

**Land adjoining Milestone Cottage,  
Basingstoke Road, Three Mile Cross,  
Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Millgate Homes**

by Stephen Hammond  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MCT 05/104

**October 2005**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land adjoining Milestone Cottage, Basingstoke Road, Three Mile Cross, Reading

**Grid reference:** SU 7150 6825

**Site activity:** Field evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 12th–14th October 2005

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Stephen Hammond

**Site code:** MCT 05/104

**Area of site:** *c.* 0.37ha

**Summary of results:**

**Monuments identified:**

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Reading Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 20.10.05
	Steve Preston ✓ 20.10.05

# Land adjoining Milestone Cottage, Basingstoke Road, Three Mile Cross, Reading An Archaeological Evaluation

by Stephen Hammond

Report 05/104

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land adjoining Milestone Cottage, Basingstoke Road, Three Mile Cross, Reading (SU 7150 6825) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Greg Meier, of Millgate Homes, Millgate House, Terrace Ruscombe Lane, Ruscombe, Twyford, Berkshire, RG10 9JT.

Planning permission (F/2005/5197) has been granted by Wokingham District Council for the construction of new houses and flats on the site with associated access and parking. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by groundworks, the consent is subject to a condition (9) relating to archaeology. A field observation in the form of an evaluation has been requested.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and Wokingham District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Thomason, Archaeological Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Stephen Hammond with the assistance of Jenny Ryder between 12th–14th October 2005 and the site code is MCT 05/104. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Reading Museum in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is a rectangular parcel of land adjoining Milestone Cottage just off Basingstoke Road on the northern fringe of Three Mile Cross, south of Reading, close to the A33 (Fig. 1). The site is currently occupied by trees and overgrown scrub. The area is relatively flat at a height of approximately 41m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology according to maps (BGS 1946) is London Clay close to a boundary with Valley Gravel. Clay with patches of gravel was observed in the trenches.

## Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location on the margins of the Kennet Valley which is considered archaeologically rich with numerous sites recorded from field survey and aerial photography (Lobb

and Rose 1996; Gates 1975). Occupation deposits of Neolithic, Bronze Age and later dates have been revealed in fieldwork to the north-west of the site at Green Park (Moore and Jennings 1992; Brossler *et al.* 2004) and non-invasive work has identified additional deposits including a possible causewayed enclosure on aerial photographs to the west. A recent field evaluation just to the south of the site located Iron Age deposits indicative of an occupation site (Hindmarch 2003).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. The specific research aims of the project were:

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site.

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

To determine if deposits of Iron Age or earlier prehistoric date are present on the site.

In order to achieve these aims it was decided to dig seven trenches, 21m long and 1.6m wide across the site (*c.* 6% of the site area) using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The trenches would concentrate on the proposed footprints of the new buildings in positions previously agreed in the project specification. However, a certain degree of flexibility would be required to avoid on site restrictions.

Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas would be cleaned using appropriate hand tools and sufficient of any archaeological features identified would be sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief. This would be done without compromising the integrity of any archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation *in situ*, or might be better excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation. All resulting spoil heaps would be checked for finds.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

## **Results**

In total seven trenches were excavated ranging in length from 19.30m to 22.10m. The positioning of the trenches had to be adjusted due to site restrictions such as tree locations but a good coverage was still maintained (Fig. 3).

### Trench 1

This trench was 20.40m long, 0.90m deep, aligned north–south. The stratigraphy noted in section consisted of 0.07m of topsoil covering several layers of made ground with frequent building rubble inclusions. This sealed a mid orange/yellow clay natural with moderate flint gravel inclusions. No finds or archaeological deposits were revealed in this trench.

### Trench 2 (Plate 1)

Trench 2 was 21.10m in length, 0.98m deep and aligned NNW–SSE. The stratigraphy recorded in section typically consisted of 0.17m of topsoil overlying several layers of made ground with brick inclusions. This overlay an orange/yellow clay natural with moderate to frequent flint gravel patches. A gully was revealed towards the north-west end of the trench (Fig. 4). A slot placed through this feature (1) revealed it to be 0.68m wide and 0.13m deep with a firm mid grey mottled with mid brown coloured silty clay fill (50) (Fig. 5). Four sherds of medieval pottery, all from the same vessel were recovered from this fill.

### Trench 3

Aligned ESE–WNW, this trench was 1.00m deep and 19.60m long. The section revealed a stratigraphy consisting of 0.09m of topsoil overlying made ground with ash and brick inclusions. This overlay 0.29m of dark grey/orange silty clay above the orange/yellow clay natural with moderate flint gravel inclusions. No archaeological finds or deposits were discovered in this trench.

### Trench 4 (Plate 2)

This trench was 19.30m long, 0.96m deep, aligned NNW–SSE. Typically 0.11m of topsoil overlay made ground with frequent building rubble inclusions. This sealed a mid orange/yellow clay natural with occasional to moderate flint gravel inclusions. A slot (2) was placed through a linear gully aligned close to the north end of the trench (Fig. 4). This showed the feature to be 0.71m wide and 0.39m deep, having a mottled brown/grey silty clay fill (51) (Fig. 5). It is probable that this feature is be a continuation of the gully note in Trench 2 to the east, but no finds came from this section. A modern gully or disturbance orientated approximately north–south was observed cutting through this feature.

### Trench 5

Trench 5 was aligned WNW–ESE and measured 22.10m in length and 0.98m in depth. The stratigraphy observed in section consisted of 0.13m of topsoil overlying made ground with moderate brick rubble inclusions.

This overlay 0.16m of light yellow/grey compacted sandy silt which in turn covered 0.30m of mid orange/grey with occasional flint gravel. This covered an orange/yellow clay natural with occasional flint gravel patches. The corner of a concrete foundation of a former building observed at the west end of the trench continued beyond the limits of the trench. No archaeological finds or deposits were discovered in this trench.

#### Trench 6

Trench 6 measured 21.90m in length, 0.98m in depth and was aligned east–west. The section revealed a stratigraphy consisting of 0.09m of topsoil overlaying made ground with ash and frequent brick rubble inclusions towards the northern end. This in turn covered 0.11m of mottled orange and grey silty sand which was seen to seal 0.12m of light orange/grey silt. Below this was a dark grey/orange layer 0.36m thick that was noted to overlie a mid orange clay natural with occasional flint gravel. No finds or archaeological deposits were revealed in this trench.

#### Trench 7

This trench was 21.30m long, 1.06m deep and aligned NNW–SSE. Typically 0.06m of topsoil overlay made ground with frequent building rubble inclusions which, in turn overlay 0.21m of orange/grey clayey silt. This overlay a mid orange/grey silty clay 0.31m thick that was noted to seal a mid orange clay natural with occasional flint gravel patches. Part of the concrete foundation and several courses of brick and the remains of a bay window of the front elevation of a former building were noted in this trench but no archaeological finds or deposits were discovered.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised four sherds weighing 53g all from gully 1, fill 50. They were all fragments of the same green-glazed jug handle, in a Surrey whiteware, probably Kingston type, and dated AD1250–1450 (Pearce and Vince 1988). The sherds were extremely abraded, and had been subjected to considerable attrition, possibly water action, before deposition.

### *Metalwork*

A single unidentified, heavily corroded iron object came from gully 1 fill 50.

## Conclusion

The evaluation has successfully revealed the presence of some archaeology on the site in the form of a gully dated by the inclusion of a few abraded sherds of medieval pottery. A second undated gully in another trench might represent a continuation of the first. These deposits were deeply buried by modern made ground. Despite the intensity of the trenching, most were devoid of archaeological deposits and finds suggesting that occupation areas are not present in the immediate vicinity. It seems likely that the gully is a boundary feature for settlement located somewhere nearby but probably not on the site, nor necessarily close by.

## References

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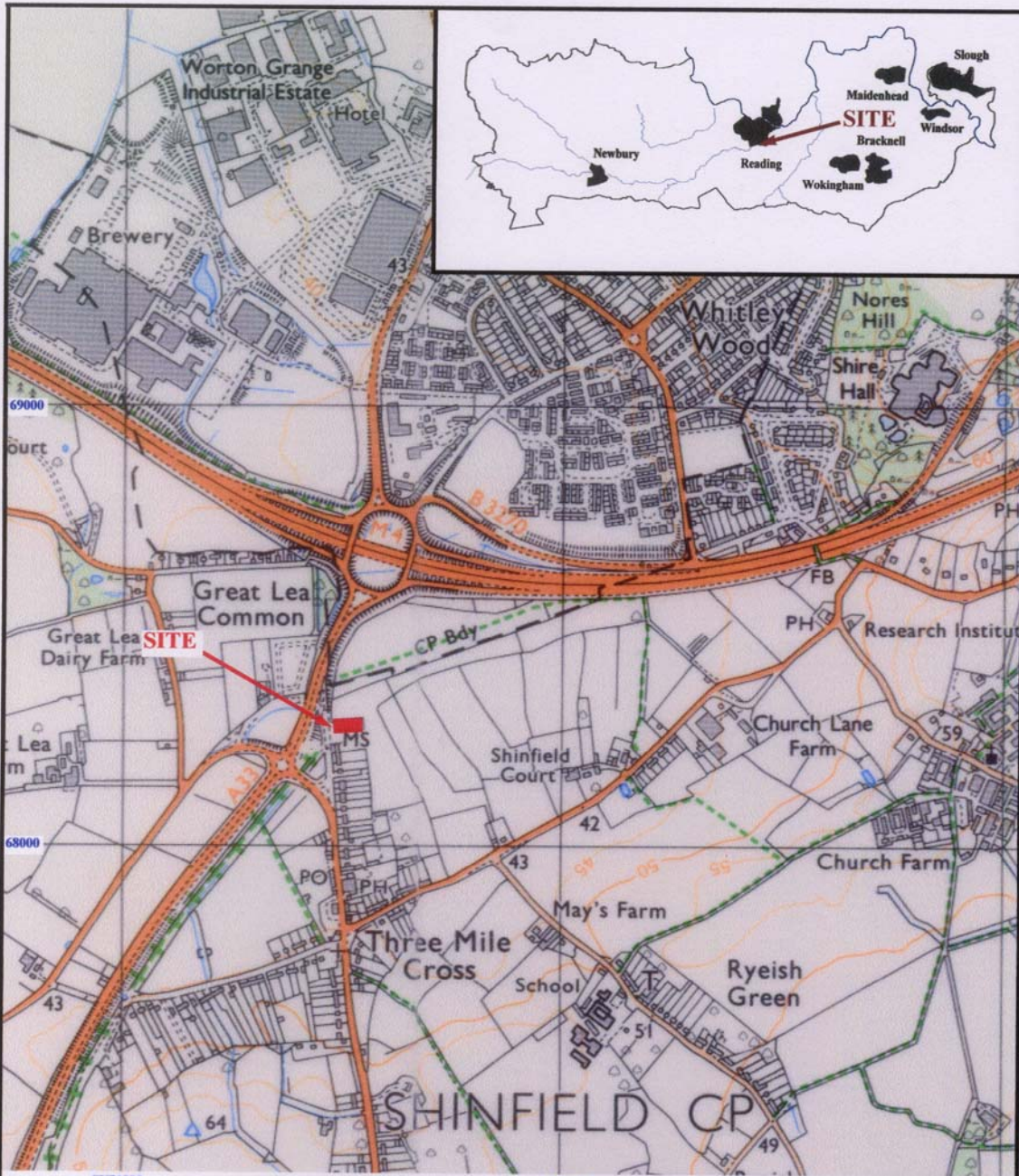
**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**  
0m at S/W end

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	20.40	1.6	0.90	0-0.07m topsoil; 0.07-0.30m grey/brown silt with very frequent building rubble inclusions; 0.30-0.57m orange/grey clay/silt with occasional brick and tile; 0.57-0.87m grey/orange silty clay with very occasional brick and tile inclusions; 0.87m+ mid orange/yellow clay natural with moderate flint gravel inclusions. No finds or archaeology.
2	21.10	1.6	0.98	0-0.17m topsoil; 0.17-0.39m grey/brown clayey silt containing frequent brick rubble inclusions; 0.39-0.76m orange/grey clayey silt with occasional charcoal flecking and brick inclusions; 0.76-0.96m grey/orange silty clay with occasional charcoal flecking and brick inclusions; 0.96m+ orange/yellow clay natural with moderate to frequent flint gravel patches. Gully 1 at 14m <b>[Plate 1]</b>
3	19.60	1.6	1.00	0-0.09m topsoil; 0.09-0.18m grey/brown clayey silt; 0.18-0.27m charcoal and ash layer; 0.27-0.44m mottled orange/grey silty sand; 0.44-0.53m light greenish white sand layer, only visible towards the NE end of the trench; 0.53-0.67m orange/grey silt layer with occasional brick inclusions; 0.67-0.96m dark grey/orange silty clay; 0.96m+ orange/yellow clay natural with moderate flint gravel inclusions. No finds or archaeology.
4	19.30	1.6	0.96	0-0.11m topsoil; 0.11-0.34m grey/brown silt with frequent building rubble inclusions.; 0.34-0.58m orange/yellow/grey silty clay with occasional brick inclusions; 0.59-0.94m yellowish orange/grey silty clay with very occasional brick inclusions; 0.94m+ mid orange/yellow clay natural with occasional to moderate flint gravel inclusions. Gully 2 at 17m cut by modern gully. <b>[Plate 2]</b>
5	22.10	1.6	0.88	0-0.13m topsoil; 0.13-0.38m grey/brown silt with moderate brick rubble inclusions; 0.38-0.54m yellow/grey compacted sandy silt; 0.54-0.84m orange/grey silty clay with occasional flint gravel; 0.84m+ orange/yellow clay natural with occasional flint gravel patches. Concrete foundation at west end. No archaeological finds or deposits.
6	21.90	1.6	1.00	0-0.09m topsoil; 0.09-0.20m grey/brown silty layer with frequent brick rubble inclusions towards the northern end; 0.20 -0.35m charcoal and ash meting layer only towards the northern end of the trench; 0.35-0.46m mottled orange and grey silty sand; 0.46-0.58m light orange/grey silt; 0.58-0.94m dark grey/orange silty clay; 0.94m+ mid orange clay natural with occasional flint gravel. No finds or archaeological deposits.
7	21.30	1.6	1.06	0-0.06m topsoil; 0.06-0.18m grey/brown silt with frequent building rubble inclusions; 0.18-0.48m yellow/brown sandy silt with frequent building rubble inclusions; 0.48-0.69m orange/grey clay/silt; 0.69-1.00m orange/grey silty clay; 1.00m+ orange clay natural with occasion flint gravel patches. Part of the concrete foundation and several courses of brick and the remains of bay window of the front elevation of a former building at south end of trench. No finds or archaeological deposits.



**APPENDIX 2:** Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
2	1	50	Gully	Medieval	Pottery
4	2	51	Gully	Unknown	None



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Figure 1. Location of site within Three Mile Cross and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site on Basingstoke Road. Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital mapping. Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

Scale: 1:1250

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# Land adjacent to Milestone Cottage, Basingstoke Road, Three Mile Cross, 2005

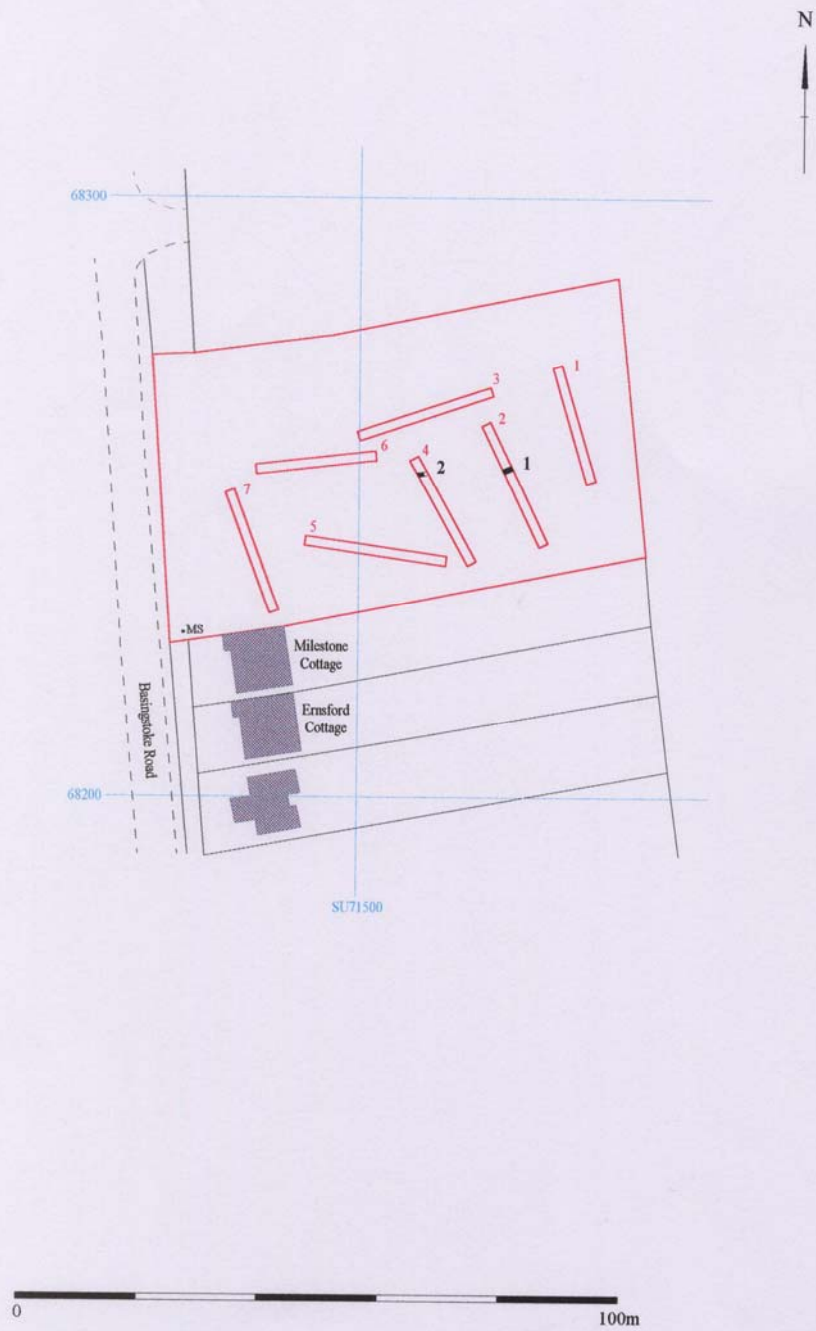


Figure 3. Location of trenches.

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**Land adjacent to Milestone Cottage, Basingstoke Road, Three Mile Cross, 2005**

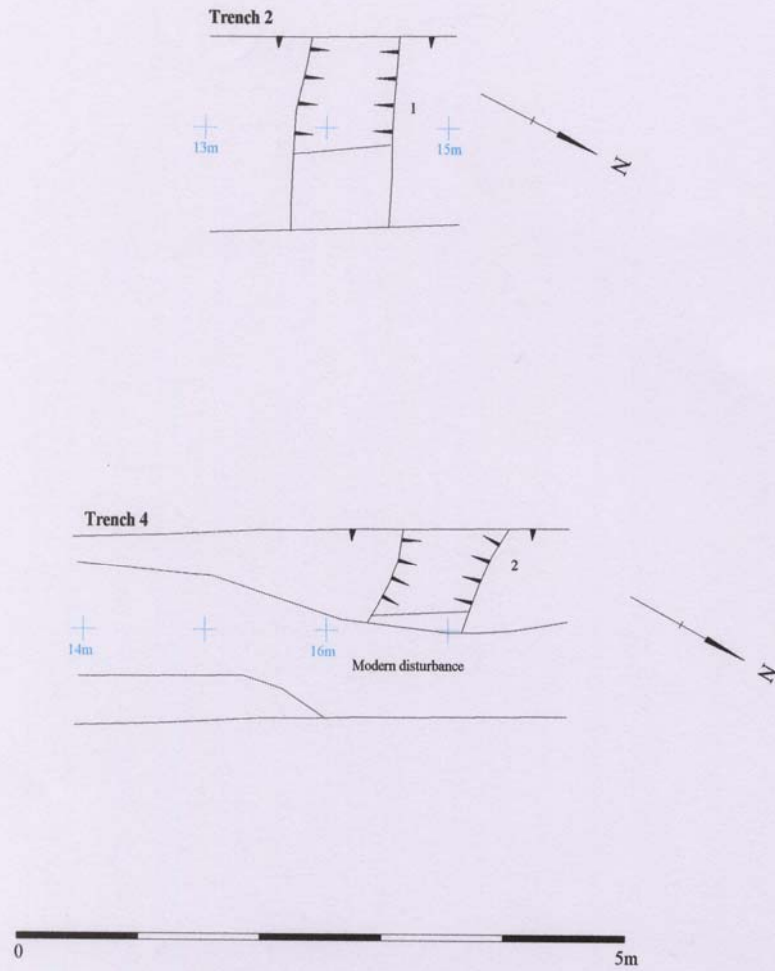


Figure 4. Plan of trenches and features 1 and 2.

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# Land adjacent to Milestone Cottage, Basingstoke Road, Three Mile Cross, 2005

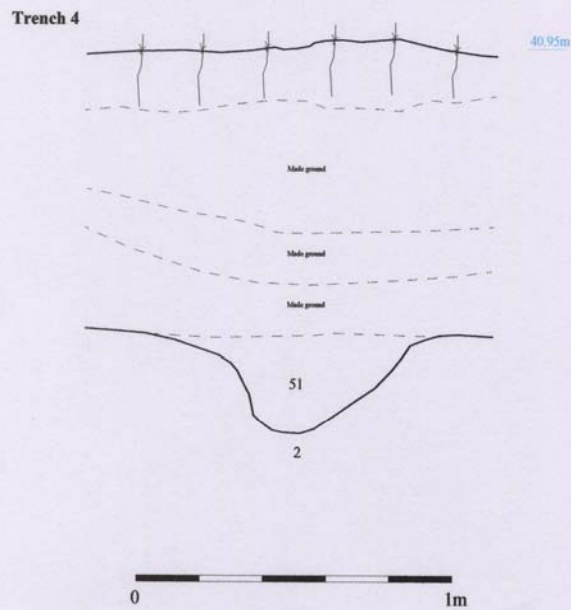
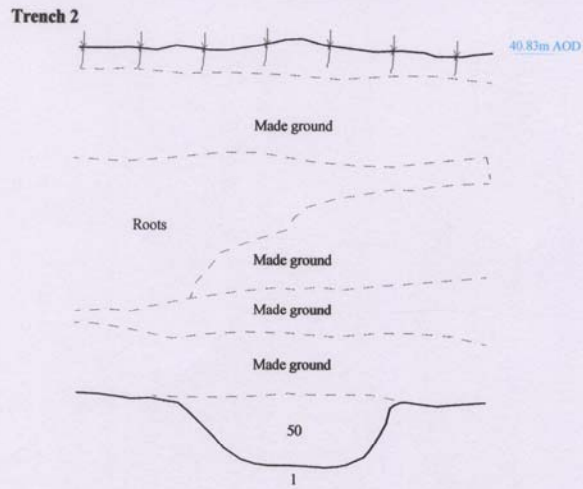


Figure 5. Sections of features 1 and 2.

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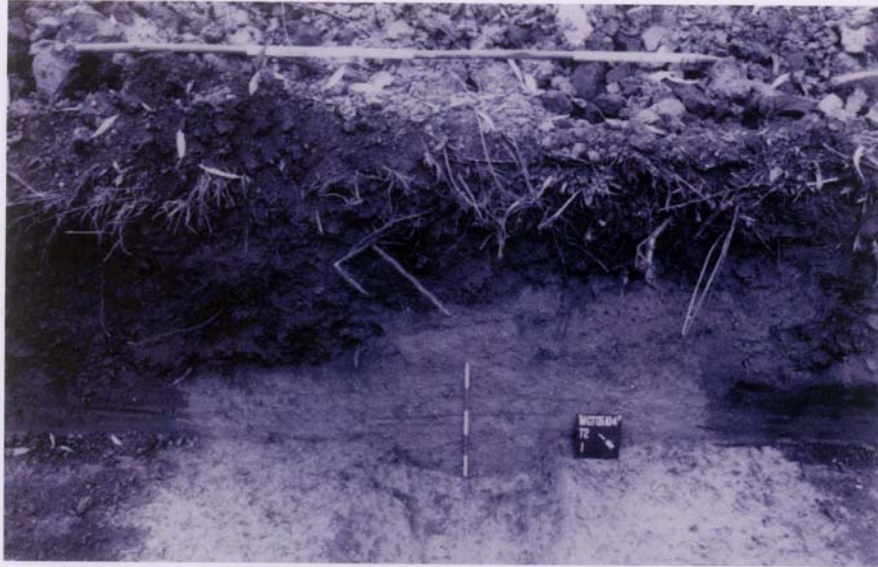


Plate 1. Trench 2, Gully 1 looking south-west, scales: 2m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 4, Gully 2 looking south-west, scales: 2m and 0.1m.