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ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

S O U T H W E S T

**Quarry 4, Blacklands, Acton,  
Langton Matravers, Dorset**

**Archaeological Recording Action**

**by Andrew Weale and Daniel Bray**

**Site Code: BAD12/78**

**(SY 9920 7725)**

# **Quarry 4, Blacklands, Acton, Langton Matravers, Dorset**

**An Archaeological Recording Action  
for Lovell Purbeck**

by Andrew Weale and Daniel Bray  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BAD 12/78

**March 2014**

## Summary

**Site name:** Quarry 4, Blacklands, Acton, Langton Matravers, Dorset

**Grid reference:** SY 9915 7775

**Site activity:** Archaeological Recording Action

**Date and duration of project:** June 2012

**Project manager:** Andrew Weale

**Site supervisor:** Daniel Bray

**Site code:** BAD 12/78

**Area of site:** 0.1 ha

**Summary of results:** A single gully containing pottery of Late Iron Age or Roman date was observed within the current area of Quarry 4

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services South West, Taunton and will be deposited at Corfe Castle Museum in due course.

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

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	Steve Preston✓ 29.03.14

# Quarry 4, Blacklands, Acton, Langton Matravers, Dorset An Archaeological Recording Action

by Andrew Weale and Daniel Bray

Report 12/78

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action carried out at Quarry 4, Blacklands, Dorset (SY 9915 7775) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Nick Dunn of Land and Mineral Management Ltd, The Roundhouse Cottages, Bridge Street, Frome, Somerset BA11 1BE on behalf of Mr Simon Hart, Lovell Purbeck Ltd, Downs Quarry, Langton Matravers, Dorset BH19 3JP

Planning permission (06/2012/006) has been gained from Dorset County Council to extract mineral from a c. 0.8ha of land in Blacklands Field to the south of Priest's Way and south of Langton Matravers, Dorset. The consent includes a condition (18) relating to archaeology, as guided by *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010) and the County Council Mineral Policies, that states "The programme of archaeological works, including the watching brief during all topsoil stripping, in accordance with the scheme submitted with the letter dated 13 April 2005 from Land & Mineral Management and approved by this Authority by letter dated 8 June 2005 (and reproduced in appendix 2 that accompanied this application), shall be complied with at all times." It is acknowledged that NPPF (2012) has superseded PPS5.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Steven Wallis, Senior Archaeological Officer with Dorset County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Bray, in June 2012 and the site code is BAD 12/78. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services South West, Taunton and will be deposited at Corfe Castle Museum in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located within the village of Acton within the parish of Langton Matravers with Langton Matravers 3km to the north-east (Fig. 1) The site lies on the limestone plateau to the south side of the Isle of Purbeck near the top of the plateau with a gentle slope towards the south-east before the edge of the plateau and the sea cliffs lying 0.6km beyond and is approximately 130m above Ordnance Datum. The site was within the current quarry complex and appeared to be former agricultural land. The underlying geology is Cretaceous Limestone part of

the Stair Hole Member (BGS 2001): weathered red clay with some weathered rock was observed within the stripped area.

## **Archaeological background**

A desk-based study, and an evaluation (Papworth 2004) have detailed the archaeological background for the site and its environs. In summary, the existing Blacklands quarry just to the west of the proposal area was archaeologically monitored in the 1940s and evidence of Iron Age and Roman occupation associated with the working of Kimmeridge Shale was uncovered. The 13-trench evaluation of the proposal site and fields to the east uncovered a low density of archaeological deposits. Four trenches (A-D) were dug in the proposal field with only trench A at its south-eastern end revealing possible occupation evidence in the form of a pit (not excavated) with late Bronze Age to early Iron Age pottery on its surface; spreads or possible other cut features (planned but not excavated) containing prehistoric pottery and charcoal further to the south. Worked flint was found in the plough soil. Fieldwalking, and fieldwork during excavation of the other trenches to the east found concentrations of worked flint. In trench K *c.* 200m to the NE of the current quarry area a concentration of Roman pottery and flints were associated with ditches and pit (not excavated). Subsequent geophysical survey suggested an enclosure of 80m by 20m in extent.

The site lies within Langton Matravers and the name Langton stems from "long farmstead or estate" (Mills 1998). The Matravers suffix is from the name of Lord Matravers who once owned the manor.

The present village of Langton Matravers is strung out along the road from Kingston to Swanage in the centre of the parish; this is probably the result of the growth of the mediaeval extractive industries of the area. Originally, as elsewhere in the Isle of Purbeck, there was a scatter of tiny settlements, most of which were already in existence by AD1086 (Domesday Book), each with a small area of land, the boundaries of which can still be traced in the continuous hedgelines (RCHM E 1970). Acton itself is mentioned in the Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002) Acton was held by the wife of Hugh FitzGrip and was held by Aethelweard in the time of King Edward. There was land for 2 ploughs, in demese was 1 plough with 3 slaves, 2 villans 1 bordar with 1 plough. There was a mill, woodland 2 fought long and 1 ½ wide. It was worth 60s now 40s.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The general objectives of the project were to excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the areas affected by the extraction. This involved examination of all areas stripped of overburden, amounting in this instance to just under 0.1ha (eventually to cover 0.8 ha).

Topsoil and overburden were removed by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket to expose the uppermost surface of archaeological deposits. Following machine clearance, all investigation of archaeological levels was by hand. All archaeological features were planned and sectioned as a minimum objective. Linear features such as field boundaries were to be sampled at a minimum of 5%. All termini were to be examined.

## **Results**

A single curvilinear gully was observed in the north of the stripped area, with a terminal at the southern end and then curving away to the north-west for a distance of 15m at which point it petered out (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 2). The gully was excavated in three slots (1, 2 and 3) and was found to be between 0.51–0.57m wide, and between 0.07–0.10m deep with moderately sloping sides and a flat base. The gully was filled with a uniform mid brown grey clay excavated (respectively 52, 53, 54). A single very abraded sherd of pottery dated to the Late Iron Age or Roman periods was recovered from the terminal end of the gully in cut 1 deposit 52.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery* by Richard Tabor

A single very abraded sherd weighing 3g was recovered from (52) of gully slot [1]. No surfaces survived although on one side the sherd was a buff red colour due to oxidization. The otherwise well-fired, black fabric included abundant angular clear quartz of up to 1mm and sparsely 2mm. There were also rare iron oxides. The fabric is entirely consistent with South East Dorset Black Burnished ware (Seager Smith and Davies 1993), which was in wide circulation in central and east Dorset from the first half of the 1st century BC until at least the early 5th century AD. The condition of the sherd and absence of associated material suggests that it is redeposited and it should not be treated as a reliable basis for dating the gully.

## Conclusion

A single archaeological feature was recorded, a gully with a very abraded sherd of pottery dated to the Late Iron Age or Roman periods. This confirms that archaeological features do survive within the area of the quarrying activity but appear to be of low density. As the single sherd of pottery recovered was very abraded it can only provide a *terminus post quem* for the gully of Late Iron Age but the gully could be of any later date. There are prehistoric and Roman features known in the area from the evaluation

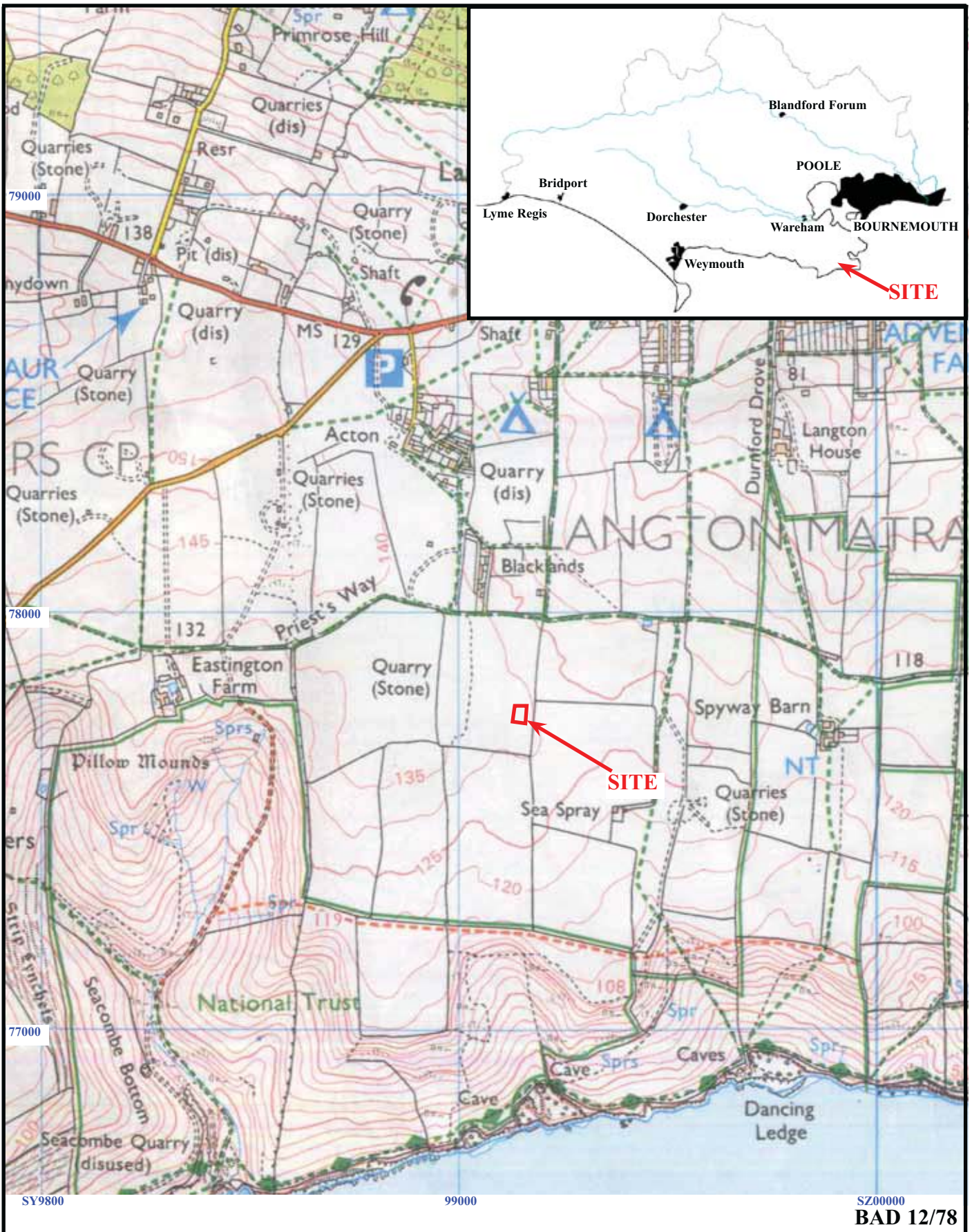
## References

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## APPENDIX 1: Feature details

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	52	Gully	Late Iron Age or later	Pottery
2	53	Gully	Late Iron Age or later	Stratigraphy
3	54	Gully	Late Iron Age or later	Stratigraphy



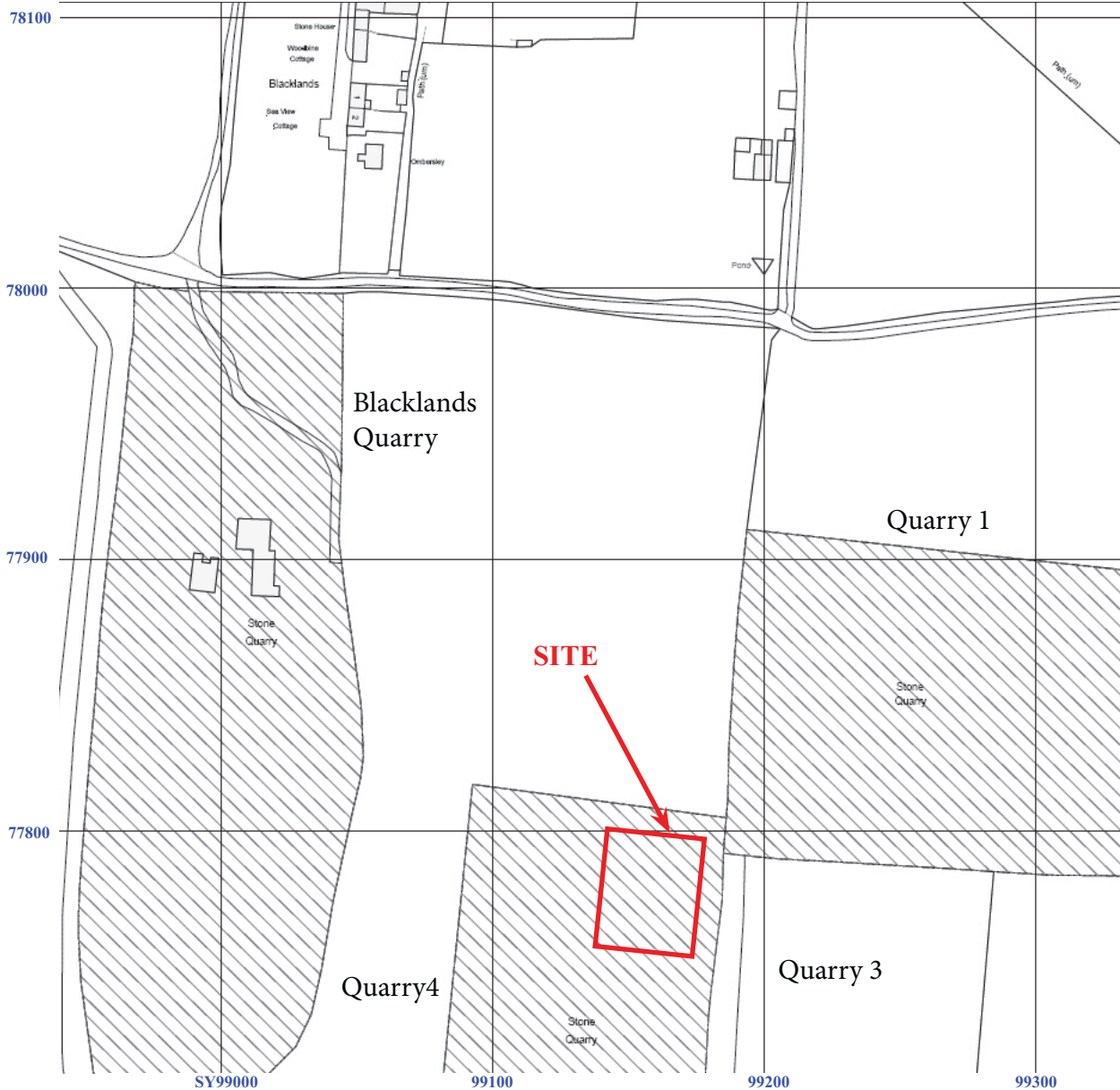


**Quarry 4 (Quarry Field), Blacklands, Acton,  
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Figure 1. Location of site within Acton and Dorset

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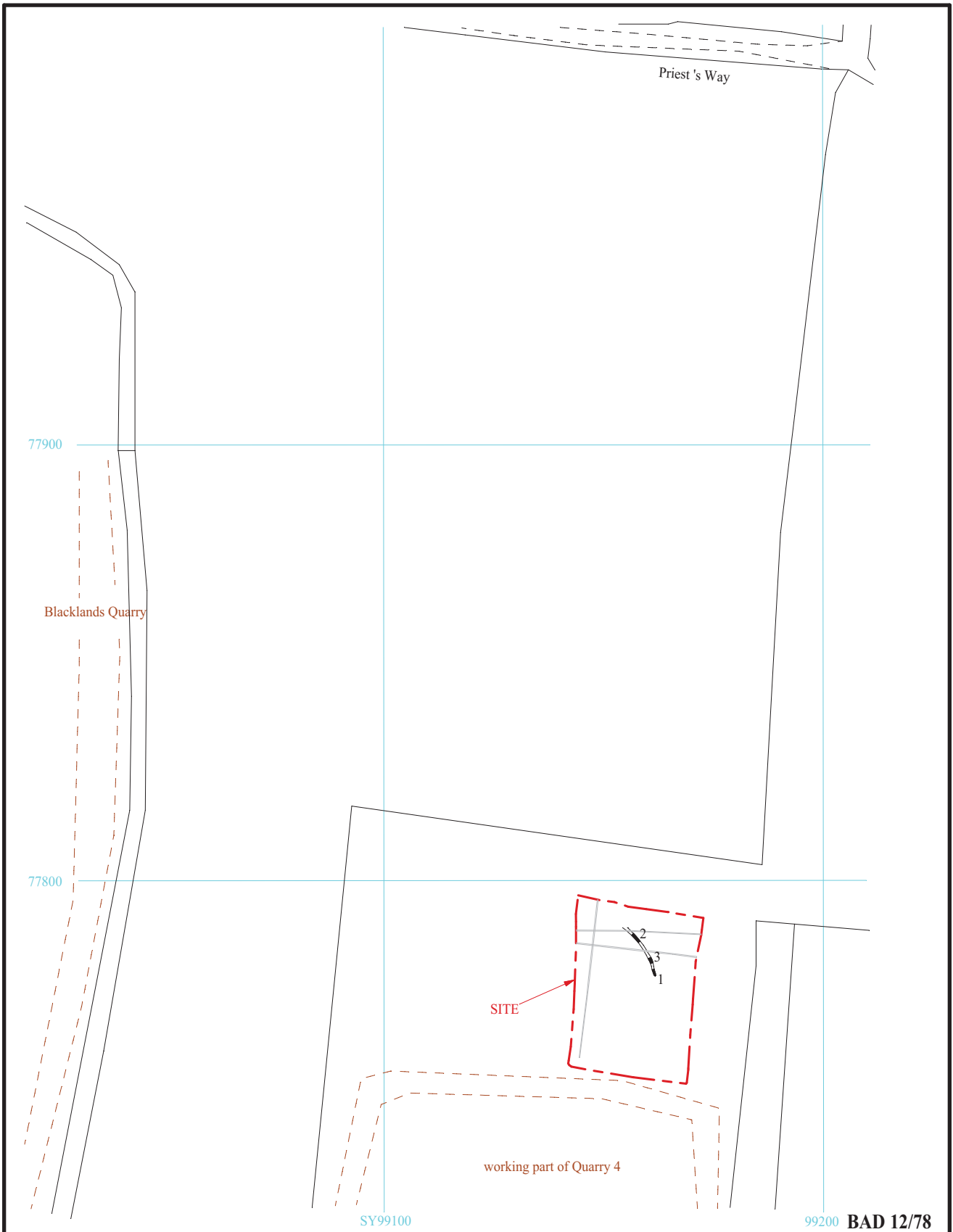


**Quarry 4 (Quarry Field), Blacklands, Acton,  
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Figure 2. Detailed location of Quarry sites.

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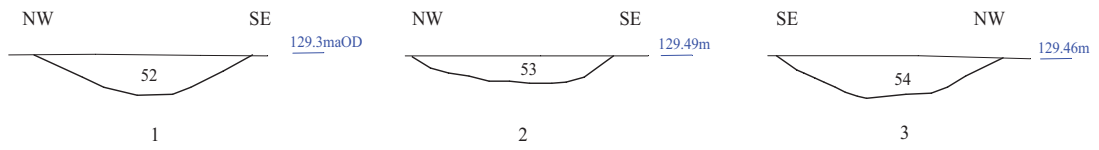


**Quarry 4 (Quarry Field), Acton, Langton Matravers,  
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Figure 3. Detail of area observed.



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Figure 4. Sections.



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Plate 1. Gully 1000, looking north east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Gully 1000 (slot 2), looking south east, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.

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**Quarry 4 (Quarry Field), Blacklands, Acton,  
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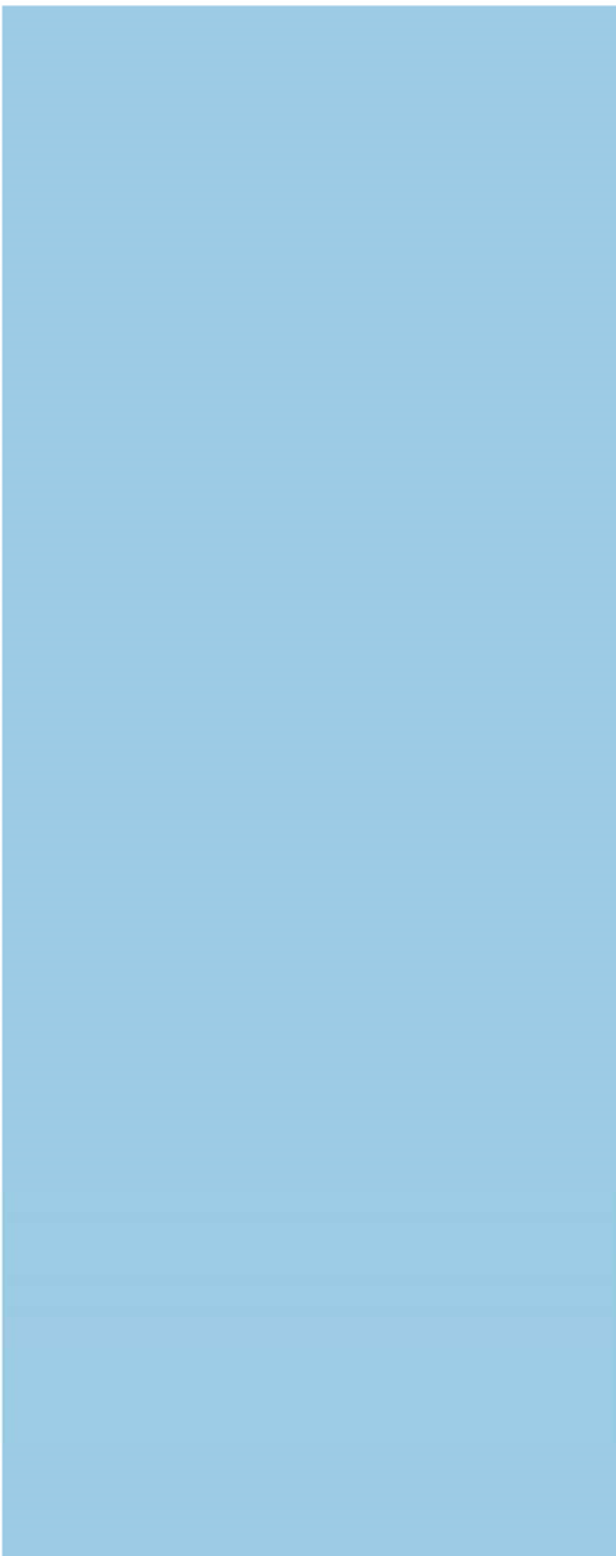
Plates 1 and 2.

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## TIME CHART

	<b>Calendar Years</b>
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late -----	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle -----	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early -----	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late .....	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early .....	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late .....	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early .....	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper .....	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle .....	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower .....	2,000,000 BC





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