ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT LAND NORTH-EAST OF UPTON MARINA, UPTON ON SEVERN, WORCESTERSHIRE

Worcestershire Archaeology
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Contents

Archaeological Evaluation at land north-east of Upton Marina, Upton on Severn, Worcestershire

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With a contribution by Dennis Williams

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land north-east of Upton Marina, Upton on Severn, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8588 4093). It was undertaken on behalf of Tingdene Marinas Limited, in advance of a proposed residential development for which an outline planning application has been submitted.

Fifteen trenches, amounting to 1088m² in area, were excavated across the proposed site. One ditch, dating to the early to middle Roman period (1st-2nd centuries) was revealed. The sherd size and quantity of the pottery recovered from the ditch indicates that there was Roman activity in the area, although no other archaeological features or deposits were identified on the site. Two sherds of later medieval pottery were also recovered from unstratified deposits, although these are probably indicative of medieval manuring practice, rather than settlement activity.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land north-east of Upton Marina, Upton on Severn, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8588 4093). It was commissioned by Tingdene Marina Limited, in advance of a proposed residential development for which an outline planning application has been submitted to Malvern District Council (reference MH/13/0431).

The proposed development site is considered to include heritage assets and potential heritage assets. The project conforms to a brief prepared by Mike Glyde, the planning archaeologist for Worcestershire County Council (Glyde 2013) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (WA 2013).

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2009) and *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

The event reference for this project, given by the Worcestershire HER is WSM49624.

2 Aims

The aims of this evaluation are:

- to describe and assess the significance of the heritage asset with archaeological interest;
- to establish the nature, importance and extent of the archaeological site;
- to assess the impact of the application on the archaeological site.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was undertaken by Andrew Walsh BSc MSc AIfA FSA Scot; who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2013 and has been practicing archaeology since 2004. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan BA MA AIfA. Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt MIFA BSc (Hons) and Dennis Williams BSc MA PhD CPhys, MinstP contributed the finds report.

3.2 Documentary research

A desk-based assessment was undertaken Archaeological Services Durham University (ASDU 2013). This report contained the results of a HER search and map regression, and concluded that there was potential for unidentified prehistoric, Roman and medieval activity to exist within the proposed development site.

3.3 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2013) which proposed a trench location plan. As a result of overhead power cables in the northern part of the site the proposed trench locations and sizes were amended in this area to fit the available working space.

Fieldwork was undertaken between 12th and 14th June 2013. The site reference number and site code is WSM 49624.

Fifteen trenches, amounting to 1088m² in area, were excavated over the site area of 27300ha, representing a sample of c4%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2. No archaeological features had been recognised prior to the evaluation so the trenches were distributed across the site in order to sample all areas.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a 360º tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples (as required), as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

3.4 Structural analysis

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was effected through a combination of structural, and artefactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

3.5 Artefact methodology, by Dennis Williams

3.5.1 Artefact recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Service practice (WA 2012a; appendix 2).

3.5.2 Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A *terminus post quem* date range was produced for each stratified context. These date ranges were used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on *pro forma* sheets.

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined under x20 magnification and referenced as appropriate by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by the Service (Hurst and Rees 1992 and www.worcestershireceramics.org).

3.5.3 Discard policy

The following categories/types of material will be discarded after a period of 6 months following the submission of this report, unless there is a specific request to retain them (and subject to the collection policy of the relevant depository):

- where unstratified
- post-medieval pottery, and;
- generally where material has been assessed as having no obvious grounds for retention.

4 The application site

4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context

The proposed development site is located on a south-west facing slope with the elevation ranging from 14 to 20m above Ordnance Datum (OD). The site is bounded to the north by the A4104, to the east and south-east by residential properties, and to the south-west and west by fields of rough ground.

The underlying geology of the site is mapped as Triassic Sidmouth Mudstone Formation, overlain by superficial deposits of Quaternary sand and gravels (BGS 2013). Superficial deposits are not mapped along the edge of the south-west facing slope.

Although no prehistoric or Roman activity was identified on the site by the desk-based assessment (ASDU 2013), it did highlight evidence that the area was exploited during these periods and there was potential for this activity to extend into the site. The site is also located between the probable medieval settlements of Holly Green and Rag House and the site may have been used as agricultural land during the medieval period.

4.2 Current land-use

The site is located on former pasture, which has not been grazed for a number of years and is heavily overgrown.

5 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figures 2 and 3. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

Natural deposits were encountered in all trenches, although they varied significantly across the site. In general at the top of the hill (to the east of the site; Trenches 4, 6 7, 10 and 15) a greyish or orangey brown sand was visible (Plate 1). Running round the side of the hill (Trenches 1, 2, 3, 8, 11, 13 and 14) was a band of greyish sand and gravel, and bright red Sidmouth Mudstone Formation (Plate 2). At the base of the hill (Trenches 5, 9 and 12) was an orangey sand (Trench 5) turning into a gravelly sand (Plate 3) to the south of the site (Trenches 9 and 12).

5.1.2 Phase 2: Roman deposits

A ditch cut [1003] natural deposits in Trench 10 (Figure 3). It measured 1.66m in width and 0.43m in depth and was aligned east to west. It was filled by a yellowish brown silty sand (1002) which yielded twelve sherds of Roman pottery (Plate 4). A re-cut [1005], which measured 0.76m in width and 0.31m in depth, was visible in the east facing section of the ditch (Plate 5). It was filled by a mid-grey sand silt (1004) which yielded nineteen sherds of Roman pottery and contained frequent charcoal flecking. The re-cut terminated within the excavated slot of the ditch.

5.1.3 Phase 3: Modern deposits

Directly above the Roman deposits in Trench 10, and natural deposits in all other trenches were a subsoil and topsoil. These broadly consisted of a reddish brown sandy silt subsoil and a greyish brown sandy silt topsoil. Two sherds of abraded medieval pottery were recovered from the topsoil or subsoil during the machine excavation of Trench 7.

5.2 Artefact analysis, by Dennis Williams

The artefactual assemblage consisted entirely of coarseware pottery, comprising Roman sherds from two stratified contexts, and medieval sherds from unstratified deposits, as shown in Table 1. The pottery was in generally good condition, with moderate levels of abrasion and a mean sherd weight that was above average for the Roman sherds.

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight (g)
Roman	ceramic	-	pot	31	632
medieval	ceramic	-	pot	2	20
			totals:	33	652

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

The pottery fabrics are listed in Table 2, and were datable to their broad production spans.

Roman

Ditch 1003 was associated with pottery of mid-1st-2nd century date (Severn Valley and Malvernian hand-made wares; the latter included a tubby cooking pot cf Peacock (1967) fig.1:3). Similar Severn Valley and Malvernian fabrics were recovered from fill 1004 (of ditch re-cut 1005), including the rim of a Peacock 1:6 cooking pot. Also recovered from fill 1004 was a substantial rim sherd from a narrow-mouthed grey ware (fabric 14) jar with traces of wavy line decoration. Close parallels to this form, probably 2nd century, have been reported among finds from Usk (Webster 1993; L Griffin, pers comm).

Medieval

All the medieval material was from unstratified deposits, comprised the local types typically found in this area, and dated from the 13th-14th century, with the closing date being less clear. Otherwise the medieval assemblage was too small for further comment.

period	fabric code	fabric common name	count	weight(g)
Roman	3	Malvernian ware	9	290
Roman	12.2	Oxidised organically tempered Severn Valley ware	9	214
Roman	12.3	Reduced organically tempered Severn Valley ware	1	12
Roman	14	Fine sandy grey ware	12	116
medieval	55	Worcester-type sandy unglazed ware	1	12
medieval	69	Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	1	8
		totals:	33	652

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery

Significance

The Roman pottery was early, with the possibility of some of it being obtained from South Wales, with the remainder from local sources. The high average sherd size was notable as it implied that settlement is probably in the near vicinity of the site. It should be noted that, approximately 400m south-east of this evaluation site, substantial fragments of Roman pottery and roof tile were recovered during earthmoving in a garden (Williams 2011). Overall the site provided further evidence of Roman occupation in this part of rural Worcestershire, and in some ways the evidence was better than usually expected, in terms of pottery types and sherd size for such a small assemblage.

Medieval activity was indicated by a few small sherds of local pottery found only in unstratified deposits, and, therefore, there seems little possibility of medieval remains on site.

context	material class	object specific type	fabric code	count	Weight (g)	start date	end date	*tpq* date range
Unstrat	ceramic	pot	55	1	12	1200	1400	-
	ceramic	pot	69	1	8	1200	1620	
1002	ceramic	pot	12.2	4	54	43	200	43-200
1002	ceramic	pot	12.2	2	24	43	200	
1002	ceramic	pot	3	5	34	43	200	
1002	ceramic	pot	3	1	20	43	200	
1004	ceramic	pot	12.2	3	136	43	200	100-200
1004	ceramic	pot	12.1	1	12	43	200	
1004	ceramic	pot	14	1	48	100	200	
1004	ceramic	pot	14	11	68	100	200	
1004	ceramic	pot	3	1	116	43	200	
1004	ceramic	pot	3	2	120	43	200	

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

6 Synthesis

No evidence of prehistoric activity was identified in the site. Romano-British activity was represented by single ditch in Trench 10. Pottery recovered from the ditch indicates that it dates to the early to middle Roman period (1st-2nd centuries). Although no other features dating to this period were identified and the ditch appears typical of a field boundary, the quantity of pottery recovered from the ditch suggest that activity was taking place in the area during the early Roman period.

There was no evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity on the site and the medieval period was only represented by two sherds of abraded pottery. These may be representative of medieval manuring practices rather than settlement activity. No post-medieval activity was identified on the site.

7 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Tingdene Marina Limited for commissioning the work and Peter Wardle (the client's archaeological advisor) for his help and support throughout.

8 Bibliography

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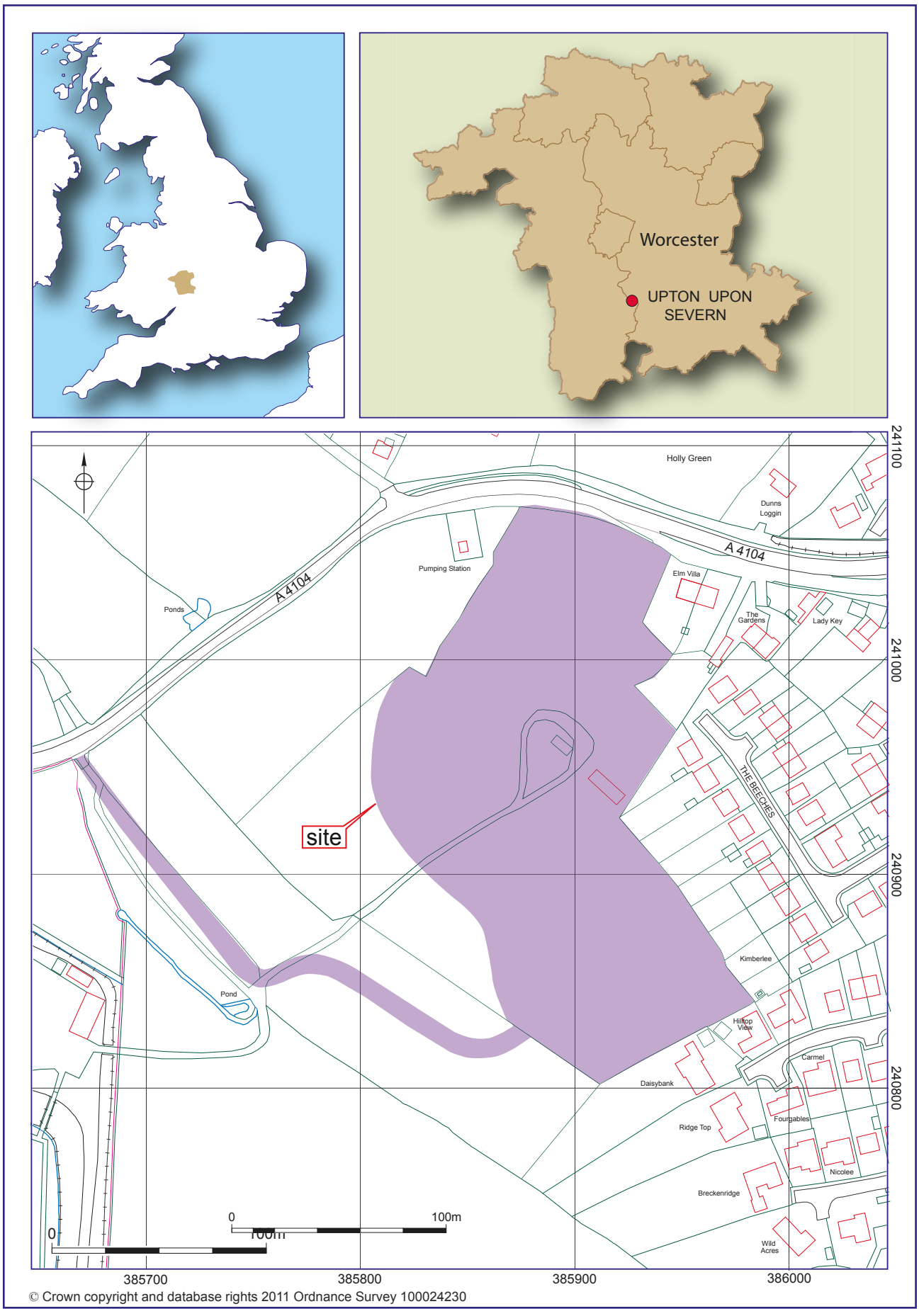
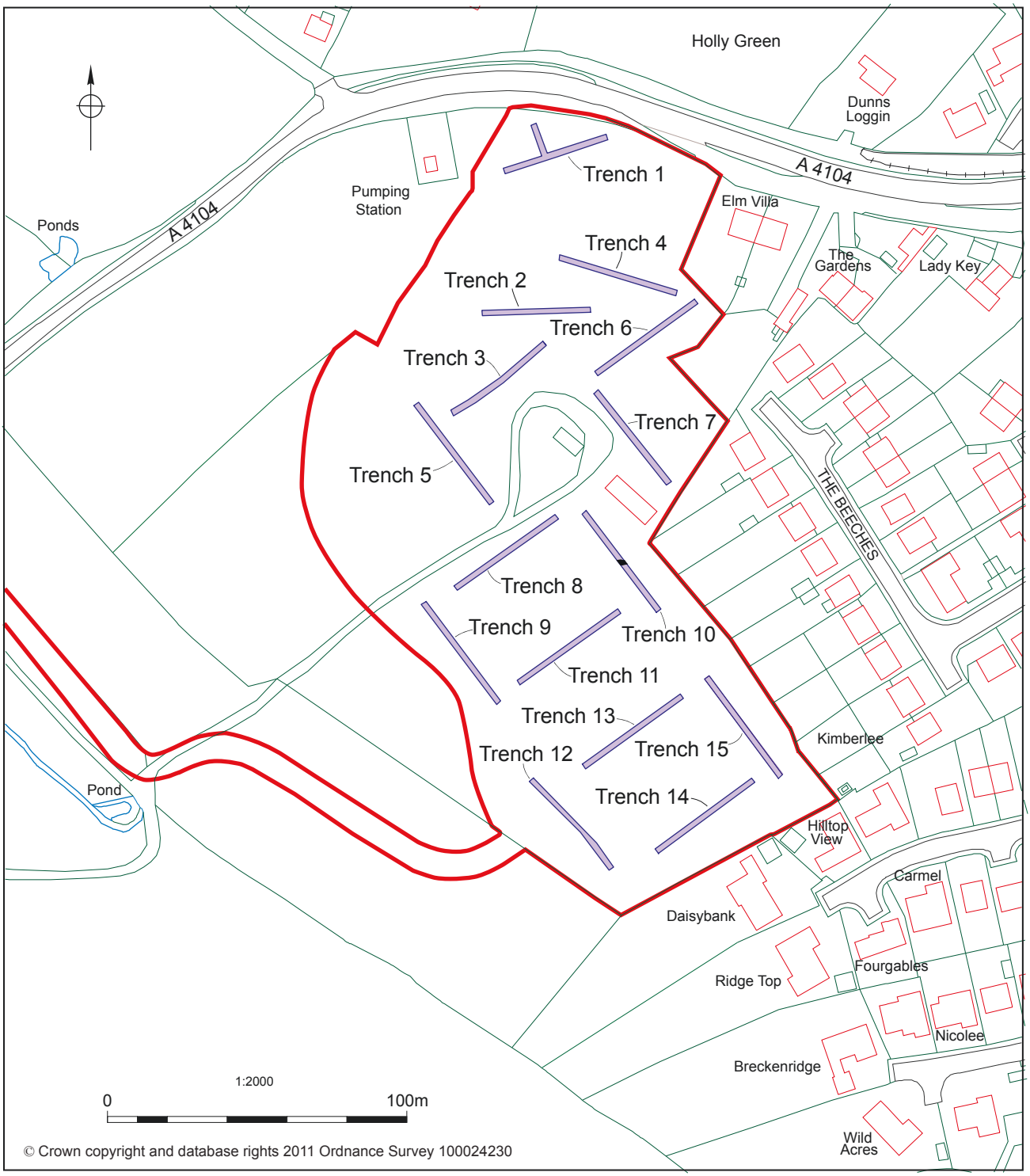
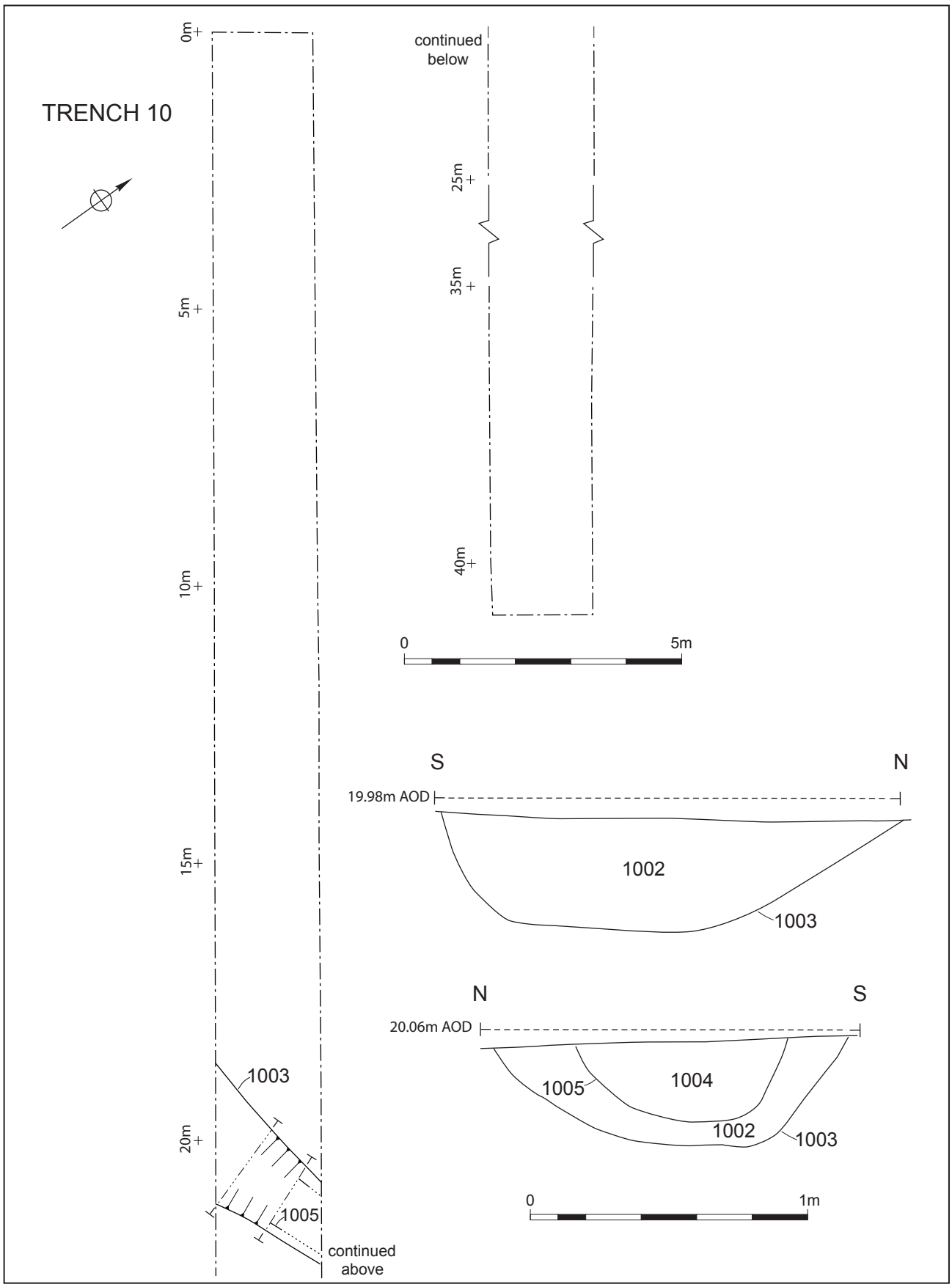
Figures



Location of the site *Figure 1*



Trench locations *Figure 2*



Trench 10: plan and sections *Figure 3*

Plates

Plate 1. The natural sand at the top of the hill to the east of the site (Trench 7)

Plate 2. The red Sidmouth Mudstone Formation on the edge of the hill (Trench 13)

Plate 3. The orangey gravelly sand on the lower ground to the west of the site (Trench 12)

Plate 4. Ditch [1003] and re-cut [1005], facing east

Plate 5. Ditch [1003], facing west

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 47.30m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.61m

Orientation: NE-SW (long axis)

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Mid-grey brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles	0.00-0.31m
101	Natural	Variable natural ranging from Sidmouth mudstone at the south western end of the trench to orange sand at the north eastern end	0.31m+

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 36m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.5m

Orientation: E-W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Mid-grey brown sandy silt with frequent pebbles	0.00-0.28m
201	Natural	Variable natural including Sidmouth mudstone at the eastern end of the trench, and red gravels and brownish orange sand to the west	0.28m+

Trench 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 39 Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.65m

Orientation: NE-SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Mid-grey brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles and frequent rooting	0.00-0.30m
301	Natural	Variable natural including Sidmouth mudstone in the centre of the trench, red gravels to the north east and orange sand to the south west	0.30m+

Trench 4

Maximum dimensions: Length: 39.5m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.4-0.61m

Orientation: E-W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
400	Topsoil	Mid-grey brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles	0.00-0.30m
401	Subsoil	Reddish brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles.	0.30-0.6m
402	Natural	Variable natural including Sidmouth mudstone grey sand and gravel at the western end of the trench, and orange sand in the centre and eastern end of the trench	0.4m+

Trench 5

Maximum dimensions: Length: 41.8m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.88m

Orientation: NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
500	Topsoil	Mid-grey brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles and frequent rooting	0.00-0.44m
501	Subsoil	Mid orangey brown sand with occasional rooting	0.44-0.35m
502	Natural	Light orange sand	0.79m+

Trench 6

Maximum dimensions: Length: 40m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.55m

Orientation: NE-SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
600	Topsoil	Mid-grey brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles	0.00-0.30m
601	Subsoil	Reddish brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles	0.30-0.50m
602	Natural	Orangey brown silty sand with occasional pebbles	0.50m+

Trench 7

Maximum dimensions: Length: 39m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.5m

Orientation: NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
700	Topsoil	Mid-grey brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles	0.00-0.30m
701	Subsoil	Reddish brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles	0.30-0.48m
702	Natural	Orangey brown silty sand with occasional pebbles	0.48m+

Trench 8

Maximum dimensions: Length: 39.8m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.30-0.60m

Orientation: NE-SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
800	Topsoil	Dark grey brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles	0.00-0.30m
801	Subsoil	Reddish brown silty sand with occasional pebbles. Visible only over the dark brown gravelly sand at south west end of trench	0.30-0.30/0.60
802	Natural	Variable natural including greyish brown sand and gravel at the north eastern edge of the trench, Sidmouth mudstone towards the northern end, and dark brown gravelly sand in the centre and south western end	0.30-0.60m+

Trench 9

Maximum dimensions: Length: 40m Width: 1.8m Depth: 1.0m

Orientation: NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
900	Topsoil	Dark grey brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles	0.00-0.35m
901	Subsoil	Reddish brown silty sand with occasional small pebbles	0.35-0.70m
902	Natural	Dark slightly reddish brown gravelly sand	0.70m+

Trench 10

Maximum dimensions: Length: 41m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.70m

Orientation: NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1000	Topsoil	Dark grey brown sandy silt with frequent pebbles and rooting	0.00-0.40m
1001	Natural	Orangey brown sand to the east, with a mixed mudstone, gravels and sands in the rest of the trench	0.4m+
1002	Fill	Mid-yellowish brown silty sand with frequent pebbles. Fill of ditch [1003]	0.40-0.83m
1003	Cut	East-west aligned ditch with steep sides to moderate sides, concave break of slope and flat base. Filled by (1002)	0.40-0.83m
1004	Fill	Mid-grey sandy silt with frequent charcoal flecking and occasional pebbles. Fill of ditch [1005]	0.40-0.71m
1005	Cut	Re-cut of ditch (1003). Filled by (1003)	0.40-0.71m

Trench 11

Maximum dimensions: Length: 40.6m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.45-0.65m

Orientation: NE-SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1100	Topsoil	Dark greyish brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles	0.00-0.32m
1101	Subsoil	Reddish brown silty sand with occasional pebbles. Visible only over the dark brown gravelly sand at south west end of trench	0.32-0.32/0.57m
1102	Natural	Variable natural including greyish brown sand and gravel at the north eastern edge of the trench, Sidmouth mudstone towards the northern end, and dark brown gravelly sand in the centre and south western end	0.32-0.57m+

Trench 12

Maximum dimensions: Length: 40.1m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.80m

Orientation: NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1200	Topsoil	Mid-grey brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles and frequent rooting	0.00-0.39m
1201	Subsoil	Mid-brownish orange sandy clay with occasional pebbles	0.39-0.71m
1202	Natural	Mid-orangey pink sandy clay with gravel patches	0.71m+

Trench 13

Maximum dimensions: Length: 40m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.4-0.72m

Orientation: NE-SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1300	Topsoil	Mid to dark grey brown sandy silt with occasional to frequent pebbles and frequent rooting	0.00-0.31m
1301	Natural	Sidmouth mudstone across most of the trench, with reddish sand and gravel at the north east end	0.31m+

Trench 14

Maximum dimensions: Length: 40.1m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.73m

Orientation: NE-SW (long axis)

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1400	Topsoil	Mid-brown grey sandy silt with occasional pebbles and frequent rooting	0.00-0.30m
1401	Subsoil	Mid-orangey brown silty sand	0.30-0.48m
1402	Natural	Mid-brownish orange sand with patches of gravels, and Sidmouth mudstone at the south western end of the trench	0.48m+

Trench 15

Maximum dimensions: Length: 40m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.76m

Orientation: NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Mid to dark grey brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles and frequent rooting	0.00m-0.47m
101	Subsoil/ weathered natural?	Light brownish orange silty sand with occasional pebbles	0.47-0.65m
102	Natural	Mid-brownish orange silty sand	0.65m+

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 49624)

The archive consists of:

4 Context records AS1

3 Field progress reports AS2

2 Photographic records AS3

74 Digital photographs

1 Drawing number catalogues AS4

1 Scale drawings

15 Trench record sheets AS41

1 Box of finds

1 CD-Rom/DVDs

1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum
Museums Worcestershire
Hartlebury Castle
Hartlebury
Near Kidderminster
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416

Summary of data for Worcestershire HER

WSM 49624

P4136

Artefacts

HER summary data						
period	material class	object specific type	count	weight(g)	start date	end date
medieval	ceramic	pot	1	8	1200	1620
medieval	ceramic	pot	1	12	1200	1400
Roman	ceramic	pot	2	120	43	200
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	116	43	200
Roman	ceramic	pot	11	68	100	200
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	48	100	200
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	12	43	200
Roman	ceramic	pot	3	136	43	200
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	20	43	200
Roman	ceramic	pot	5	34	43	200
Roman	ceramic	pot	2	24	43	200
Roman	ceramic	pot	4	54	43	200

Notes

1) In some cases the date will be "Undated". In most cases, especially if there is not a specialist report, the information entered in the Date field will be a general period such as Neolithic, Roman, medieval etc (see below for a list of periods used in the Worcestershire HER). Very broad date ranges such as late Medieval to Post-medieval are acceptable for artefacts which can be hard to date for example roof tiles. If you have more specific dates, such as 13th to 14th century, please use these instead. Specific date ranges which cross general period boundaries can also be used, for example 15th to 17th century.

period	from	to
Palaeolithic	500000 BC	10001 BC
Mesolithic	10000 BC	4001 BC
Neolithic	4000 BC	2351 BC
Bronze Age	2350 BC	801 BC
Iron Age	800 BC	42 AD
Roman	43	409
Post-Roman	410	1065
Medieval	1066	1539
Post-medieval	1540	1900
Modern	1901	2050

period specific	from	to
Lower Paleolithic	500000 BC	150001
Middle Palaeolithic	150000	40001
Upper Palaeolithic	40000	10001
Early Mesolithic	10000	7001
Late Mesolithic	7000	4001

Early Neolithic	4000	3501
Middle Neolithic	3500	2701
Late Neolithic	2700	2351
Early Bronze Age	2350	1601
Middle Bronze Age	1600	1001
Late Bronze Age	1000	801
Early Iron Age	800	401
Middle Iron Age	400	101
Late Iron Age	100 BC	42 AD
Roman 1st century AD	43	100
2nd century	101	200
3rd century	201	300
4th century	301	400
Roman 5th century	401	410
Post roman	411	849
Pre conquest	850	1065
Late 11th century	1066	1100
12th century	1101	1200
13th century	1201	1300
14th century	1301	1400
15th century	1401	1500
16th century	1501	1600
17th century	1601	1700
18th century	1701	1800
19th century	1801	1900
20th century	1901	2000
21st century	2001	

2) Not all evaluations of small excavation assemblages have specialist reports on all classes of objects. An identification (eg clay pipe) and a quantification is not a specialist report. A short discussion or a more detailed record identifying types and dates is a specialist report. This field is designed to point researchers to reports where they will find out more than merely the presence or absence of material of a particular type and date.

3) This field should be used with care. It is designed to point researchers to reports where they will be able to locate the most important assemblages for any given material for any given date.