Wessex Archaeology

Harold's House, Portskewett, Monmouthshire, South Wales

Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Results

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Harold's House, Portskewett, Monmouthshire, South Wales

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Summary

In March 2007, an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Channel 4's 'Time Team' at the site of 'Harold's House', Portskewett, Monmouthshire, South Wales (NGR 349800 188100; SAM No. MM029), to investigate a series of upstanding earthworks traditionally believed to be the site of a hunting lodge belonging to Harold Godwinson, later King Harold II of England.

The aim of the evaluation had been to investigate the nature of the earthworks and ascertain whether any remains of the putative hunting lodge remained, or whether the remains belonged to a later medieval manorial complex. The project was also designed to investigate the nature of a now infilled tidal inlet which flowed to the west of the Site, and also a dam or causeway which sealed off the northern end of the inlet. The evaluation comprised the excavation of six trial trenches, combined with geophysical survey, landscape survey and geoarchaeological (auger) survey.

No evidence of the pre-Norman conquest hunting lodge was identified, but the earthworks were revealed as probably belonging to the manorial complex of the Deneband family. Areas of human and animal accommodation were identified as well as evidence for the probable location of bread ovens. Although some traces of structures survived, much of the stratigraphic sequence in this part of the Site comprised rubble layers relating to demolition of the manorial buildings, probably late in the medieval period. Very little cultural material was found *in situ*, but late 12th/13th century pottery from a possible quarry pit which pre-dated the excavated structures suggests a *terminus post quem* for the initial construction, and this is supported by the presence of ceramic ridge tiles of probable 13th century date amongst the demolition deposits.

Examination of the tidal inlet by auger survey indicated that it would have been a navigable water way well into the medieval period and that the sandy beach at the northern end of the inlet could have served as a harbour for the medieval village and manor. The dam seems to have been put in place while the inlet was still experiencing inundation from seasonal flooding events. At some point in the medieval period, possibly coinciding with the construction of the manorial complex, the boundary between the wetter land of the inlet and the drier, raised ground on which the manor was located appears to have been enhanced by the construction of a revetment.

Full publication of the results of this evaluation is not warranted, but a recommendation is made to publish summary reports in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* and *Archaeology in Wales*.

Harold's House, Portskewett, Monmouthshire, South Wales

Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Results

Acknowledgements

This programme of post-excavation and assessment work was commissioned and funded by Videotext Communications Ltd, and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank the staff at Videotext, and in particular Michael Douglas (Series Editor), Melinda Corkery (Production Manager), Jim Mower and Lucia Ashmore (Assistant Producers), Ben Knappett (Researcher) and Emily Woodburn (Production Coordinator) for their considerable help during the recording and post-excavation work.

The geophysical survey was undertaken by John Gater, Ian Wilkins and Emma Wood of GSB Prospection. The field and topographic survey was undertaken by Henry Chapman of University of Birmingham, the Geoarchaeology Coring Survey was undertaken by Emma Tetlow of Birmingham University and landscape survey and map regression was undertaken by Stewart Ainsworth of English Heritage. The excavation strategy was devised by Mick Aston of Bristol University. The on-site recording was co-ordinated by Steve Thompson assisted by Laura Catlin, who was also in charge of on-site finds processing, both of Wessex Archaeology.

The excavations were undertaken by Time Team's retained archaeologists, Phil Harding (Wessex Archaeology), Kerry Ely, Brigid Gallagher, Ian Powlesland, Raksha Dave, Tracey Smith and Matt Williams with assistance from Steve Clarke, Felicity Taylor, Colin Harris, Stuart Wilson, Gary Jenkins and Phil Riche. On-site pottery identification was carried out by Steve Clarke, with small finds identification by Helen Geake (Cambridge University).

The archive was collated and all post-excavation assessment and analysis undertaken by Wessex Archaeology except for analysis of the environmental coring which was undertaken by Emma Tetlow and the summary of the landscape and earthwork study undertaken by Stewart Ainsworth. This report was compiled by Steve Thompson, with specialist reports prepared by Lorraine Mepham (finds), Jessica Grimm (animal bone), Chris Stevens (Environmental), Emma Tetlow (Geoarchaeology) and Stewart Ainsworth (landscape and earthwork study). The illustrations were prepared by Will Foster. The post-excavation project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Lorraine Mepham.

The work benefited from discussion on site with Neil Maylan (Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust), Rick Turner (CADW), Gwent expert Jeremy Knight, Phil Harding, Helen Geake, historian Sam Newton and Mick Aston.

Finally thanks are extended to CADW, Monmouthshire County Council, Portskewett Community Council, Kate Smith and the villagers of Portskewett for inviting Time Team and allowing access to the Site.

Harold's House, Portskewett, Monmouthshire, South Wales

Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Results

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Videotext Communications Ltd to undertake a programme of archaeological recording and post-excavation work on an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Channel 4's 'Time Team' at the site of Harold's House, Portskewett, Monmouthshire, South Wales (hereafter the 'Site') (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 This report documents the results of archaeological survey and evaluation undertaken by Time Team, and presents an assessment of the results of these works.

1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology

1.2.1 The Site is located within an area of open ground within the village of Portskewett and centred upon NGR 349800 188100. The village of Portskewett is situated 1km from the River Severn, approximately 7km south-west of Chepstow and 17km north-west of Bristol.

1.2.2 The Site is located at an elevation of approximately 10m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The underlying geology is sand stone with some overlying estuarine alluvium (BGS 1981).

1.2.3 The Site, known locally as 'Harold's Field' and listed in the South Wales Scheduling entry as 'Harold's House' is owned by Monmouthshire County Council and leased to Portskewett Community Council who currently use the site as a public recreation area.

1.2.4 The Site is located on a slight spur of raised ground which contains a series of earthworks located immediately west of St Mary's Church, comprising a sub-rectangular/oval mound or platform *c*.21-22.5m in diameter and 1m high, with a bank defining part of a possible enclosure *c*.55m east-west by 25m north-south. Within the centre of the raised mound are a series of roughly north-south aligned linear earthworks which appear to be the remains of wall lines, and the occasional large worked stone is visible through the topsoil and turf as the remains of stone buildings. On the western slope of the raised mound is a bank *c*.50m long east-west by *c*.15m wide and 1m high forming a dam or causeway and creating a probable fish pond to the north.

1.2.5 The area immediately west of the raised mound, which the dam crosses, forms part of a former stream valley now filled with alluvial material as a

result of tidal action. Prior to its silting it is likely that this palaeochannel or tidal inlet formed the navigable upper reaches of a tidal creek connected to the Severn estuary (Howell 2001, 3).

1.2.6 The Site is considered of national importance and has been designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM No. MM029).

1.3 Archaeological Background

Neolithic and Bronze Age

1.3.1 The Site is located in an area rich in archaeological sites with a number of prehistoric sites within a 1km radius of the Site. To the east is the Neolithic chambered tomb known as Heston Brake (NGR 350500 188600), which is considered part of the Severn-Cotswold group of monuments, although it may relate to a more Western and Welsh tradition (Videotext Communications, 2007, 3; Corcoran 1969; Houlder 1978). To the north of the Site at Farthing Hill (NGR 348500 188900) is a potential Bronze Age banked enclosure (Trett 1990) and to the west, just east of Caldicot Castle recent work has revealed occupation activity from the Bronze Age and identified features associated with the crossing of the River Nedern, including fords, a bridge and part of a boat, and environmental evidence identified intensive agriculture was taking place (Nayling and Caseldine 1997). Further evidence of activity in this period comes from the recovery of a thumbnail scraper at NGR 349400 188400 and a barbed and tanged arrowhead from the beach at West Pill (Videotext Communications 2007, 3).

Iron Age

1.3.2 The promontory fort at Sudbrook, south-east of Portskewett, is dated to the Iron Age and guarded the original course of the River Nedern prior to the altering of its course during the post-medieval period. The site is believed to have been a focus of activity in the area during this period (Videotext Communications 2007, 3; Children and Nash 1996). Further Iron Age activity was identified just north of the Site during excavation work prior to the construction of the new Portskewett school where substantial amounts of pottery and a number of brooches were recovered from a ditch (Videotext Communications, 2007, 3; Clarke 1999).

Romano-British

1.3.3 The road between Portskewett and Crick to the north-west is believed to have its origins in the Roman period, as a link to the coast from the main Gloucester to Caerleon road. Sections of paving were recorded on the earlier 20th century Ordnance Survey mapping but no longer survive due to the widening of the road (Margary 1973, 324). The Roman road is believed to have led to two possible harbours leading to the Severn, the first *c*.1.5km away to the south-east at Black Pill where large numbers of Roman coins dating from the 1st to 4th centuries have been recovered from the estuarine mud (Videotext Communications 2007, 3; Hudson 1982). The second possible harbour is immediately to the west of the Site leading to the confluence of the River Nedern with two small streams now under the recreation grounds. This possible harbour is now silted up and is crossed by the dam or causeway, creating a pond to the north (Sell 1996). It is possible

that both harbours were in use during the same period and utilised at different times depending on weather conditions.

1.3.4 Romano-British settlement was identified to the east of the Site on the eastern side of Sudbrook Road and the nature of the artefactual material indicated a possible high status site, perhaps a villa complex (Lawler 1995). To the north of the Site within the woodland on Portskewett Hill is a possible villa building though it has been suggested that the structure is instead a small hill-top temple (Salmon 1988).

1.3.5 Evidence of the extensive Romano-British agricultural exploitation of south-eastern Monmouthshire was revealed through archaeological work at Church Farm, Caldicot to the east of the Site (Williams 1998), Manor Farm, Rogiet to the east of the Site (Williams 1996), Thornwell Farm, Chepstow to the north-east of the Site (Hughes 1996) and land north of Treetops within Portskewett itself. The archaeology identified north of Treetops was interpreted as being on the periphery of a main site somewhere within Portskewett (Newns 1993).

Early Medieval

1.3.6 The occupation of the area following the Romano-British period is more difficult to understand due to the lack of archaeological evidence, but Portskewett is mentioned in a number of early medieval documents, often being referred to as a port (Videotext Communications 2007, 4; Edwards and Lane 1988, 108-9). There is documentary evidence for the existence of a pre-Norman *llys* of the Kings of Gwent (Redknap 2003), and it has been suggested that Portskewett was the site of a royal court called *Lisacors* (Knight 1982).

1.3.7 The most famous reference to Portskewett comes from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which records the events which followed the conquest of Southern Gwent in AD 1063 by Earl Harold Godwinson (later King Harold II of England). The Chronicle records that Harold started building a hunting lodge at Portskewett, but the building was destroyed by Caradog ap Gruffydd on the Feast of St. Bartholomew (24th August) AD 1065 (Videotext Communications 2007, 4).

1.3.8 The Chronicle states *'1065. Here in this year before Lammas (1 August), Earl Harold ordered construction in Wales at Portskewett now that he had won it, and there he gathered many goods, and thought it have the King Edward there for the sake of hunting. And then when it was almost gathered, Caradog, Gruffydd's son, came up with all those whom he could get, and killed almost all the people there. And the massacre was on St. Bartholomew's Day'* (Swanton 1997, 190).

1.3.9 Following the attack by Caradog, this area of Monmouthshire remained within English hands and is one of the few manors in Wales recorded in the Domesday Book, when it is listed as one of three *hardwicks* (dairy farms) attached to Chepstow.

Medieval

1.3.10 It appears that the importance of Portskewett declined during the medieval period, with St. Mary's Church adjacent to the Site not mentioned until AD 1254, although it contains architectural details of Norman date (Brook 1998; Evans 1997).

1.3.11 The current extant earthworks within the Site are thought to be the remains of the medieval manor house potentially associated with the Deneband family who were recorded as holding the manor of Portskewett by the time of the Wentworth survey of AD 1270 (Redknap 2003). The manor later passed from the Deneband family to John Bowles of Penhow, and then to a number of other families in the centuries after (Bradney 1929, 97-100). The date for the construction of the manor and its subsequent demolition is unknown, though within Portskewett is a house named Manor Farm. This building dates from the 16th -17th century and therefore a pre-16th century demolition for the manor within the Site can be inferred.

1.3.12 An estate map dating to 1765 records the field adjacent to St. Mary's Church as 'Tower Hay', an indication of the remains of structures and a probable tower within the limits of the Site.

1.4 Previous Archaeological Work

1.4.1 Although a number of archaeological investigations have been undertaken in the vicinity of the Site, only three pieces of work have been carried out within the Site itself. A watching brief was undertaken in 1996 during the laying of an electricity cable along the southern boundary of the field, where alluvium filling the tidal creek was identified along with a rubble wall (Sell 1996). The second piece of work, also a watching brief, identified a sandstone rubble wall to the south of the present churchyard wall. These features were interpreted as post-medieval although Roman and medieval pottery was recovered (Howell 2001).

1.4.2 In December 2005 Portskewett Community Council commissioned Site Scan (Archaeological) Ltd to carry out a resistivity survey of the Site, and a number of strong anomalies were identified which corresponded to the upstanding earthworks (Belcher 2006).

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1.1 A project design for the work was compiled by James Mower on behalf of Videotext Communications (2007), providing full details of the research aims and methods. A summary is provided here.

2.1.2 The document *'A Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales 2003'* (**http://www.cpat.org/research/seemed.htm**) states *'documentary evidence exists for a pre-Norman llys (high status secular site) of kings of Gwent on the site of Harold Godwinson's hunting lodge of 1065. An early Norman church exists on the site with substantial earthworks which are probably the*

medieval manorial complex of the Deneband family but with possible earlier elements.'

2.1.3 The project aimed to search for evidence of any pre-Norman activity as well as to identify any surviving remains of Harold's hunting lodge (Videotext Communications 2007, 6). The project also aimed to assess whether the now infilled tidal inlet would have been suitable as a harbour and thus potentially the origin of the port in Portskewett, and also to investigate its relationship with the dam or causeway which cuts off the northern end of the inlet.

3 METHODS

3.1 Landscape and Earthwork Survey

3.1.1 A topographical survey of the Site was undertaken by Dr Henry Chapman of Birmingham University, and analysis of the wider landscape, earthworks on the site and cartographic evidence was carried out by Stewart Ainsworth of English Heritage. A summary of the findings are included here.

3.2 Geophysical Survey

3.2.1 Prior to the excavation of evaluation trenches, a geophysical survey was undertaken by GSB Prospection across the Site using a combination of resistance and magnetic survey. The survey grid was set out by Dr Henry Chapman and tied in to the Ordnance Survey grid using a Trimble real time differential GPS system.

3.3 Geoarchaeological Survey

3.3.1 Two areas for auger survey were identified by Rick Turner (CADW Inspector of Ancient Monuments). Both areas form part of a sinuous palaeochannel, evident topographically, which bisected the west of 'Harold's Field' from north to south. The auger survey targeted the palaeochannel itself (Cores 1-5) and an area interpreted as a fishpond (Cores 6-8).

3.4 Evaluation Trenches

3.4.1 Six evaluation trenches of varying sizes were excavated. Their precise locations were determined so as to investigate geophysical anomalies, or positioned upon targets identified during the earthwork survey.

3.4.2 The trenches were excavated using a combination of machine and hand digging. All machine trenches were excavated under constant archaeological supervision and ceased at the identification of significant archaeological remains, or where natural geology was encountered first. When machine excavation had ceased all trenches were cleaned by hand and archaeological deposits investigated.

3.4.3 The excavated up-cast was scanned by metal detector.

3.4.4 All archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets with a unique numbering system for individual contexts. Trenches were located using a Trimble Real Time Differential GPS survey system. All archaeological features and deposits were planned at a scale of 1:20 with sections drawn at 1:10. All principal strata and features were related to the Ordnance Survey datum.

3.4.5 A full photographic record of the investigations and individual features was maintained, utilising colour transparencies, black and white negatives (on 35mm film) and digital images. The photographic record illustrated both the detail and general context of the archaeology revealed and the Site as a whole.

3.4.6 At the completion of the work, all trenches were reinstated using the excavated soil.

3.4.7 A unique site code (HHP 07) was agreed prior to the commencement of works. The work was carried out on the 13th -16th March 2007. The archive and all artefacts were subsequently transported to the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury where they were processed and assessed for this report.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Details of individual excavated contexts and features, the full geophysical report (GSB 2007), the results of the landscape and earthwork survey and details of artefactual and environmental assessments, are retained in the archive. Summaries of the excavated sequences can be found in **Appendix 1**.

4.2 Landscape and Earthwork Survey

4.2.1 The focus of attention for this survey was a complex of earthworks situated on and around a slight spur of high ground in the field to the west of St Mary's Church. These earthworks have been shown on large-scale 1:2500 maps at different levels of detail since 1887, although none depict the remains with any degree of understanding or detail. The investigations conducted during March 2007 allowed the following interpretations to be made (**Figure 2b**).

4.2.2 The spur itself is the product of two former downcutting river channels, one running from the north (a) and one from the east (b). The route of (a) is still easily traceable as an earthwork, but (b) has been largely removed during later ploughing (visible as ridges), although its route is just visible. Environmental work during the project indicated that the lower basin to the west was formerly tidal. Examination of aerial photography and landscape form indicates that the route of these streams and tidal channel can be traced south in a sinuous shallow valley to the coastline. The lack of medieval ridge and furrow ploughing in the valley compared to the surrounding landscape

suggests that this channel may have remained wet and boggy until a late period. Consequently, it may have been possible to bring a shallow-draft boat up to Portskewett at least into the medieval period.

4.2.3 Roman finds from immediately to the east of the church indicate that the spur may have been a focus for settlement in that period. The possibility of a waterfront or beachhead somewhere in the vicinity during this period cannot be discounted given the line of the Roman road from the north-west and its proximity to the area now occupied by Main Road and the former tidal reach. The proximity of this spur to tidal waters, and its relative isolation would have been an important influence on the choice of site; the same factors would have applied in the medieval period for the location of a manor house or locally prestigious residence.

4.2.4 To the west of the churchyard boundary, an area of raised earthworks (c) marks the site of what has been locally termed 'Harold's House' and the main focus of the project. These earthworks, roughly covering an area some 15m by 8m, clearly define the collapsed remains of a rectangular stone building or tower-house. Prior to the major changes of the 19th century this field was named 'Tower Hay' on the 1765 estate map drawn by John Aram; this may record a memory of a tower structure in this location. To the south, low banks define an enclosed yard or the remains of a further building or annexe (d). Emanating from these earthworks are a number of low banks and platforms, which define the remains of a rectilinear courtyard and compartments to the east and north (e), one of which (f) aligns closely with the church. At the south, slight terraces mark the site of what were probably gardens or orchards and paddocks. At the lower fringes of the spur, at the west and south are clear traces of a ditch and external bank (g). Although appearing to be L-shaped, this can be traced northwards (h) beyond the dam (see below) curving round the base of the slope, and eastwards towards the road (i), where its form has been altered by the construction of an embayment into the slope and an overlying terrace associated with it. The construction of the road has removed any further traces of its course. The indications are that the ditch formerly surrounded most of the spur, but its form has been altered significantly over time. The geography of the site suggests that a former boundary shown on the 1765 map may have marked its former limit east of the church, although this has now been lost to later development.

4.2.5 Other earthworks include a hollow way (j) curving around the former churchyard boundary to the south and west and a south-west to north-east oriented terrace (k) to the south-west of the hollow way. The former would appear to be late in date as it cuts through most of the surface earthworks; however, the latter is clearly not part of the rectilinear layout associated with the tower house and may be a remnant of an earlier structure.

4.2.6 At the west, a linear flat-topped bank (l) runs in an east-west direction across the former tidal basin, connecting the higher ground to the west and the spur. Its form is typical of a medieval dam, constructed after the redundancy of Portskewett as a functioning port or landing, designed to hold back a fresh water pond to the north. A pond and spring are shown on the 19th century

tithe map (1859). The earthworks of this dam clearly overlie the ditch and have cut through the earthwork remains of the north side of the tower house and adjacent courtyard. Thus, the construction of the dam is probably later in date than the collapse of the house, although this in itself does not preclude a late medieval date for the dam. Part of its function might have been as a flood defence. It is possible it may have been modified or raised from an earlier dam, which may also have served as an entrance to onto the complex on the spur.

4.2.7 The regularity of the enclosures and courtyard on the summit of the spur would indicate that most are likely to be contemporary with the tower-house. The whole appears to be typical of a medieval manor complex. The ditch may form the boundary of a manorial *curia*, although its location at the base of the spur seems unusual in a medieval context, although re-use of an earlier, Roman enclosure boundary ditch is a possibility. A lane shown on the 1765 map which formerly ran down the east side of the church may indicate the main access into the *curia*. Maps indicate that this lane was removed between 1887 and 1901.

4.3 Geophysical Survey (Figure 2a)

Resistance Survey

4.3.1 An area of high resistance (A) corresponds with an earthwork mound representing the putative hunting lodge. The resistance values will have been produced by a combination of wall foundations (identified by subsequent excavation in Trench 1) and a spread of rubble but it has not been possible to define any clear building plan.

4.3.2 Annular trends (B) could indicate a circular feature approximately 6m in diameter, perhaps an outhouse associated with the main building. However, as the readings are not that clear an archaeological interpretation is tentative; the responses were not investigated by excavation.

4.3.3 High resistance response (C) appears to form a rectilinear feature (possibly part of a building) sited on a level platform at the top of the mound slope. Once again, however, this interpretation was not tested by excavation.

4.3.4 A second high resistance response (E) was identified; this was initially believed to be a structure, but on excavation (Trench 3) it was revealed as an outcrop of natural sandstone bedrock.

4.3.5 Other areas of potential archaeology have been noted in the north of the data as zones of high resistance. They may have a link with (A) but are also likely to be of natural origins. A low resistance trend (D) running on a northwest-southeast alignment can be seen in the data; this trend marks the line of a small water pipe.

4.3.6 High resistance in the east and south of the data correspond to the terracing of the site; it is also likely that the sandstone geology of the area is adding to the nature of this response.

4.3.7 Low resistance values in the west and southern extents of the survey reflect the low-lying land which was originally part of a creek that has now silted up.

Magnetic Survey

4.3.8 Three areas of the site were investigated; a small block was placed over the location of the purported hunting lodge. Archaeological type responses correlate to this but do not form any clear building plan. A large ferrous anomaly within this single grid may have an association with the building but could equally be of modern origin. The further two areas sampled revealed anomalies which appear to be either geological or modern.

Conclusions

4.3.9 Both the resistance and gradiometer results have produced responses which relate to the remains of the putative hunting lodge but neither technique has really assisted with a more detailed interpretation of the site. Other potential structures have been identified in the resistance data but these were not confirmed by excavation.

4.3.10 The results of the geophysical survey are somewhat disappointing but not totally unexpected given the nature of the site and the expected archaeology. Sites where earthworks are well-preserved and where there are geological and topographical complications do not always respond well. Although it is important that the techniques are used as they often can assist with the interpretation of a site, it is unfortunate that in this instance that assistance has been minimal.

4.4 Geoarchaeological Survey (Figure 2a)

Palaeochannel Survey (Cores 1-5)

4.4.1 The first area surveyed lay to the south of the man-made feature, interpreted as a dam or causeway, which divided the northern and southern extremes of the palaeochannel. The area to the south of the dam was clearly the remnants of a palaeochannel which widened at the southern end of the field. It was hoped that this auger survey would establish the depth of the palaeochannel; its extent was to be defined by excavation.

Fishpond Survey (Cores 6-8)

4.4.2 A further sequence of cores were extracted from an area north of the dam, previously interpreted as a fishpond, and it was hoped that this survey would provide evidence for the abandoned harbour area which gave Portskewett its name.

Methods

4.4.3 The auger survey was undertaken with a 3cm 'Eijkelkamp' gouge auger. For the palaeochannel survey, auger points were chosen in the centre of the palaeochannel, approximately 15m apart. The first (Core 1) was located approximately 30m to the south of the dam and south-west of Trench 2. The second (Core 3) was located 50m to the south-east of Core 1, and just south of Trench 5.

4.4.4 A further auger survey carried out on the banks of the palaeochannel (Cores 2, 4 and 5) was to establish the depth of the topsoil, to identify any further stratigraphic features, and to establish the overall size and extent of the palaeochannel.

4.4.5 Three cores (Cores 6-8) were extracted from the fishpond area at 2.5m intervals, northwards from the centre of the feature.

Results

4.4.6 Both Cores 1 and 3 from within the palaeochannel feature were stratigraphically similar. Core 1 demonstrated a greater degree of modern soil development at its top, perhaps indicating a longer period of drying/exposure, with clay rich topsoil giving way to brown clay to a depth of 1.1m, finally giving way to the blue grey clay of the Upper Wentlooge formation, with medium to fine sand at a depth of 2m. The topsoil in core 3 is significantly shallower giving way to clay rich subsoil or B horizon at a depth of 0.45m. The homogeneous blue grey clay of the Upper Wentlooge formation occurs from 0.7m and is intercalated at 1.10-1.17m and 1.25-1.31m by deposits of well preserved mollusc shells and medium to coarse sand. A band of much darker grey, organic rich clay lies at 3-3.3m. The full depth of this estuarine clay within the palaeochannel was not established.

4.4.7 Cores 2, 4 and 5 were extracted from the modern 'banks' of the palaeochannel. The stratigraphy of the cores was similar; well developed topsoil, rich in molluscs, over stiff, grey brown alluvial soil with abundant iron staining between 0.14m and 0.25m, over blue/grey estuarine clay.

4.4.8 The first auger point was located in the centre of the 'pond' feature, and a further two cores were extracted at 2.5m intervals across the profile of the feature. The stratigraphy of the first core (6) was significantly more complex than that of the subsequent two. Mid brown topsoil overlies clayey, less well developed subsoil at 0.23m and becoming progressively sandier with depth, with a 0.03m band of clean, medium grained red sand between 0.57-0.6m. A further band 0.10m of red/brown, friable soil overlies grey/brown alluvium. The basal deposit from 1.0m is composed of fine to medium grained sand, which coarsens with depth.

4.4.9 Less complex stratigraphy was recorded in cores 7 and 8 - dark brown, clay rich topsoil to 0.2-.25m overlay red/brown subsoil, and the basal deposit of fine to medium grained sand was reached at between 0.7m and 0.8m.

Discussion

4.4.10 The extensive palaeochannel at Portskewett is characteristic of many similar features identified across the Gwent Levels e.g. Redwick (Allen and Bell 1999). This feature would once have formed a significant drainage channel in a network of brackish, dendritic creeks subject to daily inundation by the waters of the estuary. Creek networks develop as a result of receding tidal waters exploiting fissures and faults in the sediment, which initially prevents colonisation of marsh plants; over time, these features become deeply eroded and form channels across the marsh (Packham and Willis 1997). Major

drainage channels such as this can be many metres deep. The palaeochannel at Redwick, for example, at its seaward extreme is over 7m deep.

4.4.11 The palaeochannel at Redwick is a significant part, perhaps one of the largest channels, in what would have been the youngest set of tidal creeks at Redwick, totally bisecting the Holocene sequence at the site (Allen 2000; Allen and Bell 1999). Radiocarbon dates from a fish trap at the base of the channel and inclusions of Romano-British finds indicate development prior to AD 500 (Allen and Bell 1999).

4.4.12 Allen and Bell (*ibid.*) suggest that the Redwick palaeochannel formed during the 1st millennium BC. Incision of creek networks are often associated with episodes of marine transgression (Pethick 1992); in the Severn Estuary just such an episode is recorded from the later Neolithic onwards, with a relatively dramatic phase during the late Iron Age/early Romano-British period (Bell 2000). It is possible, but unproven, that this extensive feature at Portskewett formed contemporaneously with that at Redwick.

4.4.13 In contrast to the management of the levels at Portskewett, the Caldicott Level at Redwick was embanked by the early part of the 2nd millennium AD (Rippon 1996; 1997). During the late Saxon/Norman period, 59km^2 of the Caldicott Level was defended by 37km of sea wall, the greatest length of flood defence in the Severn Levels during this period (Rippon 1997). Ultimately, the palaeochannel at Redwick, constrained within this defended area, became infilled. At Portskewett, sea defences were not constructed until the early 19th century (R. Turner, pers. comm.); hence the channel could have remained open and navigable much longer at Portskewett than at Redwick.

4.4.14 Sedimentologically, the palaeochannel fills are likely to consist of components of the Upper and Middle Wentlooge formation. The Middle Wentlooge formation is characterised by a complex series of intercalated minerogenic and organic layers, and deposits represent phases of marine transgression and regression and smaller scale sea-level fluctuation in the region. Formation and deposition of the Middle Wentlooge formation ceased during the early Iron Age (Allen 1987; Allen and Rae 1987). The boundary between the Middle and Upper Wentlooge formations is usually considered to coincide with the beginning of the Romano-British reclamation of the Levels (Bell *et al*. 2000d).

4.4.15 Whilst much of the fill is comprised of the blue/grey clays characteristic of the Wentlooge formation, the Portskewett palaeochannel contains several substantial bands of molluscs, which appear to be predominantly composed of the estuarine species *Hydrobia* spp, and medium to coarse-grained sands. This indicates active inundation of the creek network by faster flowing waters, possibly storm surges, than is usually experienced in a typical creek environment of tranquil, slowly moving waters. Furthermore, the numerous molluscs found within the topsoil itself are likely to be related to a similar event in very recent history, possibly just prior to the enclosure of this section of the Levels during the 19th century. It is worthy of note that these bands are not present in the stratigraphy beyond the dam, indicating their

deposition after its construction and the impedence of water flow beyond the dam.

Conclusions

4.4.16 The contribution that geoarchaeological assessment of this palaeochannel has made to our knowledge of early medieval occupation and land use at Portskewett; within 'Harold's Field' itself and the wider context of the Caldicott Levels cannot be underestimated. Our knowledge of early medieval occupation and human activity both on the Gwent Levels themselves and the dryland/wetland interface is scant (Allen and Bell 1998).

4.4.17 Historic evidence coupled with archaeological and geoarchaeological study allows us to draw a number of conclusions:

- The palaeochannel was navigable for much of its extent, as far as the dryland edge at Portskewett.
- The palaeochannel remained open for navigation for many years; probably well into the medieval period and possibly beyond.
- Sedimentary evidence supports the hypothesis that the 'fishpond' area could have been used as a harbour.
- Sedimentary evidence suggests that the dam, used to constrain the former harbour, was probably constructed prior to infilling and sedimentation within the palaeochannel.

4.5 Evaluation Trenches

*Trench 1 (**Figures 2 & 3**)*

4.5.1 Trench 1 was located across the series of earthworks on the summit of the raised area of land at the centre of the Site. These earthworks appeared to represent the remains of buildings.

4.5.2 Below the topsoil, a number of demolition deposits (102), (103) and (127) were identified, and these mortar rich deposits showed evidence of the deliberate dismantling of buildings on the Site, with the cleaning of stonework for reuse. Sealed beneath the demolition deposits were several phases of *in situ* stratified archaeology.

4.5.3 The earliest phase of archaeology identified within Trench 1 related to a period prior to the construction of the buildings which now form the earthworks. A large feature (113) cut directly into the underlying natural sandstone geology; it was only partially revealed in a small sondage, but its irregular shape and size indicate that it could have been a quarry pit for the removal of stone.

4.5.4 At the base of the pit/quarry, primary fill (146) had formed while the feature was being dug and prior to the stabilisation of the feature edges. After the feature went out of use, it was backfilled by a series of deliberate depositions of very similar material which resulted in the formation of large homogenous

fills within it (see **Figure 3**). Over 100 sherds of early medieval pottery were recovered from the backfilled quarry. Pottery from the lower fill (112) was dated to the early medieval period (late 12th to late 13th century). The upper fill (111) also contained medieval sherds; two small sherds of post-medieval redware may be viewed as intrusive.

4.5.5 After the backfilling of (113), preparations were made for the construction of stone buildings on the Site. Deposit (110) sealed the large backfilled feature and this rubble rich deposit was a possible levelling/formation layer or working platform on which construction could begin.

4.5.6 Evidence of two buildings was recorded within Trench 1. The Site had been stripped of all overlying topsoil and subsoil before construction. Building 1 was roughly north-south aligned with an internal width of *c*.5.3m, bounded by two parallel wall foundations. Both walls were built of dry-stone sandstone blocks. The eastern wall (123) was laid directly upon sandstone geology (114), while the western wall (105), which was considerably thicker and had an internal clay core recorded as (108), was built upon levelling deposit (110).

4.5.7 Aligned centrally within Building 1 was a north-south stone pathway (140) formed of mixed stone blocks with a deliberate kerb of smaller stones. This structure formed a slightly raised walkway in the centre of the building. The floor surface within the building was only identified against western wall (105) and was constructed of stone slabs (120) laid onto a layer of reworked natural (139/130/132), which in turn overlay natural (114). It appears that the majority of the flooring material was removed when the building was demolished. Walkway (140) was raised (by 0.16m) above the lower floor layer (120).

4.5.8 There was a distinct lack of pottery or other domestic finds from the layers overlying the floor within Building 1, and no clear occupation layers were identified within the building itself, which may imply that the function of the building was agricultural, for the keeping of animals and not human habitation.

4.5.9 During the lifetime of the building a number of deposits accumulated outside of the structure. To the west of wall (105) and butting it was clay deposit (109); this appears to be identical to (108), the material infilling the core of wall (105), and was possibly dumped following the construction of the building. Overlying (109) was deposit (107), the ground surface in place when the buildings were in use. This deposit sloped westward down towards the now infilled palaeochannel.

4.5.10 Following the abandonment of the building it appears that portions of the stone slab floor (120) were removed, and following this the building was apparently burnt down and demolished. Overlying the remnant of floor (120) and the raised pathway (140) was possible evidence of burnt and collapsed roof timbers recorded as charcoal rich deposit (119). Sealing (119) was deposit (115), which contained quantities of stone roof tiles. Outside the building, west of wall (105), evidence of the collapse of the roof could be

seen as a deposit (106) with roof tiles, which sealed the buried ground surface (107). Further evidence of the roof collapse was located to the east of wall (123) where more roof tiles were evident within layer (131).

4.5.11 Following the burning and collapse of the roof, the main walls of the building were demolished, and it is clear that the useable stone was cleaned of mortar and that unusable material (stone rubble and mortar) was discarded and dumped, forming layer (103/104).

4.5.12 Building 2 was identified in the northern arm of 'L' shaped Trench 1 and was clearly part of the oval mound located on the highest point of the Site.

4.5.13 Due to the narrow constraints of the trench only a small area of Building 2 was excavated, but it was clearly identified as the entrance into the building. The doorway was formed by a large Sudbrook stone threshold (141) which was bonded into a substantial roughly east-west wall (143). Wall (143) was built of roughly hewn, mixed stones, with a rubble core bonded with compact sandy mortar, and survived to a height of 1m. The threshold led through onto a Sudbrook stone flagged floor (142/144), which was set into a bedding layer (145).

4.5.14 No occupation debris was identified within Building 2 and it appears to have been well cleaned and maintained until its demolition.

4.5.15 To the south and outside Building 2 was deposit (138), a possible occupation layer or perhaps demolition deposit, which was not excavated. Deposit (138) butted the outside of the threshold stone (141) and was sealed by evidence of the collapse of the roof of Building 2 in the form of layer (137), containing stone roof tiles. Following the deposition of (137) several rubble deposits were laid down as a result of the demolition and subsequent dismantling of Building 2. The two earliest rubble deposits (135) and (136), located inside and outside the building respectively, contained a considerable amount of limestone and sandstone rubble. After their deposition there may have been a period of stasis when activity was occurring on the site, but not necessarily further demolition. A thick deposit of topsoil material (118) overlay (136), but it is unclear whether this was a dump of material from elsewhere, or naturally forming topsoil.

4.5.16 Rubble deposits (135) and (136) were sealed beneath layer (134), an almost clean dump of mortar, which was in turn overlain by rubble deposit (133) and then (102).

4.5.17 Building 2 appears to represent the south-eastern corner and entrance of a large tower, and the remaining area of the tower could be seen to form a large sub-rectangular earthwork within the middle of the Site.

4.5.18 Evidence of a third building was identified in Trench 1 in the form of collapsed wall (124). By the angle of the pitched stones which made up layer (124), it was clear that these had fallen from the east, from a building outside the confines of the trench. To the east of the collapsed wall, a sondage revealed similar demolition/collapse deposits to those observed elsewhere

within the trench, with charcoal rich layer (129) sealed by roof tiles in layer (128). Overlying (128) was a similar topsoil deposit to (118).

*Trench 2 (**Figures 2 & 4**)*

4.5.19 Trench 2 was located at the junction of the earthwork dam and an area of raised land on which Trench 1 was situated. The trench investigated the edges of the raised area, the earthwork causeway and the silted up palaeochannel itself.

4.5.20 Below topsoil and erosion deposit (202), layers of stratified deposits were revealed. Due to the interleaving nature of the deposits, and the time constraints of the project, it was decided that viewing these deposits in section would be more informative than viewing in plan; therefore the trench was machined until the natural geology was encountered.

4.5.21 The earliest layer identified was the natural alluvial clay (218), which had been deposited by tidal action and slowly filled the palaeochannel. Overlying this was the old ground surface (217). This was only identified at the point where the trench cut into the raised area, and the point at which the dry land of the higher ground met the wet area of the now infilled water channel. Pottery recovered from (217) dated to the late 11th to 12th century.

4.5.22 The earliest feature identified in the trench was a wide, flat-bottomed ditch (210) which cut directly into the alluvium (218). This feature may be evidence of the attempts to maintain the tidal inlet as a navigable waterway leading to the Severn, by the excavation of alluvial material to create a channel. Ditch (210) was filled with waterborne deposits (203) and (209). Pottery recovered from the lower deposit (203) was identified as Roman whiteware but this can probably be viewed as residual. The upper deposit (209) produced 13th century Saintonge monochrome ware. An environmental sample taken from fill (203) contained cereal remains (wheat), high amounts of wood charcoal, and a relatively large number of fish scales (but no other remains of fish)

4.5.23 It appears that some time during the early medieval period it was deemed necessary to re-establish the division between the dry land and the wet area of the palaeochannel by the construction of a revetment along the water's edge. The revetment material (214) may have been derived from upcast from the excavation of ditch (210). The mixed alluvium and possible topsoil-derived deposit (214) contained pottery dating to the late 11th to early 12th century, and was laid directly upon the old ground surface (217). The pottery from (214) and (217) provides an approximate date for the construction of the revetment, despite only small quantities being recovered. An environmental sample taken from ground surface (217) contained cereal grains (wheat, barley and oats), seeds of pea and bean, and weed seeds.

4.5.24 The revetment was further enhanced by the deliberate addition of a series of sandy or silty deposits (213), (212) and (207), and a spread of stones (208/211).

4.5.25 A second ditch, aligned roughly north-south, appeared to cut the edge of revetment deposit (214) and the natural (218). Ditch (204) may therefore have been a further attempt to establish a division along the water's edge; the lower fill (205) contained large sandstone blocks which may have been used to hold posts in place. It was backfilled by a series of natural erosion and silting events (206), (235), (234), (233) and (232). At this point both ditches (210) and (204) were almost fully infilled, with only slight depressions remaining, and these were subsequently filled by erosion deposits derived from the revetment to the east, and probable flood events, resulting in the deposition of layers (231), (230), (229), (228) and (227), eventually to be overlain by (202).

4.5.26 Ditch (210), which was visible as an earthwork (g; see **Figure 2b**) extending around the base of the spur of land on which the manor was situated, may have been excavated to provide up-cast for the creation of a terrace to the east as well creating a boundary around the manor complex. It is clear that the tidal inlet had begun to silt up by this time, especially at the interface with the dry land of the raised spur.

4.5.27 Investigation into the dam which cuts across the infilled palaeochannel (see **Figure 4**, plan and section 202) showed that the make-up material for this feature overlay the backfilled ditch (204). The earliest identified layers of the dam were (224) and (225), which were overlain in turn by (216) and (215). Pottery recovered from (215) and (216) dated to the late 11th to early 12th century, but the quite heavily abraded nature of the sherds indicates that these are residual. The dam had been enhanced by the addition of deposits (221) and (220) but the dam had suffered from a certain degree of erosion as (215) showed clear evidence of slumping. Further evidence of slumping was seen in deposits (223) and (222). Deposit (223) showed evidence (tip lines) that it was derived from both the dam and the edge of the main terrace of the raised area. These deposits were then sealed by natural erosion deposit (202).

4.5.28 It was initially presumed that the dam was put in place to utilise the northern area of the inlet as a fishpond following the silting up of the palaeochannel. However, evidence from the borehole survey (see Section **4.4**) indicates that it was in fact constructed prior to the final infilling, while the palaeochannel was still being inundated with water, most likely as seasonal flooding. A freshwater spring was recorded on the 1859 tithe map and so the dam was needed to prevent the mixing of fresh and saline waters.

*Trench 3 (**Figures 2 & 5**)*

4.5.29 Trench 3 targeted geophysical anomaly (E), which was interpreted as a possible wall. After the removal of the topsoil and subsoil it became clear that the anomaly was in fact caused by an outcrop of natural sandstone (307). However, a large north-south aligned ditch was found, cutting (306).

4.5.30 Ditch (303) had two fills, lower (302) and upper (304). Both these secondary fills were the result of multiple depositions of similar material, the surrounding ground surface (topsoil and subsoil) giving rise to a homogenous fill. No dateable material was recovered from Trench 3.

4.5.31 The size and depth of (303) (2.4m wide by 0.9m deep) suggests that it represents more than just a property boundary or landscape division; it is possibly part of the surrounding enclosure ditch for the manor. Ditch (303) may be a continuation of Ditch Group (613) in Trench 6 (see below).

*Trench 4 (**Figures 2 & 6**)*

4.5.32 Trench 4 was located on the southern slope of the raised area. The earliest features revealed within the trench were ditch (409) and gully (414). Ditch (409) was a flat-bottomed ditch aligned with the slope of the raised area of land, sloping from north-east to south-west and visible cutting into the natural sandstone geology (416). The ditch was filled with natural erosion deposit (412), deliberate backfill (410) and mixed natural erosion/deliberate backfill deposit (408). Pottery recovered from the earliest fills (412) and (410) dated to the late 11th to 13th century. An environmental sample taken from fill (410) contained large numbers of cereal grains (wheat, rye, oats and barley), seeds of garden pea and possibly bean, and numerous weed seeds, probably incorporated with the harvested crops and indicating cultivation of both drier sandier soils and wetter areas.

4.5.33 Ditch (409) was joined on its northern side by gully (414), which contained deliberate backfill deposit (413) and natural silting deposit (417). Pottery recovered from fill (413) was dated to the 11th to 12th century.

4.5.34 The deliberate backfill deposits within ditch (409) and gully (414), and the similar alignment of the features, suggest that they may have formed part of a drainage system for the removal of waste material from the main manor complex, allowing it to flow downslope and out into the tidal inlet.

4.5.35 Following the filling of (409) and (414), the two features were sealed by colluvium layer (407), which in turn was overlain by stony deposit (406). This deposit was located at the very edge of the terrace which ran around the raised outcrop and is possibly the remnant of a revetment structure, but this is not clear.

4.5.36 Sealing (406) was colluvium deposit (402) through which was cut pit (405). The irregular pit was filled with naturally derived water- and wind-borne material (404) and contained early medieval pottery.

*Trench 5 (**Figures 2 & 7**)*

4.5.37 Trench 5 was machine excavated to investigate the palaeochannel. An alluvial clay (504) was revealed below the topsoil and, as the trench was machined deeper (to a final depth of 0.95m), the edge of the palaeochannel (503) was revealed. The palaeochannel 'cut' through earlier alluvial clay (502), clearly distinct from the fill of the palaeochannel.

*Trench 6 (**Figures 2 & 8**)*

4.5.38 Trench 6 was located on the eastern side of the raised outcrop adjacent to the boundary of St. Mary's Church.

4.5.39 Two ditches cut the natural sandstone geology (603), and were revealed following removal of topsoil and subsoil. The first, Ditch Group (613), was

aligned roughly north-south and at the northern end turned at a right angle towards the west. Three interventions were excavated through this feature and recorded as (606), (609) and (611). This ditch is on a similar alignment to, and may mark the continuation of ditch (303) from Trench 3 (see above), which is thought to surround the manorial complex, although this was not confirmed by the earthwork survey.

4.5.40 A second ditch (604) was roughly east-west aligned and filled with silty clay (605), probably a natural silting event, which contained early medieval pottery. The function of the ditch is unclear.

5 FINDS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Finds were recovered from five of the six trenches excavated; no finds were recovered from Trench 5, and very few finds from Trenches 3 and 6. Most material was concentrated in Trench 1. The assemblage is largely medieval in date, with a smaller amount of post-medieval material and some residual prehistoric and Romano-British finds.

5.1.2 All finds have been quantified by material type within each context, and totals by material type and by trench are presented in **Table 1**. Subsequent to quantification, all finds have been at least visually scanned in order to gain an overall idea of the range of types present, their condition, and their potential date range. Spot dates have been recorded for selected material types as appropriate (pottery, ceramic building material, clay pipes). All finds data are currently held on an Access database that forms part of the project archive.

5.1.3 This section presents an overview of the finds assemblage, on which is based an assessment of the potential of this assemblage to contribute to an understanding of the site in its local and regional context, with particular reference to the putative site of a hunting lodge built by Earl Harold Godwinson (later Harold II) in 1065, and to the later medieval manor on the site.

5.2 Pottery

5.2.1 The pottery assemblage includes sherds of Romano-British, medieval and post-medieval date. Condition overall is good, with sherds relatively unabraded, and some partially reconstructable profiles, although the Romano-British sherds, all of which occurred residually in later contexts, were noticeably more abraded.

5.2.2 The whole assemblage has been quantified by ware type within each context, and the presence of diagnostic sherds noted. Pottery totals by ware type are given in **Table 2**.

Romano-British

5.2.3 A handful of Romano-British sherds were recovered (see **Table 2**), all coarsewares. One sherd was identified as Dorset Black Burnished ware (BB1); others probably come from more local sources in the Severn valley area. The most diagnostic are five sherds from a whiteware flagon rim, from the lower fill of ditch (210). All these sherds can be regarded as residual here; four came from Trench 1, six from Trench 2, and one from Trench 4.

Medieval

5.2.4 The medieval pottery assemblage from Harold's House appears to conform to the ceramic sequence observed in south-east Wales during the medieval period. Evidence for pre-conquest ceramics is very slight, and ambiguous; it is generally considered that ceramics were introduced to south Wales in the immediate post-conquest period, and at first (in the later 11th century) consisted exclusively of imported English wares, from adjacent counties (Papazian 1990; Clarke 1991; Papazian and Campbell 1992). Indigenous wares appear from the beginning of the 12th century (seen, for example, at Chepstow: Vince 1991a, 135-6), but the scale of production initially appears to have been very small. Pottery supplies were augmented throughout the medieval period by English sources, particularly Bristol.

5.2.5 The dominant fabric amongst the medieval assemblage from Harold's House is a moderately coarse, sandy ware which can be equated with local Gwent Penhow ware, also identified at Chepstow as fabric Ha.1. At Chepstow this ware is dated from the late 12th to the later 13th century (Vince 1991a, 95-7). At the current site, it appears to have been used almost exclusively for jar (cooking pot) forms, with fairly simple rims; two glazed body sherds from possible quarry pit (113) probably derive from jugs, while two joining sherds from an internally glazed dish (possibly a dripping dish) came from clay deposit (109). The largest group of this fabric (indeed, the largest pottery group overall) came from pit (113) (114 sherds, from a number of jars, some with slightly developed rims).

5.2.6 Possibly pre-dating the Gwent products, however, are a small group of coarsewares in other fabrics, most of which came from Trench 2; these include one sherd of a markedly coarse, 'gravel-tempered' ware (layer (215)), one sherd of limestone-tempered ware (also from (215)), and 11 sherds in sandy/limestone-tempered fabrics (layers (216) and (217), ditch (409)). The latter group includes jar rims, again fairly simple. Fabrics containing limestone and quartz were found in late 11th and early 12th century deposits at Chepstow (fabrics Kc and Ke), and probably derive from the Bristol area (Vince 1991a, 112). All these sherds are quite heavily abraded, and the calcareous inclusions have leached out, leaving voids in the fabric. The gravel-tempered sherd is less easily dated, but similar English wares can date as early as the 10th century. It is impossible, however, to prove a pre-conquest presence on the site on the basis of this single sherd, or any of the others in this group.

5.2.7 Other miscellaneous sandy wares (including glazed sherds) may also derive from local sources, but could also include other English wares; none are diagnostic.

5.2.8 Imports from Bristol were identified in the form of Ham Green and Redcliffe wares, largely in the form of glazed (and often decorated) jugs. Ham Green wares, on revised chronology, can date as early as the 1140s, and were produced until the end of the 13th century (Ponsford 1991). None of the sherds present here are sufficiently diagnostic to enable closer dating within this range, although a rouletted jug rim from trench 1 topsoil is broadly comparable to a 12th century example from Dundas Wharf, Bristol (*ibid.*, fig. 1b, no. 20). All the Ham Green wares came from Trench 1. Redcliffe wares, which are more numerous here than Ham Green, appeared later, from the mid 13th century. One sherd is elaborately slip decorated (upper fill of pit (113)), and there is one crude 'face mask' from the rim of a jug (demolition layer (104)). All but two sherds came from Trench 1.

5.2.9 From further afield, there are examples of Donyatt ware from Somerset (two joining sherds from a white-slipped and glazed jug from layer (109)), and Surrey whiteware (one glazed body sherd from (106)). Both are likely to be 14th or 15th century in date. Of particular interest are two continental imports, both from the Saintonge – a small body sherd from a polychrome jug (layer (109); later 13th/early 14th century), and the rim from a monochrome green-glazed jug (ditch (210); late 13th century).

5.2.10 Later medieval wares are scarce; apart from the Donyatt and Surrey wares, there are two other fine sandy wares which are likely to date to the 14th/15th century (rubble deposit (102), layer (118)).

Post-Medieval

5.2.11 The post-medieval period is also relatively sparsely represented amongst the pottery assemblage; 27 of the 30 sherds recovered came from Trench 1 topsoil, and rubble deposits (102) and (103) in the same trench. Most numerous are coarse redwares, which are not closely datable, and may derive from more than one source, either local or regional. There is one clearly identifiable North Devon sherd, in gravel-tempered ware, and two sherds from the neck of a bottle or costrel in a very micaceous fabric could be a Spanish import (both came from Trench 1 topsoil).

5.2.12 More closely datable are a sherd of late 15th/16th century Raeren stoneware (topsoil (101)), and the base of a 16th/17th century cup or tyg in black-glazed ware, possibly a local Monmouthshire product (layer (103)).

5.2.13 Two sherds of modern refined wares came, respectively, from Trench 1 topsoil and colluvium (402).

5.3 Ceramic and Stone Building Material and Mortar

5.3.1 Building material was well represented on the site, both ceramic and stone, almost all of which was recovered from Trench 1 and is likely to be of medieval date.

Ceramic

5.3.2 The ceramic building material (CBM) represents a very restricted range, with an unusual predominance of decorative roof tile. Out of 144 pieces recovered, 129 are from glazed ridge tiles. Most of these appear to be in variants of a single fabric type – relatively fine, slightly micaceous and containing sparse fine quartz and iron oxides, reduced grey with oxidised surfaces. Glaze is unevenly applied and sometimes patchy. No complete examples survive, but the largest group (81 fragments), from layer (128) (representing roof collapse), includes two examples of knife-cut, 'cocks-comb' crests, and one other crest came from topsoil (101), while other ridge tiles may have lacked the added crest. Several examples from (128), and others from rubble deposits (102) and (103), and pit (113), have decoration in the form of curvilinear incising or tooling along each face.

5.3.3 This decoration is paralleled amongst the Redcliffe-ware tiles from Bristol (Williams and Ponsford 1988, fig. 24, no. 1), but the Portskewett fabric appears finer than the Redcliffe fabrics (although there are two fragments from (128) in pale-firing sandy fabrics which are almost certainly Redcliffe types). Examples from Chepstow seem to be closer in terms of fabric; these are of unknown source (Vince 1991b, fig. 49, 2). Crested tiles in Bristol are thought to date no earlier than 1250 (Ponsford 1998, 157); the examples from Chepstow occurred in 13th century contexts (Vince 1991b, 85). The tiles from layer (128) were associated with 13th/14th century pottery, while other examples came from contexts dated by pottery to the late 12th/13th century or later.

5.3.4 Ridge tiles are generally considered as indicative of high status buildings, and this certainly seems to be the case in south-east Wales, where the distribution of ridge tiles is biased towards ecclesiastical and castle sites (Papazian 1990, 23).

5.3.5 Unglazed flat (peg) roof tiles are notable by their absence, presumably because these were supplied instead in stone (see below); there are three examples from Trench 1 topsoil, which could be either medieval or early post-medieval.

5.3.6 A few pieces were identified as Romano-British, with varying degrees of confidence. One small fragment of *imbrex* roof tile came from ditch (409), while two, possibly three pieces, including one brick fragment, came from Trench 1 topsoil. A small, abraded and undiagnostic piece from layer (214) could also be of this date.

Stone

5.3.7 Apart from one object (whetstone), all of the stone recovered from the site consists of building material, and this includes a high proportion of sandstone roof tile, in both ferruginous (Pennant) and micaceous variants. No complete tiles were recovered, but several had surviving nail holes. One fragment from roof collapse layer (103) has an arrow crudely scratched on one face, but the scratching looks relatively recent.

5.3.8 The distribution of these tiles on the site largely coincided with that of ceramic tiles, and it is likely that both types were in contemporaneous use, possibly on the same building(s) - stone-roofed buildings with ceramic crests are known or suspected from Bristol, for example (Ponsford 1998, 157).

5.3.9 Other stone building material includes one slate roof tile (Trench 1 topsoil), and various fragments and roughly shaped blocks of sandstone, shelly limestone and oolitic limestone.

Mortar

5.3.10 Building material is also present in the form of a small quantity of mortar, all from Trench .

5.4 Slag

5.4.1 All of the slag recovered is iron smelting slag. Associated dating material indicates a medieval date for most if not all of this material. However, the slag did not necessarily originate on site. Given the relative proximity of the Forest of Dean, an area of intensive ironworking from the Roman period onwards, and the known redistribution of waste slag as hard core, the slag found at Harold's House could well have been introduced to the site from elsewhere. Certainly the quantity of slag recovered here is hardly sufficient to postulate on-site ironworking.

5.5 Metalwork

5.5.1 Metalwork includes objects of copper alloy, iron and lead.

5.5.2 Most of the copper alloy objects are identifiable, although few are particularly chronologically diagnostic. From Trench 1 topsoil came a small balance pan, of a type which could have been used to weigh coins, precious stones or metals (Margeson 1993, 205; nos. 1578-9); a circular belt mount with repoussé decoration, perhaps from a belt; a lace tag; and part of what was probably a rectangular buckle. All of these could fit within a late medieval/early post-medieval date range, as could two small, gilded studs, perhaps from harness, belt, or upholstery, from rubble deposit (102); and a circular riveted boss and a riveted repair patch, perhaps from a metal vessel, from rubble deposit (103). A small object found unstratified in Trench 2 might possibly be a suspension mount from a horse harness pendant, but is too small and corroded for definitive identification. A rowel spur found unstratified in Trench 3 has horizontal sides and is therefore no earlier than later 15th century (Ellis 1995, 130). The only object which came from a dated medieval context is a fragment from a circular, domed object with punched decoration, perhaps a harness boss (e.g. Margeson 1993, no. 1814), recovered from ditch (604).

5.5.3 The ironwork consists almost entirely of nails and other structural items (such as a hinge pivot from demolition/collapse layer (136)). Other identifiable objects include a horseshoe, two knives and a cleat; none of these came from medieval contexts, and most objects came from post-medieval contexts in Trench 1 (topsoil, and rubble deposits (102) and (103)).

5.5.4 Apart from a weight (Trench 1 topsoil), all of the lead comprised waste fragments.

5.6 Animal Bone

Material

5.6.1 Hand collected animal bone material was present in Trenches 1, 2, 4 and 6. Most material from Trench 1 derived from demolition layers associated with the manor house on the site. The material in Trenches 2, 4 and 6 came from contexts representing erosion deposits/silting. The material in Trench 1 is medieval and post-medieval in date (on the basis of associated finds), while the material in Trench 2, 4 and 6 is mainly early medieval in date.

Condition and preservation

5.6.2 The overall condition of the bone is fair (**Table 3**). Only Trench 1 produced enough material to describe the assemblage in some greater detail. However, it should be kept in mind that this assemblage is only small and might not form a reliable sample.

5.6.3 As 10% of the bones in trench 1 were gnawed, canid savaging was probably a significant biasing factor. Burnt bones are almost absent.

5.6.4 The moderate number of loose teeth (6%) and the absence of articulating bones or loose but matching epiphyses correspond with the extensive reworking that would have taken place when part of the building was demolished.

Species proportions

5.6.5 All trench assemblages are dominated by cattle. The larger Trench 1 assemblage is dominated by cattle, followed by pig and sheep/goat (**Table 4**). Only two horse bones were found.

5.6.6 Besides the remains of the usual domesticates, the trench 1 assemblage contained the remains of cat (101, 103), hare (106, 112), chicken (102, 103, 106, 112), goose (102, 103), partridge (102) and grey heron (106). Some very fragmented bird bones could not be identified. Trench 2 contained the pre-caudal vertebra of a large cod (214). The presence of at least 12 species among only 241 bones identified to species indicates the high status and relative modern date of this site.

Population characteristics

5.6.7 The high number of ageable bones, measurable bones and bones with butchery marks in the Trench 1 assemblage can provide information on husbandry practices, phenotype of the animals and butchery (**Table 5**).

5.6.8 It was noted that the pig and cattle bones in particular derive from large post-medieval breeds, but none of the bones was complete enough for an estimation of height at the withers. The bone structure indicates that many bones derive from young animals.

5.6.9 The presence of young chicken (106) indicates that these were probably kept on site to provide eggs and a ready source of meat.

Butchery

5.6.10 A relatively high proportion of bones show signs of butchery. In particular the large cattle carcass, and to a lesser extent the smaller carcass of pig, were divided into handier portions. The presence of all parts of the skeleton including heads and feet makes it likely that at least some animals were butchered on site. Butchery marks seen on the bones were caused by cleavers and saws.

5.7 Other Finds

5.7.1 Other finds comprise one small whetstone; one fragment of Roman window glass (context (219)) and a few fragments of modern bottle/jar; a small quantity of undiagnostic fired clay, of uncertain date; two pieces of residual prehistoric worked flint; and a small quantity of oyster shell.

5.8 Potential and further recommendations

5.8.1 Roman activity in the area is attested by a few finds, but these do include building materials (ceramic brick/tile and window glass) which support the suggestion of a substantial building in the near vicinity (Lawler 1995).

5.8.2 Despite the recovery of early medieval material, there is nothing amongst the finds assemblage to prove a pre-conquest origin for the site; if Harold Godwinson did build a hunting lodge here in 1065, these investigations failed to find any evidence either of its construction or its associated material culture. What evidence there is suggests a focus of activity from the late 12th to the late 13th century, associated with the manorial site, with the possibility of some earlier (late 11th/12th century) activity, and a probable decline in the later medieval period. The large group of pottery of late 12th/13th century date from possible quarry pit (113) suggests a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the manorial buildings, and this is supported by the presence of the ceramic ridge tiles, probably of 13th century date, in the demolition deposits.

5.8.3 The range of material culture is fairly limited, only pottery, animal bone and roof tiles (both ceramic and stone) occurring in any quantity. Pottery appears to have been supplied largely from local sources, at least from the late 12th century, but this consists largely of coarsewares, while finewares were supplied mainly by regional sources, of which Bristol was the most important. Building material, both stone and ceramic, may also have come from the Bristol area, and roofing techniques may have echoed those in use in Bristol. Ceramic and stone roofing implies a substantial, high status building, consistent with the manorial nature of the site, and this is supported by the presence of what might be considered ‘luxury goods’ in the form of imported French jugs, and a dietary range including domesticated and wild faunal species.

5.8.4 The finds have been recorded to minimum archive standard and, given the quantities involved, and the stratigraphic integrity of the excavated contexts, no further work is proposed. Some finds categories, such as the stone building material, could be targeted for selective discard prior to archive deposition.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Three bulk samples were taken from features within Trenches 2 and 4. From Trench 2, fill (203) of ditch (210), of at least 13th century date, was sampled along with a buried ground surface (217) of probable 11th/12th century date. Both of these deposits also contained residual Romano-British pottery. Within Trench 4, fill (410) of an early medieval ditch (409) was also sampled.

6.2 Methods

6.2.1 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 6**). Preliminary identifications of dominant or important taxa are noted below, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997).

6.3 Results

6.3.1 The flots were generally quite large with few roots and modern seeds that may be indicative of stratigraphic movement, reworking or a degree of contamination by later intrusive elements. Charred remains of cereals, seeds and wood were recovered from all three samples and generally preservation was very good.

Charred Plant Remains

6.3.2 Charred cereal remains and charred seeds of probable weeds were recovered from all three samples. That from the possible buried ground surface (217) contained many grains of free-threshing wheat *(Triticum aestivum sl*) and hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare sl*), along with a few seeds of pea (*Pisum sativum*) and a single specimen of bean (*Vicia faba*). Grains of oat (*Avena* sp.) were common within the sample, although these could be of the wild or cultivated species. Charred seeds of wild species included those of clover (*Trifolium* sp.), orache (*Atriplex* sp.), mouse-ear chickweed (*Cerastium* sp.), sedge (*Carex* sp.), cat's tails (*Phleum* sp.), dock (*Rumex* sp.), red bartsia (*Odontites vernus*), and cleavers (*Galium aparine*), although in most cases each species was represented only by one to two seeds.

6.3.3 Ditch (210) yielded a similar array of material to the sample described above, but was richer in wood charcoal. The cereal remains comprised mainly of

grains and rachis of free-threshing wheat *(Triticum aestivum sl*), along with occasional culm nodes. Weed seeds were relatively few and included a seed of black bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*), stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*) and one of common chickweed (*Stellaria media*).

6.3.4 The sample from ditch (409) contained large numbers of cereal grains. These were mainly of free-threshing wheat *(Triticum aestivum sl*), although rye (*Secale cereale*) and to a lesser extent hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare sl*), were also present. The sample contained numerous rachis fragments of free-threshing wheat, rye and barley, although in each case probably fewer rachis fragments were present than grains of the corresponding cereal. In at least one case the hexaploid, bread-wheat type (*Triticum aestivum*) could be identified from the rachis. Some basal rachis fragments were also present, as well as occasional culm nodes, representative of straw fragments.

6.3.5 Grains of oat (*Avena* sp.) were also frequent, outnumbering probably those of free-threshing wheat. Only two floret bases were seen, but in neither case was preservation good enough to distinguish the wild or cultivated species. Given their consistent large size it is possible that at least some represent cultivated oat (*Avena sativa*).

6.3.6 Also very numerous were probable seeds of garden pea (*Pisum sativum*). In some cases the hilum was intact enough to identify the presence of pea, however, given that many were less well preserved, common vetch (*Vicia sativa*) cannot be entirely ruled out. At least two to three of these specimens were slightly elongated suggesting probably bean (*Vicia faba*) rather than pea.

6.3.7 Weed seeds were numerous within the sample, in particular those of corn marigold (*Chrysanthemum segetum*) and stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*). Seeds of docks (*Rumex* sp.), fat-hen (*Chenopodium album*) and black bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*) were also frequent. Present, but represented by only no more than four to five seeds, were corn-cockle (*Agrostemma githago*), campion (*Silene* sp.), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), and cornflower/knapweed (*Centaurea* sp.). Wetland species were represented by several seeds of blinks (*Montia fontana ssp. chondrosperma*), a single seed of sedge (*Carex* sp.) and two capsules of rush (*Juncus* sp.).

6.3.8 A few elements of other wild species were present that are unlikely to relate to cereal cultivation. These were fragments of hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) shell, several thorns of hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) or sloe (*Prunus spinosa*) type and a single seed of bramble (*Rubus* sp.).

Charcoal

6.3.9 The sample from ditch (409) contained high amounts of wood charcoal including a fair amount of twig charcoal. At least some was ring-porous and therefore probably of oak (*Quercus* sp.), although the presence of several thorns of hawthorn or sloe would suggest the presence of one or both of these species as well within the wood charcoal. The sample from ditch (210) contained a similarly rich assemblage. The possible buried surface (217)

contained very little charcoal, although at least one fragment of bark was present.

Uncharred plant material

6.3.10 The sample from ditch (210) yielded a few uncharred seeds of water-plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*). This species is associated with water in ditches as well as rivers. Given the lack of roots in the deposit this may suggest that these seeds, along with occasional ones of elder (*Sambucus nigra*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), orache (*Atriplex* sp.) and bud scales of probable willow (*Salix* sp.), may have survived through waterlogging and/or anaerobic sealing of the deposits (the ditch fills were interepreted as waterborne deposits). However, the fact that this same sample contained occasional shells of the burrowing snail (*Cecilioides acicula*) does not entirely rule out the possibility that they could be more recent intrusions. The other sample from Trench 2, from the buried ground surface (217), also contained some highly degraded seeds of elder, which may have similarly survived.

Other Material

6.3.11 Ditch (210) also contained a reasonably large number of fish scales, but no other remains of fish.

6.4 Discussion

6.4.1 The samples indicate the cultivation of free-threshing wheat, rye, barley and probably oats. All these cereals are well known from British medieval sites (Greig 1991) and cultivated oats have been previously recorded from two Welsh sites (Hillman 1982; Jones and Milles 1984). It would appear that pea and possibly also bean were also cultivated. A similar range of crops and weed species was recovered from Llanthony Priory to the North (Milles 1983), although no pea or barley were recovered from this site.

6.4.2 Given that the relative frequency of seeds of wild species in the samples matches that of cereals it is probable that most were harvested, brought into the site and subsequently became charred with the cereal crop. The mixing of different crops within each of the flots, as well as the presence of ecological distinct species implies the charred assemblages derive from a number of different crops grown on different soil types.

6.4.3 The presence of both corn marigold and stinking mayweed within the assemblage from ditch (409) is of particular interest given that the former is commoner within crops grown on drier, more acid sandier soils, while the latter is associated with heavier clay soils. In addition the presence of rush, sedge and blinks implies that at least some of the fields extended into wetter, perhaps seasonally flooded areas.

6.4.4 The sandier soils may have included loams overlying upland sandstones, while the presence of stinking mayweed may imply the cultivation of lower lying clay fen soils (Sylvester 1958).

6.4.5 Many of the seeds recovered were from either larger seeded species e.g. black bindweed, cleavers, corn-cockle or from those that are retained within

the seedhead, for example stinking mayweed and corn marigold. While both seeds and cereal rachis fragments were relatively common within ditch (409), the sample from ditch (210) seemed to contain relatively more rachis fragments to grain and fewer weed seeds. This suggests that some of the waste comes from the processing of relatively clean ears, perhaps from coarse-sieving (Hillman 1981). It might be noted that similar assemblages from ovens in Stafford were interpreted as a mixture of cereal waste used for fuelling ovens and grain used to stop loaves from sticking within the ovens during baking (Moffett 1994). Given the quantity of material seen it is possible that the samples derived from similar activities.

6.4.6 The charcoal suggests the burning of a mixture of material including that derived from possible hedges or wooded shrub.

6.5 Potential and Further Recommendations

Charred Plant Remains and Charcoal

6.5.1 The samples have the potential to reveal evidence pertaining to the range of crops cultivated within the early medieval period around Portskewett, as well as information upon cultivation practices. There is also some potential to look at the processing of the crop and its potential use. However, given that the assemblage is not directly associated with archaeological structures or features such as ovens, such potential is limited. The charcoal has the potential to reveal something of the range of species utilised for fuel and possibly something of woodland management practices.

6.5.2 This assessment has revealed something of the nature of the assemblage and provided information concerning agricultural practices. Full analysis of the flots, in particular that from ditch (410), could better define the nature of the assemblage and may provide additional information on the range of species, as well as on the relationship of the assemblage to crop-processing stages. However, given the limited number of samples as well as the probability that the assemblages are quite mixed such analysis may be limited. Similarly the full charcoal analysis could not be related to specific activities.

6.5.3 In the light of the limited archaeological evidence no further work is recommended on the samples at this time.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The project at Portskewett was only partially successful in achieving its stated aims as no evidence of pre-Norman *llys* of the Kings of Gwent or the hunting lodge of Harold Godwinson was identified through structural remains or through the evidence of the their material culture. The finds assemblage contained nothing to prove a pre-conquest origin of the Site; there is a possibility of activity during the later 11th early 12th centuries but nothing to confirm the existence of a hunting lodge.

7.1.2 The project was, however, successful in identifying the extent, and condition of survival of the underlying archaeology, and also provided a relative chronology of activity, through the stratified remains and datable finds.

7.2 The Deneband Manor

7.2.1 The structures revealed beneath the earthworks at the centre of the Site are likely to be associated with the manorial complex of the Deneband family (recorded as holding the manor in 1270). It appears that following the passing of the manor out of the Deneband family the manor went into decline in the later medieval period and was eventually demolished, possibly sometime during the 15th century.

7.2.2 No evidence of earlier buildings were identified below the remains of the Deneband manorial complex of the late 12th to 13th century, and this could be due to the levelling and landscaping of the Site prior to construction.

7.2.3 The identification of the backfilled quarry containing late 12th to 13th century pottery was able to show that part of the manorial complex (not necessarily all of it) was constructed sometime during or after this time, and that the quarry was noted by the builders of Building 1 as they saw the potential risk of constructing a building directly over the backfilled feature and laid down rubble deposit (110) as a levelling layer and safe working platform.

7.2.4 Due to the narrow constraints of the evaluation trenches, interpretation of the structures revealed can only be surmised; one building may have provided accommodation and shelter for animals while the second was for human habitation.

7.2.5 Two walls were revealed of Building 1, which had a slightly raised cobbled path running centrally along the long axis of the building. This feature was interpreted as the central walkway between stalls used for the housing of animals. Typically stables and animal shelters had central drains for the run off of animal waste. This was not evident in Building 1, but it is possible that any such drain had been destroyed during the removal of the floor surface.

7.2.6 Building 2 was considerably more substantial than Building 1 and appears to represent the remains of a tower, presumably the structure which gave rise to the field being known as 'Tower Hay' on a late 18th century map. Little is known about the form and size of the tower, as only a very small area of the structure was revealed in the trench, but the sub-rectangular earthwork formed from the remains of the tower measures *c*.25m by 20m, which gives a maximum dimension.

7.2.7 Medieval tower houses were a development from the residential keeps of the Norman castle, and these were becoming out-dated by the 13th century as the curtain wall became the favoured way to defend an area. The curtain wall could house less cramped and more comfortable quarters than the keep, but the idea of a tower house persisted and continued through to the end of the medieval period in less secure areas.

7.2.8 During the 13th century the late 11th century hall at Chepstow Castle was adapted by the addition of a floor over the first floor hall; the resulting structure resembled the later tower house more than a typical keep. Such a structure may have been inspiration for the tower at Portskewett (Wood 1994, 166). The wall of the tower was very substantial (over 1.6m wide) and bounded a room floored with Sudbrook stone flags, creating the ground floor of the tower. No evidence remains to imply the height of the structure, although walls this thick could have supported a tower with multiple storeys.

7.2.9 The manorial complex was located with a certain degree of defence in mind, as the tidal inlet would have provided defence in a similar way to a moat and the elevated position on the outcrop would have provided a good view out towards the Severn. The complex was surrounded on its eastern side by a large ditch (identified in Trenches 3 and 6), which was certainly deep and wide enough to have provided a degree of defence. The landscape and earthwork study identified a ditch running around the base of the spur of land on which the Manor is situated, and this was recorded in Trench 2. The ditch provided material to enhance the boundary between the wet and dry land and would thus provide a further degree of protection.

7.2.10 Considerable work has been carried out into the positioning of structures within moated manor complexes (e.g. Rigold 1978, 29-36), and it seems that at Portskewett those structures creating the most waste were positioned adjacent to the tidal inlet. Building 1, which may have housed animals and thus would have produced much animal waste, was located right on the edge of the flat area so that the waste could be dumped directly into the tidal inlet, although no evidence for this was recovered.

7.2.11 In Trench 4 ditch (409) appeared to be used for the run off of waste from the top of the Site towards the tidal inlet. Analysis of the environmental remains from this ditch suggests that the south-western area of the Site may have been the location for bread ovens. It would appear logical to position such buildings most at risk from fire away from the main areas of accommodation, namely the tower house.

7.2.12 The systematic demolition of the structures within the site is evident from the numerous mortar-rich deposits, evidence of the cleaning of stone work for re-use. The date of this demolition remains unclear, but the scarcity of pottery dating later than 14th century suggests that it may have taken place late in the medieval period. Alternatively, it could have been later; the structure known as Manor Farm within the village may have been constructed utilising the demolished material of the earlier manor, but this building dates from the 16th/17th century.

7.3 The Creek and Harbour

7.3.1 Analysis of the sediments and formation of the tidal creek at Portskewett, which was formed by the daily inundation of estuarine waters, has shown that it has a similar sedimentary sequence to a palaeochannel at Redwick in the Gwent Levels which has seen more detailed study (Allen and Bell 1998), and this has led to the suggestion (as yet unproven) that it is potentially

contemporaneous with the latter feature. The formation of tidal creeks is often associated with episodes of marine transgression, and such an episode was recorded in the Severn Levels from the later Neolithic period with further dramatic phases during the late Iron Age/early Romano-British period (Bell 2000).

7.3.2 The geoarchaeology coring survey was able to show that the tidal creek was navigable for much of its length and that a sandy beach located at the northern end of the creek would have been suitable as a harbour. This may have remained navigable probably well into the medieval period.

7.3.3 Excavation of Trench 2 showed that attempts to maintain the tidal creek as a navigable water way were undertaken by the excavation of ditch (210) to maintain and potentially re-establish the boundary between the wet and dry land by the creation of a revetment along the water's edge. This work probably occurred sometime after the 11th/12th century and so may fit with the major building work of the 13th century.

7.4 The Dam or Causeway

7.4.1 The addition of the dam or causeway cutting off the northern limit of the tidal inlet was a later addition of unknown construction date. Small abraded sherds of late 11th/12th century pottery recovered from the make-up deposits are likely to be residual. The make-up layers sealed, and thus post-date, the probable revetment structures. A construction date for the dam sometime in the late medieval period is likely.

7.4.2 It had been assumed that the dam had been constructed following the total silting of the tidal inlet, but coring was able to identify that the bands of molluscs observed in the soil sequence to the south of the dam were deposited as a result of fast flowing water, probable seasonal storm surges. These were not evident to the north of the dam, which implies that it was put in place to prevent the movement of water further up the creek. The creek was therefore still facing inundation, but was no longer navigable; the northern end could then be utilised for a different purpose, such as a fishpond. A 19th century tithe map records the existence of a freshwater spring and pond to the north and the dam was perhaps therefore constructed to protect the freshwater from inundation with saline water from the Severn.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1.1 The evaluation has produced some useful and interesting results but, given the limited nature of the fieldwork, and the failure to find any evidence for Harold Godwinson's hunting lodge, further analysis is not proposed, and a full publication report is not appropriate.

8.1.2 It is proposed, therefore, that the results presented in this assessment report are summarised in a short report (maximum 5000 words, with supporting illustrations), to be submitted to *Archaeologia Cambrensis*. This would comprise a brief introduction detailing the circumstances of the project and

aims and objectives; a results section detailing the structural remains recorded, with finds information integrated into the text as appropriate; and a brief discussion of the results, with reference to the original aims and objectives. A summary will also be presented to *Archaeology in Wales*.

8.1.3 A copy of this assessment report will be deposited with the NMR at Aberystwyth.

9 ARCHIVE

9.1.1 The excavated material and archive, including plans, photographs and written records, are currently held at the Wessex Archaeology offices under the project code 65301 and site code HHP 07. The archive comprises the following elements:

- 1 Lever Arch file site records (including A4 and A3 drawings)
- Site photographs (black & white negatives and contact prints; colour slides; digital photographs)
- 11 boxes finds (10 cardboard; 1 plastic tub)

9.1.2 It is intended that the archive should ultimately be deposited with Museums Officer Andrew Helme at either the Caldicot Castle Museum of Chepstow Museum.

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APPENDIX 1: Trench Summaries

bgl = below ground level

Trench 1			**Type:** Machine Excavated	
Dimensions: 13.5 m		**Max. depth:** 8.5m	**Ground level:** 11.84m aOD	
context	**description**			**depth**
101	*Topsoil*	Mid brown sandy silt, with occasional small sub angular sandstone fragments, current topsoil and turf of pasture field. Overlies (102), (103) and (127).		0-0.16m bgl
102	*Layer*	Mid to light grey brown sandy silt with abundant small gravel fragments and larger sandstone blocks<0.20m. Contains mortar fragments. Rubble deposit concentrated towards the northern arm of Trench 1, demolition material with evidence of the cleaning of stones of mortar for re-use. Sealed by (101) and overlies (133).		0.46m thick
103	*Layer*	Mid brown sandy silt with abundant sandstone blocks and small fragments, butts and covers wall (105) on the eastern side. Rubble deposit which fills void between walls (105) and (123), overlies deposit (131). Identical to (102) and (127). Demolition/collapse deposit most likely derived from walls (105) and (123).		0.27m thick
104	*Layer*	Mid brown sandy silt with abundant sandstone rubble. Located to the west of wall (105), external of building, identical to (103) and (127). Demolition/collapse deposit most likely derived from wall (105). Overlies deposit (106).		0.18m thick
105	*Structure*	North south aligned wall, forms outer wall of building with parallel wall (123), recorded as 1.40m long and 1.30m wide and a maximum height of 0.42m. Wall survives for 3 courses of roughly shaped sandstone blocks (average 0.20m x 0.28m x 0.18m) and appears to be dry-stone constructed. Associated with wall fill (108). Overlies deposit (110).		-
106	*Layer*	Mid brown sandy silt with common small sandstone fragments and common stone roofing tile fragments. Evidence of roof collapse, falling outside the building which may imply a pitched roof. Roof collapse occurred prior to the collapse of the walls as it is sealed by their demolition layer (104). Overlies deposit (107).		0.12m thick
107	*Layer*	Mid brown loose silty clay, very friable deposit, probably topsoil derived material and the accumulation of material during a period of stasis, prior to the demolition/collapse of the structure. Deposit located external of wall (105) and sealed by roof collapse (106) and seals (109).		0.14m thick
108	*Layer*	Mid reddish brown clay deposit, central wall core of wall (105).		-
109	*Layer*	Mid reddish brown clay deposit, identical material to wall core (108). Potential dump of material intended to be used as wall core material, overlies possible work platform/levelling layer (110). Deposit is sealed beneath (107).		0.10m thick
110	*Layer*	Mid brown silty clay with abundant sandstone fragments. Nature of deposit unclear, possible levelling layer for construction of wall (105) or perhaps a working platform, rubble deposit to allow area to drain well. Overlies (111).		0.14m thick
111	*Fill*	Light to mid brown silty clay, with rare small sandstone fragments. Upper fill of large feature [**113**], appears to be naturally derived deposit, homogenous fill, multiple depositions of similar material. Mix of natural silting with occasional deliberate infilling. Overlies (112).		0.44m thick
112	*Fill*	Dark grey black silty clay with occasional small sandstone fragments and rare large stone blocks. Fill of [**113**], multiple depositions of similar material creating homogenous deposit which overlies primary fill (146).		0.68m thick
113	***Cut***	**Cut of large irregular shaped feature excavated into the underlying natural bedrock. Potentially earliest feature on site, clearly earliest stratigraphically. Possible quarry pit which has then silted up/backfilled prior to the construction of later features. Only revealed in a small slot and so true nature and thus function of feature not fully understood.**		**-**
114	*Natural*	Light-mid yellow sand and sandstone, Natural basal geology.		-
115	*Layer*	Mid brown sandy silt with common sandstone fragments and stone roofing tile fragments, revealed below rubble/demolition/collapse deposit (103) and		0.07m thick

		identified within the internal part of the building between walls (105) and (123). Deposit overlies possible occupation/burning layer (119) and is evidence of roof collapse prior to wall collapse.	
116	*Layer*	Equivalent to (102).	-
117	*Layer*	Equivalent to (133).	-
118	*Layer*	Mid-dark brown sandy silt, possible dump of topsoil material during demolition of structures as sealed beneath mortar dump (133) and seals rubble deposit (136).	0.16m thick
119	*Layer*	Dark grey brown/black silty loam with small sandstone fragments <0.04m, possible occupation layer which overlies damaged floor surface (120) and pathway structure (140). However, charcoal rich and may indicate large scale burning episode, potentially burning of roof timbers prior to collapse of roof and formation of deposit (115).	0.18m thick
120	*Structure*	Small area of stone slabs adjacent to wall (105) on the eastern/internal side and set into layer (139).	-
121	*VOID*	VOID	VOID
122	*VOID*	VOID	VOID
123	*Structure*	North-south aligned wall; forms outer wall of building with parallel wall (105), recorded as 1.40m long and 0.86m wide and a maximum height of 0.48m. Wall survives for 3 courses of roughly shaped sandstone blocks (average 0.23m x 0.26m x 0.15m) and appears to be dry-stone constructed. Appears to rest upon layer (139).	-
124	*Layer*	Mid brown silty clay with abundant sandstone rubble, initially believed to be a pitched stone wall, but clearly collapsed wall from a structure located to the east. The angle of the stones within the deposit clearly show it has fallen from the east, and structure not revealed within the small confines of the trench.	-
125	*VOID*	VOID	VOID
126	*Layer*	Mid brown silty loam. Very loose topsoil derived material which seals roof collapse deposit (128), externally of building formed by walls (105) and (123).	0.19m thick
127	*Layer*	Mid brown sandy silt with abundant sandstone blocks and small fragments, equivalent to (103) but recorded overlying wall collapse (124) and layer (126). Demolition/collapse deposit.	0.17m thick
128	*Layer*	Mid brown sandy silt with common sandstone fragments and stone roofing tile fragments, evidence of roof collapse on the east side of wall (123), outside building. Equivalent to (115).	0.09m thick
129	*Layer*	Dark grey brown black sandy silt with rare sandstone fragments and charcoal, possible occupation located outside of the building formed by wall (105) and (123). Layer overlies (130) and is sealed by tile layer (128).	-
130	*Layer*	Mid brown with patches of orange silty sand. Degraded/reworked natural which overlies solid basal geology, identical to (139) and (132).	0.09m+ thick
131	*Layer*	Mid brown silty sand with occasional small sandstone inclusions and common stone roofing tile fragments. Located to the east of wall (123), external collapse of roofing tiles.	0.05m thick
132	*Layer*	Mid brown with patches of orange silty sand. Degraded/reworked natural which overlies solid basal geology, identical to (139) and (130).	0.14m thick
133	*Layer*	Light grey sandy silt with small sandstone inclusions, mortar rich deposit evidence of the cleaning of masonry for re-use, and the dumping of the removed mortar. Sealed below (102) and overlies (118) and (134).	0.32m thick
134	*Layer*	Light grey sandy silt, no inclusions, deposit entirely derived from discarded mortar from the cleaning of masonry for re-use. Sealed by (133) and overlies (135) and (136).	0.07m thick
135	*Layer*	Mid yellow orange-brown sandy silt with abundant sandstone rubble. Large scale demolition deposit concentrated within the entrance to the possible tower formed by wall (143), step (121) and floor (142/144).	0.35m thick
136	*Layer*	Mid-light grey brown sandy silt with abundant sandstone and occasional limestone rubble. Large scale demolition /collapse deposit, seals (137) and is sealed (118) and (134).	0.37m thick
137	*Layer*	Mid brown silty sand with common stone roofing tiles; roofing collapse deposit, seals (138) and is sealed by (136).	0.08m thick

138	*Layer*	Dark grey brown/black silty clay with common charcoal fragments, possible occupation layer or burning deposit, result of burning roofing timbers. Overlain by (137), deposit not excavated.	-
139	*Layer*	Mid brown with orange patches silty sand. Degraded/reworked natural which overlies solid basal geology, identical to (130) and (132).	-
140	*Structure*	North-south aligned pathway formed of mixed stone blocks, with a deliberate kerb formed of smaller stones. Positioned centrally between walls (105) and (123) forming a central pathway, potentially indicating the structure is a stable or cow shed, with (140) forming the gap between the stalls. Recorded as 1.40m long by 1.60m wide and 0.20m high max.	-
141	*Structure*	Threshold, large Sudbrook stone forming the step into a building formed by wall (143) floor (142/144). Entrance way into possible tower. Stone not fully exposed and recorded as 0.64m x 0.40m x 0.15m.	-
142	*Structure*	Sudbrook stone flagged floor located inside probable tower, accessed through door formed by wall (413) and stone threshold (141). Stones of various sizes, flat to form floor and bonded with light yellow sandy mortar.	-
143	*Structure*	Mixed sandstone blocks roughly worked forming a thick substantial wall filled with rubble core, and bonded with light yellow sandy mortar. 1.6m wide and 0.90m high.	-
144	*Structure*	Identical to (142) only highly disturbed and damaged most likely during the demolition/dismantling.	-
145	*Layer*	Compact mid yellow sandy mortar deposit, utilised to hold in place flagged floor (142/144).	-
146	*Fill*	Light yellow silty sand, primary fill of large feature [**113**].	0.16m thick

Trench 2			**Type:** Machine Excavated
Dimensions: 13.8m		**Max. depth:** 6.5m	**Ground level:** m aOD
context	**description**		**depth**
201	*Topsoil*	Mid brown sandy silt, with occasional small sub angular sandstone fragments, current topsoil and turf of pasture field. Overlies (202).	0-0.26m bgl
202	*Layer*	Dark grey sandy silt with rare small pebbles <0.04m. Natural erosion deposit which has slumped into the hollows left by partially filled features [**204**] and [**210**], slumping of material down slope. Overlies (212), (229) and (222).	0.26-0.52m bgl
203	*Fill*	Dark grey, mottled light grey silty clay, lower fill of wide flat bottomed ditch [**210**], not primary silting. Later erosion deposit of feature edges. Water deposited. Sealed by (209) overlies [**210**].	0.22m thick
204	**Cut**	**Cut of north south aligned ditch, probably part of revetment associated with bank located to the east which runs around the area of raised ground on which the earthworks of the Site are situated. Revetment would have separated the dry land of the raised island and the wet boggy inlet which originally connected to the Severn. Cuts (218) and filled with (205), (206), (235), (234), (232) and (233)**	**0.46m deep**
205	*Fill*	Mid blue/grey mottled yellow in places, alluvial clay. Lowest fill of ditch [204], contains large stone blocks, possible evidence of the base of the revetment material.	0.14m thick
206	*Fill*	Dark blue/grey clay erosion deposit, fill of ditch [**204**].	0.20m thick
207	*Layer*	Mid brown grey silty clay with occasional lumps of clay, part of revetment bank to the east of ditch [**204**].	0.10m thick
208	*Structure*	Identical to (211).	-
209	*Fill*	Reddish brown silty clay, with rare sub angular pebbles, fill of [210], natural erosion deposit. Overlain by (230).	0.12m thick
210	***Cut***	**Cut of very wide flat bottomed ditch, recorded as 1.60m long by 4.10m wide and 0.60m deep and cut directly into the natural estuarine alluvial clay and can been seen as an earthwork which encompasses the base of the raised area of land on which the earthworks are situated.**	**0.60m deep**
211	*Structure*	Spread of stones overlying (207), possibly part of revetment located on the top of bank to the east of revetment ditch [**204**). Positioned at point where the dry land meets the wet boggy area of the partially silted inlet. Overlain by (212).	-

212	*Layer*	Reddish brown sandy silt, part of bank/revetment remains which butts (211).	0.10m thick
213	*Layer*	Grey sandy silt with occasional gavel. Part of bank material which overlies (214) and is overlain by (207).	
214	*Layer*	Mixed mid grey blue clay and brown silty sand, mixed deposits forming bank material which overlies (217), and separates the dry land from the waters edge.	0.34m thick
215	*Layer*	Dark brown sandy silt, collapsed bank material derived from the east west aligned causeway/bank which runs from the raised area of dry land at the east across the now silted up tidal inlet, creating a pond to the north. Overlies (216) and sealed by (221).	0.48m thick
216	*Layer*	Dark brown sandy silt, bank material, associated with (215) and east west aligned causeway. Overlies (225) and (224).	0.22m thick
217	*Layer*	Dark grey mottled yellow silty loam, possible old buried ground surface, overlain by bank material (214) and (213). Old ground surface appears to have originally run down to the waters edge and has been partial eroded away by water action. Overlies (218).	0.19m thick
218	*Natural*	Light blue/grey clay, alluvial clay deposit by water action, slow moving infilling of the inlet which led to the Severn.	0.60m + thick
219	*Layer*	Mixed light yellow sand and grey sandy silts, erosion deposit, derived from both the causeway bank which runs east west across the infilled inlet and the earlier north south aligned revetment bank which extended around the edge of the dry land separating the raised island form the boggy wet area of the inlet. Sealed by (222) and overlays (220).	
220	*Layer*	Dark grey sandy silt, bank material of the east west aligned causeway, sealed by (223) and overlies (221).	0.22m thick
221	*Layer*	Mid reddish brown sitly sand, bank material of causeway. Sealed by (220) and overlies (215).	0.06m thick
222	*Layer*	Very light grey sand and gravel, eroded bank material derived from east west aligned causeway.	0.20m thick
223	*Layer*	Equivalent to (219).	-
224	*Layer*	Light grey-blue clay, redeposited alluvial clay, possibly eroded from east west aligned causeway. Sealed by (237) and (225), not fully excavated.	0.22m+ thick
225	*Layer*	Orange-red and grey mixed sand layer and gravel only visible in plan and sealed by (216). Appears to overly (224), possible bank make up material.	-
226	*Layer*	Light yellow sand and grey sand and gravel, eroded bank material. Sealed by (202); seals (227) and (207).	0.10m thick
227	*Layer*	Mixed grey and yellow sand and grey sandy silt, erosion of bank material filling the hollow formed by the partially filled ditch [**204**].	0.12m thick
228	*Layer*	Dark grey and yellow mixed sand and sandy silt, eroded bank material filling the hollow formed by the partially filled ditch [**204**].	0.20m thick
229	*Layer*	Light grey sandy silt eroded bank material filling the hollow formed by the partially filled ditch [**204**].	0.08m thick
230	*Layer*	Mid grey-brown sandy silt, natural erosion which fills hollow formed by the partially filled ditches [**204**] and [**210**].	0.25m thick
231	*Layer*	Yellow-grey sandy silt natural erosion which fills hollow formed by the partially filled ditches [**204**].	0.06m thick
232	*Layer*	Light grey yellow silty clay, redeposited natural alluvium within hollow formed by the partially filled ditches [**204**].	0.08m thick
233	*Layer*	Mid grey-blue clay redeposited natural alluvium within hollow formed by the partially filled ditches [**204**].	0.06m thick
234	*Layer*	Mid grey sandy silt infilling of [**204**].	0.10m thick
235	*Layer*	Light yellow-grey sandy silt fill of [**204**].	0.08m thick
236	*Layer*	Light yellow-brown sand deposit only revealed in plan and not excavated, part of bank material of causeway.	-
237	*Layer*	Equivalent to (215).	-

Trench 3			**Type:** Machine Excavated
Dimensions: B5.7m		**Max. depth:** 1.5m	**Ground level:** 12.37m aOD
context	**description**		**depth**
301	*Topsoil*	Mid brown loose sandy silt, current topsoil and turf.	0-0.30m bgl
302	*Fill*	Dark brown sandy silt, earliest fill of ditch [303], not primary fill, large homogenous deposit, multiple depositions of similar material, appears natural derived, topsoil and sub soil washing in.	0.90m thick
303	*Cut*	Cut of north-south aligned ditch, 1.80m long by 2.4m wide and 0.90mn deep, large boundary division probable encompassing the manor house complex located on the raise area of land. Identical [609], [606] and [611], part of group [613].	0.90m deep
304	*Fill*	Mid brown silty clay, secondary fill of north south aligned ditch, multiple depositions giving rise to homogenous fill. Likely to be naturally derived erosion deposits over some time.	0.66m thick
305	*Subsoil*	Dark brown with yellow patches, sandy silt subsoil. Overlies (304).	0.30-0.44m bgl
306	*Natural*	Light yellow natural sand which overlies natural basal sandstone geology.	-
307	*Natural*	Mid reddish-yellow, compact sandstone natural geology, gave rise to anomalies in the geophysics.	-

Trench 4			**Type:** Machine excavated
Dimensions: 11.8 m		**Max. depth:** 1.5m	**Ground level:** 9.8m aOD
context	**Description**		**depth**
401	*Topsoil*	Mid brown silty clay, current topsoil and turf	0-0.19m bgl
402	*Layer*	Mid brown silty clay, colluvium deposit, hill-wash material which seals (403) and is sealed by (415) and cut through by [405].	
403	*Layer*	Mid grey sandy silt colluvium deposit; seals (409) and is sealed beneath (406).	0.19m thick
404	*Layer*	Mid brown silty clay, single fill of pit [405], appears to be natural deposition, material washing in as a result of water and wind action.	0.50m thick
405	***Cut***	**Cut of irregular shaped, steep sided, flat bottomed pit which cuts (402), filled with (404). Function of feature unknown.**	**0.50m deep**
406	*Layer*	Mid brown silty clay with abundant gravel and small pebbles, layer of stoney material which seals (403/407) and is located on the edge of the slope where the raised area of dry land leads to the wetter area of the infilled inlet. Potentially part of a revetment. Sealed by (402).	0.09m thick
407	*Layer*	Mid grey sandy silt, colluvium deposit, equal to (403) and seals (406) the upper fill of ditch [409].	0.22m thick
408	*Fill*	Mid grey silty clay upper fill of [409], mix of deliberate backfilling and natural silting episodes.	0.21m thick
409	***Cut***	**Cut of east west aligned ditch, with steep sides and a flat base which runs down slope from the upper areas of the raised island down towards the waters edge. Possibly a drainage channel for waste run-off of material from the main manor complex area to flow out into the wet area of the now in-filled inlet. Cut natural (416) and joined to north south aligned gully [414].**	**0.43m deep**
410	*Fill*	Very dark grey/black silty clay deliberate backfill deposit within ditch [**409**], ditch had already partly filled up when deposit went in. derived from the erosion of the feature edges.	0.09m thick
411	*VOID*	VOID	VOID
412	*Fill*	Mottled mid grey-blue and light to mid yellow silty sand, erosion deposit, unclear if primary fill of [409], as it should have been kept clean and free of material for a time after its digging.	0.25m thick
413	*Fill*	Very dark grey/black with light grey patches of clay, deliberate dump of charcoal rich material in to gully [414].	0.19m thick
414	***Cut***	**Cut of roughly north-south aligned gully which joins [409]. Gully appears to follow curve of raised area of land on which manor complex sits.**	**0.32m deep**

415	*Subsoil*	Mid brown silty clay subsoil which seals the archaeology and is sealed by (401).	0.35m thick
416	*Natural*	Mottled mid yellow and light yellow silty clay, natural geology.	-
417	*Fill*	Light grey silty clay upper fill of [414]. Natural silting event.	0.07m thick

Trench 5			**Type:** Machine Excavated
Dimensions: 8.15 m		**Max. depth:** 1.5m	**Ground level:** 7.62m aOD
context	**description**		**depth**
501	*Topsoil*	Mid brown silty clay; current topsoil and turf.	0-0.28m bgl
502	*Natural*	Mid grey blue alluvial clay with iron staining patches.	0.28m+ bgl
503	*Cut*	Edge of palaeochannel, now filled with (504).	0.57m + deep
504	*Fill*	Mid grey blue alluvial clay fill of [503].	0.57m+ thick

Trench 6			**Type:** Machine Excavated
Dimensions: 10.30m		**Max. depth:** 1.50m	**Ground level:** 11.37m aOD
context	**description**		**depth**
601	*Topsoil*	Mid brown silty clay topsoil and turf.	0-0.13m bgl
602	*Subsoil*	Brown silty clay subsoil layer.	0.13-0.35m bgl
603	*Natural*	Light yellow silty sand natural geology.	0.35m+ bgl
604	*Cut*	Cut of roughly east-west aligned ditch, possible boundary, surrounding ditch associated with the church or the medieval manor house.	0.30m deep
605	*Fill*	Mid reddish-brown silty clay natural silting fill of [604].	0.30m thick
606	*Cut*	Cut of north-south aligned ditch (longitudinal intervention), possible continuation of ditch [303] from Trench 3. Identical to [609] and [303]. Part of Group [613].	0.54m deep
607	*Fill*	Mid reddish-yellow silty clay, lower fill of [606] erosion deposit of the feature sides.	0.26m thick
608	*Fill*	Mid grey silty clay upper fill of ditch [606], erosion of surrounding topsoil.	0.54m thick
609	*Cut*	Continuation of ditch [606], small slot revealed the shallow edge of the ditch Group [613].	0.12m deep
610	*Fill*	Mid grey fill of [606].	0.12m thick
611	*Cut*	Cut of east-west aligned ditch which probably turns in to ditch [609/606/303], steep sides and flat base, forming part of enclosure ditch which may surround the manor site. Part of Group [613].	0.26m thick
612	*Fill*	Mid brown-grey silty clay fill of [611], natural silting event.	0.26m thick
613	*Group*	Group number for north-south aligned ditch which appears to turn to the west, composed of cuts [606], [609] and [611].	-

APPENDIX 2: Environmental Core Logs

	Depth	Description	Notes
CORE 1 7.07m OD (Within palaeo-channel)	0-.27m	Mid brown, clay rich topsoil	
	0.27-0.7m	Yellow/brown, clay rich topsoil	Molluscs abundant throughout
	0.7-1.1m	Brown clay	
	1.1-1.2m	Blue grey estuarine clay	Lens?
	1-1.67m	Blue grey/brown estuarine clay	
	1.67-2m	Blue grey estuarine clay	
	2m+	Fine to medium sand	Grows coarser with depth
CORE 2 (Lower terrace) 7.65m OD	0-.2m	Mid brown, clay rich topsoil	
	0.2-0.4m	Yellow/brown, grey clay topsoil	Molluscs abundant throughout
	0.4m+	Blue grey clay	
CORE 3 (Within palaeo-channel) 7.06m OD	0-.45m	Mid brown, clay rich topsoil	
	0.45-0.7m	Blue grey clay-rich topsoil	Molluscs abundant throughout
	0.7-1.1m	Blue grey estuarine clay	
	1.1-1.17m	Sand and molluscs	High(er) energy estuarine incursion
	1.17-1.25m	Blue grey estuarine clay	
	1.25-1.31m	Sand and molluscs	High(er) energy estuarine incursion
	1.31-3m	Blue grey estuarine clay	
	3-3.3m	Dark grey, organic rich estuarine clay	
	3.3-3.8m	Blue grey estuarine clay	
CORE 4 (Upper terrace) 7.25m	0-.14m	Mid brown, clay rich topsoil	Molluscs abundant throughout
	0.14m+	Stiff, grey brown alluvium with iron pan	
CORE 5 7.57m OD	0-0.25m	Mid brown, clay rich topsoil	Molluscs abundant throughout
	0.25+	Stiff, grey brown alluvium with iron pan	
CORE 6 7.04m OD (Fishpond)	0-.23m	Mid brown, clay rich topsoil	
	0.23-0.5m	Grey/red-brown clay rich topsoil	
	0.5-0.57m	Red/brown, friable clay rich	
	0.57-0.6m	Medium red sand	
	0.6-0.7m	Red/brown, friable clay rich	
	0.7-1m	Grey/brown alluvium	
	1m+	Fine to medium sand	Coarser with depth
CORE 7 7.28m OD (Fishpond)	0-0.25m	Mid brown, clay rich topsoil	
	0.25-0.65m	Grey/red-brown clay rich topsoil	
	0.65-0.8m	Grey/brown alluvium	
	0.8m+	Fine to medium sand	Coarser with depth
CORE 8 7.63m OD (Fishpond)	0-.2m	Mid brown, clay rich topsoil	
	0.2-0.7m	Grey/red-brown clay rich topsoil	
	0.7m+	Fine to medium sand	Coarser with depth

Table 1: Finds totals by material type and by trench (number / weight in grammes)

Material	Tr 1	Tr 2	Tr 3	Tr 4	Tr 6	Unstrat.	Total
Pottery	232/3363	50/521	-	50/594	3/57	-	335/4535
Romano-British	*4/18*	*6/67*	-	*1/6*	-	-	*11/91*
Medieval	*200/3075*	*44/454*	-	*47/580*	*3/57*	-	*294/4166*
Post-Medieval	*28/270*	-	-	*2/8*	-	-	*30/278*
Ceramic Building Material	142/5948	1/8	-	1/57	-	-	144/6013
Mortar	14/1368	-	-	-	-	2/44	16/1412
Fired Clay	-	3/17	-	1/5	-	-	4/22
Stone	142/77,192	-	-	2/285	2/3313	-	146/80,790
Flint	2/2	-	-	-	-	-	2/2
Glass	5/20	2/154	-	-	-	-	7/174
Slag	32/992	14/997	-	-	-	18/394	64/2383
Metalwork	100	3	1	-	6	-	110
Copper alloy	*8*	*1*	*1*	-	*1*	-	*11*
Iron	*71*	-	-	-	*5*	-	*76*
Lead	*21*	*2*	-	-	-	-	*23*
Animal bone	276/2982	17/300	-	7/32	3/3	6/155	309/3472
Shell	23/289	1/49	-	-	-	-	24/338

Table 2: Chronological breakdown of pottery assemblage by ware type

PERIOD	Ware	No. sherds	Weight (g)
ROMANO-BRITISH	Black Burnished ware	1	6
	Roman greyware	2	18
	Roman oxidised ware	3	12
	Roman whiteware	5	55
	sub-total Romano-British	*11*	*91*
MEDIEVAL	Medieval sandy coarseware (Gwent)	197	2691
	Ham Green wares	15	264
	Redcliffe wares	29	431
	Donyatt ware	2	30
	Surrey whiteware	1	5
	Saintonge monochrome ware	1	11
	Saintonge polychrome ware	1	2
	Gravel-tempered ware	3	33
	Sandy/limestone-tempered ware	11	58
	Limestone-tempered ware	1	2
	Miscellaneous medieval sandy wares	22	561
	Miscellaneous medieval glazed wares	9	63
	Late medieval sandy wares	2	15
	sub-total medieval	*294*	*4166*
POST-MEDIEVAL	Redware	21	226
	North Devon gravel-tempered ware	1	9
	Imported redware (Spanish?)	2	12
	Raeren stoneware	1	5
	Black-glazed ware	3	24
	Refined whiteware	2	2
	sub-total post-medieval	*30*	*278*
	OVERALL TOTAL	**335**	**4535**

Table 3: Condition and preservation of animal bone per trench (NISP)

Trench	1	2	4	6
N	281	16	5	2
Condition	fair	fair	poor	poor
Gnawing	27	1	-	-
Burnt	2	1	-	-
Loose teeth	18	-	1	-

Table 4: Animal bone species list and percentages per trench (NISP)

Species	Trench 1		Trench 2		Trench 4		Trench 6	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Horse	2	1						
Cattle	86	31	4	25	2	40		
Sheep/Goat	36	13	4	25	2	40		
Pig	66	23	2	13				
Dog	8	3						
Bird	23	8						
Fish			1	6				
Other	5	2						
Unidentified	55	20	5	31	1	20	2	100
Total	**281**	**101**	**16**	**100**	**5**	**100**	**2**	**100**

Table 5: Number of bones with the potential to inform on population characteristics & butchery

Trench	1	2	4
NISP	226	11	4
Age	24	1	1
Measure	17		
Butchery	11	1	
Pathology	1		

Table 6: Assessment of the charred plant remains and charcoal

										Residue
Feature type/no	Context	Sample	size litres	flot size ml	Grain	Chaff	seeds charred	Charcoal 4/2 mm	Other	Charcoal >5.6mm
Trench 2				13th century Roman residual						
Ditch 210	203	2	8	175 ^{5}	A	A	B	20/10ml	fish scales (A)	-
Possible buried surface	217	4	20	50 ^{10}	A*	-	A	5/4ml	-	-
Trench 4										
Ditch 409	410	3	30	300 ^{0}	A**	A*	A*	90/70ml	-	5ml

KEY: A** = exceptional, A* = 30+ items, A = ≥10 items, B = 9 - 5 items, C = < 5 items

NOTE: [1]flot is total, but flot in superscript = % of rooty material.

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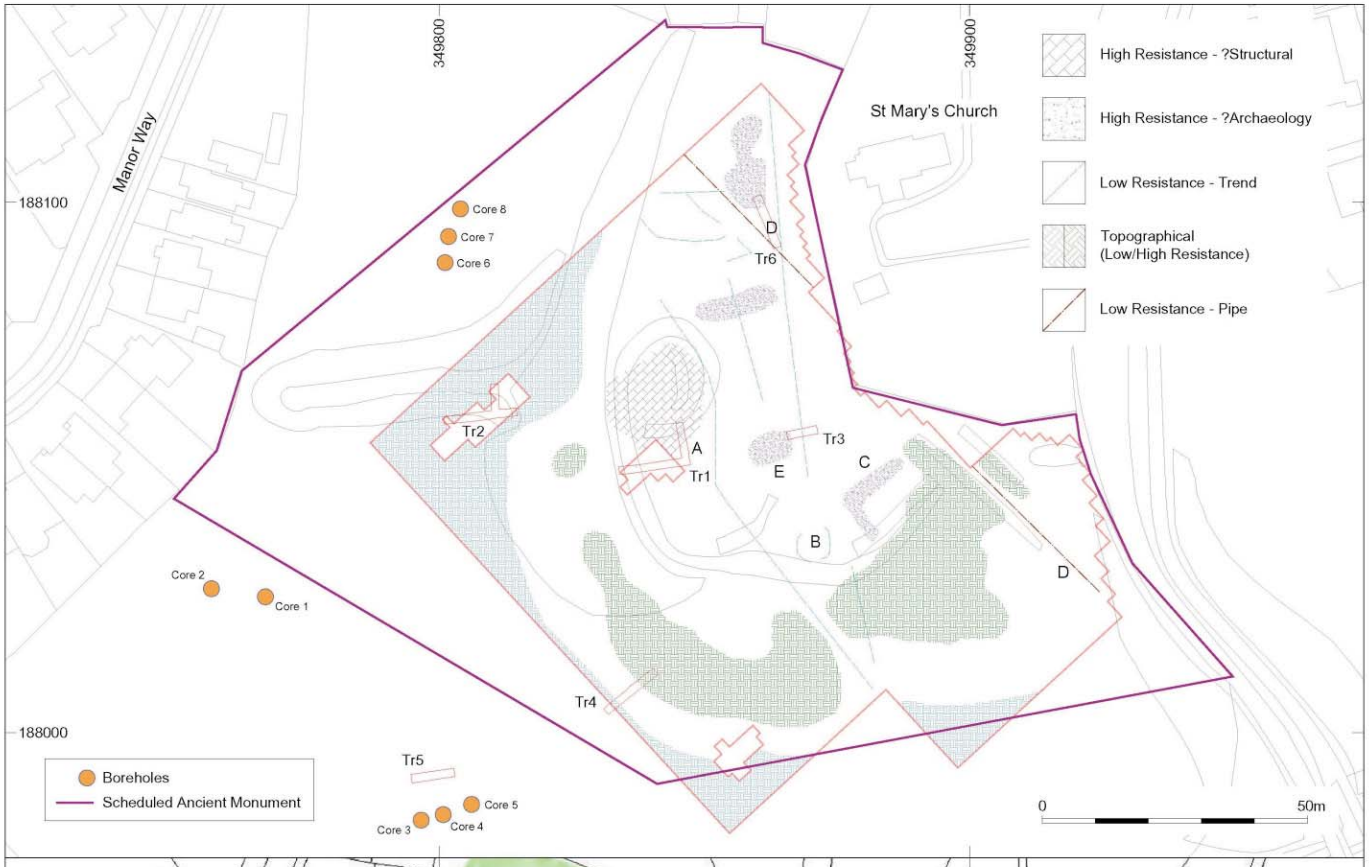
Location of site and Portskewett, showing Chepstow and the Severn River

Figure 1



Geophysical data courtesy of GSB Prospection Ltd.

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Trench location, with (a) borehole locations and geophysical results; (b) earthwork survey

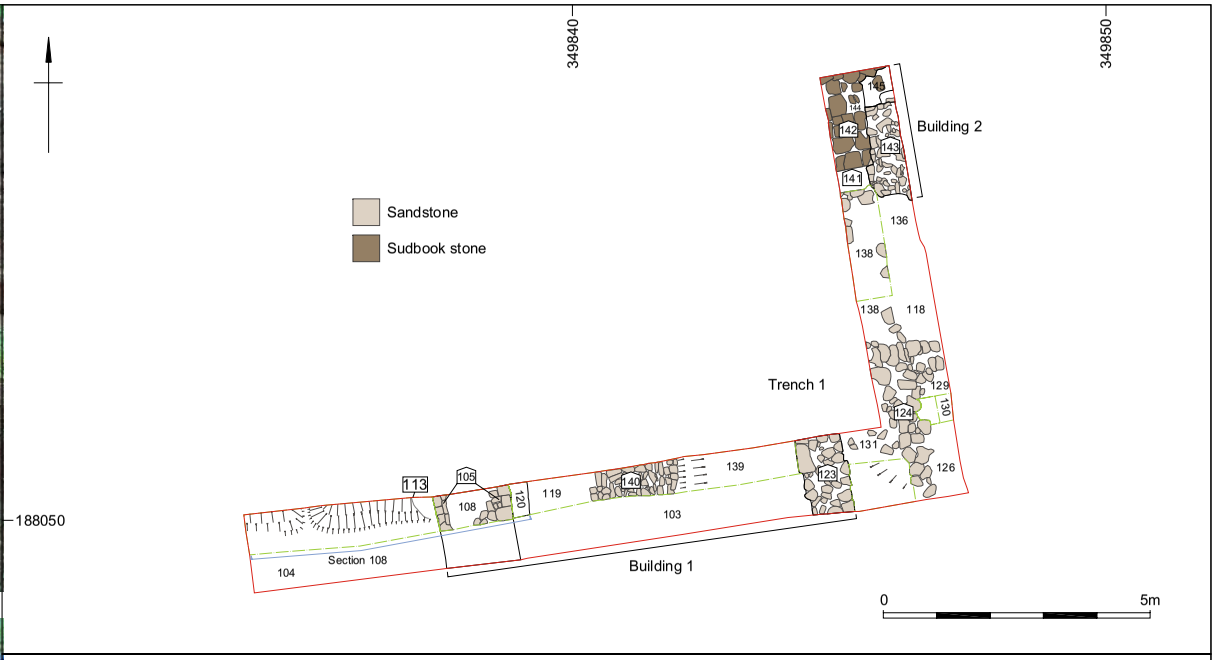
Figure 2

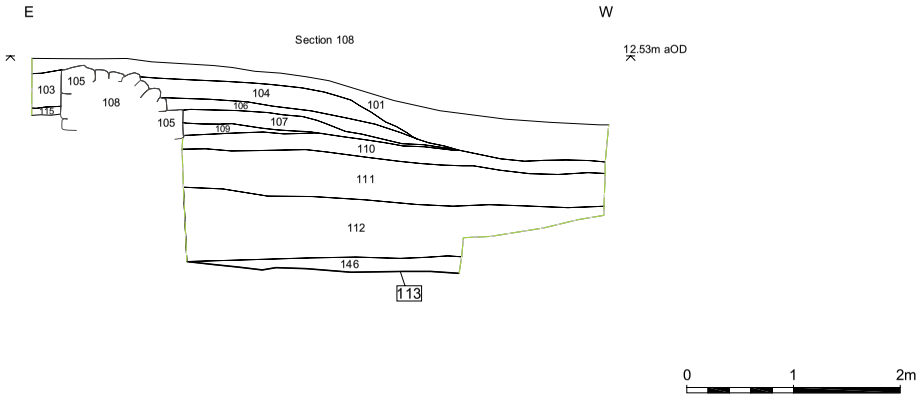
Trench 1 from the east

Trench 1 from the west

Building 2 showing wall (143), floor (144) and threshold (141)

Trench 1, central walkway (140) of Building 1





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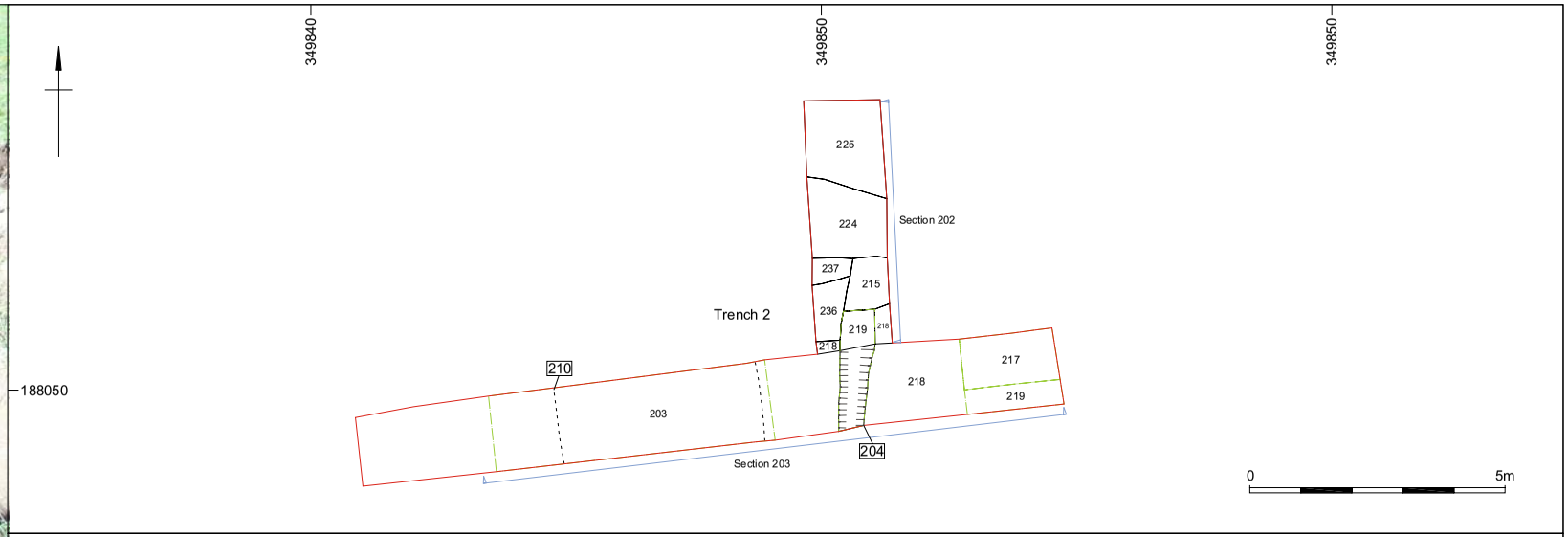
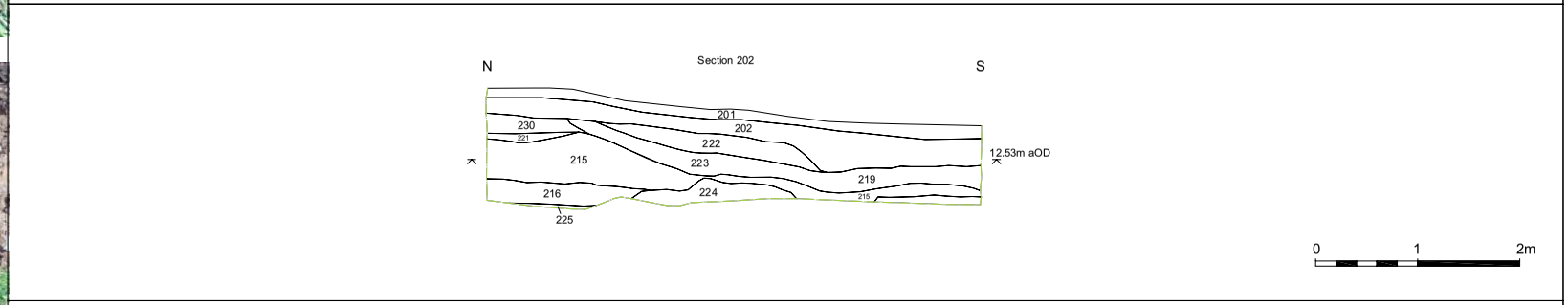
Trench 1

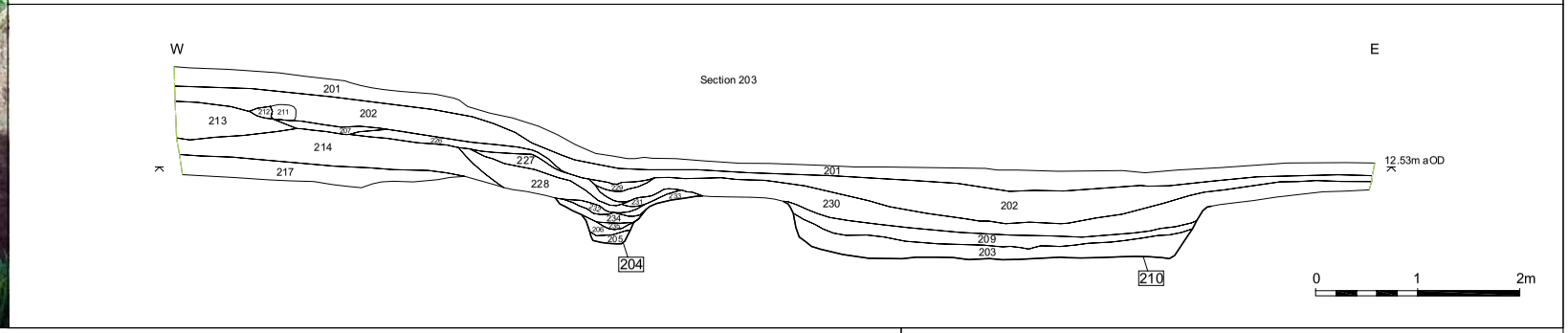
Figure 3

Trench 2 from the east

Trench 2 from the south







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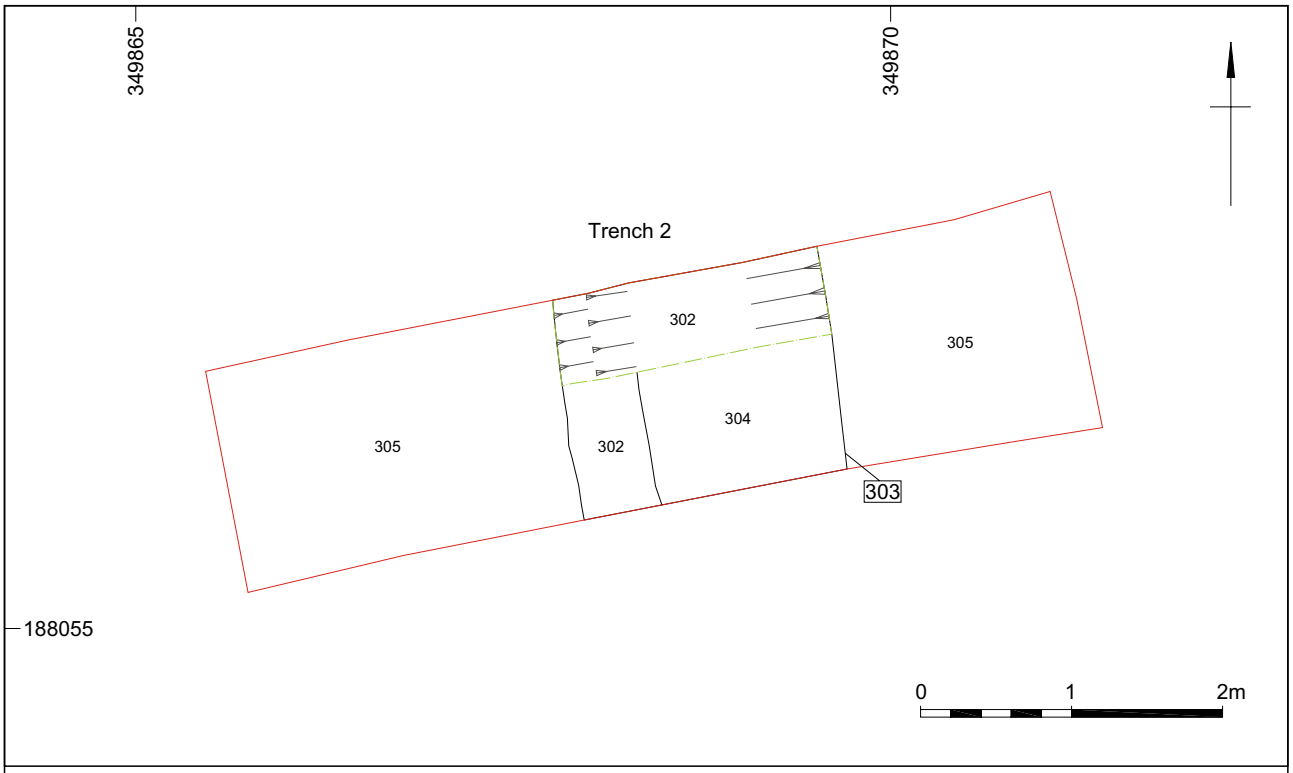

Ditch (303) from the south

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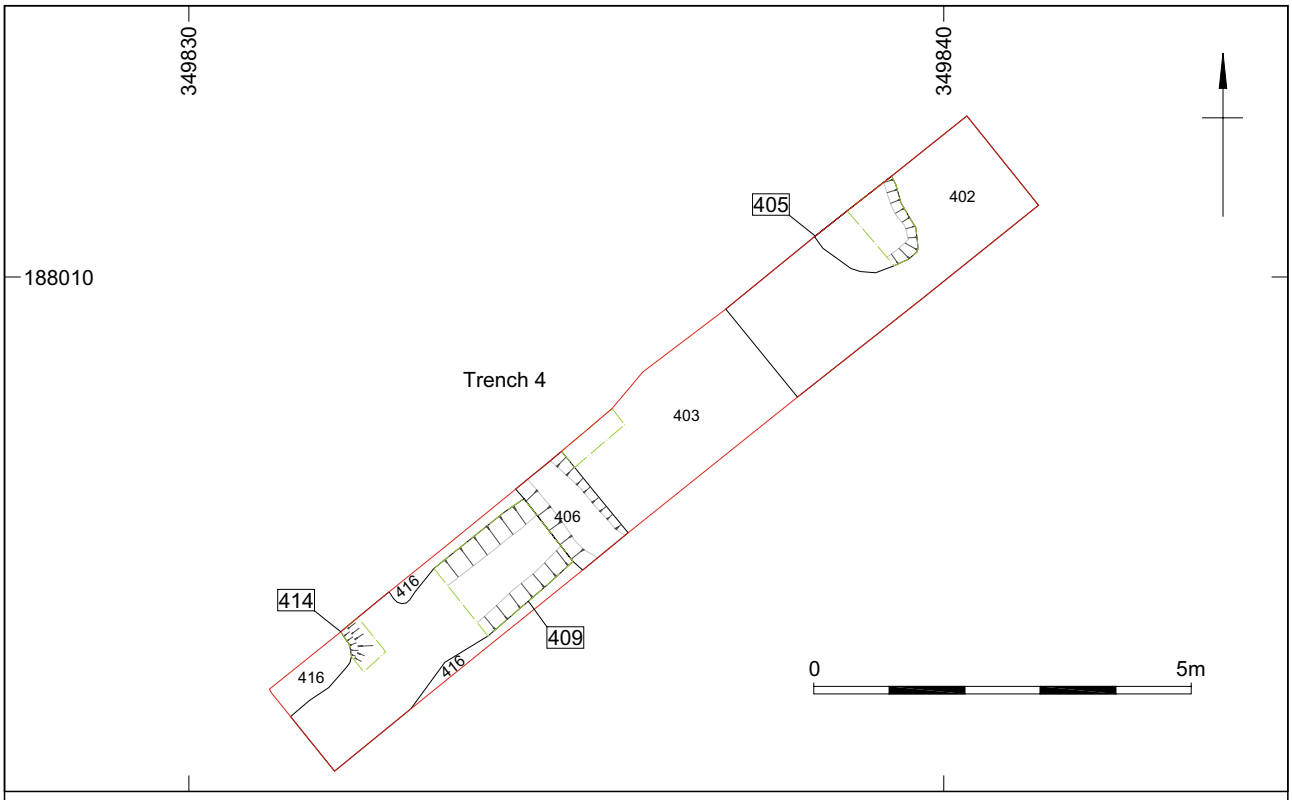

Trench 4 from the south west

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North facing section showing edge of palaeochannel

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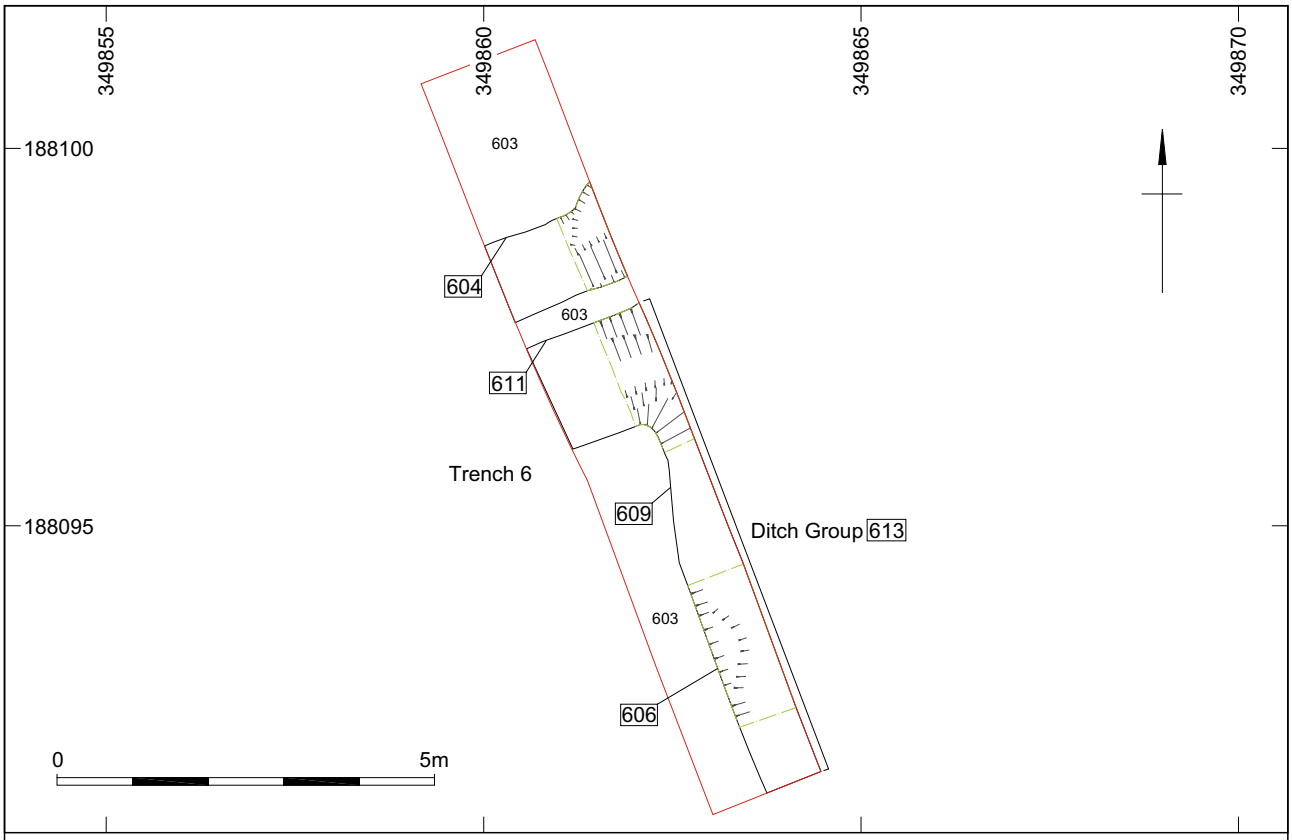

Trench 6 from the south

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