Viewer 2020).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The site was the subject of a Cultural Heritage Chapter as part of an Environmental Statement (Cotswold Archaeology 2015). This established that there are no known heritage assets recorded within the site, although a small modern structure - probably an agricultural building - was observed on 20th-century aerial photographs within the central field; this has since been demolished. The presence of three Bronze Age barrows in the wider environs of the site indicates some prehistoric occupation in the area. During the early medieval, medieval and post-medieval periods the site is likely to have comprised agricultural land associated with the small settlement at Bulkworthy.
- 2.2** A previous geophysical survey of the site identified mainly linear anomalies thought to relate to former field boundaries and drainage (Edwards 2019). A possible small square enclosure-type anomaly was also recorded, but this was excluded from the development area.

3. AIMS

- 3.1** The aim of the work was to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features, deposits or finds within the site, with particular reference to the development-affected anomalies identified by the geophysics. The results of the work, as set out in this report, will be reviewed and used to inform any subsequent mitigation.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by AC archaeology (Valentin 2018), the DCCHET document *Specification for Archaeological Field Evaluation* and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' document, *Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation* (revised December 2014). It comprised the machine excavation of three trenches totaling 110m in length, with each 1.8m wide. Trench locations are shown on Fig. 1 and were positioned to target anomalies identified by the geophysics, where affected by the solar scheme. It was originally proposed that seven trenches would be excavated but changes to the scheme layout meant that only three were needed (Trenches 3, 6, and 7).
- 4.2 All trenches were located with a Leica Net rover GPS accurate to 1cm. The removal of overlying soils within the trenches was undertaken in 20cm spits (maximum) under the control and direction of the site archaeologist. Stripping by mechanical excavator ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural subsoil was exposed.
- 4.3 All features and deposits revealed were recorded using the standard AC archaeology *pro forma* recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2* (revised August 2012). Detailed sections and plans were produced at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20, while all site levels relate to Ordnance Datum (OD).

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

Natural subsoil was exposed in each of the trenches and comprised a light brownish yellow silty clay, with common slate and sandstone inclusions. It was exposed at a depth of between 0.5m and 0.58m. A dark greyish brown silty loam ploughsoil was present in all three trenches, which had a thickness of between 0.23m to 0.3m. In all trenches an up to 0.35m thick mid yellowish brown silty clay agricultural subsoil was also present. No archaeological features or deposits were exposed in any of the trenches. Trench 3 contained a single natural linear hollow/infilled combe (303). The results from Trench 3 are described below, while tabulated context descriptions for all trenches are provided in Appendix 1. Context numbers are prefixed by the relevant trench number (e.g. 300 for Trench 3, 700 for Trench 7 etc.). No artefacts were recovered at all.

5.2 Trench 3 (Plan and section Fig. 2; Plates 3 and 4)

This trench was approximately north-south aligned and located in the south-west corner of the site at the bottom of the slope. It was excavated onto the light brownish yellow silty clay natural subsoil (context 302) present at a depth of 0.58m, below agricultural subsoil (301) and ploughsoil (300). The natural combe matched the position of a wide linear anomaly identified by the geophysical survey.

Combe 303

This was located in the northern half of the trench and was aligned broadly east to west. It was 4m wide and 0.62m deep, with gradually-sloping even sides onto a slightly rounded base. It was filled with three naturally-formed and sterile greyish brown silty clay soils (304-306) and no artefacts or ecofacts were present.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were exposed during the evaluation. The geophysical anomaly investigated in Trench 3 proved to be a natural combe that had silted up with greyish brown silty clays. Other anomalies targeted in Trenches 6 and 7 were formed by variations in the natural geology (banding of silty clay and stone).

7. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 7.1 The paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ under the unique project code of **ACD1926**. It will be held until it is known if any further archaeological work on the site is required. On completion of all archaeological work the archive will be offered the Museum and Barnstaple and North Devon under the accession number **23.2018a**.
- 7.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed using the unique identifier **384439**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

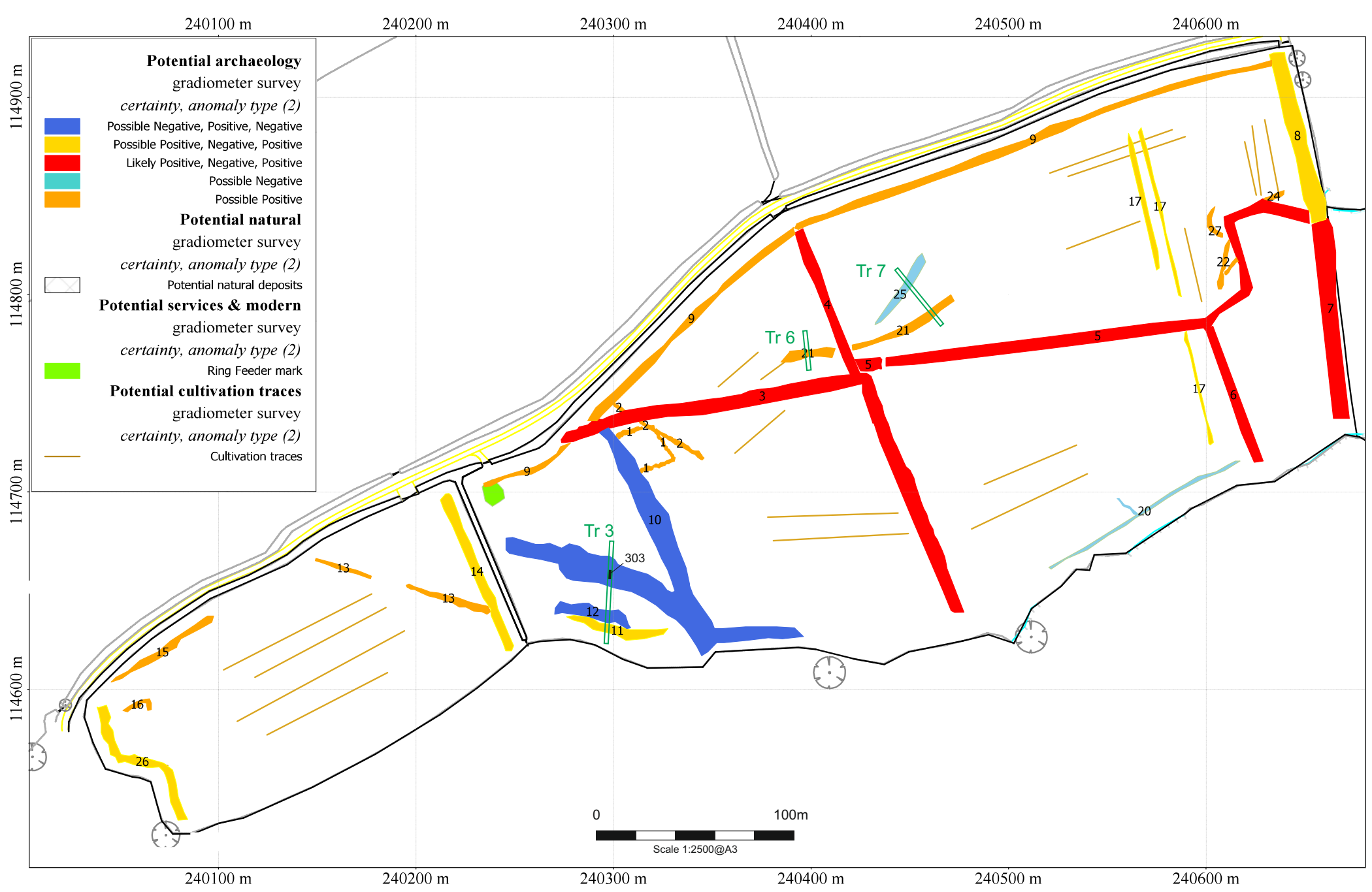
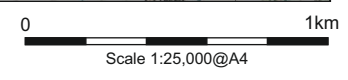
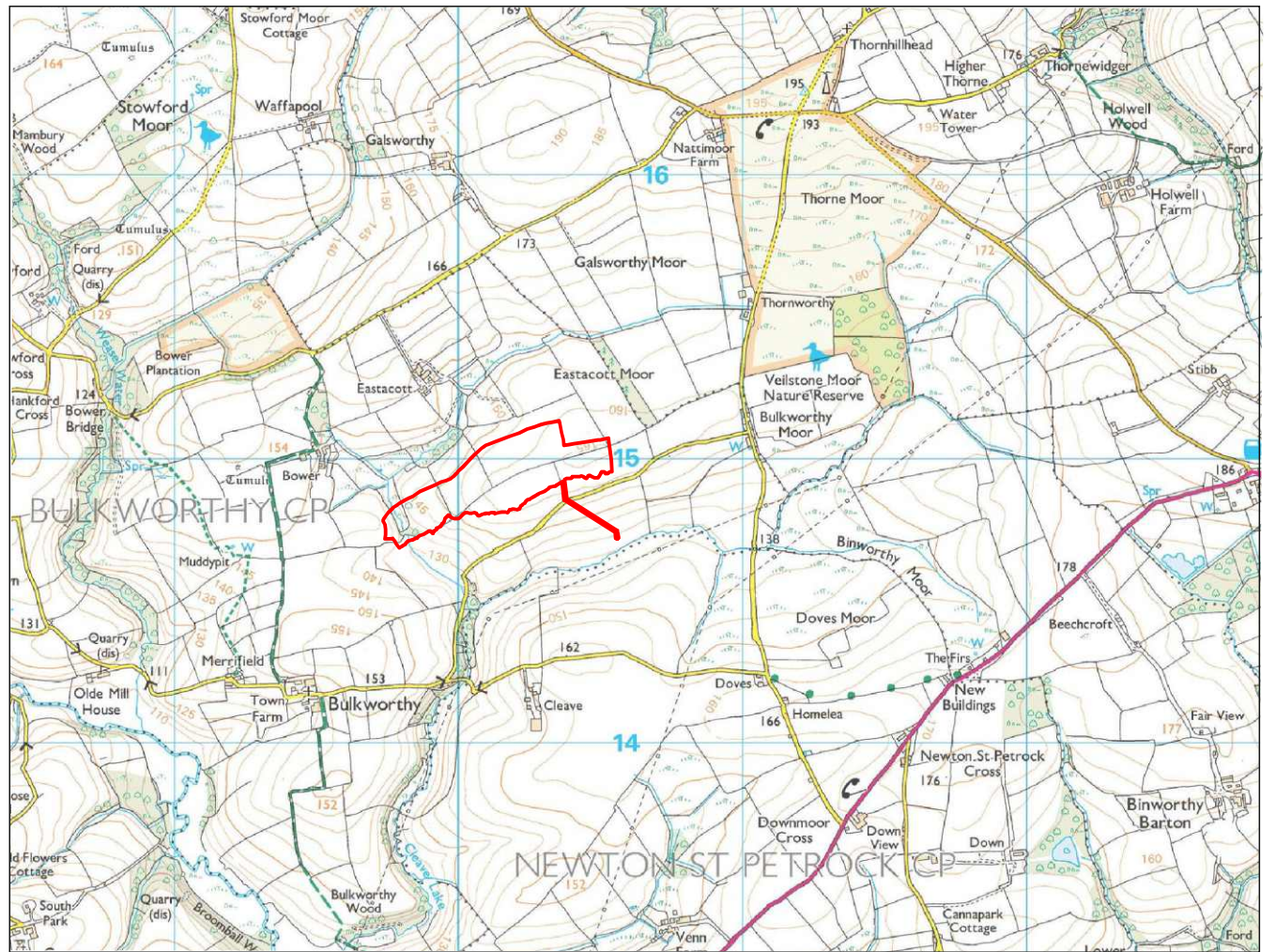
8. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey Online Viewer, 2020, www.bgs.ac.uk.

Cotswold Archaeology, 2015, Chapter 3: Cultural Heritage. *Bulkworthy Solar Farm ES*.

Edwards, M., 2019, *An archaeological magnetometer survey, land near Town Farm, Bulkworthy*. Unpublished Substrata report for client, ref. **1809BUL-R-1**.

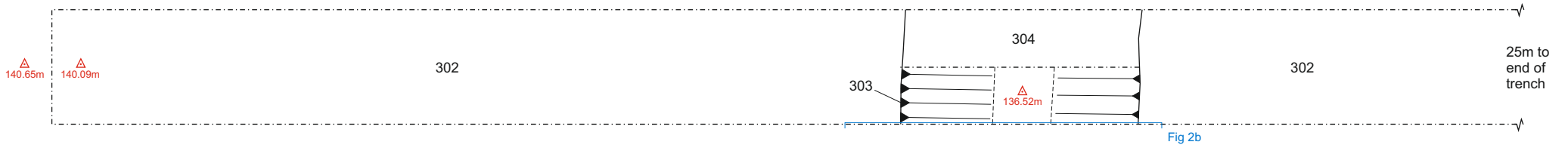
Valentin, J, 2018, *New Solar Farm, Bulkworthy, Devon. Project Design for a Programme of Archaeological Work*. Unpublished AC archaeology document for client, ref. **ACD1926/1/1**.



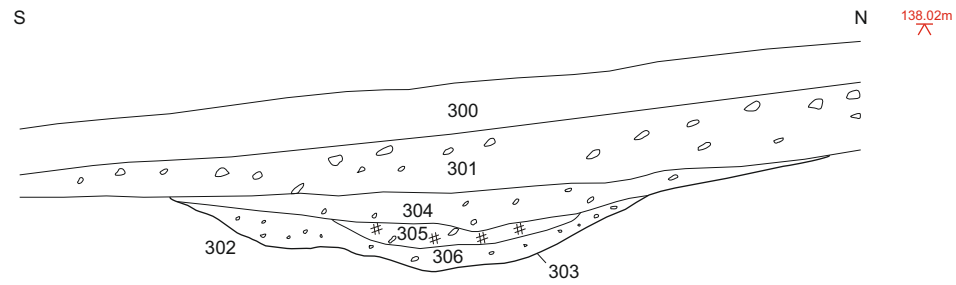
Excavated trenches with archaeological features shown

TITLE
Fig. 1: Location of site and trial trenches in relation to the geophysical survey interpretation

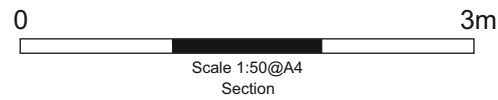
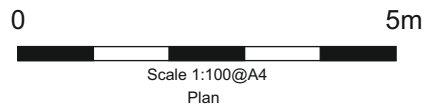
a) Plan of Trench 3



b) Section of natural combe 303



Key	
	Stones
	Charcoal



PROJECT

New Solar Farm, Bulkworthy,
Torridge, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 2: Trench 3, plan and section



AC archaeology



Plate 1: General view of site looking east from western side of field



Plate 2: General view of Trenches 6 and 7, looking to north



Plate 3: Trench 3 following excavation, looking to south (1m scale)



Plate 4: Trench 3, natural combe 303, looking to northwest (2m scale and 1m scale)



Plate 5: Trench 7 following excavation, looking to north (1m scale)

Appendix 1

Tabulated Context Descriptions by Trench



APPENDIX 1: TABULATED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS BY TRENCH

Trench 3		Length 50m	Width 1.8m	Alignment N - S
Context	Description	Depth (b.g.s)	Interpretation	
300	Dark greyish brown silty loam	0-0.23m	Ploughsoil	
301	Mid greyish brown silty clay	0.23-0.58m	Agricultural subsoil	
302	Light brownish yellow silty clay with common slates	0.58m+	Natural subsoil	
303	Linear hollow, 4m wide by 0.62m deep. Gradual sloping sides and concave base	0.58-1.2m	Natural combe feature	
304	Mid greyish brown silty clay	0.58-0.9m	Upper fill of combe 303	
305	Grey to dark brown silty clay	0.9m-1.1m	Fill of combe 303	
306	Grey to dark brown silty clay	1.1m-1.2m	Primary fill of combe 303	

Trench 6		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment N - S
Context	Description	Depth (b.g.s)	Interpretation	
600	Dark greyish brown silty loam	0-0.3m	Ploughsoil	
601	Mid yellowish brown silty clay	0.3-0.5m	Agricultural subsoil	
602	Light brownish yellow silty clay with common shillet	0.5m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 7		Length 40m	Width 1.5m	Alignment NW - SE
Context	Description	Depth (b.g.s)	Interpretation	
700	Dark greyish brown silty loam	0-0.25m	Ploughsoil	
701	Mid yellowish brown silty clay	0.25-0.5m	Agricultural subsoil	
703	Light brownish yellow silty clay with common shillet	0.5m+	Natural subsoil	

b.g.s = below ground surface

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