Archaeological excavation near Elmley Castle, Worcestershire: assessment and updated project design

PRELIMINARY REPORT

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Project 3727
WSM 45791
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Archaeological excavation near Elmley Castle, Worcestershire: assessment and updated project design

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With contributions by Jane Evans, Richard Henry, and Alan Clapham

Summary

This report summarises the results of a small archaeological excavation (WSM 45791) at the location of a hoard of Roman coins (WSM 45790) found on the side of Bredon Hill near Elmley Castle in south Worcestershire (NGR SO 9734 4147). It describes the context of the discovery, drawing on information from the finders, the Portable Antiquities Finds Liaison Officer, and the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record. It then describes the hoard itself and the evidence from the excavation, drawing in each case on preliminary assessments. The report ends by stating the work necessary to produce a full report on the excavation archive. The hoard itself will be studied independently.

The excavation established that the hoard of *c* 3,700 coins dating to the period *c* 260-282 was deposited about a century later on, in what was, or had been, a substantial settlement. Although the trench measured only 3m by 3m, it produced evidence for eight phases of Roman activity including three phases of building. The excavation also produced fourteen more coins and significant quantities of pottery, building materials, and animal bone.

The evidence suggests that the hoard was placed in a pit cut through a layer of demolition debris deposited in or after the mid 4th century. This deposition is the last evidence of Roman occupation on the site.

Part 1: Assessment

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

The excavation was prompted by the discovery of a hoard of Roman coins. The hoard was found by metal-detectorists operating on a familiar site with the permission of the landowner. They reported the discovery to the Portable Antiquities Scheme's Finds Liaison Officer for Warwickshire and Worcestershire, who informed Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service. After a discussion involving all parties, WHEAS agreed to fund a small excavation on the find-spot to obtain more information on its context and significance. The Field Section WHEAS was asked to undertake the work, on the basis of a detailed proposal (HEAS 2011).

1.2 Project parameters

The project conforms to the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (HEAS 2010), and the *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (IfA 2008).

2 Topographical and archaeological context

The hoard (WSM45790) was found in a pasture field on the south side of Bredon Hill, nearly 1km west of Elmley Castle (NGR SO 9734 4147; Figs 1 and 3). The field encloses a gently sloping part of the hillside beneath a steep, wooded slope (Fig 3; Plates 1 and 2). The soils of the area have been mapped as stagnogleyic argillic brown earths of the Curtisden Association, developed on Middle Lias siltstones and clays (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983; Ragg *et al* 1984, 150). The field is in the parish of Little Comberton, although it represents an eastward projection of the parish boundary. The land to the south is in the parish of Elmley Castle and the land to the north is in the parish of Bricklehampton.

One of the metal-detectorists who found the hoard had visited the field on several occasions in the 1990s. Over this period, he found some tens of Roman coins and many more iron nails and shotgun cartridges. He returned with a colleague on the 18 June 2011 and found the hoard almost immediately. The coins were found in and around a broken ceramic jar at a depth of approximately 0.30-0.55m below the surface. The hole dug to recover the hoard was approximately 0.55m long by 0.30m wide.

The wider archaeological context of the hoard, and the other remains described below, is provided by the results of previous prospection and fieldwork (Fig 1, Table 1). Taken together with evidence from Kemerton, Overbury, and Conderton, it suggests that the area around Bredon Hill was densely settled and farmed throughout the Roman period.

WSM number(s)	NGR	Description
Sites		
1566	SO 98905 42330 & SO 98700 42085	Aerial reconnaissance in 1962 and in the 1990s identified two areas of cropmarks suggesting superimposed rectangular enclosures, ditches, and pits in the north of the field, and two or three rectangular enclosure to the south-east, one containing a small circular enclosure. Both areas were investigated in 2010, first by geophysical survey and then by sample trenching. Geophysical survey in the northern area identified anomalies suggesting a sequence of ditches. A trench excavated across two parallel anomalies exposed six intercutting ditches on the same alignment, some containing Roman pottery. Geophysical survey over the small circular cropmark to the south identified a similar anomaly. A trench excavated across this anomaly exposed a ditch and a pit, but no artefacts were found.
3677, 3679, & 11384	SO 98370 42430	Aerial reconnaissance in 1959, 1961, 1962, 1990, and 1996 identified two areas of cropmarks. The main area (3677 and 11384) suggested a large rectangular enclosure and a track to the south, aligned roughly north-south, with small oval enclosures on either side. Other cropmarks in the north-east of the field suggested widely-spaced ditches aligned roughly east-west (3679). The main area of cropmarks was investigated in 2010, first by geophysical survey and then by sample trenching. Geophysical survey over part of the sub-rectangular enclosure identified anomalies broadly corresponding to the cropmarks and other anomalies suggesting unresponsive features. A trench targeted four anomalies but exposed ten features, including re-cut ditches, a pit, and a rubble wall foundation, all associated with late Iron Age and Roman pottery. Stone roof tiles and a fragment of box flue tile were recovered from the ploughsoil above these features. Geophysical survey over an oval enclosure to the south identified anomalies suggesting a sequence of ditches. A trench excavated across these anomalies exposed two ditches and a posthole. The features were associated with Roman pottery including a rim sherd of 4th century shell-tempered ware.
3678 & 5564	SO 99104 42228 & SO 99060 41300	Aerial reconnaissance in 1962 and in the 1990s identified cropmarks extending across five fields. The main concentration (3678) suggests superimposed sub-rectangular enclosures. Another group of cropmarks to the south (5564) suggests a track and adjacent irregular enclosures. A walkover survey in 1971 identified an extensive scatter of Roman pottery. The main concentration of cropmarks was scheduled in the 1980s (WT236).
6045	SO 97960 42680	Aerial reconnaissance in 1963 and in the 1990s identified the cropmarks of several rectangular enclosures and a track to the north. The site was investigated in 2010, first by geophysical survey and then

WSM number(s)	NGR	Description
		by sample trenching. The geophysical survey targeted parts of two enclosures and identified anomalies suggesting two small sub-circular enclosures and nine pits. The trench targeted two anomalies but exposed a sequence of ditches and the robbed-out walls of a stone building, all associated with Roman pottery.
6591	SO 98850 42665	Aerial reconnaissance in 1962 and in the 1990s identified the cropmarks of superimposed rectangular enclosures and co-axial ditches to the north and west. A walkover survey in 1971 identified an extensive scatter of Roman pottery. The site was investigated in 2010, first by geophysical survey and then by sample trenching. Geophysical survey targeted part of one enclosure and an area without cropmarks to the south-west. Anomalies were identified within the enclosure suggesting outer and internal ditches, and outside the enclosure suggesting a scatter of pits. One trench targeted a linear anomaly but found several features and a midden deposit associated with late Iron Age and Roman pottery. Another trench targeted two discrete anomalies but no features were exposed.
35841 & 35842	SO 96350 38513 & SO 96168 38415	Two Roman sites in Overbury Park Wood excavated between 1952 and 1955. The records have been lost, but the artefacts are held in Birmingham Museum. They include a large quantity of Roman pottery spanning dating through most of the period.
36105	SO 99610 43570	A report from the farmer and landowner of Roman material in the ploughsoil led to a fieldwalk by the Worcestershire Branch of the Young Archaeologists' Club in 2007. The fieldwalking identified an extensive scatter of Roman artefacts and worked limestone. The artefacts included large quantities of Severn Valley ware, some Samian ware, iron nails, a coin of the Empress Crispina (AD 177) and the broken top half of a rotary quern. The area was investigated in 2010, first by geophysical survey, and then by sample trenching. Geophysical survey identified linear anomalies suggesting a grid-like pattern of ditches. A trench excavated across these anomalies exposed ditches suggesting two phases of enclosure. The trench also exposed a wall foundation of roughly-hewn limestone and a pile or stack of limestone rubble. A small assemblage of Roman pottery and animal bone was recovered.
Find-spots		
2907	SO 97160 38352	Roman artefacts found during excavation of Iron Age hillfort, 1958-9.
20630	SO 99700 43150	Roman coins of 2nd and 4th century date discovered by metal-detecting in the 1990s.
26758	SO 98000	Roman artefacts from the Kersoe area in Birmingham Museum. Probably from the Holland-Martin collection of finds made on the Overbury Estate

WSM number(s)	NGR	Description
	39000	in the early-mid 20th century.
26760	SO 99290 4287	Fifteen sherds of Roman Severn Valley ware found in ploughsoil during watching brief in 1998.
39527	SO 95761 42131	Roman brooch and four coins reported to Portable Antiquities Officer in 2007
Cropmarks (Iron Age or Roman)		
3676	SO 97804 43090	Rectangular cropmarks photographed in the 1960s and 1990s.
8749	SO 97544 44052	Rectilinear and circular cropmarks photographed in the 1960s and 1990s.
24022	SO 97770 43700	Cropmarks of part of a double-ditched square or rectangular enclosure photographed in 1996.
24040	SO 98960 43100	Cropmarks of small square enclosure with rounded corners and entrance along the east side. Photographed in 1996.
26793	SO 99267 43229	Linear cropmarks photographed in 1996.

Table 1: Roman sites and find-spots in the area of the hoard

3 Aims

The aims of the project were:

- to identify archaeological deposits, layers, structures, horizons, features or deposits (heritage assets) associated with the find-spot;
- to describe and assess the significance of the heritage asset/s with archaeological interest;
- to establish the nature, importance and extent of the archaeological site;
- to assess the state of preservation and vulnerability of the heritage asset/s with archaeological interest;
- to assess the potential suitability of the site for subsequent investigations, such as geophysical (non-invasive) survey

4 Methods

4.1 Preliminary research

All information on the site, on the hoard and its context was collected and studied before the fieldwork began. The find-spot was visited, and the coins themselves were examined and discussed with the finders and the PAS Finds Liaison Officer. Records of sites and finds in the immediate vicinity of the hoard were obtained from the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record. The report included topographic information and a series of historic maps.

4.2 Fieldwork

4.2.1 Excavation

The excavation took place between the 4 and 8 July 2011. It followed the specification set out in the proposal (HEAS 2011, 2-3), including sieving of a sample of the spoil using a shaking sieve with a 5mm mesh.

The 3m by 3m trench was positioned with the find-spot at the centre. After the turf was cut and stacked for later replacement, the trench was scanned with a metal-detector (one or both finders being on-hand throughout) and hand excavation was undertaken using trowels. After a 0.10m spit of ploughsoil had been removed and sieved the trench was scanned again. As few artefacts were found, the team switched to mattocks and only half the spoil (approximately) was sieved. After the ploughsoil was removed, the team began to excavate deposits and features stratigraphically, using mattocks and trowels as circumstances required. Each newly-exposed deposit and fill was scanned, as was the spoil, although sieving proved unproductive and was discontinued. By such means, it is considered that almost all the coins and metalwork and other artefacts in the area of the trench have been recovered.

Drawn, written, and photographic records were made according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995). In addition, the Documentation Officer of Worcester Museum and Art Gallery recorded the whole excavation photographically, and in occasional video clips.

The trench was backfilled by a wheeled excavator supplied by the landowner and operated by his son.

4.2.2 Survey

During the excavation, the finders of the hoard scanned the whole field and dug small shallow holes to investigate responses. (Fig 3) No more coins were found. A fragment of a copper alloy Roman trumpet brooch was recovered along with many iron nails. The nails were undated but were determined to be pre-modern.

The backfilled holes resulting from this survey, and from the survey undertaken on 18 June, were located by the Documentation Officer and PAS Finds Liaison Officer using the Service's Leica Netrover GPS (Fig 3).

The density and spread of the finds can be argued to indicate the extent of the Roman occupation area across the field.

4.3 Post-fieldwork

4.3.1 Stratigraphy

After the fieldwork, the records were checked and levels were related to Ordnance Survey datum. The stratigraphic sequence was then checked and revised by overlaying plans. The stratigraphic context of the hoard could not be observed, as the hole dug to recover it was larger than the pit dug to bury it. However, this issue was resolved by using the levelled plans and sections to reconstruct the stratigraphy in the centre of the trench. As discussed below, this allows the stratigraphic context of the hoard to be established beyond reasonable doubt.

4.3.2 Artefacts

After being washed and marked, the artefacts from the excavation were scanned to assess the date range of activity represented by the assemblage and to establish when the hoard was deposited.

4.3.3 Soil sample

Two litres of soil surrounding the hoard was recovered, retained, and brought to the Service's Environmental Archaeologist for analysis. This was dry-sieved and sorted, as it was thought to contain fragments of textile and leather.

5 Records

The records made during the excavation can be summarised as follows:

Record/catalogue type	Reference	Quantity
Context sheets	AS1	25
Fieldwork progress sheets	AS2	2
Photographic record sheets	AS3	3
Drawing number records	AS4	1
Site drawing sheets	AS34	9
Trench record sheets	AS41	2
Digital photographs	n/a	128
Boxes of finds	n/a	1
Soil samples	n/a	1

Table 2: Record quantification

Artefact/sample type	Quantity (count)	Roman deposits	Post-Roman deposits
Pottery	534	275	259
Building materials	Not quantified		
Coins	14	6	8
Copper alloy	7		6
Iron	24	17	7
Lead	2	1	1
Bone	1	1	0
Bulk samples	1	1	0

Table 3: Artefact and sample quantification

6 Results

6.1 Stratigraphy

The following section describes the main deposits and features found in the excavation. It also notes associated artefacts and *terminus post quem* or baseline dates. The phasing is provisional but unlikely to change except in detail.

6.1.1 Natural deposits

Natural deposits were exposed in a sondage excavated in one corner of the trench (Figs 4 and 7, context 125; Plate 3). At this point, they were 0.76m below the surface.

6.1.2 Roman deposits

Phase 1

The earliest Roman deposit was a reworked subsoil (context 123), which contained a few sherds of Roman pottery (not represented in Table 4 below).

Phase 2

The first of three structures on the site of the trench was represented by an unbonded but consolidated mass of medium to large roughly-hewn stones (Fig 4; context 121; Plate 4). They probably represent a slighted wall foundation or the edge of a platform for a timber building.

Phase 3

The Phase 2 structure was sealed by a soil containing large flat stones which may have formed a surface (context 120). It was sealed by another, less stony soil (context 113). Between them, these deposits produced 71 sherds of pottery and a single coin. The coin has been provisionally dated to AD 260-282. This is broadly consistent with the pottery, which suggests a late 2nd to 3rd century *terminus post quem*.

Phase 4

The Phase 3 soils were cut by the foundation for a wall which was aligned north-west to south-east along one side of the trench (Fig 5; contexts 122 and 124; Plate 5). The wall was founded on yellow limestone fragments in a matrix of greyish brown clay silt (context 122). By analogy with other Roman sites in the region, such structures were probably intended to be carried up in timber, rather than in stone.

Phase 5

After the Phase 4 wall was demolished, it was overlain by deposits of reddish brown sand (context 107) and yellowish/greenish brown clay silt (Fig 6; context 112). Sixteen sherds of pottery from the latter deposit suggest a 2nd century *terminus post quem*.

Broadly contemporary activity was represented by two postholes (Fig 6; contexts 106 and 109), a partially-exposed pit (context 118), and two stakeholes (contexts 115 and 117). The postholes were roughly the same distance from the Phase 4 wall and may have been elements of a building that replaced it on much the same footprint.

Phase 6

The demolition of the Phase 5 building, or structure, was represented by a layer of soil containing 54 sherds of 3rd to 4th century pottery (context 104). It also contained two coins, provisionally dated to AD 260-282.

Phase 7

The Phase 6 deposit was sealed by a layer of soil with frequent limestone fragments which probably represent a demolished building or structure (Fig 7, context 103; Plate 6). It contained 64 sherds of pottery with a mid 4th century *terminus post quem*.

Phase 8

In all probability, the hoard was dug through the Phase 7 demolition debris, or perhaps through the layer above (context 102). As noted above, stratigraphic position of the hoard could not be observed in the field, as the hole dug to recover it was larger than the pit dug to bury it. Both holes were roughly the same depth, however, and a reconstruction of the stratigraphy in the centre of the trench (Fig 7) shows that it must have been cut through this layer or the jar containing the coins could not have been buried.

6.1.3 Post-Roman deposits

Phase 9

The latest Roman layer (context 103) was sealed by a reworked soil with humic and leached horizons (contexts 100=101 and context 102). This soil represents post-Roman land-use, including cultivation, although it contained only Roman artefacts (259 sherds of pottery, 8 coins and 14 other metal artefacts).

6.2 Artefacts

6.2.1 Coins, by Richard Henry

The coin hoard consists of around 3,700 debased Roman radiates which had been stored in a Severn Valley ware vessel. The radiate denomination was introduced by Caracella (AD 198-217) as a double denarius, although over the next half century the radiate became heavily debased and a primarily copper-alloy denomination. There were a number of attempts to reform the coinage, the reforms of Aurelian (AD 270-275) created a larger module coin which was often silver washed or plated.

A preliminary identification of a select number of coins suggest the coins date from AD 260–282. A number of radiates of Gallienus (AD 260-268) and rulers from the Gallic Empire (Reece Period 13) were visible. There are a large number of post-reform radiates from Reece Period 14, including Aurelian, Florian (AD 276), and Probus (AD 276-282). The coins average around 3 grams a coin which is consistent with the later post-reform radiates under Aurelian and his successors. Further research and an emperor count are required to supplement any further details on the hoard.

Hoards of debased Roman radiates are relatively common. A recent example is the Frome Hoard, which contained a similar range of emperors and dates, However, the present hoard lacks radiates of Carausius (AD 286-293) and Allectus (AD 293-296) which are commonly found in other radiate hoards. It also contains radiates of Gallic emperors which other 'legitimist' hoards lack. Considering that radiate hoards are relatively common there are few examples of hoards being deposited in later periods, except for the Gloucestershire hoard, which was deposited in a vessel *c* AD 420.

Thirteen coins were found also during the excavation, they consist of one Roman sestertius, probably from the 2nd century AD, 11 Roman radiates dating to between AD 260–275 (Reece Period 13) and one probable barbarous radiate. Further research which will be undertaken at the British Museum will be needed to date these coins more precisely.

6.2.2 Vessel containing the hoard, by Jane Evans

The jar containing the hoard was in fragments, possibly as a result of plough damage, and had not been washed. It was, however, possible to estimate its original profile and thus its form and date. It was a narrow-mouthed jar, with a diameter of 110mm, in Severn Valley ware, WHEAS Fabric 12 (Hurst and Rees 1992; www.worcestershireceramics.org), the most common fabric produced and used in the region during the Roman period.

This particular form, with a simple out-curving rim and globular profile, is thought to be a long-lived type, dating from the mid 1st century AD to the 4th century AD (Webster 1976, fig. 1.1). It was the most common narrow-mouthed jar type produced at the Malvern, Newland Hopfields kiln site (Evans *et al* 2000, fig. 21.JNM1), where the main period of production was dated to the mid-to-late 2nd into the 3rd century (*op. cit*. 70). The most interesting parallel, in terms of dating and perhaps the wider context of deposition, comes from excavations at Bays Meadow villa in Droitwich (Barfield 2006). The complete profile of a similar jar is published from Phase 3 (*op. cit.* fig. 97.116). This phase has a clear *terminus post quem* of *c* AD 289, based on coins associated with the construction of a defensive rampart (*op. cit*. 125-6). It is thought that the main villa was destroyed sometime in the late 3rd century, and new building occurred from *c* AD 355.

No good parallels for the jar are evident in the later 4th century, phase 4, assemblage from Bays Meadow.

Based on the evidence presented above, the form of the jar associated with the hoard is consistent with the date of the coins it contained. However, the stratigraphic position of the hoard suggests a later date for the burial, and for the jar.

6.2.3 Artefacts from the excavation, by Jane Evans

The excavation produced a range of Roman artefacts (Table 4). The artefacts were in good condition, indicating a favourable burial environment and little post-depositional disturbance.

Context	Roman pot (count)	Roman pot (wt. g)	*Av. wt. (g)*	CBM (count)	CBM (wt. g)	*Av. wt. (g)*	Bone	Context *tpq*
Hoard jar	62	*1617*	26	0	0		0	Mid-late 3rd+
100	113	*659*	6	36	459	*13*	30	Late 3rd-4th
101	96	*527*	5	50	325	*7*	24	2nd-3rd?
102	50	*649*	13	13	290	*22*	4	Late 3rd-4th
103	67	*565*	8	4	0	*0*	6	Mid 4th +
104	54	*486*	9	3	1450	*483*	4	Late 3rd-4th
105	2	*9*	5	0	0		0	2nd
111	3	*40*	13	1	535	*535*	0	2nd
112	16	*184*	12	1	20	*20*	20	2nd
113	54	*843*	16	5	444	*89*	15	Late 2nd-early 3rd (or late 2nd-4th?)
120	17	167	*10*	0	0		6	2nd century
Total	534	5746	*11*	113	3523	*31*	109	

Table 4: Summary of bulk finds by context

Pottery

The pottery suggests a long period of occupation. The earliest activity was represented by small quantities of Palaeozoic limestone tempered ware (WHEAS fabric 4.1). This was a common Iron Age ware that continued to be produced and used into the mid 1st century AD. Given the absence of any other evidence of pre-Roman activity on the site, a mid 1st century AD date seems most likely. However, all sherds were residual in 2nd century or later deposits (2 sherds from 101, 1 sherd from 103, 1 sherd from 105, 3 sherds from 120).

Eight sherds of samian were recovered. The group included fragments of possible South Gaulish samian dating to the 1st century AD. A Dr 36 bowl and a decorated Dr 37 bowl came from layer 103, clearly residual. Another possible South Gaulish Dr 37 bowl came from context 113, also residual and associated with a 2nd century, Central Gaulish Dr 33 cup. Evidence for 1st to 2nd century activity was also provided by diagnostic coarse wares: sherds of organic tempered Severn Valley ware (WHEAS fabric 12.2) and handmade Malvernian ware (WHEAS fabric 3). The assemblage included diagnostic sherds of 2nd century Black-burnished ware (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, fig. 123, WA type 22), and late 2nd to early 3rd century BB1, with right-angled cross hatch. Most of the Severn Valley ware forms dated broadly to the 2nd/3rd to 4th centuries. Various forms indicated late 3rd to 4th century activity: Black-burnished ware bowls (Seager Smith and

Davies 1993, fig. 124, WA type 25), and an Oxfordshire colour-coated bowl (WHEAS fabric 29) dated 270+.120).

The latest dating evidence came from 6 sherds of late Roman shell-tempered ware (WHEAS 23), two of which had burnt residues. These could be submitted for C14 analysis if closer dating was required. This ware generally dates to the later 4th to 5th century, particularly when found in quantity. The date of its earliest occurrence is less clear. For instance, at excavations at 14-20, The Butts, Worcester, it was associated with two coins dating to AD 330-335 and one to AD 337-340, at Evesham Road, Pershore (Griffin 2005, table 6) the latest coins dated to AD 354-364, and in Gloucester it is associated with a coin hoard dated post-AD 388 (Hassall and Rhodes 1975, 85-6).

The earliest deposit on site (120) appears to date to the 2nd century. The deposit above this (113) certainly dates to the late 2nd to early 3rd century, but also includes a sherd of late 3rd to 4th century BB1 (the latter could be intrusive). Three deposits above this (105, 111, 112) produced only very small assemblages dated 2nd century or later. Layers 104, 103,102 and 100 all produced late 3rd to 4th century pottery, mixed with 2nd century material. The late Roman shell-tempered ware was found in layer 103.

Building materials

The assemblage included substantial fragments of Roman ceramic building material, particularly from layer 104. This included diagnostic fragments of tegula, imbrex and possible box flue tile. A near-complete stone roof tile was recovered from the ploughsoil (102), and 22 iron nails were recovered from upper layers (101, 102, 103 and 104). This all reflects the presence of a significant Roman structure.

Other artefacts

Other artefacts include six hobnails (five from the ploughsoil, contexts 101 and 102) and the other from layer 104), and the tip of a bone pin from (context 112). There were a couple of fragments of lead/lead waste, an unidentified perforated object, a fragment of possible slag, and fragments of mortar.

There were also 648 grams of animal bone fragments from seven contexts (100, 101, 102, 111, 112, 113, and 120). All the bones are consistent with domestic refuse. The bones are mostly from cattle and sheep/goat, but include pit bones (in context 101) and a rodent bone (in context 112). Some bones have cut marks and some have been gnawed by rodents. None of the bones are complete enough to warrant measuring or statistical analysis.

Finally, context 113 produced a small fragment of charcoal. The wood is probably hawthorn, and has saw marks (Alan Clapham, pers comm).

6.3 Soil sample, by Alan Clapham

As noted above, the soil recovered from around the hoard was initially thought to contain fragments of textile and leather. Accordingly, the sample was sifted through a series of geological sieves.

One coin was recovered and provisionally identified as a Roman radiate dating to AD 260-282. Large amounts of small fragments of oolitic limestone were also recorded

along with *Echinodern* (sea urchin) fossil remains which belong with the limestone fragments.

The piece of 'textile' recovered was in fact a mass of modern roots which were common throughout the sample. The 'leather' was in fact animal dung (either cow or sheep) as it consisted of finely comminuted plant remains.

Part 2: Updated Project Design

7 Updated aims

The original aims of the excavation have been achieved, in that the stratigraphic context of the hoard has been established. It was evidently deposited late in the history of a large and significant Roman settlement. However, more work needs to be done to produce a full report on the excavation archive. A full report will also be required to inform the interpretation of the hoard itself, and form part of any future report.

It would be very desirable to learn more about the settlement by undertaking more investigative fieldwork. At present, it appears that settlement was large, long-lived, and materially rich, but nothing more can be said on the basis of an extensive scatter of coins and a small excavated sample. The most informative and cost-effective method of further investigation would be geophysical survey: ideally, this should cover the whole area where finds have been made, which measures approximately 335m from east to west and 90m from north to south (3 hectares or 7½ acres). Ideally, such a survey should be complemented by a detailed topographic survey, and by test-pitting in the woodland to the south.

The updated aims can therefore be summarised as follows:

- Geophysical survey;
- Topographic survey;
- To analyse the excavation archive to appropriate standards;
- To produce a combined report on the excavation, the surveys and the hoard;
- To address issues raised by the results by undertaking research on local sites and other coin hoards in the region

8 Methods statement

The following work is necessary to produce a full report for publication.

8.1 Stratigraphic analysis

Brief descriptions of all deposits and features will need to be entered into a database (to form part of a digital archive), and reproduced as an appendix to the report. The phasing of the Roman deposits will need to be checked and perhaps revised once the artefact analysis is complete.

8.2 Artefact analysis

Pottery

Further work required for full publication comprises detailed analysis by fabric and form, and full quantification of the pottery assemblage. This will allow detailed comparison with other sites, and discussion of the site's status in relation to other rural and villa sites. It is estimated that *c* 20 sherds will require illustration. The hoard jar will need to be reconstructed before illustration.

Building materials

For full publication, detailed analysis by fabric and form is required for the building material, and detailed analysis by type for the nails. It is estimated that 7 items will require illustration.

Other artefacts

One or two of the metal artefacts may need to be illustrated.

Animal bone

The animal bone will require some analysis. This will involve identifying all the bones to species and recording any butchery, pathology, burning and gnawing.

8.3 Illustration

As well as the artefact illustrations suggested above, it will be necessary to illustrate the location of the find-spot (once the information has been released), and also the locations of other Roman sites and find-spots in the area.

8.4 Research

The report would benefit greatly from limited research on other Roman coin hoards in the region, and on other hoards with well-established stratigraphic contexts. In particular, it would be instructive to identify any other hoards closely associated with contemporary settlements, and especially other hoards of coins that may have been curated and selected for burial.

9 Task list

Task	Task name	Personnel	Days
1	*Project management*	*tbc*	*tbc*
2	*Stratigraphic analysis*	*tbc*	*tbc*
2.1	Finalise phasing	*tbc*	*tbc*
3	*Artefact analysis*	*tbc*	*tbc*
3.1	Coarse pottery	*tbc*	*tbc*
	Samian ware	*tbc*	*tbc*
3.2	Building materials	*tbc*	*tbc*
3.3	Metalwork	*tbc*	*tbc*
3.4	Animal bone	*tbc*	*tbc*
4	*Illustration*	*tbc*	*tbc*
4.1	Location of find-spot and excavation	*tbc*	*tbc*
4.2	Sites and find-spots in surrounding area	*tbc*	*tbc*
4.3	Selected artefacts	*tbc*	*tbc*
5	*Research*	*tbc*	*tbc*
5.1	Research on sites and finds in surrounding area	*tbc*	*tbc*
5.2	Research on Roman coin hoards in Worcestershire	*tbc*	*tbc*
6	*Liaison with specialists*	*tbc*	*tbc*
7	*Compiling report*	*tbc*	*tbc*
8	*Editing report*	*tbc*	*tbc*
9	*Archiving*	*tbc*	*tbc*

Table 5: Task list

10 Storage, conservation and archiving

At present, the coins from the hoard and the excavation are being cleaned and conserved in the British Museum. It is assumed that the coins will be defined as treasure, according to the Treasure Act 1996, and will be valued and either sold to a museum, where they will be kept, or returned to the landowner. The jar that contained the hoard is also currently at the British Museum.

The other artefacts are currently held by the Field Section of the Service, along with the site archive. None of the artefacts are thought to require specialist conservation. It is anticipated that this part of the archive will be deposited with Worcestershire Museums, either in the County Museum at Hartlebury Castle or with Worcester Museum and Art Gallery.

11 Quality

The Service is part of Worcestershire County Council and is subject to the Council's policies, safeguards, practices and audit procedures.

The Service is registered as an archaeological organisation (RAO) with the Institute for Archaeologists, and as such is bound to the IfA's *Code of Conduct* and bylaws.

The following are relevant to this project:

- *Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology* (2008a);

- *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (2008b); and
- *Guidelines for finds work.*

The project and any recommendations will conform to the government advice contained in *Planning Policy Statement 5* (PPS5: DCLG 2010) and *Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (DCLG/DCMS/EH 2010).

The Service is covered by public and employer's liability insurance (with a limit of £40 million), and professional indemnity insurance (with a limit of £5 million). Insurance is with Chartis Insurance UK Ltd (Policy Number 21005095, expires 29 September 2011).

12 Acknowledgements

The project stemmed from the dedication and responsibility of Jethro Carpenter and Mark Gilmore who found and reported the hoard to PAS. They also lent their services during the excavation and ensured a very high recovery of coins and metalwork. The project team are indebted to them, and to John Cook, the landowner and farmer, for permitting and supporting the excavation. Thanks are also due to Richard Henry (PAS Finds Liaison Officer) for liaising with the finders, identifying coins, assisting on site, and providing invaluable information. Finally, the project team are grateful to Deborah Fox (Documentation Officer, Museums Worcestershire) for making a comprehensive record of the excavation and assisting with sieving and surveying.

13 Project personnel

The project was led by Darren Miller. Assistance in the field was provided by Mike Nicholson and Tim Cornah. Mike Nicholson also assisted with record-checking and stratigraphic analysis. Finds analysis was undertaken by Richard Henry and Jane Evans, sample processing by Alan Clapham, and illustration by Carolyn Hunt. Emma Hancox commented on the animal bone. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan.

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Plates

Plate 1: General view of find-spot and trench, view west

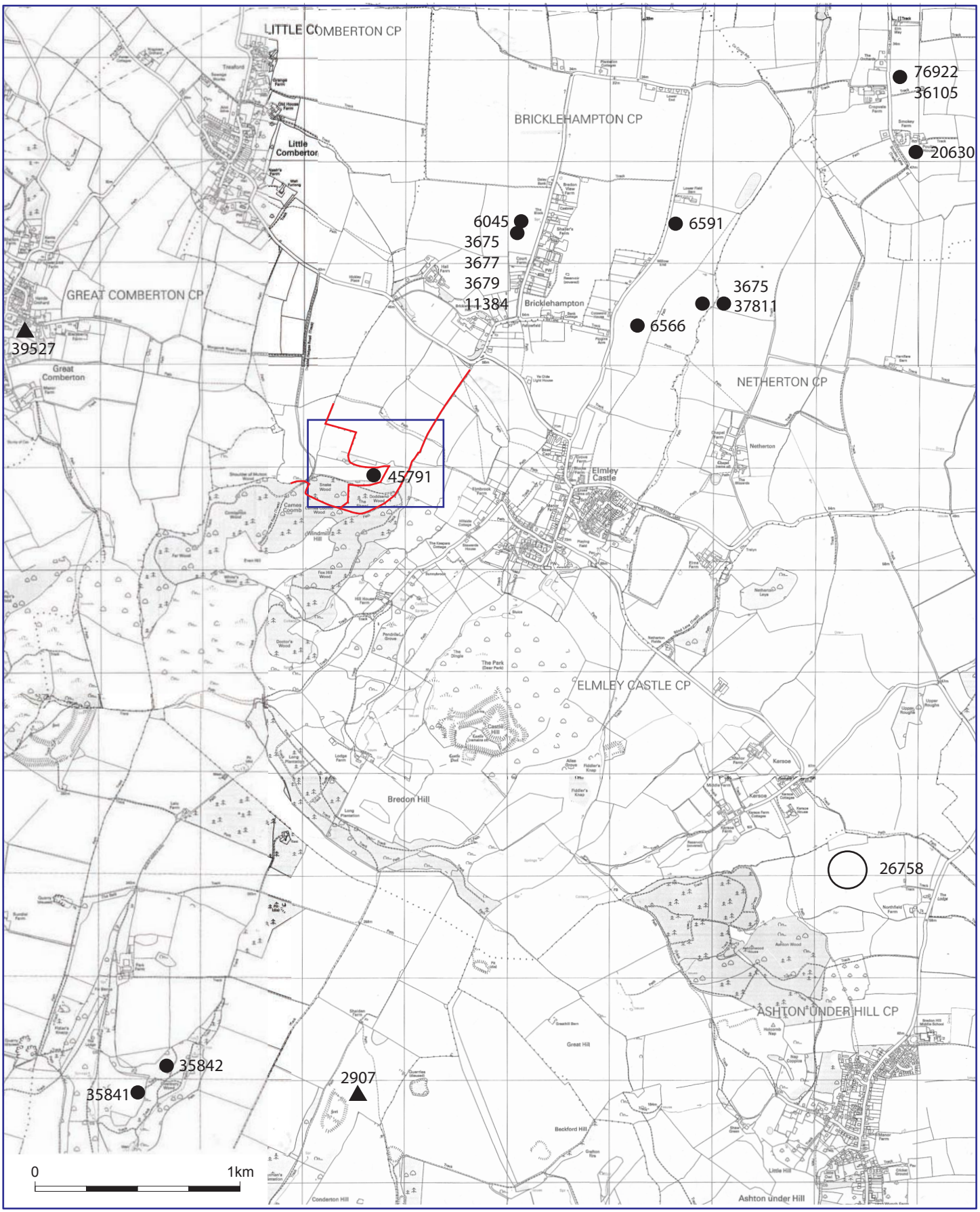
Plate 2; General view of find-spot and trench, view south-east

Plate 3: Sondage in east corner of trench showing broad sequence of deposits to natural

Plate 4: Structure 121, view south-east

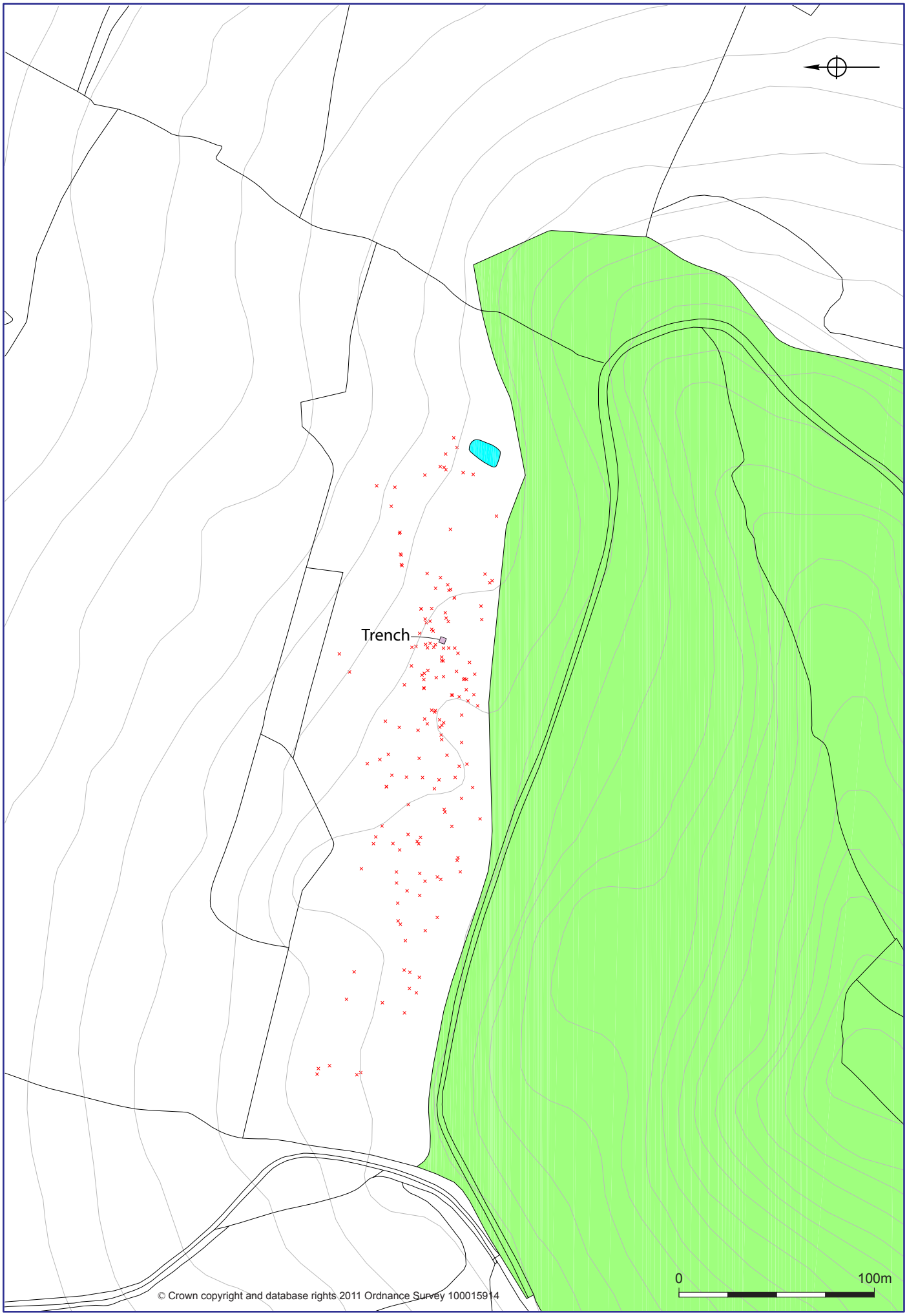
Plate 5: Foundation 122, view south-west

Plate 6: Demolition debris 103, view south-west

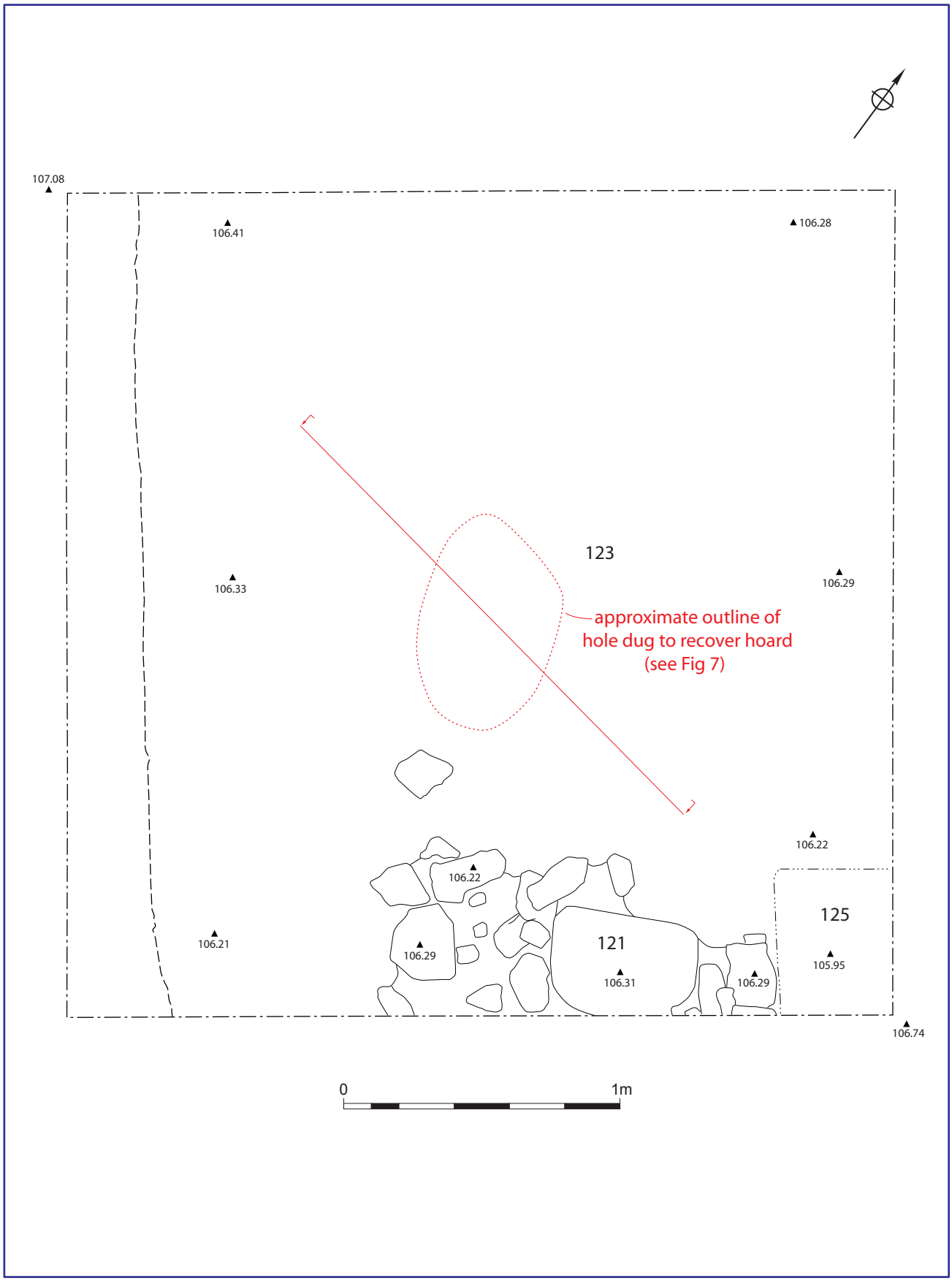


Location of the site and sites in the vicinity

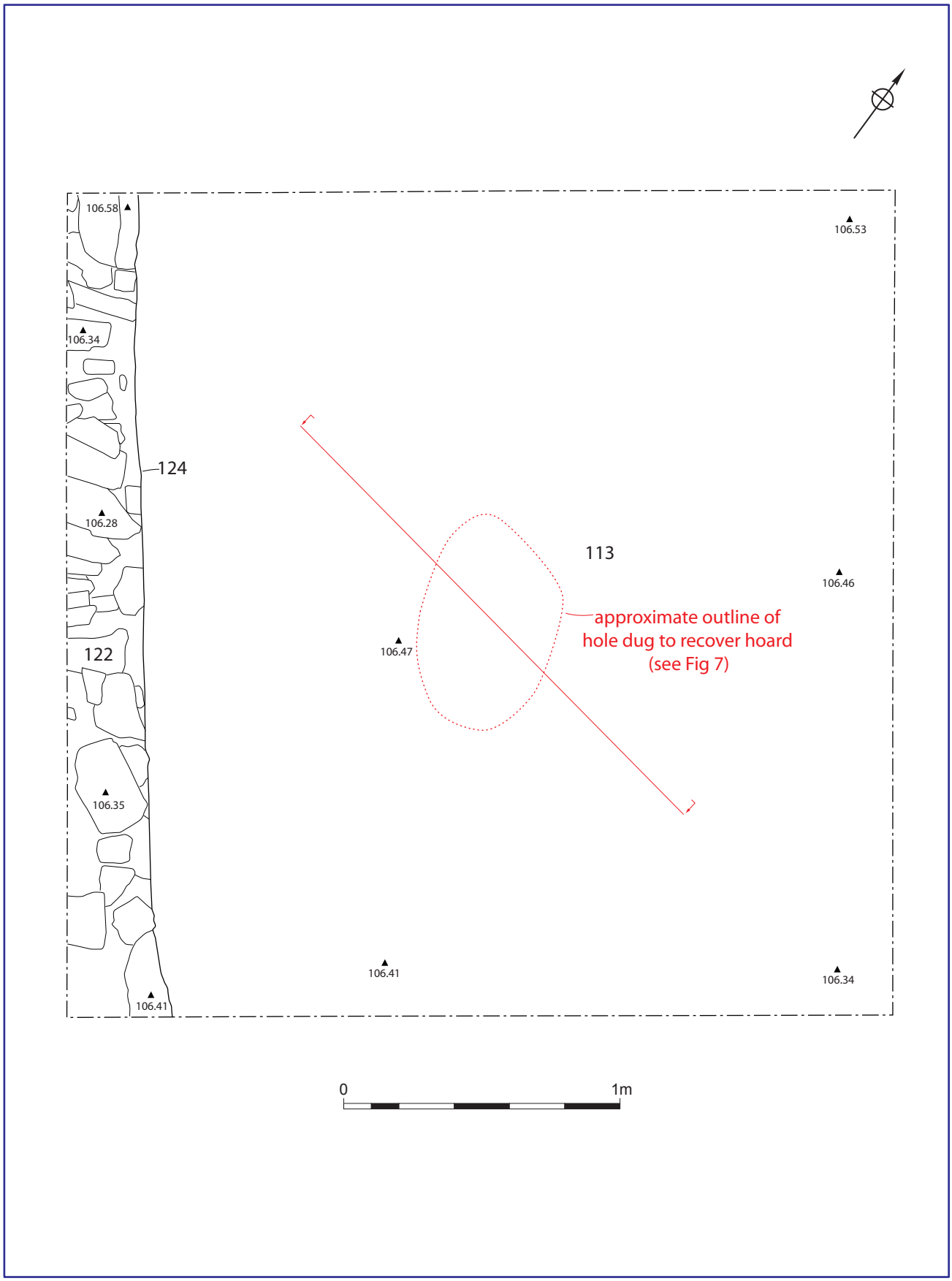
Figure 1



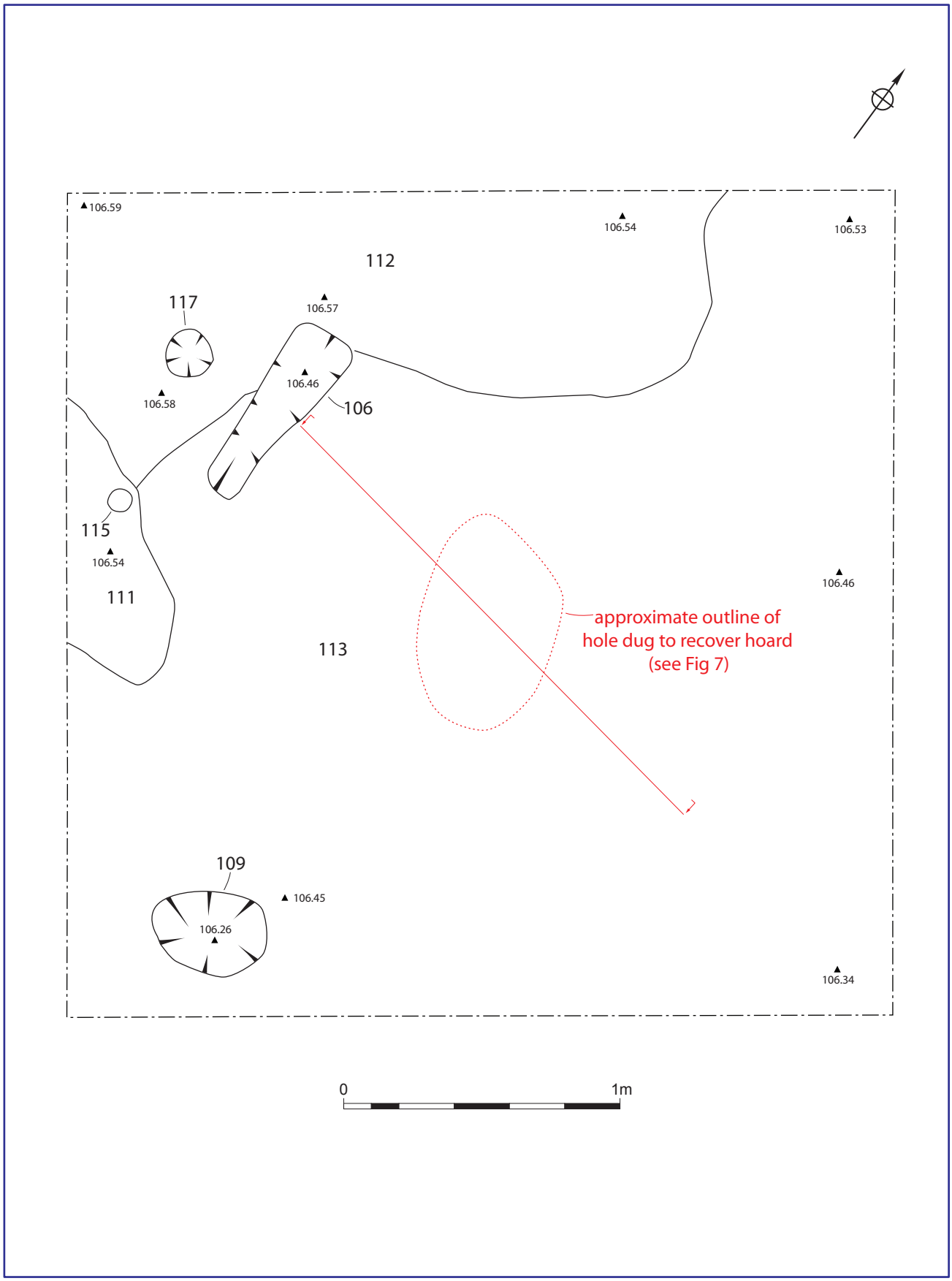
Location of trench and metal-detecting holes *Figure 3*



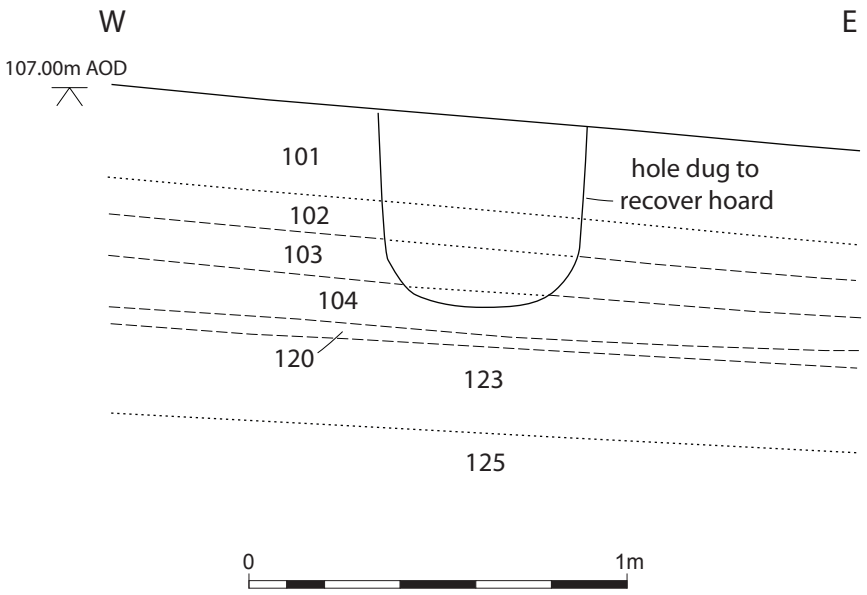
Phase 2 foundation *Figure 4*



Phase 4 foundation *Figure 5*



Phase 5 features *Figure 6*



Reconstructed section across hole dug to recover hoard
(dotted lines indicate uncertain boundaries)

Figure 7