

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**The Paddocks, School Lane,
Castle Eaton, Swindon, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Weale

Site Code: SLC10/52

(SU 1462 9565)

**The Paddocks, School Lane, Castle Eaton,
Swindon, Wiltshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

For Bower Mapson Limited

by Andrew Weale

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code SLC10/52

June 2010

Summary

Site name: The Paddocks, School Lane, Castle Eaton, Swindon, Wiltshire

Grid reference: SU 1462 9567

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 2nd–3rd June 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andrew Weale

Site code: SLC 10/52

Area of site: *c.* 0.38ha

Summary of results: Two ditches were recorded but which did not produce any dating evidence. Part of the site was occupied by an alluvium-filled palaeochannel of the River Thames. On the basis of these evaluation results, the archaeological potential of the site appears to be low.

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

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| Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 07.06.10 Steve Preston ✓ 07.06.10 |
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The Paddocks, School Lane, Castle Eaton, Swindon, Wiltshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Weale

Report 10/52

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at The Paddocks, School Lane, Castle Eaton, Swindon, Wiltshire (SU 1462 9567) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Peter Mapson of Bower Mapson Ltd, Willow House, 7 The Avenue, Stanton Fitzwarren, Swindon, SN6 7SE.

Planning permission (app. no. S/10/0672/NIRO) has been sought from Swindon Borough Council to construct new housing on the site following the demolition of the existing structures. The site occupies an 'L'-shaped area of c. 0.38ha. The results of this evaluation are required to accompany the planning application.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, County Archaeological Officer for Wiltshire Country Council on behalf of the Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Weale and Aidan Colyer on the 2nd and 3rd of June 2010 and the site code is SLC 10/52. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Swindon Museums and Art Gallery in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located within the village of Castle Eaton to the south of the River Thames with the villages of Kempsford to the north east, Marston Meysey to the north-west and with the town of Cricklade and the hamlet of Eysey to the south-west (Fig. 1). The site is generally flat, with a slight slope from south-east to north-west down towards the River Thames, from 79m to 77m above Ordnance Datum. Currently the site is occupied by a house and gardens with a stableyard and outbuildings. It is bounded to the north by School Lane, the east and west by housing and the south by open farmland (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is mapped as Pleistocene Second Terrace Gravels close to the boundary with the First Terrace Gravel of the River Thames which overlies Upper Jurassic Oxford clay, which outcrops to the north-east of the site (BGS 1974). The geology observed within the trenches was a mixture of alluvial clays and gravels.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its proximity to the historic (medieval) core of the settlement of Castle Eaton. Castle Eaton has late Saxon origins and is mentioned in Domesday Book (AD1086) as being held by Earl Roger with geld for 15 hides, land for 12 ploughs, a mill, 100 acres of meadow and pasture 6 furlongs long and 3 wide (Williams and Martin 2002). The site also lies close to extensive areas of prehistoric, Iron Age, and Roman settlement revealed by fieldwork in advance of gravel extraction at Roundhouse Farm, Marston Meysey (Lewis and Wallis 2010) and Manor Farm, Kempsford (Hammond *et al.* 2005), Stubbs Farm, Kempsford (Cromarty *et al.* 2007)) and more broadly within one of the most fully explored archaeological landscapes in the country (Miles *et al.* 2007; Pine and Preston 2004).

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. This work was to be carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation in-situ, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project are:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any late Saxon or medieval deposits are present on the site; and
- to provide information in order to draw up an appropriate mitigation strategy if required.

It was proposed to excavate six trenches, three at 10m long and three at 5m long, all 1.6m wide. Topsoil and any other overburden were removed by a backhoe machine (JCB-type) fitted with a 1.6m long toothless ditching bucket was used to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. The trenches were dug to examine the full depth of deposits above natural geology. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the project.

Results

All six trenches were excavated as intended with minor variation in position and orientation due to the presence of services and trees (Fig. 2). The trenches varied from 5.0m to 10.6m long and from 0.6m to 0.98m deep. A

metal detector was used to increase the recovery of metal artefacts but in the area of trenches 1, 4, 5 and 6 the presence of overhead power cables interfered with its operation giving false readings. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1 and a list of features excavated forms Appendix 2.

Trench 1 (Fig. 3; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned WSW–ENE and was 9.3m long and a maximum of 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy comprised dark brown to black humic loam topsoil to a depth of 0.20m above a mid red/brown silty clay with gravel subsoil to a depth of 0.35m.

Beneath the subsoil and cut into hard yellow gravel natural geology was Ditch 1 which was orientated SE - NW and was 3.10m wide and 0.56m deep with sides that sloped approximately 30° and what appeared to a flat base, however the water table was encountered at 0.38m deep within the ditch. Ditch 1 was filled with (52) a mid yellow/brown sandy clay with occasional gravel (Fig. 4). A section was excavated though the ditch to the mid point and then extended across the remainder of the ditch for finds retrieval; just three pieces of animal bone weighing 14g were recovered.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

Trench 2 was aligned WNW–ESE and was 10.6m long and a maximum of 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy comprised topsoil to a depth of 0.25m, beneath which were two modern services, one at either end of the trench, both of the services were cut into a mid red/brown silty clay with gravel subsoil which had a depth of 0.30m. Beneath the subsoil was what is believed to be an infilled river channel (4). Neither the edges nor sides of palaeochannel 4 were seen as it took up the whole of the exposed base of the trench between the services and remained unexcavated. Palaeochannel 4 was filled with (55) mottled red/brown to blue/grey clay with lenses of yellow gravel. The palaeochannel was augured to a depth of 2.1m below topsoil with no notable change in the fill, nor were organic components seen within the augured sample. Beneath the fill of the palaeochannel, a hard yellow gravel was encountered which was assumed to be the natural geology.

Trench 3 (Fig. 3; Pl. 2)

Trench 3 was aligned SW–NE and was 9.8m long and a maximum of 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy comprised topsoil to a depth of 0.20m over silty clay with gravel subsoil to a depth of 0.35m. Beneath the subsoil was palaeochannel (3) which had an uneven irregular shape in plan irregular and undercut edges though the base was not seen. A hand dug sondage was excavated though the fill of the palaeochannel, which was filled with mottled red/brown to blue/grey sandy clay with lens of yellow and red brown sandy gravel (53). The sondage was excavated to a depth of 1.10m below topsoil after which it was augured to a depth of 1.8m with no change in

deposit. No artefacts were recovered from the fill of the palaeochannel. Palaeochannel 4 and 3 are likely to be the same feature which extends across the site to the north of the current house.

Trench 4 (Fig. 3)

Trench 4 was aligned SE–NW and was 5.0m long and a maximum of 0.70m deep. The stratigraphy comprised topsoil to a depth of 0.25m. Beneath the topsoil was subsoil to a depth of 0.40m. Beneath the subsoil was ditch 3 which appeared to be linear in plan aligned N-S with sides that sloped approximately 30° and a flat base (Fig. 4). Ditch 3 was filled with a mid yellow/brown sandy clay with occasional gravel (54). A section was excavated through the ditch and was extended after recording for the retrieval of dating evidence but no finds were recovered. Ditch 3 was cut through hard yellow gravel natural geology

Trench 5 (Pl.3)

Trench 5 was aligned SW–NE and was 5.6m long and a maximum of 0.98m deep. The stratigraphy comprised Tarmac to a depth of 0.05m. Beneath the Tarmac was 0.10m of clean loose yellow gravel made ground. Beneath the gravel made ground was 0.10m of mixed red brown silty clay with modern brick and concrete made ground. Beneath this was 0.35m of blue green clay with decayed roots and a malodour. Beneath the clay was 0.33m of mid red brown silty clay with gravel subsoil. Finally beneath the subsoil was hard yellow gravel natural geology. No archaeological features were present within Trench 5 nor were any artefacts recovered from it.

Trench 6 (Plate 4)

Trench 6 was aligned SW–NE and was 5.2m long and a maximum of 0.7m deep. The stratigraphy comprised Tarmac to a depth of 0.05m; beneath the Tarmac was 0.10m of clean loose yellow gravel made ground. Beneath this was 0.10m of mixed red brown silty clay with modern brick and concrete made ground. Beneath this layer of made ground was 0.20m of mixed red brown and yellow brown clay with modern concrete. Beneath the clay was 0.18m of mid red brown silty clay with gravel subsoil. Finally beneath the subsoil was hard yellow gravel natural geology. No archaeological features were present within Trench 6 nor were any artefacts recovered from it.

Finds

Animal Bone by Andrew Weale

A total of three pieces of animal bone weighing a total of 14g were recovered from ditch 1 in Trench 1. The bone is badly preserved and fragmented which makes identification impossible but it is probably from a small or medium sized mammal.

Conclusion

Cut features of possible archaeological interest in the form of ditches, do survive on site to the south of the current house. These ditches were roughly orientated at 90° to each other and the fills were almost identical with each other. This could suggest that it may be a single ditch which returns outside the trenches or two related ditches that were open and silted up with a very similar sedimentary process. No dateable artefacts were recovered from either of the ditches including the extra part excavated solely for the propose of locating such artefacts.

The area to the north of the current house appeared to be taken up by a former river channel which is not surprising given the proximity of the current River Thames. The channel appeared to be infilled with alluvial deposits (silty clay) without organic material such as peat. The area of the stableyard appears to have been landscaped in the past with the accumulation of modern made ground lying on top of subsoil with no buried topsoil evident. This may reflect the building of the stable yard or its previous use as a lorry park but in any case is modern.

On the basis of these evaluation results, the archaeological potential of the site appears to be low.

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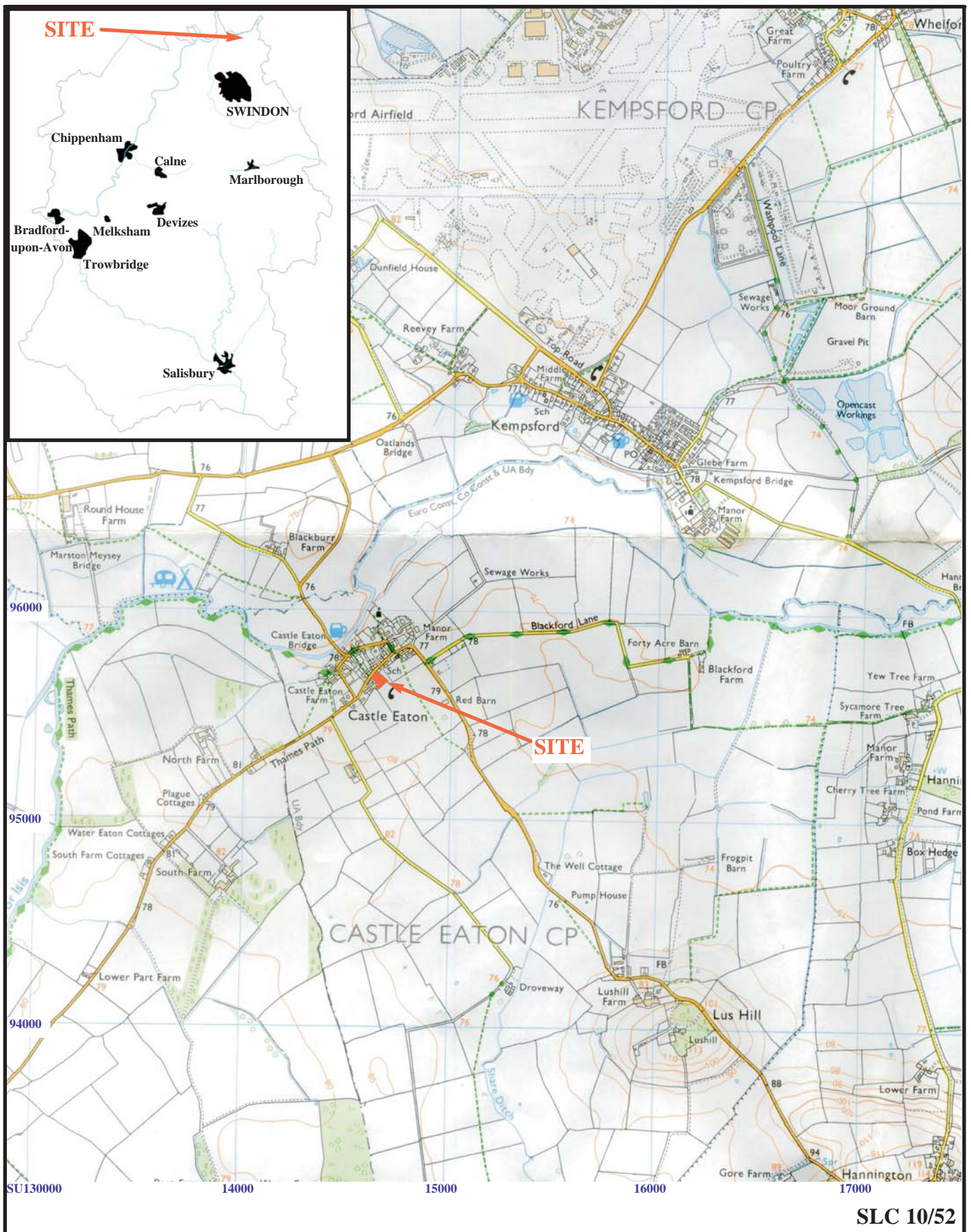
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at south or west end

| <i>Trench</i> | <i>Length (m)</i> | <i>Breadth (m)</i> | <i>Depth (m)</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|--|
| 1 | 9.3 | 1.6 | 0.6 | 0-0.02m topsoil, 0.20m-0.55m subsoil. Ditch 1. Hard yellow gravel natural geology. [PI. 1] |
| 2 | 10.6 | 1.6 | 0.65 | 0-0.25 topsoil, 0.25-0.65m subsoil, Palaeochannel 4. Natural geology encountered at 2.1m by auger. |
| 3 | 9.6 | 1.6 | 0.8 | 0-0.25m topsoil, 0.25-0.65 subsoil. Palaeochannel 2. Gravel natural geology. [PI. 2] |
| 4 | 5.2 | 1.6 | 0.7 | 0-0.25m topsoil, 0.25-0.65m subsoil, Ditch 3. Gravel natural geology. |
| 5 | 5.6 | 1.6 | 0.98 | 0-0.05 Tarmac, 0.05-0.15m gravel made ground, 0.15-0.25m rubble made ground, 0.25-0.6m malodorous clay, 0.60-0.93m subsoil. No archaeological features. Gravel natural geology. [PI. 3] |
| 6 | 5.2 | 1.6 | 0.7 | 0-0.05 Tarmac, 0.05-0.15m gravel made ground, 0.15-0.25m rubble made ground, 0.25-0.45m clay made ground, 0.45-0.63m subsoil. Gravel natural geology. [PI. 4] |

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

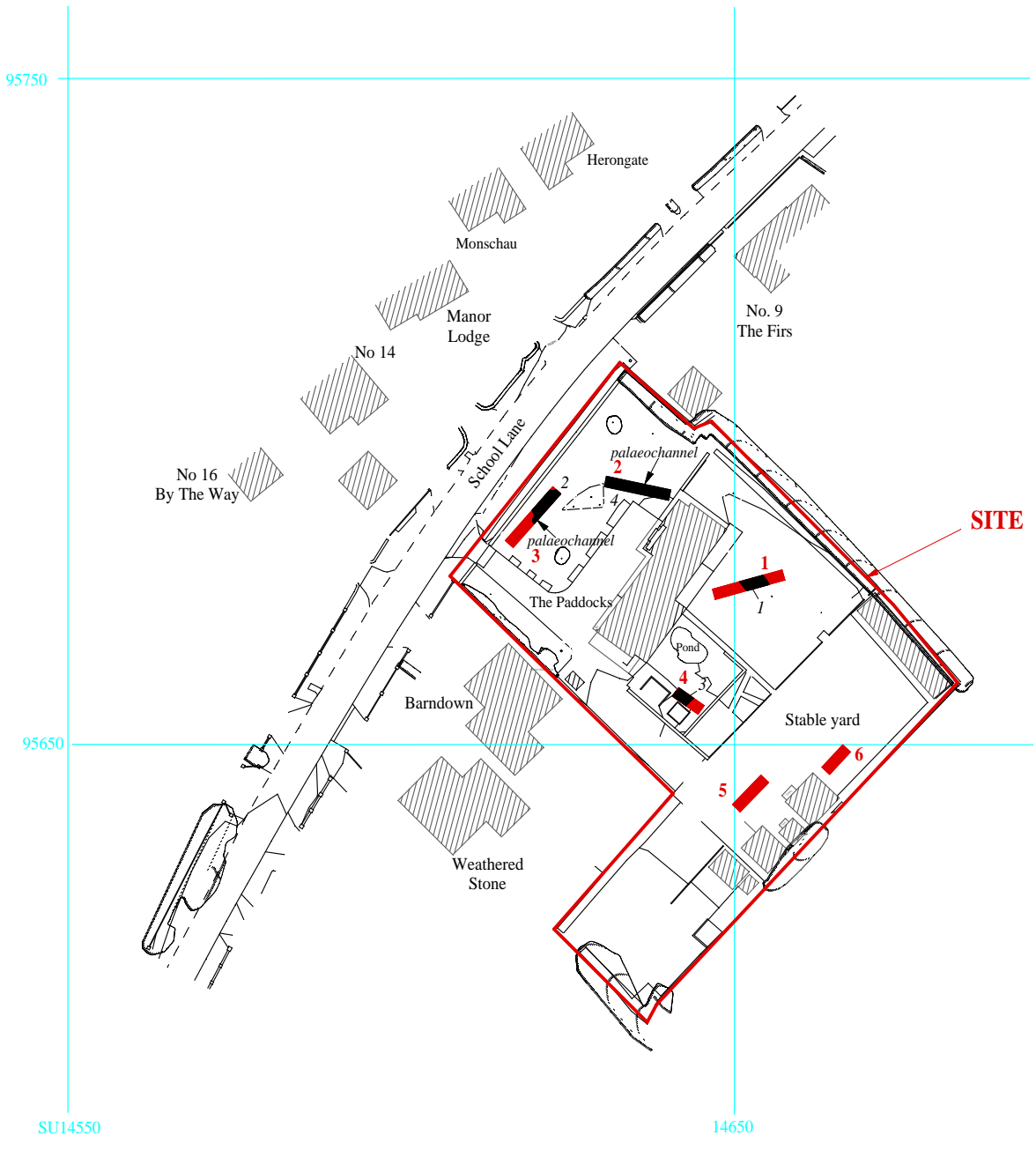
| <i>Trench</i> | <i>Cut</i> | <i>Fill (s)</i> | <i>Type</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Dating evidence</i> |
|---------------|------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------|------------------------|
| 1 | 1 | 52 | Ditch | Unknown | None |
| 3 | 2 | 53 | Palaeochannel | Unknown | None |
| 4 | 3 | 54 | Ditch | Unknown | None |
| 2 | 4 | 55 | Palaeochannel | Unknown | None |



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Figure 1. Location of site within Castle Eaton and Wiltshire.

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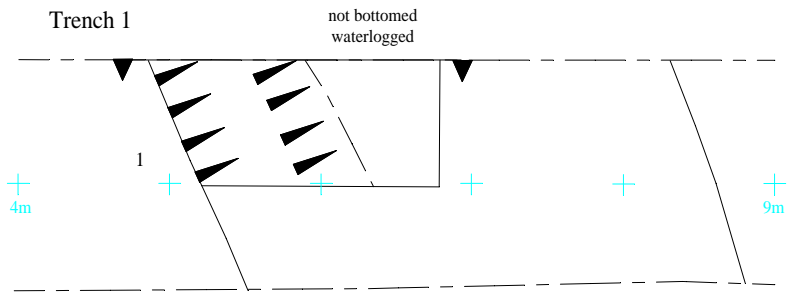
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Figure 2. Current site survey, and location of trenches.

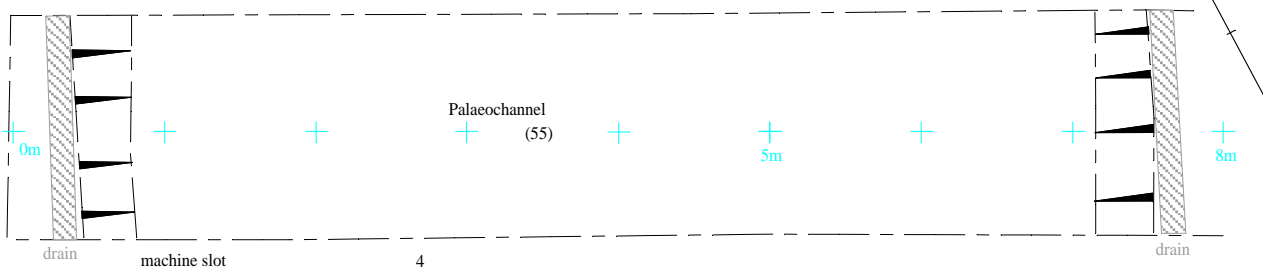


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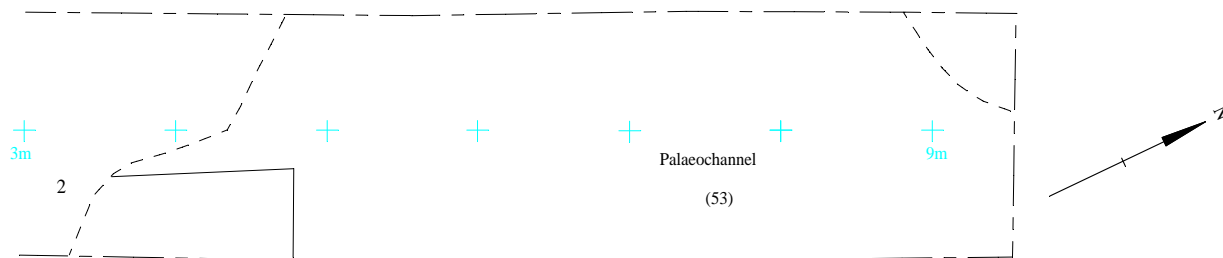
Trench 1



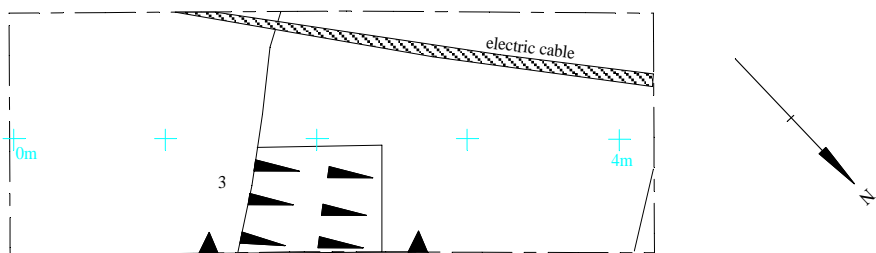
Trench 2



Trench 3



Trench 4

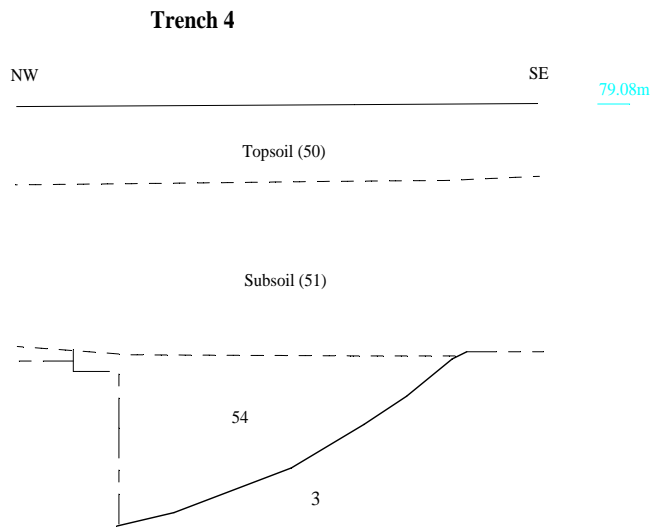
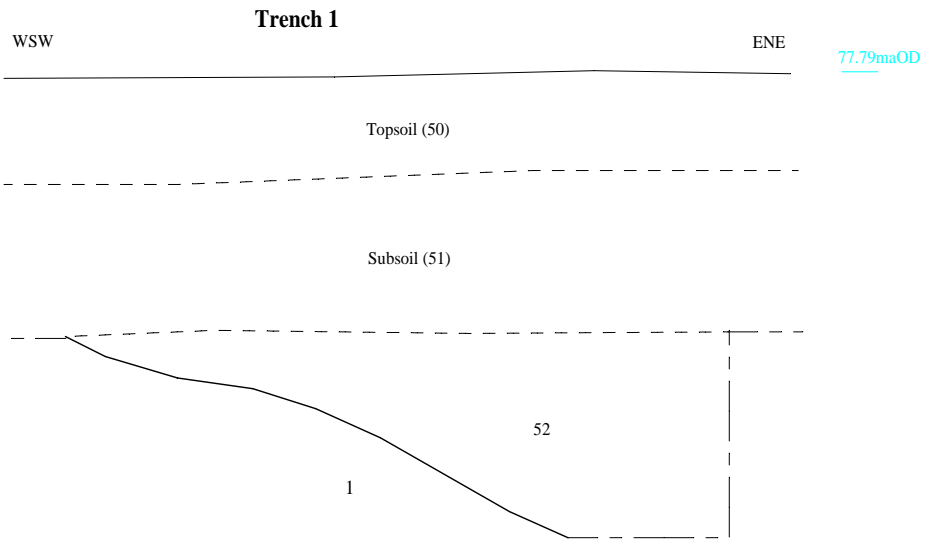


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Figure 3. Detail of trenches.





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Figure 4. Sections.





Plate 1. Trench 1, section of ditch 1, looking north west, scale 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 3, looking north east, horizontal scales 1m and 2m, vertical 0.5m

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Plates 1 and 2.

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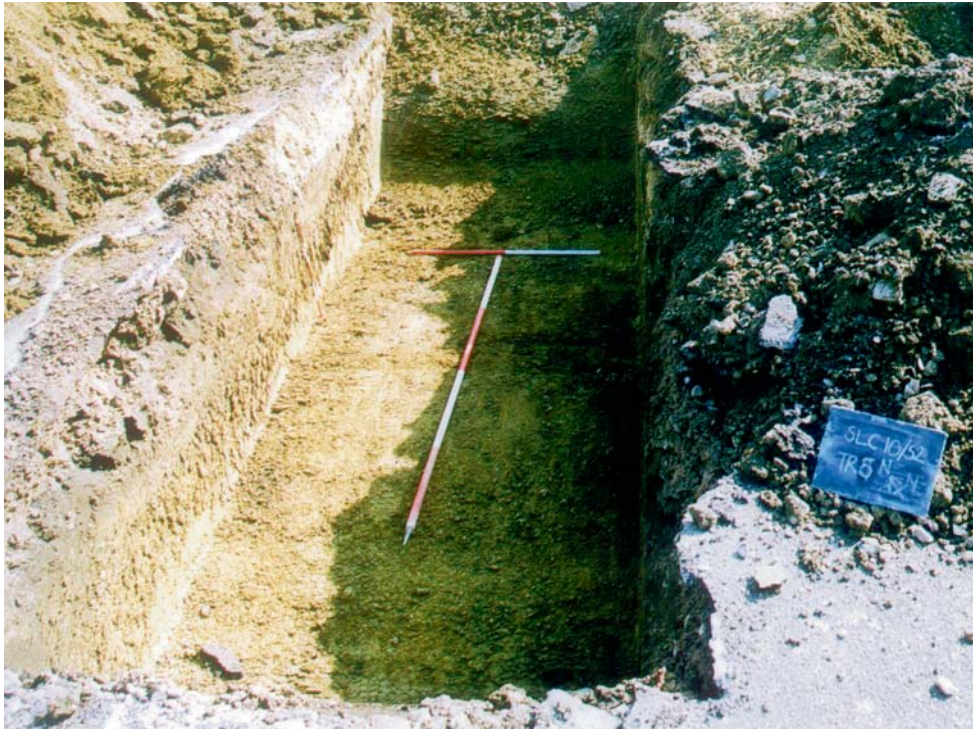


Plate 3. Trench 5, looking north east, horizontal scales 2m and 1m, vertical scale 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 6, looking north east, horizontal scales 2m and 1m, vertical scales 0.5m.

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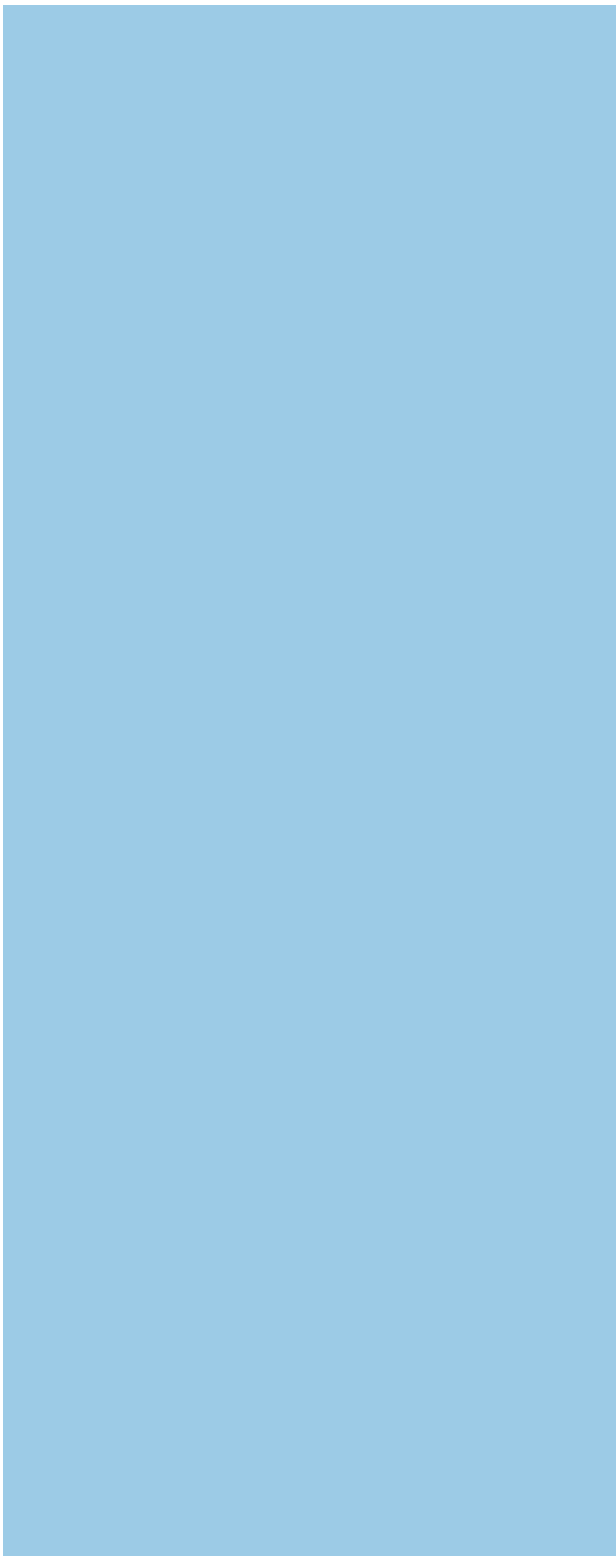
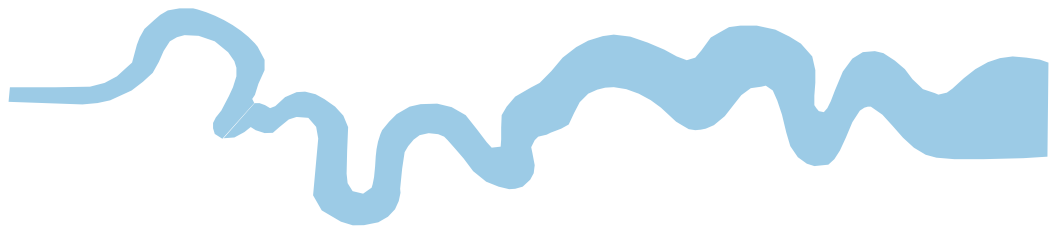
Plates 3 and 4

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TIME CHART

| | Calendar Years |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 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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