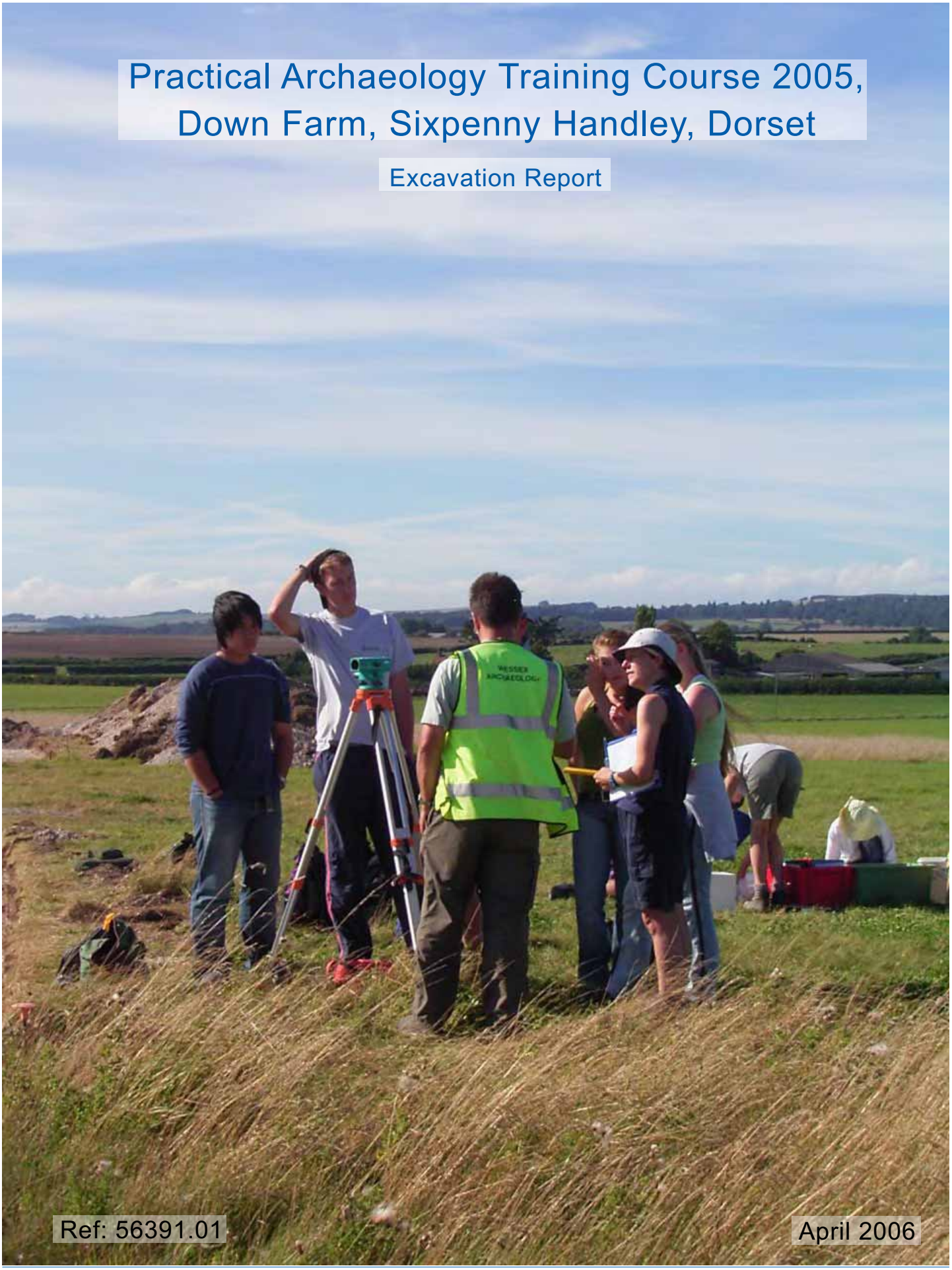
Wessex Archaeology

Practical Archaeology Training Course 2005, Down Farm, Sixpenny Handley, Dorset

Excavation Report



Ref: 56391.01

April 2006

Practical Archaeology Training Course (2005), Down Farm, Sixpenny Handley, Dorset

Excavation Report

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Report reference: 56391.01

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Summary

This report summarises the results of all the archaeological investigations to date carried out at Home Field, Down Farm, Sixpenny Handley, Dorset (NGR. ST 9980 1461), but concentrates on the results of the 2005 fieldwork. It presents the results of a 2 week excavation run as a practical archaeology course for the general public by Wessex Archaeology. It also summarises the results of environmental analyses of samples taken during Martin Green's (1985/6, 1995) and Wessex Archaeology's (2004) earlier work on the Site.

This was the second season of research excavation carried out on the site and comprised three small areas which are extensions to the earlier excavation areas. The excavation occurred between 5th – 20th September 2005. The results from the archaeological investigations at Home Field have highlighted the major period of activity being from the Late Bronze Age into the Middle Iron Age (11th - 7th to 5th - 3rd centuries BC). A small quantity of Beaker period (2600 – 1800 BC) and Romano-British (AD 43 – 410) pottery from the excavations indicates small-scale activity of these dates in the area, though the nature of the activity is difficult to ascertain.

The 2004 and 2005 excavations recorded a sub-rectangular banked enclosure, with a short, externally ditched section on the west side, was constructed in the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (11th - 7th century BC) and continued in use until the Middle Iron Age (5th – 3rd centuries BC). The palaeoenvironmental evidence indicates that sometime in the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age the local landscape changed from downland pasture to arable. This change may have been part of the reorganisation of the landscape upon the construction of the settlement enclosure.

Internal settlement features included Early (700 – 400 BC) and Middle Iron Age (400 – 100 BC) chalk quarry hollows, a *c*. 15m diameter Middle Iron Age roundhouse and undated 4-post granary structures. The post-pits of another possible roundhouse entrance of Early Iron Age date were recorded in 2005. The enclosure is possibly associated with an extensive Celtic field system and lynchet running down Gussage Cow Down and across Home Field respectively. The overall evidence from all the fieldwork shows that on-site settlement activities included flint knapping, bronze and iron metalworking, textile manufacture and grain storage. The chalk quarrying may have been for cob wall construction, whitewash (for daub walls) or marling of calcium deficient fields. Animal husbandry included the keeping of cattle, sheep/goat and pig though it is not possible to ascertain the relative importance of each species. Dog remains, possibly domesticated, were also present.

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Acknowledgements

The fieldwork could not have been undertaken but for the generosity shown by Martin Green, the landowner. Wessex Archaeology are very grateful to Martin for his continuing agreement to allow us to carry out archaeological research and training on Home Field, and continue some of the exploratory archaeological work he carried out in the 1980s and 90s. We would also like to thank him for allowing us access to his fantastic museum. Martin's knowledge, enthusiasm and good humour helped make the courses a great success.

Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Jake Keen for again giving a fascinating insight into Iron Age iron smelting techniques with his practical demonstrations, and for allowing the course participants to take part.

All the Wessex Archaeology staff involved in the project would like to thank the participants for showing boundless enthusiasm, good nature and a zest for learning. This has helped make the training courses and excavation such a success and so enjoyable.

The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Margaret Bunyard (Education Manager), who also managed the Outreach/Educational side of the project. The fieldwork was directed by Chris Ellis, with assistance from Catherine McHarg, Ellie Brooks, Talla Hopper and Doug Murphy. Lectures were given on site by Chris Stevens (palaeoenvironmental), Stephanie Knight (animal bone) and Matt Leivers (pottery).

This report was compiled by Chris Ellis with assistance from Matt Leivers (Finds) and Stephanie Knight (Animal Bone). The palaeoenvironmental analyses for Martin's earlier work were carried out by Sarah Wyles, Chris Stevens and Michael J. Allen. The illustrations were prepared by S. E. James.

Practical Archaeology Training Course (2005), Down Farm, Sixpenny Handley, Dorset

Excavation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of Wessex Archaeology Ltd and Martin Green, Down Farm, Sixpenny Handley, Dorset. It summarises the results of the 2005 excavations at Home Field, Down Farm (NGR. ST 9980 1461) – hereafter referred to as the 'Site', as well as containing a brief summary of earlier excavations of the Site. It summarises the results of environmental analyses of samples taken during Martin Green's (1985/6, 1995) and Wessex Archaeology's (2004) earlier work on the Site.

1.1.2 The fieldwork was undertaken by members of the general public, supervised by Wessex Archaeology staff between 5th – 20th September 2005.

1.1.3 Wessex Archaeology is committed to the greater public understanding of archaeology and the dissemination of the results of its investigations as part of its educational objective as a charitable organisation. To that end, Wessex Archaeology decided members of the public would be given the opportunity to carry out the present research excavation under professional supervision.

1.1.4 The aim of the excavation and associated workshops was that the participants should learn the processes of archaeological excavation and recording and the fundamental principles of archaeological interpretation. The participants were all given a number of lectures and practical activities by finds, environmental, animal bone and surveying specialists during the project. Participation in the smelting of iron on site using prehistoric technology was also undertaken.

2 SITE LOCATION, GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY

2.1.1 The Site lies at the centre of an area of high chalk downland called Cranborne Chase, that lies between Poole and Salisbury. This area of high undulating downland rises from the south-east to a dramatic scarp at its northern edge where the ground lies at *c*. 270m above Ordnance Datum. A small number of watercourses cross the Chase and drain to the south-east. Down Farm is located within the Allen valley.

2.1.2 The Site lies on a gently north facing slope on the south-west side of the Allen valley at a general height of *c*. 76m (aOD) though the ground rises to Gussage Cow Down to the south to a height of 110m (aOD). The underlying geology is Upper Chalk which has shafts, caverns and tunnel valleys caused by excess water running through fissures in the chalk. In places Clay-with-Flints caps the chalk. This is seen in certain areas of the Allen valley, where Valley Gravel is also recorded.

2.1.3 To the east of Down Farm a number of periglacial features called 'naleds' have been recorded (Catt *et. al.* 1980). These are the result of periglacial action which led to coombe-rock (eroded chalk) collecting around frozen springs. Today, this creates a distorted and pock-marked landscape of discrete mounds and hollows.

2.1.4 The Site is presently part of a Habitat Improvement Scheme and is put over to pasture (Green 2000, 145).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Archaeological setting

3.1.1 The Site lies in the middle of Cranborne Chase (**Figure 1**), one of the most rich and archaeologically significant landscapes in southern England.

3.1.2 Cranborne Chase has been an important area for archaeological research, from the beginnings of archaeology as a scientific endeavour. Fieldwork has been carried out by notable archaeologists such as Colt Hoare, Lieutenant General Pitt Rivers, Sumner, Keiller and more recently by Barrett, Bradley and M. Green.

3.1.3 Close to Down Farm, remains from all periods have been found. The prehistoric periods from the Mesolithic (10,000 – 4000 BC) to the Iron Age (700 BC – AD 43) are particularly well represented. The sites include scatters of Mesolithic flints, prehistoric open settlements as well as an impressive number and range of prehistoric ritual or ceremonial sites. The sites include the Late Neolithic Dorset Cursus (*c*. 3360 – 3030 BC) and the henges of Knowlton and Wyke Down as well as Later Neolithic Grooved Ware period settlements at Wyke Down and Fir Tree Field immediately to the east (Green 2000). Beaker period (2400 – 1800 BC) settlement is also known from Fir Tree Field where a cluster of pits lay below an Early Bronze Age (2400 – 1500 BC) pond barrow. A large number of Early Bronze Age barrows are known from the immediate area, including Wyke Down to the north.

3.1.4 Later activity is present in Fir Tree Field where a Middle Bronze Age (1500 – 1100 BC) settlement overlay the earlier Grooved Ware period open settlement (Barrett, Bradley and Green 1991). Iron Age (700 BC – AD 43) activity is particularly evident near the Site. This includes a series of Late Bronze Age/Iron Age droveways and Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British (100 BC – AD 150) 'banjo' enclosures on Gussage Cow Down (Green 2000).

3.1.5 To the south and south-west of Down Farm, running down from Gussage Cow Down, an extensive Celtic field system has been recorded from aerial photographs (Bowen 1990). Small square or sub-rectangular (Celtic) field systems are mainly Iron Age or Romano-British in date though may extend back to the Middle Bronze Age (Bradley *et al.* 1994; Yates 1999, 2001). The system could be contemporary with the extensive complex of Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British 'banjo' enclosures on Gussage Cow Down.

3.1.6 A component of the Gussage Cow Down Celtic field system is a lynchet that runs across Home Field and which marks the boundary between soil types in the valley (Green 2000, 129). This was investigated in 1995 (*see 2.2.5*). Lying just to the south of the lynchet a sub-square enclosure was also investigated (Green 1986; Bowen 1990). The enclosure was also investigated as part of the present fieldwork (see *Methodology* below).

3.1.7 Romano-British activity near the Site is represented by Ackling Dyke, the major Roman road running from the provincial capital in London (*Londinium*) to Exeter (*Isca Dumnoniorum*) via Old Sarum (*Soriodunum*). Settlement extended into the Romano-British period on Gussage Cow Down with continued use of the 'banjo' enclosures and areas beyond. A possible Roman-Celtic temple is also recorded in this area.

3.1.8 Little Anglo-Saxon (AD 410 – 1066) evidence exists in the immediate area of the Site though secondary burials of this date have been recorded from early Bronze Age barrows at Woodyates and Oakley Down to the north. A hedge line bisecting the Allen valley is thought to preserve a boundary between two Late Saxon estates (850 – 1066 AD). The northern part of this boundary is preserved in the present Down Farm track and public footpath. There is little Anglo-Saxon evidence in the Dorset area. This is probably due to a number of factors such as exhaustion of the downland soils by this time, low population densities and the lack of survival to the present of poor quality Anglo-Saxon pottery in the ploughsoil.

3.2 Excavations 1985/6-88, 1995

3.2.1 M. Green carried out excavations within Home Field on or near the Site in the 1980s and 1995 which comprised a 330 m^2 area, mostly outside, but also within the sub-rectangular enclosure. A 50 x 4m trench dug in 1995 sectioned the lynchet to the north.

3.2.2 Outside the enclosure's eastern earthwork side, a small number of features were recorded. They included two large quarry hollows (**F.1**, **F.2**) which contained abraded, Early Iron Age (700 – 400 BC) pottery, worked flint, animal bone, metalworking waste and a bone awl. Two flint knapping clusters of material were also recorded in the base of **F.1** (Green 1986, 173). A number of postholes in the area were also recorded in 1987-88 as the trench was extended to the west (**HF 87/88**). Two postholes (**PH.7**, **PH.8**) pre-dated the quarry hollows.

3.2.3 The postholes around the south side of **F.1** may be from two post-built structures. **PH's 1-2**, **4** probably comprise a 4-post structure (undated) with the fourth posthole beyond the trench edge. To the west of **F.1** two postholes (**PH. 5, PH. 6**) possibly comprised part of another structure, probably partly destroyed by the digging of **F.1,** as they were of similar size and had similar fills which contained a few sherds of Early Iron Age pottery. Other postholes to the west (**PH.12, PH.17**) were not readily discernible as being components of post-built structures.

3.2.4 Two post-pits (**F.4**, **F.5**) were noted and they contained a relatively large finds assemblage, including worked flint, mostly Middle Iron Age pottery with a single sherd of residual Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery, quernstone fragments and at least three fired clay loomweights from **F.5**. The post-pits were thought at the time to be of a substantial porch to a possible roundhouse structure which continued to the west.

3.2.5 In 1995 M. Green investigated the lynchet in Home Field. A trench (**HF 95**) was excavated across the lynchet (**Figure 1**). A single possible posthole (**PH.1a**) was recorded. Palaeoenvironmental samples were taken from soils within the 'negative' lynchet and below the 'positive' lynchet. A single sherd of Late Bronze Age (1000 – 700 BC) or Early Iron Age (700 – 400 BC) pottery was recovered from the buried soil horizon. The results of palaeoenvironmental samples from this buried soil at **HF 95** and from quarry hollow **F.1** (**HF 86**) are discussed further in Section 8 below.

3.3 Excavation 2004

3.3.1 Two trenches, *c*. 32m apart (**Trenches 1-2**), comprising a total of 532m^2, were excavated to extend **HF87/88**. They were located to record the possible roundhouse that the two post-pits (**F.4, F.5**) suggested lay to the west, as well as other settlement features within the enclosure. **Trench 2** was excavated to characterise the short section of enclosure that ground observation of a crop mark showed to be ditched along this side, and part of the enclosure's interior.

3.3.2 In **Tr.1** some postholes of the north-western and south-eastern circumference of a *c*. 15m diameter roundhouse (**142**) were recorded suggesting that post-pits **F.4** and **F.5** did belong to the entrance as originally proposed.

3.3.3 In **Tr.2** a further undated 4-post structure (**212**) was recorded to the west of a large MIA quarry hollow (**232**). In the west of the trench the northernmost length of the enclosure's western ditch (**237**) was recorded. This *c*. 10m length contained Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (11th - 7th century BC) pottery in its primary fills, though it also contained residual Beaker and later MIA pottery in its later secondary fills. The right side of a cow skull was recorded on the base of ditch segment **241**. A well-preserved series of antler pick marks were clearly visible in the base of the ditch in segment **217/241** (Wessex Archaeology 2005, plate 1). A *c*. 3m wide strip of relatively unweathered chalk natural immediately east of the ditch may indicate the location of an internal bank subsequently destroyed, but no clear evidence of collapsed bank material was discernible in any of the ditch segments.

3.3.4 By the northern ditch terminal a very shallow scoop (**202**) was recorded which contained an undated, articulated cow skeleton (**260**). The cow was laid on its right side with the head to the north, although the skull was missing (Wessex Archaeology 2005, plate 2). The skeleton had been badly truncated by ploughing and little of its left side remained. This 'placed deposit' may represent a ritual marking of an entrance. Though unproven from faunal analyses, it is possible that the partial cow skull from the base of ditch segment **241** came from the animal buried in pit **202**.

3.4 Geophysical surveys

3.4.1 A geophysical survey, including the area of the Site, was undertaken in Home Field by Bournemouth University in early 2004, though the results were inconclusive (M. Green *pers. comm.*).

3.4.2 Prior to the 2005 fieldwork a magnetometer and topographic survey were undertaken over the area of Home Field where the Site is located as part of an undergraduate research project at Durham University (Legg 2005). A small number of features were discernible in the results which may represent post-holes or quarry hollows (the larger features), though specific structural remains or settlement activities were not readily apparent (*op cit*, 1).

4 METHODOLOGY – 2005 EXCAVATION

4.1 Excavation Methods

4.1.1 Three areas (**Trenches 1a and 2a** [south and north]) were stripped of topsoil (**Figure 1**) with a wheeled mechanical excavator and comprised a total of 665m^2, including 390m^2, for **Tr.1a** and 275m^2 overall for the two areas of **Tr.2a**. **Tr.1a** was predominantly a western, but also a southern extension of **Tr.1** (**WA 04**) intended to find more evidence of roundhouse **142** and to investigate more of the interior of the enclosure. The two areas of **Tr.2a** were extensions to **Tr.2** (**WA 04**) to investigate the full extent of the enclosure ditch, predicted to terminate to the south, and to investigate more of the interior of the enclosure next to a possible western entrance.

4.1.2 After machine stripping all the trenches were hand cleaned. Large samples (50% by volume) of the larger features (quarry hollows) were excavated. All the features were surveyed using GPS survey equipment and tied into the Ordnance Survey grid and Ordnance Datum (metres above Ordnance Datum). All excavated features had sections and plans drawn at appropriate scales (1:10/1:20) using a local site grid, and a full photographic record including excavated features and more general working shots was also kept.

4.1.3 All smaller discrete features (postholes, post-pits) were half-sectioned but where they could be demonstrated to be components of post-built structures (roundhouse, four-post structures, fencelines) they were fully excavated after being half sectioned initially to record filling sequences, possible post-pipes, and possible packing material. Initially a small number of ditch sections were partially excavated in the southern extent of the enclosure ditch (**237**).

4.1.4 However, it was decided to concentrate on the number of features revealed in **Tr's 1a** and **2a** in the 2 weeks available for the fieldwork and the excavation of the ditch sections was discontinued.

4.1.5 All the features were backfilled using spoil at the end of the excavation. The larger features were lined with a non-permeable textile membrane before backfilling. The trenches were otherwise left open.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The section summarises the significant results from the 2005 season. This also includes part of the palaeoenvironmental summary from M. Green's work of **HF 86** and **HF 95** as well as **WA 04**, which were not available when report on the 2004 work was compiled (Wessex Archaeology 2005).

5.2 Natural deposits and soil sequence

5.2.1 All the features in **Tr.1a** and the two areas of **Tr.2a** were sealed below the topsoil and cut the natural chalk bedrock. Fills were therefore silty in texture and generally contained common small angular chalk fragments as well as large lumps of flint nodules and fragments of sandstone.

5.2.2 The 0.25m thick topsoil was characterised by a mid-brown silty clay with sparse angular flint fragments and common small chalk fragments.

5.2.3 The natural bedrock chalk was in fairly good condition and was not particularly weathered. When excavated it broke into angular blocks freely. Numerous post-medieval plough scars were evident, particularly in **Tr.2a**.

5.3 Fieldwork

Trench 1a

5.3.1 Postholes, stakeholes, tree-throws and quarry hollows as well as a continuation of a modern water pipe trench were recorded. The small number of undated stakeholes made no discernible pattern, though they were originally components of stake-built structures (fences?). No further postholes of roundhouse **142** were recorded to the west or south of last season's **Tr.1**. The majority of the features were concentrated in the northern part of **Tr.1a**, which included a possible roundhouse entrance (**774**).

(?)Roundhouse structure (774)

5.3.2 Two large post-pits (**556, 569**) close to the northern edge of the trench, were 2.70m apart and may be the entrance to another roundhouse facing south-south-west. Most of the possible building lies outside the trench to the north.

5.3.3 The post-pits were sub-oval in shape, aligned north-west/south-east with near-vertical/vertical irregular sides and flat bases. They were *c*. 0.7 – 0.8m across and 0.45-8m deep. A post-pipe was clearly visible in post-pit **556** where large chalk blocks and flint nodules had been used as packing. In post-pit **569** 31 kg of flint nodules of Allen Valley and chalk flint were used as packing material, particularly around the south of the feature (**Plate 1**). The post-pipe of this post-pit and the post-pipe in **556** suggest timber posts 0.26 – 0.28m diameter were erected in these features. Finds include worked and burnt flint as well as three sherds of Early Iron Age pottery from the primary fill of post-pit **569**.

4-post structures

5.3.4 Two 4-post structures (**601**, **748**) were recorded close to each other in the north-east of the trench.

5.3.5 The westernmost of the structures (**601**) was sub-rectangular, aligned north-west/south-east, measured 2.4 by 2.1m and consisted of four regularly-sized postholes (**533**, **551**, **563**, **733**). These were generally sub-circular or sub-oval in shape (0.35 – 0.46m) and 0.32 – 0.37m deep with near vertical, flat sides and flat bases. Two of the postholes showed clear post-pipes with packing of chalk rubble and flint nodules around the sides of the features. The finds included worked and burnt flint, slag and a single piece of bone.

5.3.6 The eastern structure (**748**) was composed of four regularly-sized postholes (**168**, **173**, **175**, **515**) resulting in a sub-rectangular structure of 2.4 by 2.1m (identical to structure **601**), aligned north/south. The postholes were very similar in size and shape, being circular/sub-circular and 0.3 – 0.4m in diameter and 0.28 – 0.35m deep with regular, vertical sides and flat bases. Only posthole **173** showed clear signs of *in-situ* chalk packing on one side, though large flint nodules were recovered from posthole **168**. Only one piece of worked flint and a single piece of animal bone were recovered from the postholes.

Quarry hollow

5.3.7 Only one of the large quarry hollows in the west of **Tr.1a** was investigated (**192**). Two quadrants were excavated. The feature measured 2.8 by 2.2m and comprised a number of discrete, shallow quarry pits (**187-190**, **506-8**) which resulted in the overall irregular shape of the feature. The pits were clearly discernible in the irregular sides of the feature. The south-west corner of the quarry hollow was cut by an undated posthole (**501**) containing burnt flint. The individual pits were 0.3 - 0.4m deep, circular/oval in shape, with moderate to steep, concave sides. In many places the horizontal cleavage planes in the chalk bedrock had been exploited to quarry the chalk. Finds recovered from the quarry hollow include worked and burnt flint and 49% of the pottery (Early Iron Age) assemblage from the 2005 excavations.

Other features

5.3.8 In the south-west of **Tr.1a** there were two very similar pairs (**574/577** and **758/760**) of inter-cutting postholes which may be related. In both cases the later postholes were *c*. 0.35 – 0.4m diameter and *c*. 0.4m deep with vertical flat sides and a flat base. Both later postholes (**577**, **760**) exhibited clear post-pipes with rammed chalk rubble packing material (**578**, **761**), indicating that timber posts of 0.16m diameter were erected in them.

5.3.9 Both pairs of postholes were clearly discernible because of the relative abundance of burnt flint recovered from them, which comprised 26.7% (**574/577**) and 21.7% (**758/760**) respectively of all the burnt flint (by weight) recovered from the Site. These features must be part of the same structural sequence, though this is not indicated by other postholes nearby.

Trench 2a

5.3.10 Only a small number of features were recorded in the northern and southern parts of this trench (**Figures 1**, **3**). In the southern part (**Tr.2a(S)**), the extension to the earlier trench (**Tr.2**) had exposed another 8m of enclosure ditch **237** giving a total length of 18 metres. In the northern part of the trench (**Tr.2a(N)**) a small number of stakeholes and postholes were recorded, comprising at least two 4-post-structures. Although the stakeholes undoubtedly comprise elements of stake-built structures (fencelines?) there was no discernible pattern in their distribution. A small part of the quarry hollow (**232**) recorded in the east of **Tr.2** (**WA 04**) was also present in the trench.

4-post structures

5.3.11 The 4-post structures (**702**, **718**) were recorded close together in the north-east of **Tr.2a(N)**.

5.3.12 The westernmost structure (**718**) is a slightly irregular sub-rectangular structure measuring 2.3 - 2.5m by 2.3m and aligned north-west/south-east. The relatively shallow postholes (**715**, **719**, **722**, **725**) were oval/sub-circular in shape, 0.25 – 0.35m in size (generally *c*. 0.35m) and 0.2 – 0.25m deep with vertical/near-vertical sides and flat bases. Only worked and burnt flint was recorded from the postholes.

5.3.13 Structure **702** was exactly square in shape, being 2.4m square. The four postholes (**703**, **706**, **709**, **712**) were all sub-oval in shape, generally aligned north/south and 0.3 – 0.46m in extent and *c*. 0.40m deep. Markedly larger and deeper than the postholes for structure **718**, these all had vertical, flat sides and flat bases and post-pipes were clearly visible in two postholes (**709**, **712**). A possible post-pipe was also recorded in a third posthole (**706**). These would indicate that timber posts *c*. 0.12 – 017m diameter were erected and packed within these features. The packing, where present, was composed of small sub-angular chalk rubble material (<30mm). Mainly burnt flint, but also a little worked flint, was recorded from the later fills of these features as well as small amounts of charcoal.

Enclosure Ditch

5.3.14 The southernmost 8m of the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age enclosure's western ditch was exposed and recorded in **Tr.2a(N)**. Four segments (**301**, **303**, **305**, **308**), including a quadrant terminal section, were excavated to a depth of *c*. 0.25m deep before excavations ceased. The ditch was *c*. 1.8m wide, slighter wider than recorded in 2004, probably because of the slightly higher chalk natural in this area, which generally slopes down to the north. From the 2005 season, a very small assemblage of worked and burnt flint and Early Iron Age pottery was recovered from the latest fills of the sections.

6 FINDS

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 All the finds from all the excavations (**HF 85/86**, **HF 87/88**, **HF 95**, **WA 04, WA 05**) have been quantified by material type within each feature type and context, and the results are presented in **Tables 1-3** (see **Table 1**).

6.1.2 The finds range in date from prehistoric to post-medieval. Worked flint, burnt flint and pottery dominate the very small assemblage from the present excavations; other material types are present but in much smaller quantities.

6.2 Pottery

6.2.1 A total 107 sherds were recovered in 2005, mainly consisting of small highly abraded featureless body sherds in sandy fabrics, some with shell or chalk temper. Most sherds are not directly dateable. Consequently, the assemblage has been dated on the basis of the very few diagnostic pieces.

6.2.2 In terms of type and date, the sherds appear to be Early Iron Age. The identifiable examples belong to Cunliffe's All Cannings Cross early style of the eighth and seventh centuries BC (Cunliffe 1991, 64-5).

6.2.3 A few sherds have burnished and/or slipped and smoothed surfaces. Some are finewares (probably bowls) while thicker, coarse pieces probably derive from jars. One fineware sherd has a sharp carination with burnishing and a single very fine incised line above the shoulder. Several sherds from pit 519 derive from a red-finished bowl with a high shoulder, shallow neck, and upright beaded rim. Decoration on the neck consists of three incised horizontal lines with short diagonal incisions on the intervening bas relief.

6.3 Worked Flint

6.3.1 A total of 13 pieces of struck flint were recovered from the 2005 fieldwork. The majority of the assemblage consists of nodular flint. All pieces have a cream/white covering patina. The source of the material is undoubtedly local, probably obtained from the Upper Chalk during the digging of pits and ditches or during cultivation. Technology is direct, hard hammer percussion.

6.3.2 Twelve unretouched flakes were recovered, from quarry hollow **192** and **521**, ditch **237** and posthole **569** along with a single rather crude scraper from posthole **530**. This latter piece is undoubtedly later prehistoric. The remainder of the assemblage is not closely dateable.

6.4 Burnt Flint

6.4.1 Burnt, unworked flint was recovered from the 2005 excavations. This material type is intrinsically undatable, although frequently associated with prehistoric activity and is probably associated with the Late Bronze Age/Iron Age settlement activity on the Site.

6.5 Fired Clay

6.5.1 A total of 10 fragments of fired clay weighing 19g were recovered, mostly in small numbers, with no contexts having more than eight fragments. No fragments had any surfaces or features.

6.6 Stone

6.6.1 Fragments of stone were recovered, including a coarse sandstone conglomerate and a pebble (ditch segment **308**), possible quern fragments from posthole **574**, and a featureless sandstone fragment from posthole **593**.

6.7 Metalwork

6.7.1 A single fragment of slag was recovered from 4-post structure (**601**) posthole **533**.

6.8 Other Finds

6.8.1 Other finds comprised two pieces of shell, and a shard of modern blue glass from ditch section **308**.

Table 1 - All finds (except bone) by context (No./wt [g])

CBM = ceramic building material

Excavation/ Feature	Worked Flint	Burnt Flint	Pottery	CBM	Fired Clay	Metal	Slag	Stone
Roundhouses (142, ?774)								
HF 87/88 Sub-total	*14*		*28/334*		*99/5099*			*8/11982*
WA 04 Sub- total	*3*	*3/10*						*28/295*
WA 05 Sub-total	*1*	*11/352*	*6/20*					
Roundhouse Sub- Total	**18**	**14/362**	**34/354**	**0**	**99/5099**	**0**	**0**	**36/12277**
Quarry hollows (F.1, F.2, 192, 232)								
HF 86 Sub-total	*676*		*419/2229*		*4/74*	*40/31*		*46/1432*
WA 04 Sub-total	*22*	*68/777*	*57/466*		*31/88*			*1/52*
WA 05 Sub-total	*9*	*32/1292*	*52/187*					
Quarry hollows total	**707**	**100/2069**	**528/2882**	**0**	**35/162**	**40/31**	**0**	**47/1484**
Ditch 237								
WA 04 Ditch sub-total	**90**	**44/927**	**36/99**	**0**	**2/2**	**0**	**1/2**	**2/132**
WA 05 Ditch sub-total	**1**	**8/48**	**2/2**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**5/109**
Four-post structures (212, 601, 702, 718, 748)								
WA 04 Sub-total								
WA 05 Sub-total		*101/2113*			*1/8*		*1/1*	*1/23*
4-post total								
Other								
HF 86 Sub-total	*4*		*4/4*					
WA 04 Sub-total	*27*	*176/4062*	*18/71*	*3/24*	*10/11*			*1/3*
WA 05 Sub-total	*2*	*462/10588*	*47/246*		*9/18*			*7/219*
HF – 95 Lynchet			1/8					
Other Total	**33**	**176/14650**	**70/329**	**3/24**	**19/29**	**0**	**0**	**8/222**
TOTALS								
HF 86-88, 95 Sub-totals	**694**	**0**	**452/2575**	**0**	**103/5173**	**40/31**	**0**	**54/13414**
WA 04 Sub-totals	**142**	**291/5776**	**111/636**	**3/24**	**43/101**	**0**	**1/2**	**32/482**
WA 05 Sub-totals	**13**	**614/14393**	**107/455**	**0**	**10/19**	**0**	**1/1**	**13/352**
TOTAL	**849**	**805/20169**	**563/3211**	**3/24**	**156/5293**	**40/31**	**2/3**	**99/14248**

7 ANIMAL BONE

7.1 Results

7.1.1 Very little bone was recovered from this phase of excavation (**Table 2**), partially due to the extremely poor preservation, but also the nature of the features excavated, which included numerous postholes (**Table 3**). The quarry hollow contained little bone, but the quantity was proportionate to the 2004 excavations.

Table 2: Numbers and species represented from each excavation

Excavation	Cattle	Sheep/Goat	Pig	Dog	Rodent	Unidentified	Total
HF 86	14	68	9		2	315	408
HF 87/88	3					3	6
WA 04	15	8		1		74	98
WA 05	2		4			19	25
Total	**34**	**76**	**13**	**1**	**2**	**411**	**537**

7.1.2 All bone was in poor or very poor condition, and that in the postholes was worse than the bone from the quarry. No gnawing was identified although the bone surface did not generally survive, and the poor condition was due entirely to rootlet erosion. This is reflected in the high proportion of loose teeth (67% of identified bones) which were tough enough to survive although the bone of the jaw had been destroyed.

7.1.3 Only six bones could be identified to species and it is likely that larger animals were over-represented simply because the thickness of the bone was greater and they would survive where thinner-walled bones would have been completely destroyed. Some sheep-sized long bones were present, but these were eroded to such an extent that they were barely recognisable.

7.1.4 Pigs were most common, represented only by teeth, and cattle were definitely present only in the form of two humeri. In both cases the different species were seen in the quarry and in postholes. Humeri shafts are fairly robust and this may account for their representation here, although it is interesting that the range of elements was so limited. Unfortunately the sample size is too small to comment further.

7.1.5 As a result of the poor condition, no bones could be measured, although four could indicate age. Cattle bones were fused, and one very worn and one slightly worn pig molar were present. These teeth cannot give accurate ages at death since the tooth rows were incomplete, and the potentially varied diet of pigs renders the analysis of age on a small sample of single teeth very problematic, as they wear down less predictably than cattle or sheep.

7.1.6 No bones were burnt, but a helical fracture was noted on one cattle humerus, indicating breakage close to the time of death.

7.2 Summary

7.2.1 This is a small, poorly preserved assemblage that has probably suffered from differential preservation in favour of the larger bone elements and has led to the loss of most of the bone surface. Most ageable elements are fragmentary teeth that cannot be closely aged to indicate the season or even an accurate age at death. This strictly limits its potential to inform on aspects of animal husbandry, butchery and consumption patterns, although what little evidence does survive (and is not attributable to taphonomic factors) is entirely consistent with what is known of other Iron Age sites in southern Britain.

Table 3: Numbers and species represented by feature type

Feature	Cattle	Sheep/Goat	Pig	Dog	Rodent	Unidentified	Total
Quarry hollows (F.1, F.2, 192, 232)							
Quarry hollows (HF 86)	*14*	*68*	*9*		*2*	*311*	*404*
Quarry hollow (WA 04)	*5*	*3*				*12*	*20*
Quarry hollow (WA 05)	*1*		*1*			*1*	*3*
Quarry (all)	20	71	10		2	324	427
Ditch 237							
Ditch (WA 04)	8	5		1		29	33
Ditch (WA 05)			3				
Four-post structures (212, 601, 702, 718, 748)							
WA – 04							
WA - 05	1					18	22
Other							
Other (WA 04)	5					40	45
Other (WA 05)							
Total	**34**	**76**	**13**	**1**	**2**	**411**	**537**

8 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSES

8.1 Aims

8.1.1 Samples were taken to help in defining the nature of the environment and economy of the Down Farm area (cf. Allen 1999; 2000a; 2002; Green 2000; French *et al.* 2003).

8.2 Samples taken and palaeo-environmental evidence

8.2.1 Four bulk samples of between 10 and 30 litres from the 2004 excavation were processed for the recovery and assessment of charred plant remains and charcoal.

8.2.2 Three of these samples, all from ditch segment **217** (group **237**), were sub-sampled for the retrieval of molluscs. A monolith was also taken from the primary fill of ditch segment **241**.

8.3 Assessment Results; methods and data

8.3.1 The bulk samples were processed by standard flotation methods; the flot retained on a 0.5 mm mesh and the residues fractionated into 5.6 mm, 2 mm and 1 mm fractions and dried. The coarse fractions (>5.6 mm) were sorted, weighed and discarded.

8.3.2 The flots were scanned under a x10 - x30 stereo-binocular microscope and presence of charred remains quantified (**Table 4**), to record the preservation and nature of the charred plant and charcoal remains.

8.3.3 The flots varied in size (average size for a 10 litre sample is 60 millilitres) with up to 60% rooty material and low numbers of uncharred weed seeds, which can be indicative of stratigraphic movement.

Table 4. Assessment of the charred plant remains and charcoal

				Flot							Residue	
Feature type/ no	Context	Sample	size litres	flot size ml	Grain	Chaff	Weed seeds uncharred	Weed seeds charred	Charcoal >5.6mm	Other	Charcoal >5.6mm	analysis
LBA-MIA												
Ditch 237 Segment 217	218	2	30	500 ^{175}	C	-	c	B(h)	-	moll-t (A)	-	
	272	3	30	100 ^{25}	C	-	c	C	C	moll-t (A)	-	
	275	4	20	25 ^{15}	C	C	c	C(h)	C	moll-t (A)	-	
Animal burial 202	267	1	10	250 ^{150}	-	-	b	C	-	moll-t (A)	-	

NOTE: [1]flot is total, but flot in superscript = ml of rooty material. [2]Unburnt seed in lower case to distinguish from charred remains

KEY: A** = exceptional, A* = 30+ items, A = ≥10 items, B = 9 - 5 items, C = < 5 items, (h) = hazelnuts, smb = small mammal bones; Moll-t = terrestrial molluscs Moll-f = freshwater molluscs; Analysis, C = charcoal, P = plant, M = molluscs

8.4 Charred plant remains

8.4.1 Very few charred plant remains were recovered from the samples. The ditch produced fragments of cereal grains, but preservation was very poor and they could only tentatively be identified as barley (*Hordeum vulgare* sl). Only one glume base from hulled wheats emmer or spelt (*Triticum dicoccum/spelta*) was recovered from the lowest sample. Weed seeds were very poorly represented and consisted of two seeds of vetches/wild pea (*Vicia/ Lathyrus* sp.) from the upper most deposit.

8.4.2 Fragments of hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) were present in two of the ditch samples and a few fragments of sloe (*Prunus spinosa*) were also recovered.

8.4.3 The remaining sample from the cow burial pit **260**, contained no cereal remains and while seeds of goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp.) were present, it is probable that these are modern.

8.4.4 While grains of hulled wheats, emmer or spelt (*Triticum dicoccum/spelta*) are known from the Neolithic, chaff is rarely recorded prior to the later Bronze Age and it is notable that previous work on Bronze Age material from Down Farm produced mainly evidence for barley and no chaff (Jones 1991). The finds of hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) fragments are of some interest, while commonly recorded on Neolithic sites and often on Middle Bronze Age sites, they are more rarely recorded from Iron Age context apart from where accompanied by high remains of cereals and wood charcoal.

8.5 Charcoal

8.5.1 Charcoal was noted from the flots of the bulk samples and is recorded in **Table 4**. The few fragments of greater than 5.6mm observed were mainly large wood pieces.

8.6 Land snails

HF86 and HF 95 Samples

Quarry hollow **F1**

8.6.1 A column of seven mollusc samples were taken by Roy Entwistle from this feature (**HF 86**, **Figure 1**). Samples of 1500g were processed and shell numbers were good (73-263). The assemblages were typically dominated by open country species. The assemblages indicate two environments; the lower portion may suggest grazed grassland, while the upper may indicate disturbance and possibly cultivation in the vicinity.

8.6.2 The sequence may indicate a change in the vicinity, whilst the feature was open, from pasture to arable sometime in the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age. This complements other information.

Home Field lynchet (HF 95)

8.6.3 The weathered Upper Chalk contained a number of periglacial stripes. These were most prominent in the area of the positive lynchet where they were protected. Periglacial stripes were not noted upslope (to the north) or in the area where the negative lynchet occurred.

8.6.4 The positive lynchet is represented by a slight thickening of the soil (0.32-0.38m) in comparison with the normal soil depth of 0.28-0.30m, at the break of slope. The shallow positive lynchet is largely embraced within the modern colluvial ploughed rendzina. Only the lower portion of the ploughsoil had a stronger colluvial component, but was mixed. The shallow negative lynchet contained a dark, almost stone-free, silty loam colluvium.

8.6.5 Three spot samples were taken for mollusc analysis: from the negative lynchet, the positive lynchet and a periglacial stripe.

8.6.6 Samples of 1000g were processed following standard methods (Evans 1972). The periglacial stripe contained few shells, but these were typically open country (*Vallonia costata, Vallonia excentrica, Helicella itala* and *Trichia hispida*) typical of a late glacial environment (Kerney 1963). The lynchet contained typical ploughwash assemblages dominated by open country species such as *Pupilla muscorum* and *Vallonia* sp. typical of ploughwash (cf Bell 1983), but the presence of a few shade-loving species (*Nesovitrea hammonis, Discus rotundatus* etc) in low numbers may indicate the lynchet bank was unploughed and supported long grass or a hedge. Further analysis will determine this.

WA 2004 Samples

8.6.7 Three sub-samples were taken from the bulk samples through ditch segment **217**, and two further samples from the Coombe Deposits in the valley *c*. 150m to the north-north-west of the excavations. Samples of 1500g were processed by standard methods (Evans 1972) for land snails. The flots (0.5mm) were rapidly assessed by scanning under a x10 - x30 stereo-binocular microscope to provide some information about shell preservation and species representation. The numbers of shells and the presence of taxonomic groups were quasi quantified (**Table 5**).

8.6.8 As bulk samples from the ditch were sub-sampled the remaining samples were scanned for any extra species.

8.6.9 The sample from the Periglacial deposits included a clay-rich periglacial solution feature (sample A), and the background calcareous rubble marl (sample B). The solution feature was devoid in shells, while the coombe deposit contained very few shells but *Vallonia* sp. and *Helicella itala* were present and typical of cold stage environments (Kerney 1963). One specimen may be the extinct late glacial species *Trochoidea geyeri* (Soós) (Kerney 1999, 184).

9 PALAEO-ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMARY

9.1.1 The environment around the enclosure indicates that the landscape was not as open as previously perceived and published for this period (Allen 2000b, 2002). The nature of this environment helps understand the Site and its wider setting. Although sparse plant remains have been recovered, there are very few records of this period in this area, so the confirmation of barley and wheat cultivation is useful.

Table 5. Land snail assessment from ditch segment 217 (Group 237)

SITE PHASE	LBA-MIA						*Coombe*	
FEATURE TYPE	Ditch							
FEATURE	217							
CONTEXT	primary		secondary		U. secondary		solun	coombe
CONTEXT	275		272		218			
SAMPLE	4		3		2		A	B
DEPTH (m)	spot	spot	spot	spot	spot	spot	spot	spot
WEIGHT (g)	1500	bulk	1500	bulk	1500	bulk	1500	1500
Open country species								
Pupilla muscorum	C	-	C	-	-	+	-	-
Vertigo cf. *pygmaea*	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	C
Helicella itala	C	-	C	-	C	-	-	C
Vallonia spp.	C	-	B	-	B	-	-	+
Intro. Helicellids	-	+	C	-	C	-	-	-
Catholic species								
Trichia hispida	C	-	B	-	A	-	-	C
Pomatias elegans	+	-	C	-	B	-	-	-
Cochlicopa spp.	C	-	C	-	B	-	-	-
Cepaea spp..	C	+	-	+	-	+	-	-
Punctum pygmaeum	-	-	C	-	C	-	-	-
Shade-loving species								
Carychium	C	-	A	-	A	-	-	-
Discus rotundatus	C	-	A	-	A	-	-	-
Acanthinula	-	+	C	-	C	-	-	-
Oxychilus	C	-	B	-	B	-	-	-
Aegopinella	C	-	B	-	B	-	-	-
Clausiliidae	-	+	C	-	C	-	-	-
Ena	-	+	C	-	C	-	-	-
Helicigona lapicida	-	+	C	-	C	-	-	-
Vitrea	-	+	B	-	A	-	-	-
Burrowing species								
Cecilioides acicula	-	-	C	-	B	-	-	-
Approx **totals**	25	+	80	+	100	+	0	5

KEY: A = ≥10 items, B = 9 - 5 items, C = < 5 items, (+) = present

10 FIELDWORK SUMMARY

10.1.1 Overall the research project achieved its goals in ensuring the participants gained a more rounded picture of archaeology rather than the two-dimensional picture usually given in the media. Generally, the feedback from all the participants was excellent and the project, both in fieldwork and outreach terms, was a great success.

10.1.2 The results of the 2005 fieldwork complement and add to the knowledge of the development of the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement enclosure at Home Field.

10.1.3 Although small, the pottery assemblage from the 2005 excavation is significant in illustrating possible roundhouse construction and quarry hollow pitting activity being undertaken in the Early Iron Age, during the enclosure ditch's infilling.

10.1.4 The palaeoenvironmental evidence indicates that sometime in the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age the local landscape changed from pasture to arable. This change may have been part of the reorganisation of the landscape upon the construction of the settlement enclosure.

10.1.5 The nature of the features excavated this season (predominantly postholes) has effected the scale and quantities of finds types within the present assemblage, which probably accounts for the absence of residual Beaker or later Middle Iron Age or Romano-British material, as has been recorded in earlier excavations.

10.1.6 The most significant discoveries of this season include four 4-post structures, making a total of six, within a relatively restricted area of the enclosure. Unfortunately all the structures are undated. These structures are common on later prehistoric sites of southern Britain and are generally considered above ground storage buildings, probably granaries, although other functions such as excarnation platforms have been proposed (Ellison and Drewett 1971).

10.1.7 Another significant result from this season's excavation was the discovery of a second possible roundhouse structure, of which only the large entrance post-pits have been recorded. These indicate that another roundhouse, of Early Iron Age date, might be present to the immediate north of **Tr.1a**.

10.1.8 The extension of **Tr.2** to the south has confirmed that the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age settlement enclosure is partially ditched, but discontinuous, on its western side.

10.1.9 Another area of quarrying was excavated (**192**), making three, though others are recorded in the east of the enclosure. The features have been dated to the Early Iron Age (**HF 85**, **WA 05**) and Middle Iron Age (**WA 04**) periods showing chalk quarrying over a potential 400 year period. The suggested purposes for chalk quarrying include; (i) building cob walls, (ii) limewash production, (iii) marling calcium-deficient fields, or all or some of these at different times.

11 CONCLUSIONS

11.1.1 The results from the 2005 excavation have shown that settlement, including Early Iron Age roundhouse construction and quarrying were being undertaken during the infilling of the enclosure ditch. The settlement enclosure may be related to the major lynchet lying to the immediate north, which is a component part of a large rectilinear Celtic field system running down the northern slope of Gussage Cow Down. The construction of the settlement enclosure in the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (11^{th} – 7^{th} centuries BC) may have entailed a reorganisation of the local landscape resulting in a change from downland pasture to arable fields discernible in the palaeoenvironmental evidence from Home Field.

11.1.2 Overall, the fieldwork results from the Home Field reflect a range of later prehistoric settlement activities. These included flint knapping, bronze and iron metalworking, textile manufacture, grain storage and cooking. Animal husbandry practices focussed on cattle, sheep/goat and pig though it is not possible to ascertain the relative importance of each species. The remains of possibly domesticated dogs were also present.

11.2 The Archive

11.2.1 The artefacts, and any accompanying documentary records from M. Green's excavations at the Site are held by M. Green at Down Farm, Sixpenny Handley, Dorset under the project codes **HF 86**, **HF 87/88** and **HF 95**.

11.2.2 The artefacts, and any accompanying documentary records from the present fieldwork (**WA 05**) and **WA 04** have been compiled into a stable, fully cross-referenced and indexed archive in accordance with Appendix 6 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (2^{nd} Edition, English Heritage 1991). The archives are currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire, under the project code **56390**. The full list of the contents of this archive are detailed in **Appendix 1** of this report. On the completion of the present research excavations by Wessex Archaeology the full archive will be handed over to M. Green.

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13 APPENDIX 1 – ARCHIVE INDEX

File No.	NAR Cat.	Details	Format	No. Sheets
1	-	Index to Archive (2004)	A4	1
1	-	Project Specification (2004)	A4	8
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1	B	Day Book (photocopy) (2004)	A4	12
1	B	Context Index (2004)	A4	6
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1	D	Photographic Register (2004)	A4	16
1	D	CD-Rom Digital photo's (2004)	-	1
1	E	Environmental Sample Register (2004)	A4	1
1	E	Environmental Sample Records (2004)	A4	5
1	C	Context Finds Records (2004)	A4	5
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2	B	Site Graphics (2004)	A3	5
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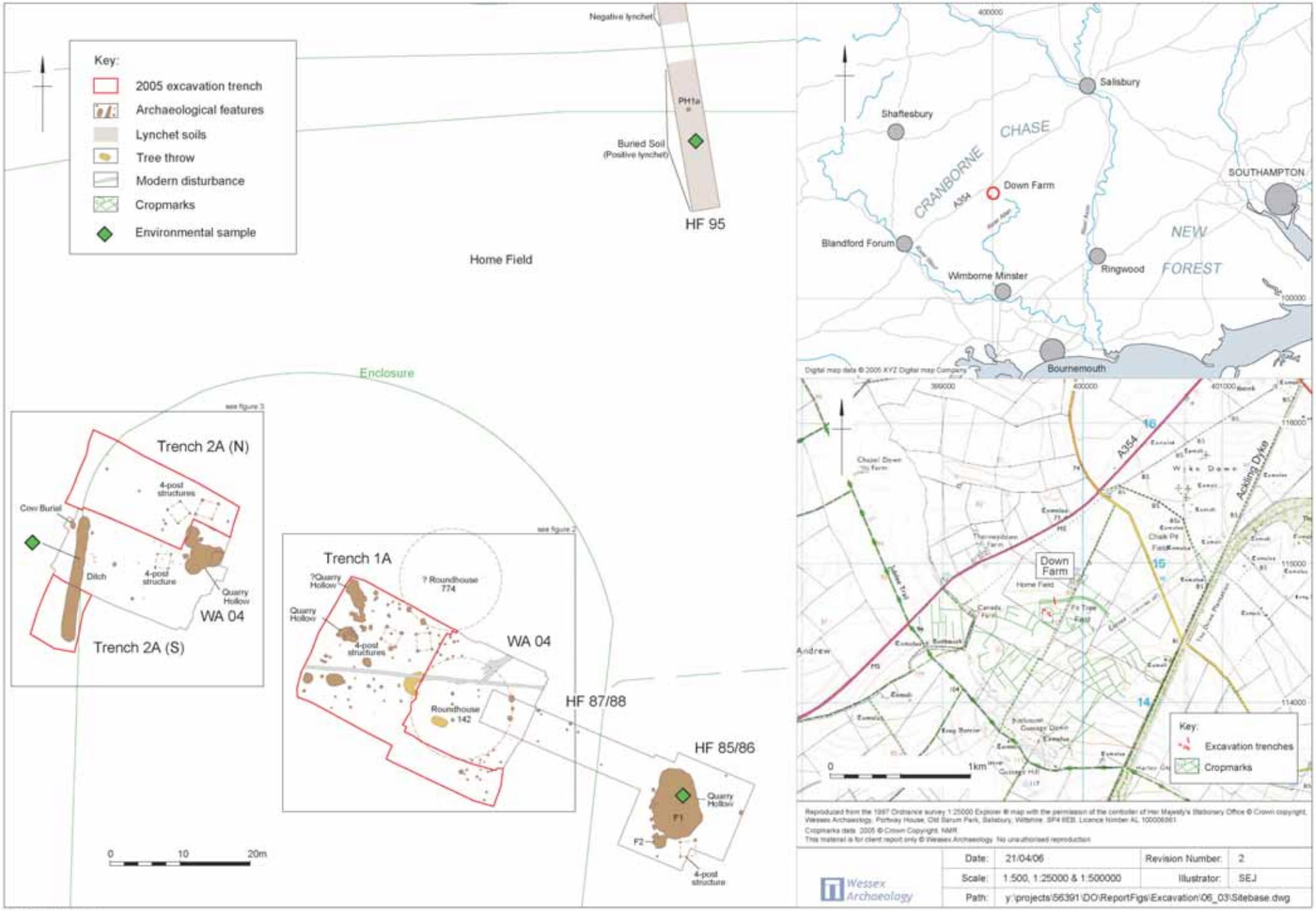
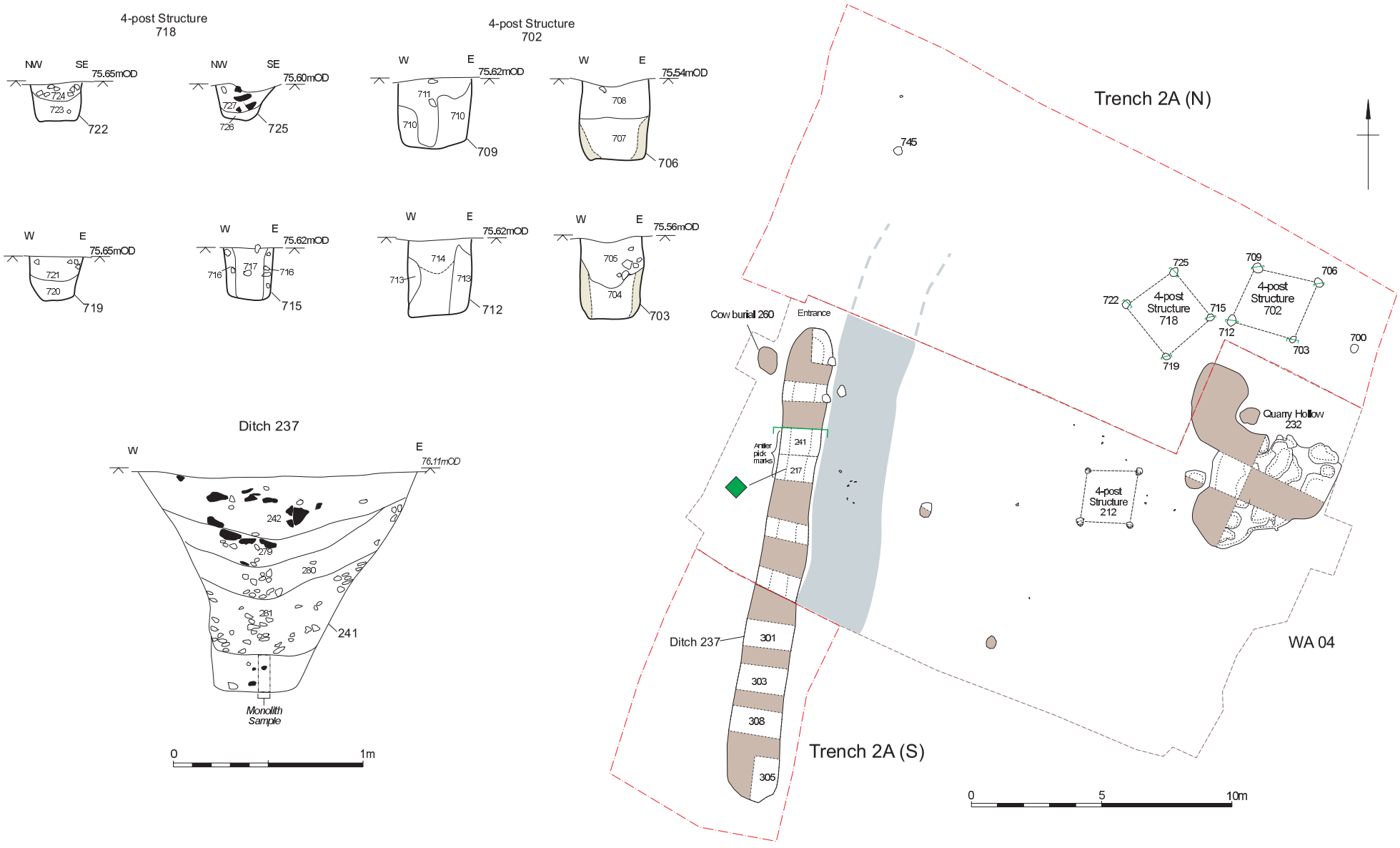
4	-	B+W Negatives (2004/5)	35mm	607
4	-	Colour slides (2004/5)	35mm	607
FINDS	3 BOXES			



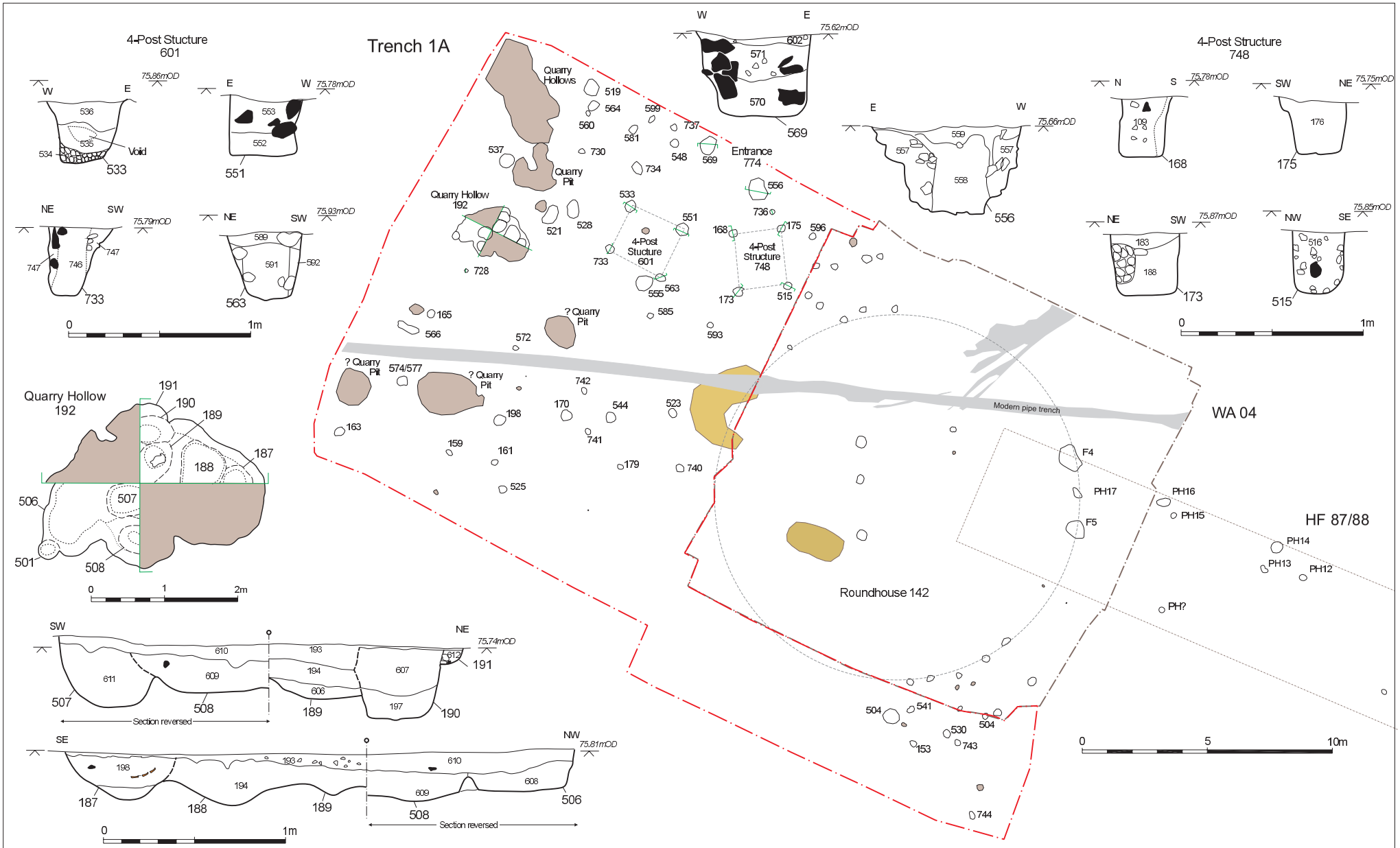
Site location maps

Figure 1



Plan of Trench 2A and sections

Figure 3



Date:	21/04/06	Revision Number:	1
Scale:	Plan: see bar scale Detail plan @ 1:50 & Sections @ 1:20	Illustrator:	SEJ
Path:	Y:\Projects\56391\DO\ Report Figs\Excavation\06_03\A3Fig2.cdr		

Plan of Trench 1A, WA 04 and HF 87/8 trenches with sections

Figure 2

Plate 1. Flint packing in Post-pit 569, viewed from south (scale: 0.5m)

Wessex Archaeology	Date:	5/04/06	Illustrator:	SEJ
	Path:	Y:\PROJECTS\56391\D.. O..\Report Figures\Excavation\06_03\A4_Photos.cdr		

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