JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

HIGH LODGE FARM, CULHAM

OXFORDSHIRE

On behalf of

Natural England

JULY 2010

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Summary

An archaeological field evaluation was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services at High Lodge Farm, Culham, Oxfordshire. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the nature, significance of and the extent of plough damage to cropmarks and archaeological remains. In total ten trenches were opened up in two different areas. A number of ditches, pits, postholes and a Roman cremation burial were recorded. A number of features in each trench were excavated in order to obtain dating evidence, and to determine the level of damage caused by modern farming.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location *(Figure 1)*

The evaluation area was split into two smaller areas. Area 1 was on Andersey Island, south east of the town of Abingdon and on the south side of the River Thames at SU 450364 96542. Area 2 was on an outcrop overlooking Andersey Island to the north. The site lies to the east of the A415, approximately 1 km south of Abingdon Bridge at SU 50576 96012. The Superficial Geology of Area 1 is sand and gravel over bedrock of the Great Oolite Group (BGS Geoindex). The Superficial Geology of Area 2 is clay/sand over an undifferentiated bedrock of Gault Formation and Upper Greensand (BGS Geoindex).

1.2 Planning Background

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the nature and significance of, and extend of plough damage to, cropmarks and existing archaeology on High Lodge Farm near Abingdon, Oxfordshire. The evidence gained will inform the ongoing agricultural regime on the farm. Natural England's Archaeological Advisor prepared a Brief for the field evaluation.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Both Area 1 and Area 2 comprises a large number of cropmark sites of uncertain significance and vulnerability to plough damage. The cropmarks that are apparent within the farm holding at High Lodge appear to represent the clear archaeological remains of potentially very significant features from the early pre-historic to the early medieval, and on into the civil war period.

The connexion between Abingdon Abbey and the Culham region was already in existence in the late 8th century. The abbey was then in possession of Andersey Island in Culham and exchanged it for Goosey (Berkshire) at the wish of Offa (d. 796), King of Mercia. The Mercian kings used the island as a hunting seat and this caused such inconvenience to the abbey that Abbot Rathanus gave King Coenwulf (796- 821?) Sutton Courtenay (Berkshire) in part exchange for Andersey. The Abbey seems later to have lost possession, for both Athelstan, King of Wessex, and the early Norman kings are said to have resided there. It was not until 1101 that a grant by Queen Maud and another by Henry I restored Andersey to the abbey. The account in the Abingdon Chronicle may be inaccurate in detail, but there is no reason to doubt its general content (VCH 1962).

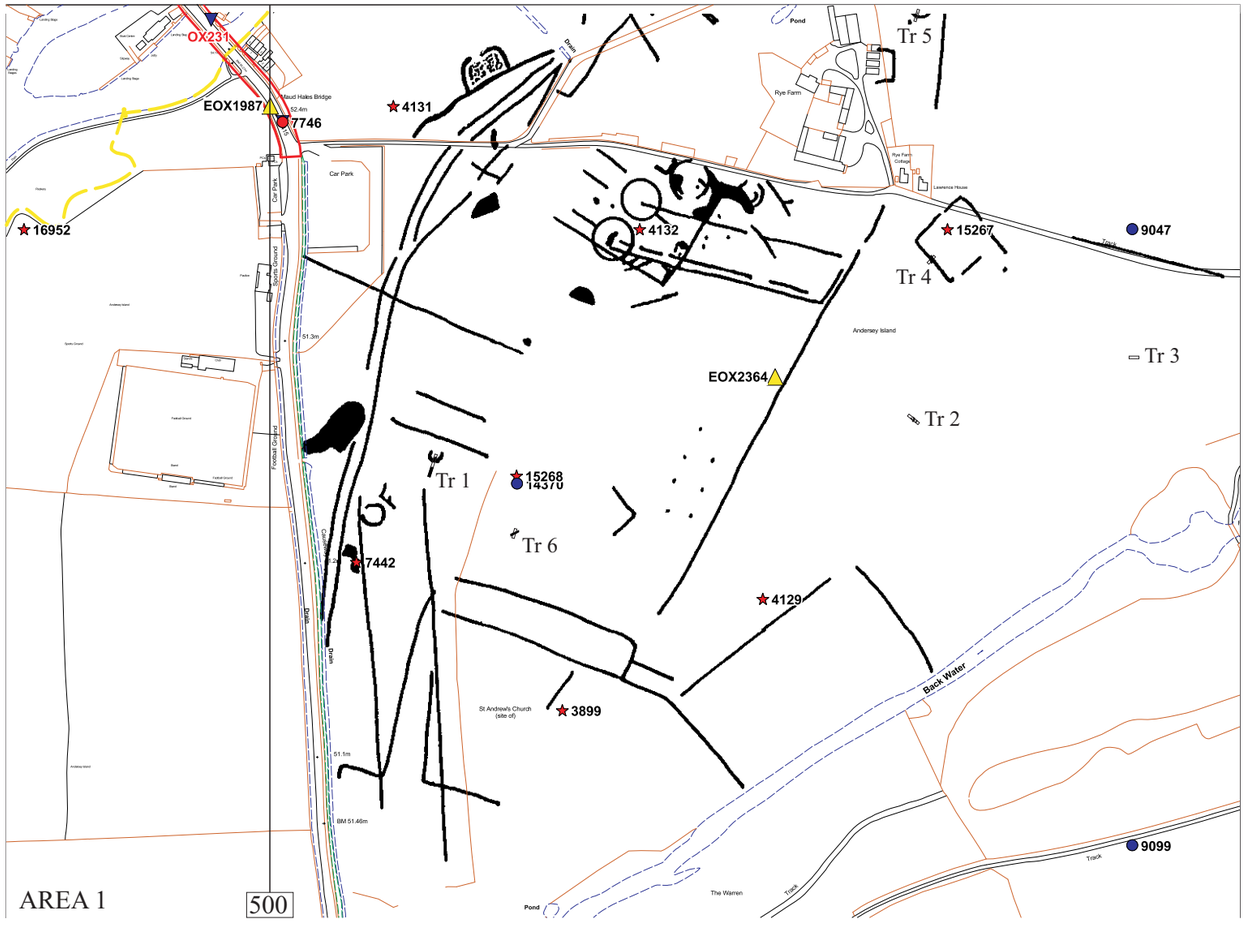


Figure 1. Site location Area 1

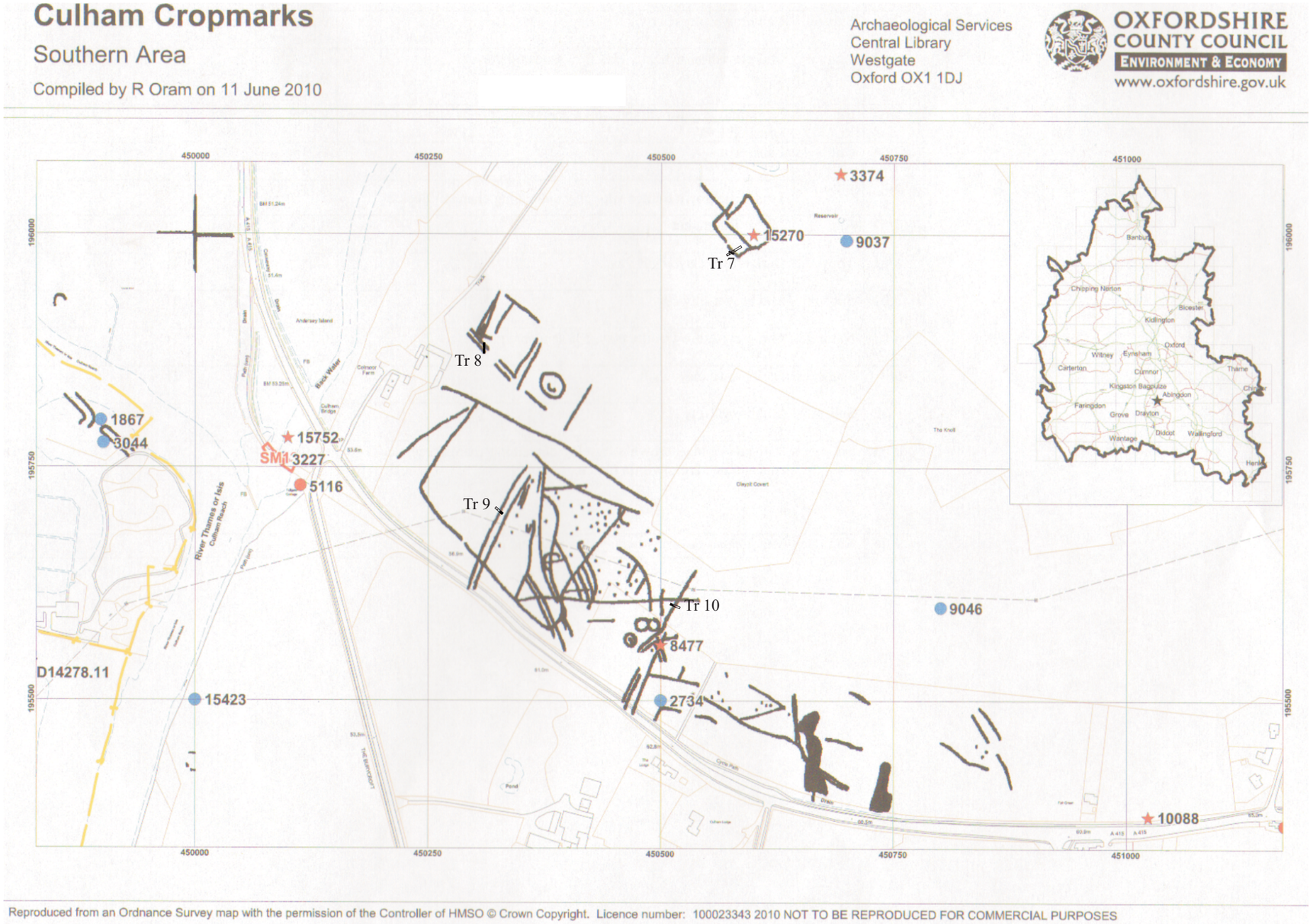


Figure 2. Site location Area 2

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits.
- To obtain sufficient information to establish the extent, depth and potential damage caused by ploughing to the features identified.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

The first stage of work was a geophysical survey (Ainslie 2010). The second stage was for further investigative trenching. In response to a Design Brief issued by Natural England's Archaeological Advisor a WSI was prepared by JMHS. This second phase work was carried out by JMHS.

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (1994) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

The investigation involved the mechanical excavation of trial trenches supplemented by limited hand investigation of archaeological features and deposits. Six trenches were placed in Area 1 and four trenches in Area 2. Within Area 1 two trenches were 10 m in length and four 8 m in length. Three trenches in Area 2 were 10 m in length and the fourth was 15 m. All trenches were 2 m wide and were situated to target the results of a previous geophysical survey or known cropmarks. Natural England's Archaeological Advisor advised on the location of all trenches.

All trenches were 2 m wide and were excavated by JCB excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The resultant surfaces were cleaned by hand prior to limited hand excavation of any identified archaeological deposits.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was produced. The trenches were backfilled after recording.

Mr Dan Bashford of Natural England and Mr Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services monitored the work.

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in ( ) indicate fills or deposits of material whilst numbers referring to features themselves are shown without brackets.

4.1 Field Results

Area 1

Trench 1

The lower deposit encountered was the natural sand and gravels (1/03). Cut into this were two features a ditch 1/04 and a pit 1/06.

The ditch 1/04 was 4.45m wide and over 2m wide. It was 0.5m deep with concave sides and a flat base. It was filled with a mid grey brown silty sand (1/05) that contained fragments of bone, glass and brick as well as clay tobacco pipe and post-medieval pottery.

The irregular pit 1/06 was not excavated. It measured 8m wide in plan and was over 2m long. The upper fill was a mid grey brown silty sand (1/07) that contained fragments of brick.

Both features were noted to have truncated earlier deep plough marks cut into the surface of the gravels (1/03).

All features were sealed by a lower plough-soil that consisted of light red-brown silty sandy-clay (1/02) roughly 0.12m thick.

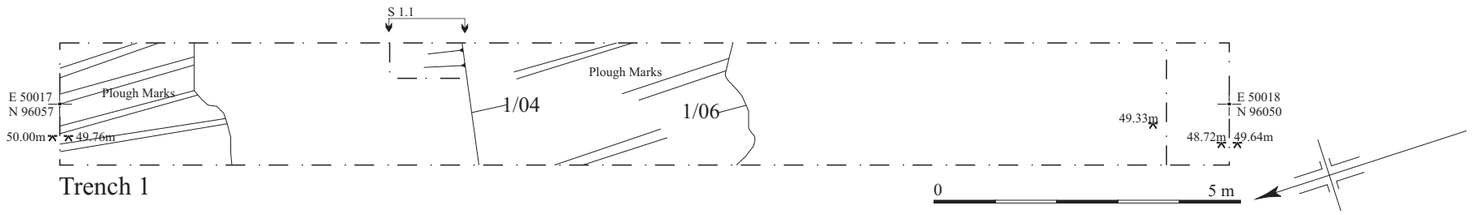
Plough marks cut into the surface of this layer (1/02) in the northern and central part of the trench were also evident, indicating at least two phases of ploughing in the area.

The uppermost layer was a loose dark brown sandy loam (1/01) that was 0.15m thick.

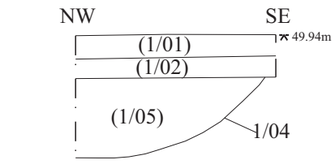
Trench 2

Trench 2 was excavated to the natural light brown sand and gravels (2/04). This extended throughout the trench, to a length of 11m and 2m in width. Natural (2/04) was not excavated.

Cut into the natural gravels were a series of shallow posthole, stakehole and pit features. They have here been described in order from northwest to southeast. Shallow pit 2/06 was 0.62m in length, 0.50m in width and 0.12m in depth. It had a gradual break of top and base slopes, with a concave base, and contained a single fill (2/05).



Trench 1



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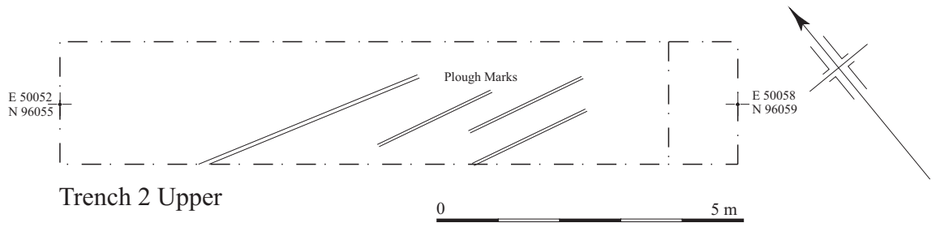
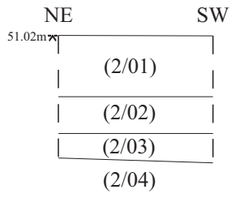


Trench 2 Upper

Trench 2 Lower



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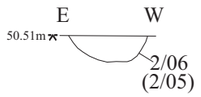

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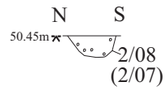

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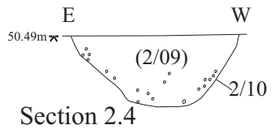

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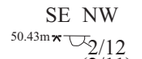

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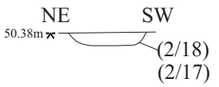

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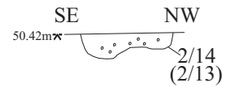

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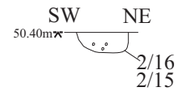

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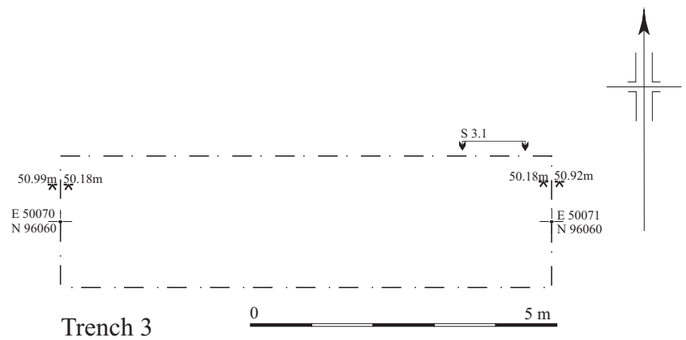
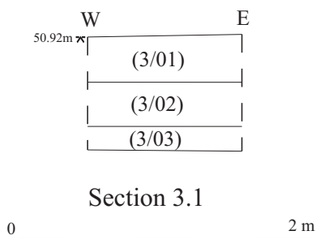


Trench 3



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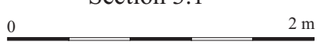


Figure 3. Trenches 1-3 Plans and sections

Possible shallow posthole 2/08 was approximately circular in plan and measured 0.50m in length, 0.35m in width and 0.13m in depth. It had a sharp break of top slope, with a concave base and contained a single fill, (2/07). Stakehole 2/12 was circular in plan, measuring 0.13m in diameter. It had a concave base with inward sloping, concave sides and contained a single fill (2/11) 0.06m thick. Possible posthole 2/14 was oval in plan with a length of 0.60m and width of 0.30m. The depth varying from 0.10m to 0.17m. It contained a single fill (2/13). The base of this feature was irregular, deeper in the northeast. Possible posthole 2/16 was approximately oval in plan with a length of 0.30m and width of 0.15m. This feature was relatively shallow, with the single fill (2/15) extending to a depth of 0.10m. Possible shallow pit 2/18 was approximately circular in plan, with a diameter of 0.50m and 0.1m deep. It had a gradual break of top and base slopes and concave sides sloping to a relatively flat base. It contained a single fill (2/17).

These features varied in size and depth but contained the same fill. Fills (2/05), (2/07), (2/11), (2/13), (2/15) and (2/17) consisted of a compacted mid grey brown silty loam containing numerous angular and rounded gravels with orange silty mottling throughout.

A linear feature 2/10 oriented north by south ran through the approximate centre of the trench, extending under the northeast and southwest baulk. Ditch 2/10 extended to a length of 2.7m, width of 1.10m, 0.29m deep and appeared to be bending slightly to the southwest. It had a gradual break of top slope, with relatively straight, inward sloping sides to a sharp break of base slope and concave base. It contained a single fill (2/09) of a mid grey brown silty loam with a higher silt content towards the base of the deposit. It contained few inclusions, with rare charcoal flecking c.5% charcoal flecking and rare gravels c.1%.

All of these features were sealed by a layer of alluvium (2/03) 0.16m thick. This layer consisted of a highly compacted silt loam, mid grey brown in colour, extending through the trench. Orange silty mottling was present throughout the deposit, as well as rare angular and rounded gravels.

Alluvium (2/03) was sealed by a layer of ploughsoil (2/02) 0.17m thick, of a highly compacted, friable orange-brown silty loam. It contained rare manganese staining and rare gravel inclusions c.1% throughout. No plough marks were observed at this level. This is probably due to the thickness of the topsoil, 0.38m, in this part of the site.

Sealing ploughsoil (2/02) was compacted silty loam topsoil (2/01). This layer was brown in colour, and 0.38m thick. It contained rare CBM flecking c.1%, rare flint and other stone sub angular gravels c.2%. A single piece of highly degraded Iron Age pottery was recovered from this layer.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was excavated to the natural underlying light brown sand and gravels (3/04), reached at a depth of 0.72m and extending throughout the trench measuring 8m in length and 2.2m in width. Sealing this was an alluvium layer (3/03) 0.15m thick. This layer consisted of a highly compacted dark brown silty loam with some clay content. It also contained rare rounded and sub angular gravels c.1%. Above alluvium (3/03)

was a layer of ploughsoil (3/02) consisting of highly compacted mid brown friable silty loam 0.28m thick. This layer also contained rare rounded gravels c.1%. Sealing all these layers was the topsoil (3/01) 0.29m thick. This consisted of mid grey brown silty loam with rare CBM flecking and contained rare gravels c.1%.

No features of archaeological interest were located in Trench 3.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was excavated to the uppermost level of the underlying natural sand and gravels (4/04). This was only visible at the base of a test trench excavated in the southwest to determine the depth of the alluvial layer (4/03). Alluvial layer (4/03) consisted of mid brown silty loam with some clay content and contained rare rounded gravels and was 0.25m thick. This layer was exposed throughout the extent of the trench.

Cut into alluvial layer (4/03) was linear feature 4/08, oriented north by south. This ditch was exposed to a length of 2.00m, width of 3.10m and depth of 1.20m. It had a gradual break of top and base slopes, with slightly concave sides to a concave base. It contained 3 fills. Primary fill (4/05) extended to a depth of 0.26m and consisted of mid brown friable silty sand containing rounded and angular gravels throughout. It also contained rare CBM flecks <1% and very rare charcoal flecking. Sherds of Late Roman pottery were recovered from this fill. Secondary fill (4/06) consisted of mid grey brown silty loam and contained large amounts of small rounded gravels throughout. This fill is tipping towards the centre of the ditch from the west, suggesting a deliberate filling event. The uppermost fill (4/07) of ditch 4/08 consisted of highly compacted mid grey brown silty loam with some clay content. This fill extended to a depth of 0.90m and contained very rare charcoal flecking.

Sealing ditch 4/08 and alluvial layer (4/03) was a layer of ploughsoil (4/02) 0.24m thick. Ploughsoil (4/02) consisted of a compacted brown silty loam with rounded stones and angular gravels throughout. Two plough marks oriented north by south were visible at this level but not excavated.

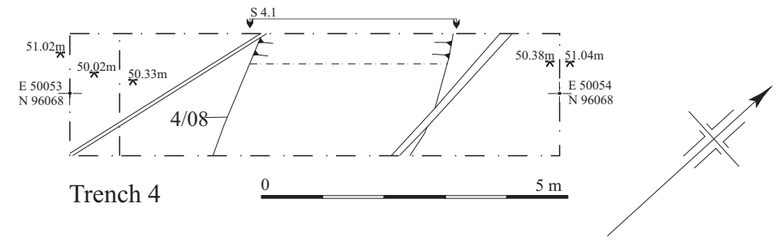
Topsoil (4/01), consisting of grey brown silty loam, sealed the ploughsoil throughout the extent of the trench. This was 0.25m thick and contained rare CBM flecking and rounded gravels.

Trench 5

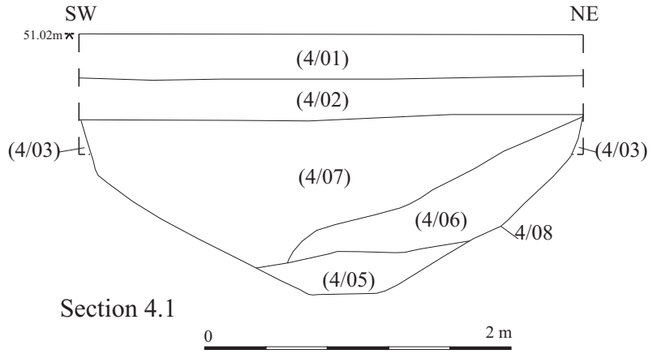
Trench 5 was excavated to the natural light yellow sand and gravel (5/03). Cut into the natural were nine archaeological features in total. These features were similar in shape and size and contained the same fill.

Feature 5/04 was an ephemeral, roughly linear feature c. 0.50m in length and 0.20m wide. It contained a single fill of red-brown sandy silt (5/05) and was not excavated.

Possible posthole/small pit 5/06 was circular in plan with a diameter of 0.20m. It contained a single fill of red-brown sandy silt (5/07) and was not excavated.



Trench 4



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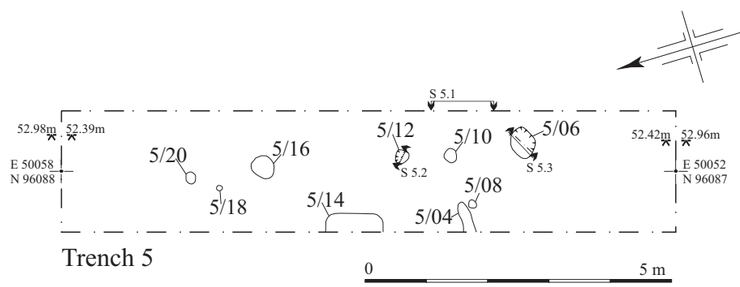
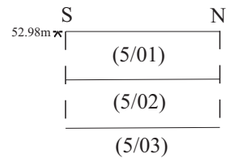


Trench 5



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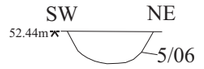

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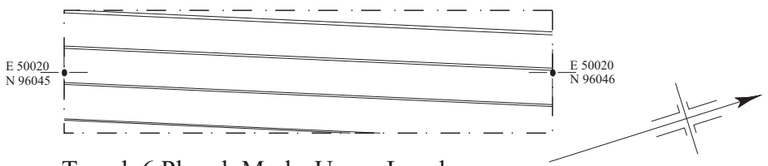
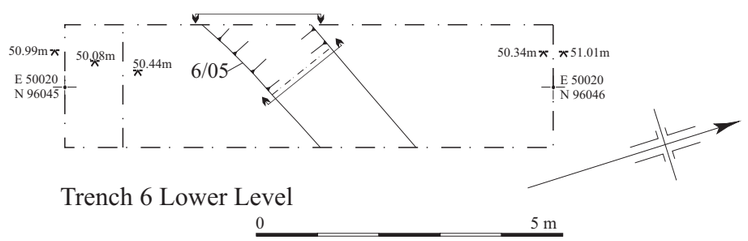
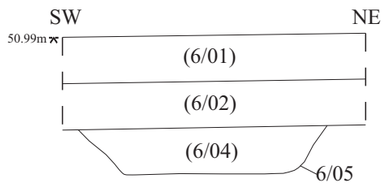


Trench 6 Plough Marks Upper Level



Trench 6 Lower Level



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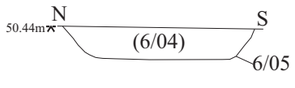


Section 6.1

Figure 4. Trenches 4 - 6 Plans and sections

Possible postholes 5/08 and 5/10 and 5/18 were circular in plan and measured 0.10m in diameter. They were not excavated and each contained a single fill of red-brown sandy silt (5/09), (5/11) and (5/19) respectively.

Possible posthole 5/12 was circular in plan with a diameter of 0.25m. It had a sharp break of top slope, with sides sloping at a gradient of c. 80° to a gradual break of base slope and flat base. It contained a single fill of red-brown sandy silt (5/13) 0.16m thick.

Possible pit 5/14 was very ephemeral in plan, but appeared to be roughly oval in shape. It was approximately 1m in length and 0.30m in width. It was unexcavated and contained a single fill of red-brown sandy silt (5/15).

Possible posthole 5/16 was circular in plan, with a diameter of 0.45m. It was not excavated and contained a single fill of red-brown sandy silt (5/17).

Possible posthole 5/20 was circular in plan, with a diameter of 0.15m. It was unexcavated and contained fill of red-brown sandy silt (5/21).

The features were sealed by mid red brown silty sandy clay (5/02). This contained 5% Gravel and extended to a maximum thickness of 0.34m throughout the trench. This was sealed by a topsoil layer of loose dark grey brown sandy clay (5/01) containing 40% gravel and small stones with a maximum thickness of 0.32m.

Trench 6

Trench 6 was excavated to the top of the pale yellow gravel (6/03) It contained a single archaeological feature cut into the natural. Ditch 6/05 was oriented E-W. It measured 1.25m in width and over 2m in length. It had a sharp break of top and base slope, with sides at a 60° gradient to a flat base. It contained fill (6/04) that consisted of a dark red brown slightly silty sand.

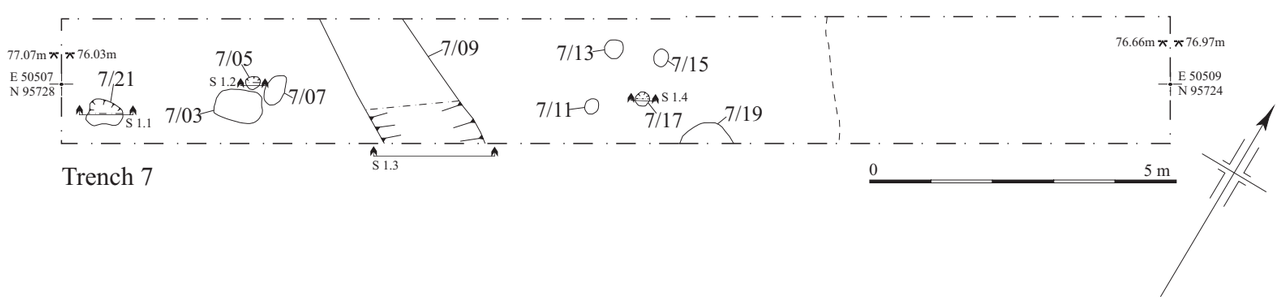
Sealing ditch 6/05 and natural (6/03) was a 0.3m thick layer of red brown, slightly silty sand ploughsoil (6/02) A layer of dark grey brown sandy loam topsoil (6/01) 0.3m thick with occasional gravel inclusions sealed the trench.

AREA 2

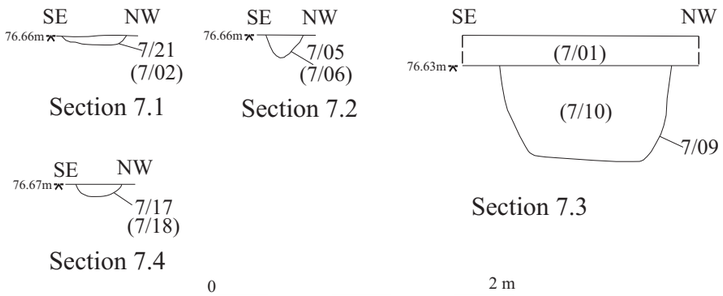
Trench 7

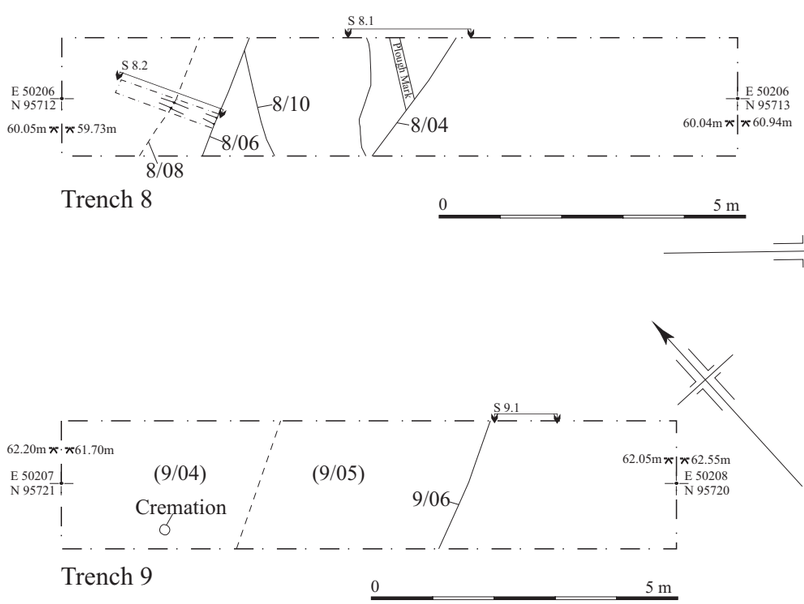
Trench 7 was located at the top of Andersey Island, a natural hill in the landscape about a mile north of High Lodge Farm.

The lower deposit encountered was firm yellow-grey silty-clay subsoil (7/22). Cut into this were a ditch 7/09, four pits 7/03, 7/07, 7/19 & 7/21 and five post holes 7/05, 7/11, 7/13, 7/15 & 7/17.

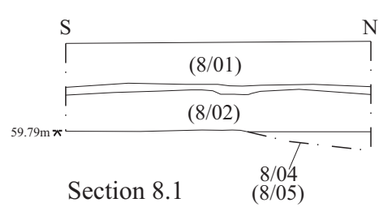


Trench 7

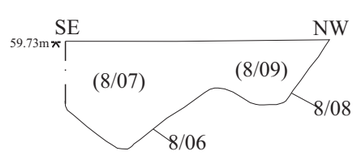




Trench 8



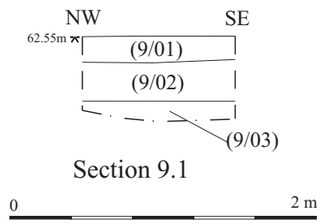
Section 8.1



Section 2.2

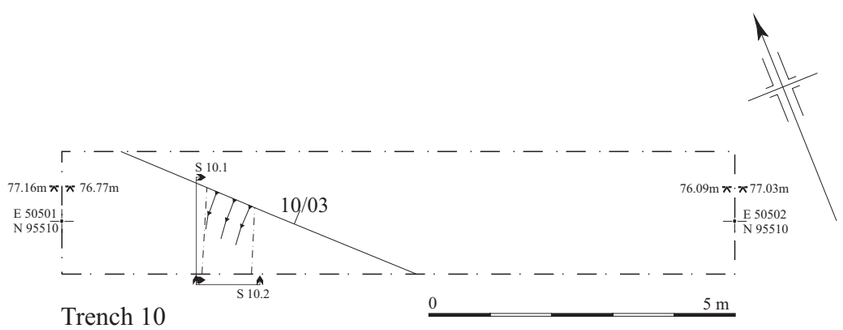
0 2 m

Trench 9

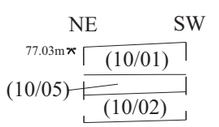


Section 9.1

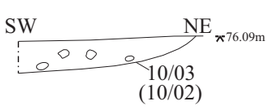
0 2 m



Trench 10



Section 10.1



Section 10.2

0 2 m

Figure 5.Trenches 7-10 Plans and sections

The ditch 7/09 was roughly orientated north-south. It was 1.12m wide, 0.62m deep and over 2m long. The side were slightly concaved, but near vertical in places. The base was flat. It was filled with a Brown-grey sandy silt containing small amounts of gravel and charcoal flecks (7/10)

Pits

Cut	Dimensions	Depth	Fill
7/03	0.5m x 0.6m	-	Brown-grey sandy silt (7/04)
7/07	0.25m x 0.4m	-	Brown-grey sandy silt (7/08)
7/19	0.6m dia	-	Brown-grey sandy silt (7/20)
7/21	0.5m x 0.4m	0.05m	Brown-grey sandy silt (7/22)

Postholes

Cut	Dimensions	Depth	Fill
7/05	0.2m dia	0.12m	Brown-grey sandy silt (7/06)
7/11	0.2m dia	-	Brown-grey sandy silt (7/12)
7/13	0.25m x 0.3m	-	Brown-grey sandy silt (7/14)
7/15	0.2m dia	-	Brown-grey sandy silt (7/16)
7/17	0.2m dia	0.1m	Brown-grey sandy silt (7/18)

No artefacts were found in the fills associated with these features. The similarities of the fills could suggest that all are contemporary.

All features were sealed by a topsoil 0.27m thick of loose grey-brown sandy silt.

Trench 8

The lower deposit encountered was the natural sand and gravels (8/03). Cut into this were four linear ditches 8/04, 8/06, 8/08 and 8/10. Some plough marks were seen in the surface of the natural.

Only the western side of ditch 8/04 was visible, this was aligned roughly N-S. Its eastern edge appeared to be outside the limits of the trench implying a width of over 6m. It was not fully excavated, but was noted to have relatively shallow sides and to contain a mid grey-brown sandy silt (8/05) with c.2% gravels with brick or tile fragments and Romano-British pottery.

In the central part of the trench there was ditch 8/10. This was aligned roughly NW-SE and was unexcavated but noted to contain a mid grey-brown silty clay flecked with charcoal (8/11).

To the east was a third ditch 8/06. Although excavated its fully extant was not seen. Its western edge lay outside the limits of the trench and a later ditch 8/08 truncated the eastern edge. In profile it appeared to be roughly a flattened V-shape and was 0.7m deep. It contained a mid grey-brown silty clay flecked with charcoal (8/07) and some sherds of roman pottery.

Cutting both ditches 8/06 and 8/10 was ditch 8/08. This was parallel to ditch 8/06 and 8/04 and may be a re-cutting of ditch 8/06. It was difficult to distinguish the western edge but it was approximately 0.8m wide and 0.44m deep with a U-shaped profile.

All features were sealed by a lower plough-soil that consisted of mid brown silty sandy-clay (8/02) roughly 0.3m thick. The uppermost layer was a loose dark brown sandy loam (8/01) that was 0.28m thick.

Trench 9

The lower deposit encountered was the natural sand and gravels (9/03). Cut into this was a possible ditch 9/06.

Only one side of the ditch feature 9/06 was seen. This was aligned NE-SW and was over 2m in length. It was recorded to a minimum width of 3m before it was obscured by deposit (10/04). The fill of this ditch 9/06 was a light grey-brown sandy silt (9/05) with 20% gravel and flecked with charcoal. It was not excavated.

To the western end of the trench was a deposit (10/04) of mid-dark grey-brown sandy silt over 0.1m thick. That appeared to seal ditch 9/06, although it could also prove to be an upper fill of the feature.

Within this layer (9/04) was a cremation burial contained within a Roman ceramic vessel. No cut for this burial could be identified and it would appear that ploughing had damaged the upper section of the vessel. This was probably a single event as the sherds were scattered relative close to the remains of the base with in (9/04).

The cremation was left *in situ*, covered with geo-textile and layer of soil. The sherds of the upper portion of the vessel were collected.

All features were sealed by a lower plough-soil that consisted of mid brown silty sandy-clay (9/02) roughly 0.23m thick. The uppermost layer was a loose dark brown sandy loam (9/01) that was 0.18m thick.

Trench 10

The lower deposit encountered was the natural sand and gravels (10/04). Cut into this was a ditch 10/03

The ditch 10/03 was roughly orientated NE-SW. It was over 1.9mm wide, 0.2m deep and over 5.7m long. The sides were shallow and concaved. The base was relatively flat. It was filled with a brown-grey sandy silt containing small amounts of burnt stone and charcoal flecks (10/02)

It was sealed by a lower plough-soil that consisted of light yellow-grey silty sandy-clay (10/05) roughly 0.12m thick. The uppermost layer was a loose dark brown sandy loam (10/01) that was 0.2m thick.

4.2 Reliability of Results

The archaeological evaluation was carried out in good conditions with sunny and dry weather. The results are therefore felt to be representative of the extant archaeology.

5 FINDS

5.1 Roman Pottery *(by Andrew Peachey)*

Trial trench excavations recovered a total of 66 sherds (640g) of Roman pottery in a fragmentary but well-preserved condition from four contexts. The bulk of the assemblage was accounted for by cross-joining sherds from a Black-burnished ware 1 jar/cooking pot, distributed in the fills of two contexts, and dating to the late 3rd to 4th centuries AD. The remainder of the assemblage is comprised of non-diagnostic late Roman coarse wares.

Methodology

The pottery was quantified by sherd count, weight and R.EVE. Fabrics were examined at x20 magnification, assigned an alpha-numeric code and cross-referenced where possible to the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber & Dore 1998). All data was entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that will be deposited as part of the archive.

Fabric Codes and Descriptions

BB1	Black-burnished ware 1, produced in Wareham/Poole Harbour region, Dorset (Seager Smith & Davies 1993, 249: Fabric 1; Tomber & Dore 1998, 127: DOR BB1)
UNS OX1	Sandy oxidised ware, probably produced locally (Seager Smith & Davies 1993, 280: Fabric 37D)
GRS	Sandy grey ware, several sources are represented, all are probably local within the Abingdon, Oxford and Dorchester region
ROB SH	(Late) Roman shell-tempered ware (Tomber & Dore 1998, 212), potentially sourced from Harrold, Beds.

Commentary

Contexts 9/01 (area 2) and 9/04 (area 2) contained a total of 48 sherds (480g) of BB1 from a single vessel. The vessel was a jar or cooking pot with a wide flared rim, a zone of obtuse burnished lattice decoration around the centre of the body and the remainder of the body plain (facetted) burnished. In total *c*.35% of the vessel is represented in the two contexts. This fabric and form were produced in the Wareham/Poole Harbour region of Dorset in the late 3rd to 4th centuries AD, and have a common distribution in the region of the site, notably at Dorchester (Seager Smith & Davies 1993, 230-1: Type 3). Context 9/01 (area 2) also contained small fragments of the rim of an UNS OX1 'dog dish' with a bead rim and a body sherd of GRS, while context 9/04 (area 2) also contained sparse body sherds of GRS.

Context 8/07 (area 2) contained sparse body sherds of GRS from multiple vessels and sources, while context 4/05, area 1 contained small fragments of ROB SH, a fabric with a common distribution in late Roman (late 3rd to 4th century AD) assemblages in the south of England.

5.2 Medieval Pottery *(by Paul Blinkhorn)*

The pottery assemblage comprised 30 sherds with a total weight of 309g. The post-Roman material was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXAM: Brill/Boarstall ware, AD1200 – 1600. 1 sherd, 9g.
OXCL: Cistercian ware, 1475-1700. 1 sherd, 2g.
OXDR: Red Earthenwares, 1550+. 15 sherds, 153g.
OXEST: London stoneware. c. 1680 plus. 1 sherd, 2g.

In addition, a single sherd of somewhat abraded Iron Age pottery (11g) was present, as were 11 sherds (132g) of Romano-British material. The latter mainly comprised Grey Wares and grog-tempered wares, and are likely to be of 1st– 2nd century date. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

The post-Roman material is all late- or post-medieval. The single sherd of OXAM is certainly in a late fabric, and of 15th- or 16th- century date. The Romano-British pottery is generally in fairly good condition, and appears reliably stratified.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

			IA		RB		OXAM		OXDR		OXCL		OXEST		
Tr	Cntxt	Area	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
1	5	1							4	65					M16thC
2	1	1	1	11											IA
5	1	1							1	21					M16thC
6	1	1			1	13	1	9	10	67	1	2	1	2	L17thC
8	5	2			3	19									RB
8	9	2			1	66									RB
9	4	2			6	34									RB
		Total	1	11	11	132	1	9	15	153	1	2	1	2	

5.3 Clay tobacco pipes

Fragments of clay tobacco pipes were found in contexts (1/05) (5/01) (6/01) and (10/01).

5.4 Burnt clay

A single piece of daub or burnt clay weighing 11g was collected from the context (8/09) in Area 2.

5.5 Environmental remains

Due to the nature of the deposits encountered no environmental samples were taken.

6 DISCUSSION

The evaluation was successful in confirming the presence of the recorded cropmarks in the area. Unfortunately the majority of the features recorded were undated.

Trench 1 recorded no evidence for the potential Saxon Palace that was recorded on the 1st edition OS map and noted in the Natural England brief. Trench 2 recorded the pits believed to be in this area, but no evidence was seen to confirm the theory that this was a cemetery.

The enclosure ditch targeted by Trench 4 indicated a possible late Roman date for the feature.

The ring ditch speculated by cropmarks in the area of Trench 5 was not seen, however the circular positioning of some of the features as well as natural depressions or features may have given the impression of a ring ditch

Trench 6 identified the ring ditch previously noted as a cropmark, however no dating evidence was present within the ditch fill.

The hilltop enclosure targeted by Trench 7 revealed no dating evidence, but did record a high concentration of cut features. The theorised prehistoric farmstead targeted by Trench 8 would appear to date the remains in the area to the Roman period with several phases of inter-cutting ditches

The enclosures targeted by Trench 9 indicated the presence ditches and a 3rd-4th century cremation burial.

The undated features, especially the discrete features recorded in Trenches 2, 5 and 7, could potentially be of a similar Roman date. A slightly earlier Late Bronze Age or Iron Age date could not be ruled out as the area has obviously undergone prolonged periods of ploughing, which the pottery of this period would not survive.

The impact of modern farming activity was most obvious in Area 1, where plough marks were visible in the subsoil and/or the natural gravel in many of the trenches. However some evidence of limited deep ploughing was seen in Area 2 notably in Trench 8 and Trench 9 where the cremation burial had been partially disturbed.

The identification of an upper and lower plough soil in many trenches is indicative that modern or more recent activity is of a shallow nature and less damaging to the subsoil archaeological features present in the area.

Finds from within the ploughsoils were sparse and gave no indication of activity that may have been present on the site, but it would appear that there was little activity in the area after the Roman period until the 13th century.

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