

## Practical Archaeology Training Course 2007, Down Farm, Sixpenny Handley, Dorset

### Excavation Report



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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 focuses in detail on the results of the 2007 fieldwork. It presents the results of a two week excavation run as a practical archaeology course for the general public by Wessex Archaeology Ltd.

This was the fourth season of research excavation by Wessex Archaeology Ltd and members of the general public of a Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age enclosed settlement, and comprised the continuation of excavation of features in Area 3B, which were begun last year. The excavation was carried out between 3<sup>rd</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> September 2006.

The earlier excavations in Home Field have recorded a sub-rectangular banked enclosure, with a short, externally ditched section on the west side, which was constructed in the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (11<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> century BC) and continued in use until the Middle Iron Age (5<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC). Internal settlement features identified include quarry hollows, 4-post granary structures and two possible Iron Age roundhouses. Numerous other postholes of Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age date as well as undated stakeholes have been recorded, many of which may also comprise components of domestic or ancillary structures or fencelines within the settlement.

The 2007 excavations built upon work begun last year and cleaning and excavation in the north-east of the area has revealed an additional two possible 6-post structures and three or four, 4-post 'granary' structures. Other numerous postholes in Area 3B undoubtedly represent the remains of a number of other structures which are unidentifiable at this stage of assessment. A geophysical survey undertaken this season to the north of the excavations recorded a number of anomalies suggesting possible pits and postholes outside of the settlement enclosure. If archaeological in nature, these may date to periods outside of the enclosure evidence to date or be evidence of contemporary 'extra-mural' activity. Either way, this information is intriguing and possibly worth further study in the future.

The palaeoenvironmental evidence to date indicates that sometime in the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age the local landscape changed from predominantly downland pasture to arable. This change may indicate a reorganisation of the nearby landscape upon the construction of the settlement enclosure. The settlement 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, grain storage and chalk quarrying. The chalk quarrying may have been for cob wall construction, whitewash (for daub walls) or marling of calcium deficient fields, though some evidence for cob wall construction within the settlement has been recorded. Animal husbandry practices 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. Dogs would probably have been used for hunting as well as guarding animals stockaded within the settlement.

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## **Excavation Report**

### **Acknowledgements**

The fourth season of 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 the Training Excavation in Home Field, Down Farm and carry on some of the exploratory archaeological work he carried out in the 1980s and 1990s. Wessex would also like to thank him for allowing us access to his excellent museum. Martin's knowledge, enthusiasm and good humour helped make the course a great success.

All the Wessex Archaeology staff involved in the project would like to thank the participants for showing enthusiasm, good nature and a zest for learning, even on the hottest of days! This has helped make the training courses and excavation 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 (3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> September) and Dave Godden (10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> September), with assistance from Barry Hennessy and Gemma White. Matt Leivers and Pippa Bradley gave seminars on prehistoric pottery and worked flint respectively, and Martin Green gave a thoroughly enjoyable and useful demonstration of flint knapping. Wessex Archaeology's terrestrial geophysical survey team, led by Paul Baggaley, conducted a magnetometer survey of areas to the north and east of currently opened areas, and gave a brief demonstration to the course participants.

This report was compiled by Gemma White and Chris Ellis. The finds were assessed by Matt Leivers. The palaeoenvironmental analyses for Martin's earlier work and Wessex Archaeology's sampling were carried out by Sarah Wyles, Chris Stevens and Michael J. Allen. The geophysical survey was directed by Paul Baggaley and assisted by Cristina Serra. The survey was undertaken by Louise Tizzard and Stephanie Arnott. Cristina Serra processed and interpreted the survey data and assisted in the reporting of the results. The illustrations were prepared by S. E. James.

# **Practical Archaeology Training Course (2007), 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 2007 excavations at Home Field, Down Farm (NGR. ST 9980 1461) – hereafter referred to as the ‘Site’. Included are brief summaries of earlier excavations of the Site, including Martin Green’s earlier fieldwork (1985/6, 1995) as well as Wessex Archaeology’s excavations of 2004 – 2006.
- 1.1.2. The fieldwork of this report was undertaken by members of the general public, supervised by Wessex Archaeology staff, between 3<sup>rd</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> September 2007.
- 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 offered members of the public the opportunity to carry out the present research excavation under professional supervision.
- 1.1.4. The aim of the excavation and associated workshops was to teach the processes of archaeological excavation and recording and the fundamental principles of archaeological interpretation. Course participants were given lectures on prehistoric pottery and flint tools and saw a practical demonstration of flint knapping given by Martin Green. They were also given an introduction to GPS surveying by Chris Ellis (week one) and Gemma White (week two).
- 1.1.5. Overall the research project achieved its goals in ensuring the participants gained a more ‘rounded’ picture of archaeology rather than the ‘two-dimensional’ picture often portrayed in the media. The feedback from all the participants was excellent and the project, both in fieldwork and outreach terms, has continued to be a success.



## **2. SITE LOCATION, GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY**

- 2.1.1. The Site is located on an area of high chalk downland called Cranborne Chase, situated between Poole and Salisbury (**Figure 1**). 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 (aOD). 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 central stretch of the Cranborne Chase, one of the most rich and archaeologically significant landscapes in southern England. 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.
- 3.1.2. 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.



**Practical Archaeology Training Course (2007),  
Down Farm, Sixpenny Handley, Dorset**

**Excavation Report**

Prepared for:  
**Wessex Archaeology Ltd**  
**Portway House**  
**Old Sarum Park**  
**Salisbury**  
**Wiltshire**

**and**

**Martin Green**  
**Down Farm**  
**Sixpenny Handley**  
**Dorset**

by  
**Wessex Archaeology**

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- 3.1.3. 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 round 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) enclosed settlement overlay the earlier Grooved Ware period open settlement (Barrett *et al.* 1991). The Middle Bronze Age settlement appeared to have comprised a single rectangular structure as well as 4-post granary structure and four additional house structures, two of which predated the enclosure ditch (Barrett *et al.* *ibid.*, Figure 5.27). 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. 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 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 (*Sorviodunum*). 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).

- 3.1.9. The northern part of this boundary is preserved in the present Down Farm track and public footpath.
- 3.1.10. 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. 1985/6-88, 1995 Excavations**

- 3.2.1. Martin Green carried out excavations within Home Field on or near the Site in the 1980s and in 1995 which comprised a 330m<sup>2</sup> area, mostly outside, but also within the sub-rectangular enclosure (**Figure 1**). A 50m 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), and two of these postholes predated the quarry hollows. Some of the postholes excavated by Martin Green formed elements of structures including four-posters. One of the postholes contained a few sherds of Early Iron Age pottery. Two larger postholes at the very west end of the trench (F.4, F.5) were thought to be likely post-pits forming part of a possible substantial western facing entrance or porch to a roundhouse. They contained a large finds assemblage including worked flint, a single sherd of residual Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery, quernstone fragments and at least three fired clay loomweights from F.5.
- 3.2.3. In 1995 M. Green investigated the lynchet in Home Field with a trench excavated across it (HF 95). 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 from these have been discussed in earlier reports (see Wessex Archaeology 2004 and 2005).

### **3.3. 2004 Excavation**

- 3.3.1. Two trenches, c. 32m apart (Trenches 1-2), comprising a total of 532m<sup>2</sup>, were excavated to extend HF87/88 (**Figure 1**). They were located to record the possible roundhouse that the two post-pits 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. These support the idea that post-pits F.4 and F.5 did belong to a roundhouse entrance as originally proposed (**Figure 1**), which was oriented to the east.
- 3.3.3. In Tr.2 a further undated 4-post structure was recorded to the west of a large Middle Iron Age (MIA) quarry hollow. In the west of the trench the northernmost length of the enclosure's western ditch 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 a middle ditch segment. A well-preserved series of antler pick marks were clearly visible in the base of the ditch in another middle section (Wessex Archaeology 2005, plate 1). A c.3m wide strip of relatively unweathered chalk natural immediately east of the ditch probably indicates the location of an internal bank subsequently destroyed by millennia of ploughing, but no clear evidence of collapsed bank material was discernible in any of the ditch segments' fill sequences.
- 3.3.4. Adjacent to the northern ditch terminal a very shallow, truncated pit was recorded which contained an undated, articulated cow skeleton. 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 a settlement entrance, a well-known later prehistoric practice. Though unproven from faunal analyses, it is possible that the partial cow skull from the base of the nearby ditch segment came from the animal buried in the pit.

### **3.4. 2005 Geophysical survey**

- 3.4.1. 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 postholes or quarry hollows (the larger features), though specific structural remains or settlement activities were not readily apparent (*op cit*, 1).

### **3.5. 2005 Excavation**

- 3.5.1. Three small areas immediately adjacent to the 2004 excavations were opened in 2005 (Areas 1A, 2A[North] and 2A[South] ). Further sections were excavated through the southern extent of the enclosure ditch, the construction of which has been dated by pottery finds, to the Late Bronze Age/ Early Iron Age (11<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries BC), although it remained in use until the Middle Iron Age (5<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC).

- 3.5.2. A number of internal features relating to settlement and other activities were also encountered. These included intercutting irregular chalk quarry pits which contained Early Iron Age pottery and burnt flint. Also, a large number of postholes and stakeholes were recorded. These included a possible roundhouse structure in the north of Area 1A and at least four, 4-post 'granary' structures.

### **3.6. Results from 2006 excavations**

- 3.6.1. The 2006 season involved the stripping of two areas (3A and 3B). These areas respectively joined the earlier trenches as a 'transect' of excavated areas across the settlement enclosure, and an extended area to the north (3B) to investigate the northern extent of the settlement enclosure visible on aerial photographs.
- 3.6.2. In Area 3A at least four, 4-post 'granary' structures were recorded, as well as a possible small roundhouse in the south-east corner (extending into Area 1A) and many stakeholes which may comprise fencelines, dividing space within the enclosure. A linear series of quarry pits (hollows) investigated in 2005 (Area 1A) were also further excavated.
- 3.6.3. In Area 3B a second linear series of quarry pits were investigated as well as a large number of postholes and small pits recorded in this area. The northern part of this area clearly showed a linear (east-west) strip of higher, and relatively unweathered, chalk natural which undoubtedly reflects the original position of the ploughed out enclosure bank. These strips of unweathered chalk, with a relative dearth of archaeological features, have also been recorded to the west (Areas 2, 2A[N]) and east (HF 87/88) and correlate very well with the enclosure cropmark visible on aerial photographs.
- 3.6.4. A possibly 'placed deposit' of ritual significance was recorded in a small pit in the mid-west of Area 3B. It contained a deposit of Middle Iron Age pottery, worked and burnt flint, animal bone and a human leg bone laid on a layer of burnt flint (Wessex Archaeology 2007, figure 3). Deposits of this nature within settlement contexts are thought by many scholars of the later prehistoric periods to signify some sort of ritual practice.
- 3.6.5. Another small pit, to the immediate east of the 'placed deposit' pit, contained a charcoal-rich deposit with over 21Kg of burnt flint and a near-complete Early Iron Age All Cannings Cross type bowl. This material is probably derived from the rakings from a nearby hearth.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1.1. Because of the large number of archaeological features exposed in 2006, many in Area 3B remained unexcavated at the end of that season. Therefore, in the 2007 season, excavation and recording continued only in Area 3B.

- 4.1.2. The area was cleaned by hand before excavation began and any additional features revealed (from the 2006 season) were mapped using GPS survey equipment and tied into the Ordnance Survey Grid and Ordnance datum (metres aOD). All features investigated were at least half-sectioned, recorded (with written and drawn records) and photographed. During reordering all surveying for plans and sections was undertaken using a dumpy level and a local temporary bench mark set up in 2004.
- 4.1.3. At the end of this season a number of features still needed to be investigated. Therefore, the whole of Area 3B was covered in a non-permeable geotextile membrane (Terram) and sealed below a thick layer of soil overburden. This should protect the features until the 2008 season when work will be continued in Area 3B.

#### **4.2. The Archive**

- 4.2.1. The artefacts, and any accompanying documentary records from Martin Green's (**HF 86**, **HF 87/88** and **HF 95**) and Wessex Archaeology's fieldwork (**WA 04-07**) have been compiled into a stable, fully cross-referenced and indexed archive in accordance with Appendix 6 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (2nd Edition, English Heritage 1991).
- 4.2.2. Martin Green's and Wessex Archaeology's archives are currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire. The Wessex Archaeology archives are under the project codes **56390** and **56392**. On the completion of the present research excavations by Wessex Archaeology the full archive will be handed over to M. Green.

### **5. EXCAVATION RESULTS**

- 5.1.1. A total of 70 postholes, four stakeholes, one tree throw and three sections across quarry hollows were excavated in the 2007 season. The quarry hollows also appeared to have truncated a further seven postholes, which have been recorded as far as was possible.
- 5.1.2. The densest concentration of features lay in the central and southern part of Area 3B. It was clear that the density of features began to drop off in the northern part of the Site towards where the enclosure boundary may originally have existed. Possible indirect evidence for the bank was indicated by the relatively pristine, unweathered chalk in this part of the Site. This had also been noted during the earlier excavations by Martin Green (see Wessex Archaeology 2004, Section 2.2).
- 5.1.3. The results of the 2007 season of excavation are discussed below but should also be viewed in the context of previous work on the Site, especially the fieldwork conducted in Area 3B undertaken in 2006 (Wessex Archaeology 2007).

## **5.2. Postholes**

- 5.2.1. Area 3B shows a dense concentration of postholes and the generally 'busy' nature meant that it was difficult to identify which postholes may originally have been associated within specific post-built structures.
- 5.2.2. During the 2006 and 2007 seasons it was thought that the postholes of this area probably represent several superimposed phases of settlement activity, making the overall understanding of which posts were originally associated all the more difficult. Indeed this suggestion was borne out by the fact that several of the posts in this area provided evidence for recuts, implying continued maintenance. Furthermore, finds retrieved from this part of the Site, particularly the pottery, provided evidence of activity spanning the Late Bronze Age into the Early and Middle Iron Ages.
- 5.2.3. At this early assessment stage it has been difficult to fully identify building and other structural plans. It will only be possible to fully understand possible structural remains in Area 3B when a full analysis is undertaken which takes into account the dimensions, packing, finds and fill characteristics and relative spatial positions of all the postholes. A small finds assemblage was recovered from a few (15) of the postholes. This comprised a small number of small, abraded sherds of Early to Middle Iron Age date. It also included a small assemblage of possible residual Neolithic/Bronze Age worked flint as well as later prehistoric pieces, and a small quantity of burnt flint.
- 5.2.4. The postholes excavated were almost all circular (a few oval or sub-circular features were identified) with straight or concave sides and a relatively flat base. From this season, they ranged from 0.15m to 0.57m in diameter (average 0.29m) and their depths ranged from 0.02m to 0.6m (average 0.18m).
- 5.2.5. Out of the 70 postholes excavated in this area, evidence for post packing was identified in 25 examples, often in the more substantial posts as one would expect. Of these, five show flint packing and 20 show chalk packing. Fewer examples of post-pipes were identified, but at least thirteen examples were noted.
- 5.2.6. The absence of post-packing or post-pipes from the other postholes does not imply that they originally lacked wooden posts; rather that perhaps in a large number of instances the posts had been removed when a structure fell into disuse or was abandoned. Forty-four of the postholes contained only a single fill, a further 22 had two fills while four, had three fills. Three of the post-holes had recuts demonstrating re-use and suggesting maintenance and longevity of some of the structures.



- 5.2.7. A small number of post-built structures were recorded in this area, including two 6-post structures (**1427, 1428**) and three (possibly four) 4-post structures (**1429 – 31**). All of these are traditionally thought in later prehistoric archaeology to represent above ground ‘granary’ structures although they may have been used to store a number of different materials or equipment, or alternatively represent some completely different function (Ellison and Drewett 1971). These are discussed below.

### **5.3. Four-post structures**

- 5.3.1. All three of the undated 4-post structures recorded in 2007 were sub-square or rectangular in plan (**Figure 2**) and generally c. 1.5m square or 2m by 1.55m in size. At Danebury 499 examples were recorded (Cunliffe and Poole 1991, 104), and the examples from the Site would fall within the range of ‘small’ and ‘large’ Danebury structures (Cunliffe 1984, 89).
- 5.3.2. The postholes were generally sub-circular in shape with near-vertical and vertical sides and shallow, concave bases. They were generally 0.25 – 0.4m in diameter and c. 0.3m deep (for **1429**) but were otherwise very truncated and only 0.04 – 0.14m deep (for **1430, 1431**). All four postholes of **1429** had evidence of chalk packing fill, though no post-pipes were evident in these recorded structural postholes. Only one piece of worked flint was recovered from any of these structures (**1430**).
- 5.3.3. A fourth possible 4-post structure may be present in the north-west of Area 3B. At present only the undated north-east posthole (0.25m diameter and 0.09m deep) has been excavated. Three other (unexcavated) postholes would comprise a c. 2.3m sub-square structure. Further investigations in 2008 should prove if this represents another 4-post structure. At present at least thirteen 4-post ‘granary’ structures have been recorded on the Site.

### **5.4. Six-post structures**

- 5.4.1. Two possible, rectangular 6-post structures have been identified in the north-east of Area 3B (**Figure 2**). Both structures’ postholes contained the bulk of the small finds assemblage of worked and burnt flint and Middle to Late Iron Age pottery from the 2007 season. Both structures would fall into Danebury’s ‘Type A’ category of large 6-post structures (Cunliffe 1984, 91). These structures are also widespread for the later prehistoric periods and are also thought to be above ground ‘granary’ structures though they may have been used to store other materials or equipment or have been excarnation platforms (Ellison and Drewett 1971).

- 5.4.2. The western structure (**1427**) measures 3.5m x 2.3m and is comprised of postholes which vary from 0.4 – 0.5m diameter (average 0.44m) and from 0.17 – 0.3m deep (average 0.22m). Only posthole **1316** had no chalk packing. Four of the postholes (**1217, 1220, 1231, 1312**) have a post-pipe indicating timber posts of 0.18 - 0.26m in diameter (average 0.21m) were originally erected within them.
- 5.4.3. The eastern 6-post structure (**1428**) measures 3.6m x 1.9m and is comprised of post holes generally 0.3m diameter and 0.17m deep.
- 5.4.4. Both of the structures mentioned above contained finds within the backfill of their postholes. This included worked and burnt flint (both residual Neolithic/Bronze Age and later prehistoric date) and Middle to Late Iron Age potsherds. An animal tooth was also recovered from the eastern structure (**1428**). This would date these two structures to the Middle to Late Iron Age, consistent with the dateable features and other structures already recorded within the settlement enclosure.

## **5.5. Quarry Hollows**

- 5.5.1. All the earlier seasons' fieldwork had investigated a number of chalk quarry pits (quarry hollows). Three further sections (**1254-56, 1262-65, 1414**) were excavated through quarry hollow Group **1116**, which had been partially investigated in 2006. These interventions confirmed earlier observations in demonstrating that the quarry hollows comprise a number of individual intercutting shallow pits. Although generally, relatively finds-rich, this season's work recorded no finds from the quarry hollows. The implication from the fill sequences implies that these hollows had been allowed to silt up naturally, and therefore finds associated with domestic activity in the immediate vicinity had become trapped within the hollows.
- 5.5.2. The purpose of these relatively shallow 'borrow pits' may be related to the domestic activity. Quarry hollows were possibly excavated to retrieve chalk for the creation of cob walls. Evidence to support this suggestion came from a posthole excavated in 2006, which contained a quantity of chalk marl within its backfill, implying that this material may have originally been derived from the cob walls of a dismantled or abandoned structure in the vicinity.

## **5.6. Summary of Area 3B**

- 5.6.1. In Area 3B, as stated earlier, it is hard to distinguish posthole relationships at this stage due to the dense nature of features in this area and the fact that they undoubtedly relate to several different phases of activity. It is possible that a whole series of 4-post structures, fencelines, round-houses and rectangular houses may be observed from these posthole clusters through further analysis as well as further excavation.

- 5.6.2. At present, however, apart from the probable 4 and 6-post structures highlighted above, it is not possible to say anything too meaningful about what most of these different postholes may represent other than a large number of them are fairly substantial. Indeed it is likely that many of them (deep, with post-packing and often with substantial post-pipes) are load-bearing posts that probably form parts of domestic or ancillary structures rather than simply defining space within the settlement.
- 5.6.3. The two more substantial postholes (postholes **911** and **964**) identified in the south-eastern part of Area 3B in the 2006 season may form part of a porch or entrance. However, presently, no further elements of a circular post-built structure are visible that further support this theory.
- 5.6.4. In the 2006 report it was suggested that rather than looking for circular structures, the features in Area 3B may form a number of rectilinear alignments or rectangular post-built structures. The extrapolated lines on **Figure 2** are at present only conjectural, and it is likely that further excavation and analysis of this part of the Site will modify this picture. To highlight this, some of the conjectural rectangular structures' postholes are part of two of the 4-post structures recorded in this season's work.

## **6. GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY**

### **6.1. Methodology**

- 6.1.1. Survey grids were established at 20m x 20m using a Leica 1200 RTK GPS system and tapes. The Leica system receives corrections from a network of reference stations operated by the Ordnance Survey and Leica Geosystems, allowing positions to be determined to an accuracy of 1-2cm in real-time, and therefore exceed English Heritage recommendations for geophysical surveys (1995).
- 6.1.2. The survey was undertaken using a Bartington Grad 601-2 dual gradiometer system in accordance with English Heritage Guidelines for Geophysical Surveys (1995). The data were collected at 0.25m intervals along traverses spaced 1m apart. This gives 3600 measurements per grid and is the recommended methodology for archaeological surveys of this type (English Heritage, 1995).
- 6.1.3. The instrument has two sensor assemblies fixed horizontally 1m apart allowing two traverses to be recorded simultaneously. Each sensor contains two fluxgate magnetometers arranged vertically with a 1m separation, and measures the difference between the vertical components of the total magnetic field within each sensor array. This arrangement of magnetometers suppresses any diurnal or low frequency effects.

- 6.1.4. The instrument has a resolution of 0.1nT over a  $\pm 3000$ nT range, and measurements from each sensor are logged at intervals of 0.25m. All of the data are stored on an integrated data logger for subsequent post-processing and analysis.

## **6.2. Post-Processing**

- 6.2.1. The magnetic data collected during the detail survey are downloaded from the Bartington system for processing and analysis using both commercial and in-house software. This software allows for both the data and the images to be processed in order to enhance the results for analysis; however, it should be noted that minimal data processing is conducted so as not to distort the anomalies.

- 6.2.2. Typical displays of the data used during processing and analysis:

- XY Plot – Presents the data as a trace or graph line for each traverse. Each traverse is displaced down the image to produce a stacked profile effect. This image can include a hidden line algorithm to remove certain lines and enhance the image. This type of image is useful as it shows the full range and shape of individual anomalies.
- Greyscale – Presents the data in plan view using a greyscale to indicate the relative strength of the signal at each measurement point. These plots can be produced in colour to highlight certain features but generally greyscale plots are used during analysis of the data.

## **6.3. Geophysical Interpretation**

- 6.3.1. The interpretation methodology used by Wessex Archaeology Ltd separates the anomalies into two main categories: archaeological and unidentified responses.

- 6.3.2. The archaeological category is used for features when the form, nature and pattern of the anomaly are indicative of archaeological material. Further sources of information such as aerial photographs may also have been incorporated in providing the final interpretation. This category is further sub-divided into three groups, implying a decreasing level of confidence:

- Archaeology – used when there is a clear geophysical response and anthropogenic pattern.
- Probable archaeology – used for features which give a clear response but which form incomplete patterns.

- 6.3.3. The unidentified category is used for features when the form, nature and pattern of the anomaly are not sufficient to warrant a classification as an archaeological feature. This category is further sub-divided into:
- Possible archaeology – used for features which give a response but which form no discernable pattern or trend.
  - Increased magnetic response – used for areas dominated by indistinct anomalies which may have some archaeological potential.
  - Trend – used for low amplitude or indistinct linear anomalies.
  - Ferrous – used for responses caused by ferrous material. These anomalies are likely to be of modern origin.
- 6.3.4. Finally, services such as water pipes are marked where they have been identified.

#### **6.4. Detailed survey results and interpretation**

##### *Introduction*

- 6.4.1. The detailed gradiometer survey covered a total area of 0.22ha, consisting of four full 20 x 20m grids and two partial grids. The survey area was situated north of the on-going archaeological training excavation (**Figure 1**).
- 6.4.2. The data was collected by two trainees at high range. High range surveys are less sensitive to magnetic anomalies. This set up was not the most suitable for identifying anomalies of archaeological interest; nevertheless, the data quality was high and numerous anomalies could still be identified.
- 6.4.3. The greyscale plot (**Figure 3a**) and XY plot of the archaeological interpretation of the results (**Figure 3b**) are illustrated.

##### *Results and Interpretation*

- 6.4.4. The archaeological interpretation of the detailed gradiometer survey identified a complex area of anomalies. The interpretation aims to highlight the most prominent anomalies, illustrate their position and approximate shape. Due to data processing (interpolation) the dimensions of the anomalies are not exact. The interpretation highlighted the following anomalies:
- 5 ferrous or metallic objects
  - 33 anomalies of possible archaeological interest including potentially pits, postholes or tree throws, in which archaeological material might be found
  - Numerous linear trends, mainly orientated east-west were also recorded. This type of anomaly may result from ploughing, modern landscaping or represent linear arrangements of archaeological features. However, the magnetic strength is too poor to aid further interpretation.

## **6.5. Conclusions**

- 6.5.1. The results of detailed gradiometer data revealed numerous anomalies that according to the interpretation methodology represent features of unknown origin but of possible archaeological interest.
- 6.5.2. However, on the basis of the results uncovered during the archaeological excavation immediately south of the survey area, these anomalies are believed to be of probable archaeological interest.
- 6.5.3. A full excavation over these features is highly recommended.

## **7. FINDS**

### **7.1. Pottery**

- 7.1.1. Only 27 sherds were recovered. The material consists of small and abraded featureless body sherds in sand, sand-and-flint, sand-and-shell and calcareous fabrics. No rims, bases, handles, decoration or other features were present; one sherd has a slight curve to the wall. On fabric grounds, all sherds fit within the Early to Middle Iron Age sequence identified from earlier phases of excavation on the Site.
- 7.1.2. The largest group (of 13 sherds) come from a single vessel in large posthole **1206**. This is thin-walled and has a better surface finish (although still not especially fine) – the vessel was probably a bowl.

### **7.2. Worked Flint**

- 7.2.1. Only 11 pieces were recovered. Ten were flakes, and one a nodule from which a few small flakes had been removed, probably to test the raw material. 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. Condition is uniformly good.
- 7.2.2. The assemblage divides into two groups. One group (the large crude flakes from postholes **1231** and **1237**) is typical of late prehistoric flintwork, and are likely to be associated with the construction and use of the settlement. The remainder (small flakes) are earlier – perhaps Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age and residual in nature.

## **8. PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE**

### **8.1. Introduction**

- 8.1.1. The palaeoenvironmental material taken during the 2006 season was unavailable for inclusion in that season's report. It has therefore been included in this report, along with the results of the assessment of the palaeoenvironmental samples taken in 2007.

### **8.2. 2006 Season**

- 8.2.1. A total of eight bulk samples were taken from a pit (**849**), a quarry pit (**991**), a ?hearth (**906**) and the fill of a pot within it, and three postholes (**808, 911, 964**) – **Figures 1** and **2**. The samples were processed for the recovery and assessment of charred plant remains and wood charcoals.
- 8.2.2. In addition, a series of 12 samples were taken from the northern terminal of the settlement enclosure ditch Group **237 (355)** and were processed for the recovery of land snails (**Figure 1**).

#### *Charred Plant Remains and Wood Charcoals*

- 8.2.3. Bulk samples were processed by standard flotation methods; the flot retained on a 0.5 mm mesh, residues fractionated into 5.6 mm, 2mm and 1mm fractions and dried. The coarse fractions (>5.6 mm) were sorted, weighed and discarded. Flots were scanned under a x10 – x40 stereo-binocular microscope and the presence of charred remains quantified (**Table 1**) to record the preservation and nature of the charred plant and wood charcoal remains. Preliminary identifications of dominant or important taxa are noted below, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997).
- 8.2.4. The flots varied in size containing up to 80% rooty material that may be indicative of stratigraphic movement, reworking or the degree of contamination by later intrusive elements. Seeds of goosefoot (*Chenopodium* spp.) which were thought to be modern intrusions were observed in a single sample. The charred material was poorly preserved.

#### *Charred plant remains*

- 8.2.5. Very sparse quantities of charred plant remains were recovered from these samples. A small amount of indeterminate grain fragments were recorded in posthole **911** and a low number of weed seeds from the possible hearth **906**. The weed seeds were of wild oat/ brome grass (*Avena/Bromus* spp), which is typically found in samples from arable deposits.



#### *Wood Charcoal*

- 8.2.6. Wood Charcoal was noted from the flots of the bulk samples and is recorded in **Table 1**. Moderate numbers of fragments of greater than 5.6mm were recovered from pit **849** and posthole **911**. The wood charcoal was mainly mature wood pieces.

#### *Land snails*

- 8.2.7. A series of 12 contiguous samples were taken from the northern terminal of enclosure ditch Group **237 (355)**. Samples of 1500 or 2000g were processed by standard methods (Evans 1972) for land snails. The flots (0.5mm) were rapidly assessed by scanning under a x 10 – x 40 stereo-binocular microscope to provide some information about shell preservation and species representation. The numbers of shells and the presence of taxonomic groups were quantified (**Table 2**). Nomenclature is according to Kerney (1999).

- 8.2.8. Snail numbers were low in the samples from ditch fills **351** and **352** but increase in the upper ditch fill **353**. The snails recovered from the samples from this context were predominantly shade loving species and *Pomatias elegans*, an intermediate species. Very few open country species were recovered. The shade loving species included rupestral species such as *Helicigona lapicida*, *Acanthinula aculeata* and *Clausiliidae*, which like to live on firm dry surfaces, particularly rocks, walls and tree trunks, while *Pomatias elegans* favours disturbed ground and bare earth. This may indicate the presence of a niche rock rubble habitat such as on a ditch bank. The virtual lack of open country species may also be as a result of the presence of a bank. Other species are more indicative of long unkempt grassland both within and along the ditch.

### **8.3. 2007 Season**

#### *Introduction*

- 8.3.1. A total of five bulk samples were taken from a series of postholes (**1206, 1225, 1237, 1339, 1376**) (**Figure 2**) and were processed for the recovery and assessment of charred plant remains and wood charcoals.

#### *Charred Plant Remains and Wood Charcoals*

8.3.2. Bulk samples were processed by standard flotation methods; the flot retained on a 0.5 mm mesh, residues fractionated into 5.6 mm, 2mm and 1mm fractions and dried. The coarse fractions (>5.6 mm) were sorted, weighed and discarded. Flots were scanned under a x10 – x40 stereo-binocular microscope and the presence of charred remains quantified (**Table 1**) to record the preservation and nature of the charred plant and wood charcoal remains. Preliminary identifications of dominant or important taxa are noted below, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997).

8.3.3. The flots were generally small with c.75% rooty material that may be indicative of stratigraphic movement, reworking or the degree of contamination by later intrusive elements. Seeds of goosefoot (*Chenopodium* spp.) which were thought to be modern were recorded in three of the samples. Charred material was poorly preserved.

#### *Charred plant remains*

8.3.4. Sparse quantities of charred grain fragments were recorded in four of the samples, those from posthole **1237** (**Figure 2**) were probably hulled wheat grains. No charred weed seeds were observed.

#### *Wood Charcoal*

8.3.5. Wood charcoal was noted from the flots of the bulk samples and is recorded in **Table 1**. The few fragments of greater than 5.6mm observed from four of the postholes were mainly mature wood pieces.

## **9. DISCUSSION**

9.1.1. The research project was successful in achieving its training goals. The feedback from all the students was generally very positive and all felt that they had learned and achieved a great deal.

9.1.2. The 2007 excavations have very much built on and complemented the evidence and interpretations of Martin Green's earlier investigations and the 2004 – 2006 seasons. At this assessment stage it must be noted that only preliminary statements may be made, especially with regards to the patterning of the postholes in Area 3B. However, the excavations have clearly highlighted the importance of this part of the Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age settlement enclosure, which contains a number of post-built structures, including 4-post and 6-post 'granary' structures, as well as chalk quarry pits and pits containing domestic settlement waste material and possible ritually significant placed deposits.

9.1.3. Unfortunately postholes, by their very nature, are difficult to date, as few of those excavated at Down Farm produce diagnostically dateable finds.

- 9.1.4. However, further analysis of the dimensions, fill characteristics, spatial locations and finds from the large number of postholes particularly in this area but also Area 3A, should assist in a better definition of broad chronological groups and therefore of associated structural remains.
- 9.1.5. The majority of postholes in Area 3B were more substantial both with respect to diameters and depths in comparison to the previous excavation areas. Furthermore, many of these postholes provided evidence for post-packing and post-pipes. All of this evidence suggests the presence of more substantial structural evidence in Area 3B, with possibly load-bearing, and deeper posts suggesting domestic or other ancillary structures. At present it is difficult to ascertain certain 'zones' of contemporary but differing activities within specific parts of the enclosure.
- 9.1.6. The geophysical survey to the immediate north of the excavations has highlighted the potential of areas outside of the Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age settlement enclosure to contain archaeological features which may be of different periods or possibly represent contemporary extra-mural settlement activity.

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**Table 1 - Assessment of the charred plant remains and charcoal**

**SAMPLES FROM 2006**

Feature	Context	Sample	Vol	flot size	% roots	grain	chaff	weed seeds	comments	charcoal	other
Late Bronze Age - Middle Iron Age											
Pits											
849	850	10	20	80	70	-	-	-	-	A	Moll-t (A)
849	856	25	10	20	80	-	-	-	-	C	Moll-t (A)
Quarry Pit											
991	992	31	0.1	3	5	-	-	-	-	B	-
Postholes											
808	809	24	0.5	5	10	-	-	-	-	C	Moll-t (C)
911	912	27	10	75	35	C	-	-	indeterminate grain frag	A	Moll-t (A)
964	966	29	3	10	50	-	-	-	-	C	Moll-t (A)
Pot fill											
906	907	30	0.5	5	40	-	-	-	<i>Chenopodium</i> (prob modern)	C	Moll-t (C)
?Hearth											
906	907	28	20	200	75	-	-	C	<i>Avena/Bromus</i>	B	Moll-t (A)

**SAMPLES FROM 2007**

Feature	Context	Sample	Vol	flot size	% roots	grain	chaff	weed seeds	comments	charcoal	other
Early to Middle Iron Age postholes											
1237	1238	31	10	40	65	-	-	-	<i>Chenopodium</i> (prob modern)	-	Moll-t (A)
1206	1208	32	10	40	75	C	-	-	indeterminate grain frag <i>Chenopodium</i> (prob modern)	C	Moll-t (A)
1225	1226	33	10	40	75	C	-	-	indeterminate grain frag <i>Chenopodium</i> (prob modern)	B	Moll-t (A)
1339	1340	34	10	25	75	C	-	-	indeterminate grain frag	C	Moll-t (A)
1376	1377	35	10	15	75	C	-	-	wheat grain frags	C	Moll-t (A)

KEY: A\*\*\* = exceptional, A\*\* = 100+, A\* = 30- 99, A = ≥10 items, B = 9 - 5 items, C = < 5 items; Moll-t = terrestrial molluscs

**Table 2 - Land snail assessment from enclosure ditch Group 247 (2006)**

SITE PHASE	Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age											
FEATURE TYPE	Ditch											
FEATURE	Group 247 (355)											
CONTEXT	351	352						353				
SAMPLE	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
DEPTH (m)	1.1- 1.2	1.0- 1.1	0.9- 1.0	0.8- 0.9	0.7- 0.8	0.6- 0.7	0.5- 0.6	0.4- 0.5	0.3- 0.4	0.2- 0.3	0.1- 0.2	0.0- 0.1
WEIGHT (g)	2000	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	2000	1500	1500	1500	2000	1500
<b>Open country species</b>												
<i>Pupilla muscorum</i>	-	-	-	-	-	C	-	-	-	-	-	C
<i>Helicella itala</i>	C	-	-	-	-	C	C	-	-	-	-	B
<i>Vallonia</i> spp.	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Catholic species</b>												
<i>Trichia hispida</i>	B	C	-	-	-	-	C	C	C	C	C	B
<i>Pomatias elegans</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	A	-	A	A	A
<i>Cochlicopa</i> spp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	C	-	-	-	C
<i>Cepaea/Arianta</i> spp	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	C	+	C	C	+
<i>Punctum pygmaeum</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	C
<b>Shade-loving species</b>												
<i>Carychium</i>	C	-	-	-	-	C	-	A	B	C	C	A
<i>Discus rotundatus</i>	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	C	C	C	C	A
<i>Acanthinula</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	C	-	-	-	C
<i>Oxychilus</i>	-	-	-	-	C	C	C	C	C	-	C	B
<i>Aegopinella</i> spp	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	C	C	C	C	B
<i>Vitrea</i> spp	-	-	-	-	-	C	C	C	-	-	-	C
<i>Clausiliidae</i>	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	C
<i>Helicigona lapicida</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	C	C	C	C	C
<i>Ena</i> spp	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	C	-	-	-
<b>Burrowing species</b>												
<i>Cecilioides acicula</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	B	-	-	C	B
<b>Approx totals</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>85</b>



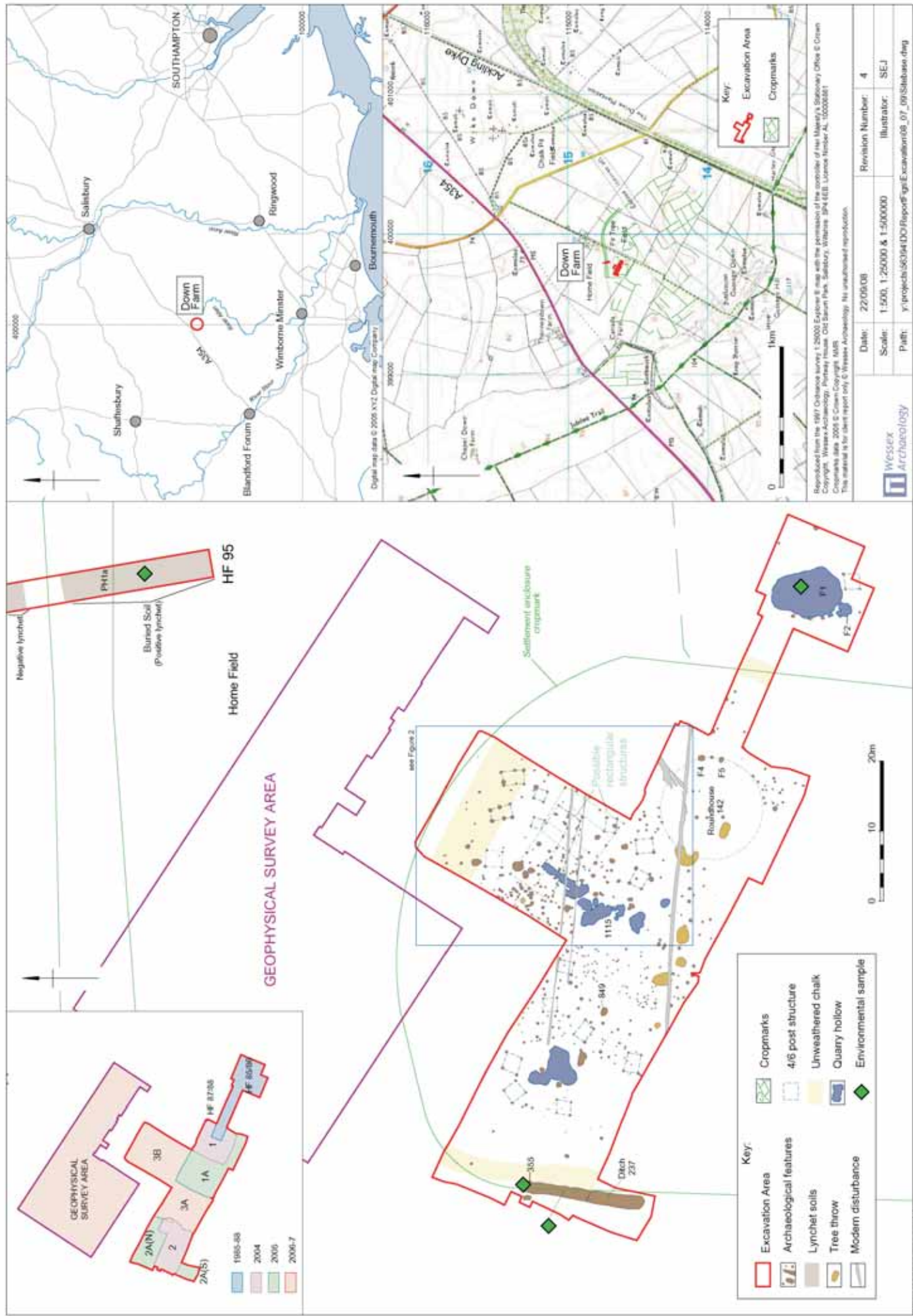
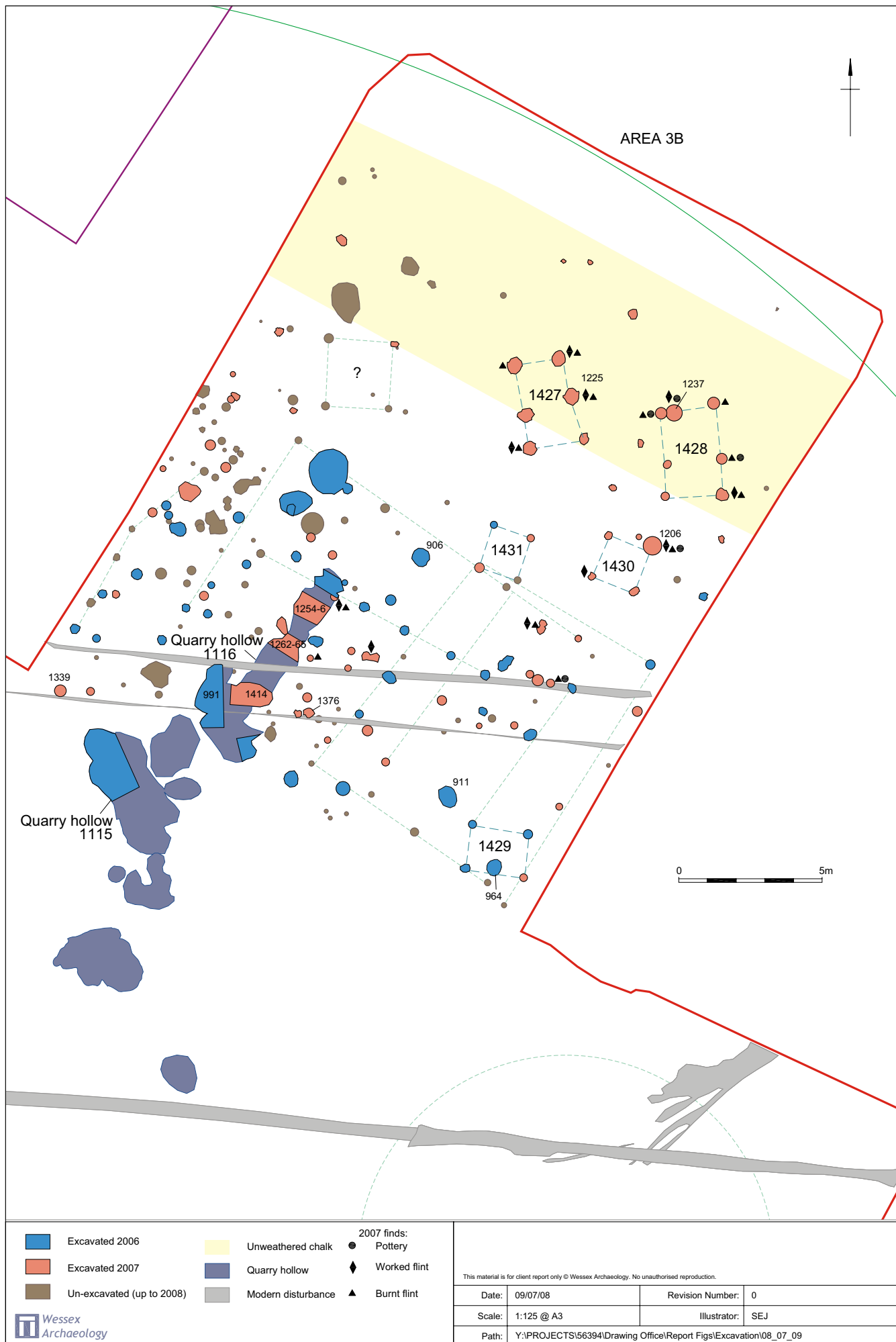
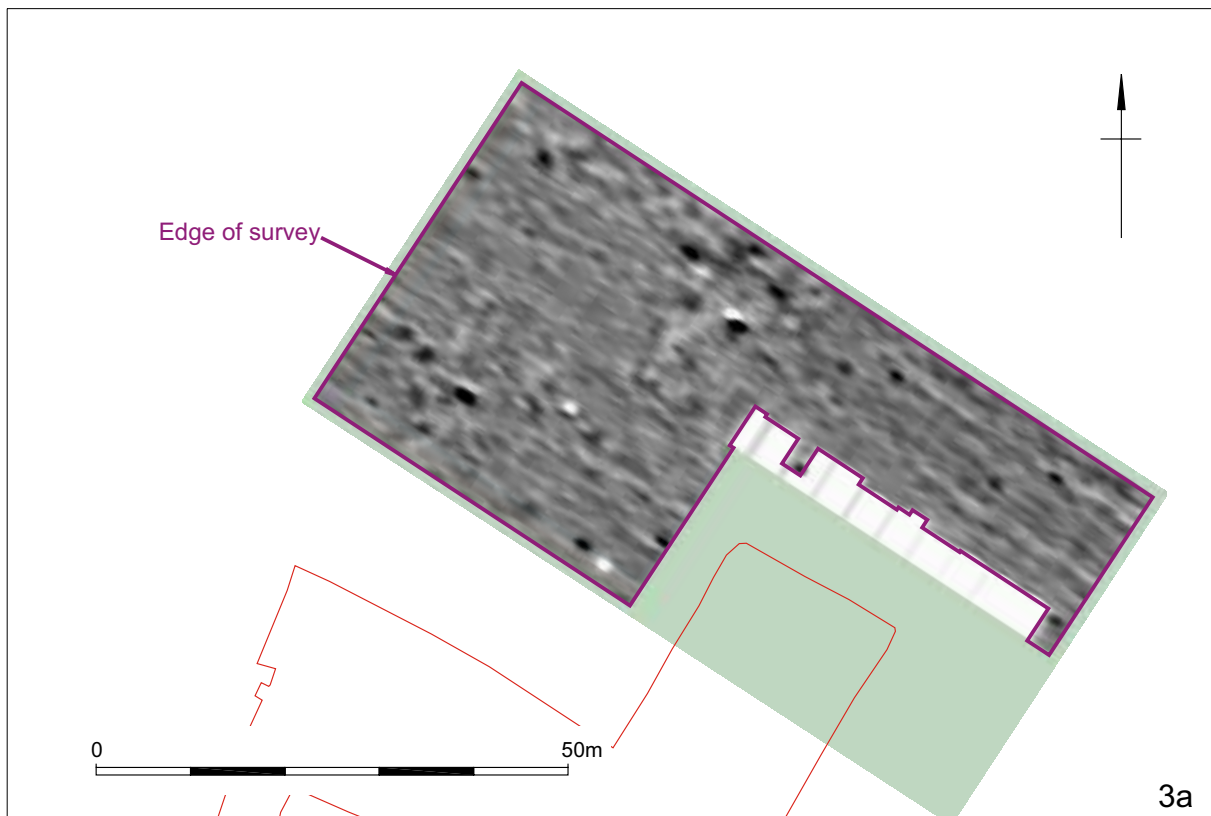


Figure 1  
Site location maps

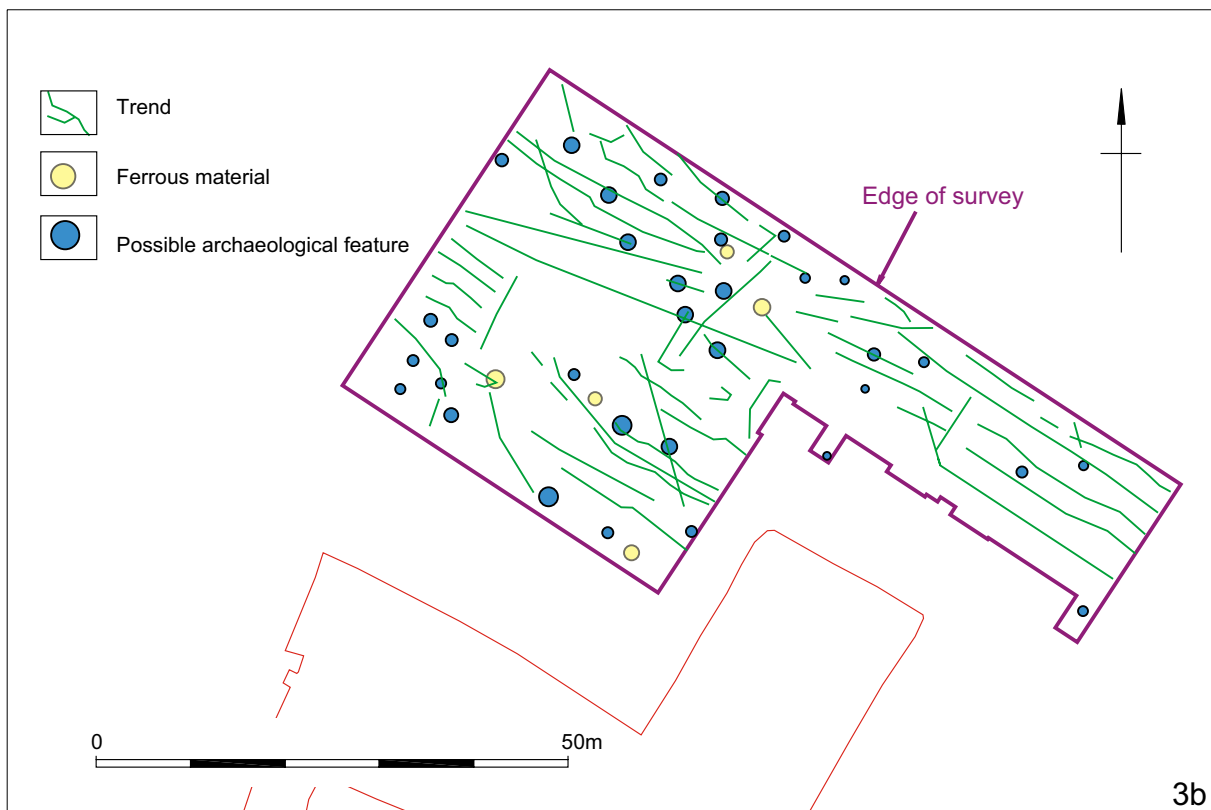


Plan of Area 3B

Figure 2

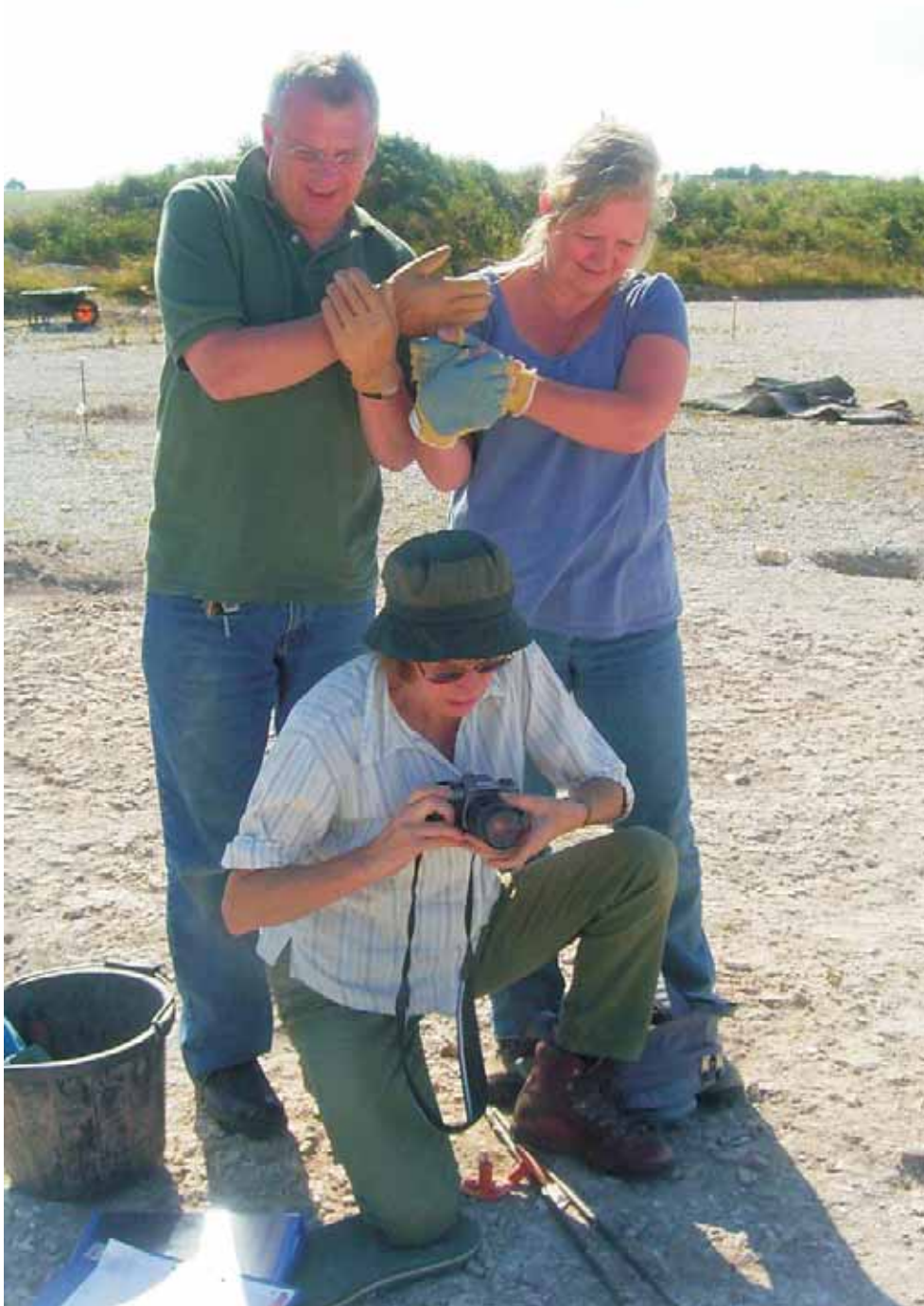


Greyscale gradiometer plot



XY trace and coded interpretation of gradiometer data





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