

Back Lane, Middlezoy, Somerset:

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

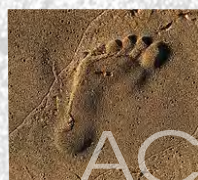
NGR ST 37744 32824

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AC archaeology

BACK LANE, MIDDLEZOY, SOMERSET: RESULTS OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRENCH EVALUATION (NGR ST 37744 32824)

SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation, consisting of seven machine-excavated trenches, was undertaken by AC archaeology Ltd on land at Back Lane, Middlezoy, Somerset (NGR ST 37744 32824), during April 2019. The work was undertaken as part of a programme of archaeological works required in support of a planning application for a residential development. Four phases of archaeological activity was revealed on the site, including an undated phase. The main archaeological component revealed was represented by part of a former substantial enclosure ditch of Late Bronze Age date and revealed in three of the trenches. Later activity comprised part of a possible Romano-British field system and several possible quarry pits of medieval date and containing pottery of 12th to 15th century. A former trackway was also present, but of uncertain origin.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This document sets out the results of an archaeological trench evaluation on land at Back Lane, Middlezoy, Somerset (NGR ST 37744, 32824). It has been prepared by AC archaeology Ltd on behalf of Sedgemoor District Council. The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.
- 1.2** The trench evaluation was undertaken to supplement the results of a previous geophysical survey and in accordance with a Project Design (Cox 2019) approved by the Senior Historic Environment Officer (SHEO), Southwest Heritage Trust, advisors to the local planning authority. The investigations were required to identify the significance of any heritage assets on the site that may be affected by development.
- 1.3** The proposed application area covers two fields, although only the northern field is proposed for development. This field is situated on the southeast side of Middlezoy and lies at around c. 9m OD on generally level ground. It is currently pasture in the area of the proposed development, while the remainder of the field to the east has recently been ploughed. The application area is bounded by hedgerows on all but its eastern side, which comprises the south-west edge of the ploughed area of the field. The underlying solid geology comprises Mercia Mudstone (BGS); sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 200 to 225 million years ago in the Triassic Period.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Although there are no recorded assets within the boundaries of the proposed development, the Somerset Historic Environment Record (SHER) lists several sites in the area, the nearest represented by a series of cropmarks (SHER 11911), situated immediately northeast of the application area and include what has been interpreted as part of a former enclosure which may extend further to the south-west into the proposed development area.

2.2 The site has been subject to a geophysical survey in February 2019, which identified anomalies considered to be of archaeological origin. This included at least one enclosure, along with agricultural features, pits and a possible drove way. These features are shown on Fig. 1.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 The trench evaluation was undertaken to determine, as far as reasonably possible, the location, extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present on the site, as dictated by current best practice.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The trench evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the Project Design.

4.2 The investigations comprised the machine-excavation of seven trenches, totalling 100m in length, each 1.8m wide. All site levels quoted relate to ordnance datum.

4.3 All soil removal was undertaken under the control and direction of the Site Archaeologist. Topsoil was removed by tracked mechanical excavator, using a wide toothless bucket, and stored alongside each trench, separated from any subsoil as necessary. Stripping by mechanical excavator ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural subsoil was exposed.

4.4 All trenches were recorded using trench records forms; 'positive' trenches were recorded using the full range of the standard AC archaeology *pro forma* recording system.

4.5 The archive has been prepared using the site code ACW1180 and is currently stored at the offices of AC archaeology (Wiltshire).

5. RESULTS

Introduction

5.1 A total of seven trenches was excavated across the site, all of which were positioned to target anomalies revealed on the geophysical survey. Each of the trenches revealed archaeological features or deposits, most of which correlated with the geophysical survey results. A subsoil horizon, varying in depth, thickest in Trench 1, was present in all trenches across the site. The nature of this soil horizon is unclear but may be alluvial in origin. The natural substrata varied in composition across the site from clay to a light sand or greensand, with some trenches containing 'pockets' of clay containing abundant shell fragments (Burtle Beds). Where archaeological deposits were present on the site, the subsoil horizon appears to have been cut through by them, although this was unclear in some of the trenches; due to the similarity in composition with the fills of features and the subsoil. All trenches containing archaeological deposits are described in text below.

Trench 1 (plan Fig. 2a; section Fig.2b; Plate 1)

- 5.2** This trench was 10m in length aligned approximately north-east to south-west and was positioned on level ground. A maximum depth of 0.7m was excavated through topsoil and subsoil before archaeological deposits were revealed. The recorded layer sequence for this trench is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Trench 1 depositional sequence

Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation
100	0 – 400mm max	Dark brown sandy clay loam.	Topsoil/grass.
101	400 - 700mm	Dark reddish-brown sandy clay containing sparse small gravels / pebbles. Very diffuse with overlying topsoil horizon.	Subsoil horizon – alluvial in nature?
109	700mm +	Stiff reddish-brown clay.	Natural sub-strata.

Feature F102

- 5.3** This feature represents several elements of a former trackway and associated flanking ditches. It was aligned north-west to south-east and present at a depth of 0.6m below the ground surface and sealed by layer (101). It comprised a stone surface (107), composed of a single layer of small rounded or angular pebbles and gravels, spanning a width of 2.9m, and with a gentle camber, and flanked by two parallel ditches. An underlying layer (108), 0.2m thick and composed of dark brown sandy clay containing small pebbles and gravels may represent a consolidation horizon for surface (107). Both flanking ditches F104 and F106 had similar dimensions and profiles, each with a width of between 0.6m and 0.8m and comprising steep sloping sides and a concave base at a maximum depth of 0.6m. Both ditches contained the same fill composition comprising very dark grey-brown sandy clay containing common charcoal flecks and small pebbles and gravels (103) / (105). No dating evidence was recovered from either ditches or track surface, although the depth below the ground surface and its presence below a well-established soil horizon may suggest it is of some age.

Trench 2 (plan Fig.2c; section Fig. 2d; Plate 2)

- 5.4** This trench was 20m in length and aligned approximately north-east to south-west and was positioned on level ground. A maximum depth of 0.5m was excavated through topsoil and subsoil before a single archaeological feature was revealed. The recorded layer sequence for this trench is summarised in Table 2.

Feature F203

- 5.5** This linear feature represents part of a former ditch, aligned on a north-west to south-east axis and was also revealed in Trench 3 (F319). Where exposed it had dimensions in plan of 1.8m in length and a width of 2.5m, with excavation revealing a steep sloping profile and broad flat base at a depth of 0.9m. It contained two fills comprising primary fill (202); composed of dark brown sandy clay containing sparse charcoal flecks, small greensand fragments and gravel

inclusions and an upper fill (201), composed of dark reddish-brown sandy clay containing small greensand pieces and gravels. Two sherds of Late Iron Age/Romano-British pottery were recovered from fill (202). This feature appears to represent part of a former field boundary ditch, although is interpreted as part of a former enclosure on the geophysical survey results.

Table 2: Trench 2 depositional sequence

Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation
200	0 – 300mm max	Dark brown sandy clay loam.	Topsoil/grass.
204	300 - 500mm	Dark reddish-brown sandy clay containing sparse small gravels / pebbles.	Subsoil horizon – alluvial in nature?
205	500mm +	Stiff reddish-brown clay.	Natural sub-strata.

Trench 3 (plan Fig.2e; sections Figs. 2 f-h; Plates 3-5)

- 5.6** This trench was 20m in length and aligned approximately north-east to south-west. A maximum depth of 0.5m was excavated through topsoil and subsoil before several archaeological features were revealed. F319 was not investigated as this feature was a continuation of F203 and investigated in Trench 2. The recorded layer sequence for this trench is summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Trench 3 depositional sequence

Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation
300	0 – 300mm max	Dark brown sandy clay loam.	Topsoil/grass.
304	300 - 500mm	Dark reddish-brown sandy clay containing sparse small gravels / pebbles.	Subsoil horizon – alluvial in nature?
305	500mm +	Varies from yellow / yellow-brown sand with gravels to a stiff reddish-brown clay. A shelly deposit was also present but only observed at the lower extent of some of the features excavated.	Natural sub-strata.

Feature F302

- 5.7** This feature appears to represent a former pit, only partly exposed within the trench and sub-circular in plan and with a maximum diameter present of 1m. Excavation revealed a moderate to gentle sloping profile and flat base at depth of 0.65m. It contained a single fill (301), composed of dark grey-brown sandy clay containing sparse charcoal flecks, greensand pieces and gravels, along with two sherds of medieval pottery. This feature possibly represents a former extraction pit and appears to be associated with adjacent feature F304.

Feature F304

- 5.8** This feature appears to represent a former pit, only partly exposed within the trench and sub-rectangular in plan and with dimensions present of 3 x 1.5m. Excavation revealed a steep or

vertical profile and undulating base at a maximum depth of 1.1m. It contained a single fill (303), appearing to represent a single episode of infilling and composed of dark grey-brown sandy clay, containing thick lenses of sand and occasional greensand pieces, charcoal flecks and gravels. This feature possibly represents a former extraction pit and appears to be associated with adjacent feature F302. A small quantity of artefacts, including eight sherds of medieval pottery and a piece of iron slag, was recovered from the fill.

Feature F306

- 5.9** This linear feature was aligned on a north-east to south-west axis with dimensions in plan of 1.8m in length and a width of 3m, with excavation revealing a steep sloping profile and slightly concave base at a depth of 2m. It contained a sequence of fills composed of an upper fill of dark reddish-brown sandy clay containing occasional charcoal flecks and greensand pieces; this sealed a dark reddish-brown sandy clay containing occasional greensand pieces (312). In-turn this sealed a thin yellow-brown clayey sand, containing sparse small greensand pieces and gravels (313); a mid-dark brown sandy clay (310) containing sparse small greensand pieces, charcoal flecks and gravels; a thin yellow-brown clayey sand containing sparse small greensand pieces and gravels (tertiary fill 309 – was only present on the north-west facing edge of this ditch feature); The secondary fill (308) was a mid-dark brown clayey sand containing sparse charcoal flecks and moderate greensand pieces and gravels that sealed the primary fill (307), composed of mid-grey silty sand containing abundant small shell fragments and sparse gravels. Some of these fills may derive from a former slumped-in adjacent bank. A single sherd of Neolithic pottery and small quantity of animal bone was recovered from fill (312). This feature represents part of the northern extent of a former enclosure ditch revealed on the geophysical survey results.

Feature F314

- 5.10** This linear feature was aligned on a north-east to south-west axis with dimensions in plan of 1.8m in length and a width of 2.5m, its excavation revealed a steep to moderately sloping profile and flat base at a depth of 0.9m. It contained a sequence of fills composed of slightly mixed gravelly sandy clay containing abundant small shell and greensand fragments (primary fill 315); dark brown sandy clay containing occasional greensand pieces and shell fragments (secondary fill 316); mid-dark brown sandy clay containing moderate greensand pieces and sparse charcoal flecks and gravels (tertiary fill 317) and upper fill (318) composed of dark reddish-brown sandy clay containing occasional charcoal flecks and greensand pieces. Two sherds of Romano-British pottery and a small quantity of animal bone was recovered from (317). This feature appears to represent part of a former field boundary ditch, although it is interpreted as part of a former enclosure on the geophysical survey results.

Feature F319

- 5.11** This linear feature represents part of a former ditch, aligned on a north-west to south-east axis and was also recorded within Trench 2. Where exposed in plan, it had dimensions of 1.8m in length and a width of 1.9m and filled with dark reddish-brown sandy clay containing small greensand pieces and gravels. This feature appears to represent part of a former field boundary ditch, although is interpreted as part of a former enclosure on the geophysical survey results.

Trench 4 (plan Fig.3a; section Fig. 3b; Plate 6)

- 5.12 This trench was 10m in length and aligned approximately east to west. A maximum depth of 0.5m was excavated through topsoil and subsoil to reveal a single archaeological feature. The recorded layer sequence for this trench is summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Trench 4 depositional sequence

Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation
400	0 – 300mm max	Dark brown sandy clay loam.	Topsoil/grass.
401	300 - 500mm	Dark reddish-brown sandy clay containing sparse small gravels / pebbles.	Subsoil horizon – alluvial in nature?
402	500mm +	Yellow / yellow-brown sand and greensand with 'pockets' of reddish-brown clay containing abundant small shell fragments.	Natural sub-strata.

Feature F403

- 5.13 This feature appears to represent a former pit, only partly exposed within the trench and sub-linear in plan and with plan dimensions present of 1.6 x 1m. Excavation revealed a moderate to gentle sloping profile and undulating base with a maximum depth of 0.5m. It contained a single fill (404), composed of dark reddish-brown sandy clay containing moderate greensand pieces and gravels. This feature may be associated with feature F503 in Trench 5. It appears as part of a short sub-linear feature on the geophysical survey results. No dating evidence was recovered.

Trench 5 (plan Fig.3c; section Fig. 3d; Plate 7)

- 5.14 This trench was 10m in length and aligned approximately east to west and was positioned on level ground. A maximum depth of 0.5m was excavated through topsoil and subsoil before a single archaeological feature was revealed. The recorded layer sequence for this trench is summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Trench 5 depositional sequence

Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation
500	0 – 300mm max	Dark brown sandy clay loam.	Topsoil/grass.
501	300 - 500mm	Dark reddish-brown sandy clay containing sparse small gravels / pebbles.	Subsoil horizon – alluvial in nature?
502	500mm +	Yellow / yellow-brown sand and greensand with 'pockets' of reddish-brown clay containing abundant small shell fragments.,	Natural sub-strata.

Feature F503

5.15 This feature appears to represent a former pit, only partly exposed within the trench and sub-linear in plan and with dimensions present of 1.8 x 1m. Excavation revealed a steep sloping profile and flattish base with a maximum depth of 1.25m. It contained four fills composed of dark reddish-brown sandy clay containing moderate greensand pieces, gravels and sparse charcoal flecks (upper fill 504); reddish-brown sandy clay containing sparse greensand pieces and gravels (tertiary fill 505); reddish-brown sandy clay containing moderate greensand pieces and gravels (secondary fill 506) and a primary fill composed of red sandy clay containing moderate greensand pieces and gravels. This feature possibly represents a former extraction pit and may be associated with feature F403 in Trench 4. It appears as part of a short sub-linear feature on the geophysical survey results. Two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from fill (504).

Trench 6 (plan Fig.3e; section Figs. 3f; Plates 8 and 9)

5.16 This trench was 20m in length and aligned approximately east to west and was positioned on generally level ground. A maximum depth of 0.7m was excavated through topsoil and subsoil to reveal two archaeological features. The recorded layer sequence for this trench is summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: Trench 6 depositional sequence

Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation
600	0 – 300mm max	Dark brown sandy clay loam.	Topsoil/grass.
601	300 - 500mm	Dark reddish-brown sandy clay containing sparse small gravels / pebbles.	Subsoil horizon – alluvial in nature?
602	500mm +	Varies from yellow / yellow-brown sand with gravels to a stiff reddish-brown clay.	Natural sub-strata.

Feature F603

5.17 This linear feature was aligned on an approximate north-east to south-west axis with dimensions in plan of 1.8m in length and a width of 1.2m, with excavation revealing a steep sloping profile and flat base at a depth of 0.75m. It contained a sequence of fills composed of dark reddish-brown sandy clay containing occasional charcoal flecks and greensand pieces (upper fill 605); light brown sandy clay containing moderate greensand pieces and sparse charcoal flecks (tertiary fill 607); reddish-brown sandy clay containing moderate greensand pieces and gravels (secondary fill 606 - only present on east facing edge of feature) and primary fill (608), composed of light reddish-brown sandy clay containing sparse small greensand pieces. This feature represents part of a linear feature revealed on the geophysical survey results. No dating evidence was recovered.

Feature F604

5.18 This linear feature was aligned on an approximate north to south axis with dimensions in plan of 1.8m in length and a width of 3.2m, with excavation revealing a steep sloping profile and flat base at a depth of 1.9m. It contained a sequence of fills composed of reddish-brown sandy clay containing occasional charcoal flecks and greensand pieces (uppermost fill 609); dark reddish-brown sandy clay containing occasional greensand pieces and sparse charcoal flecks (upper fill 610); reddish-brown sandy clay containing sparse small greensand pieces and gravels (upper fill 611); mid-dark brown clayey sand containing sparse charcoal flecks and moderate greensand pieces and gravels (lower fill 612); dark reddish-brown sandy clay containing occasional greensand pieces and sparse charcoal flecks (lower fill 613); yellow-brown clayey sand containing sparse small greensand pieces and gravels (tertiary fill 614 - only present on east facing edge of feature); yellow-brown clayey sand containing sparse small greensand pieces and gravels (tertiary fill 615 - only present on west facing edge of feature); light reddish-brown sandy clay containing sparse small gravels (tertiary fill 616 - only present on east facing edge of feature) and primary fill (617), composed of light brown silty sand containing abundant small shell fragments, sparse small gravels and greensand. Some of these fills may derive from a former adjacent bank. A small quantity of Late Bronze Age pottery along with a small quantity animal bone was recovered from fills (611) & (613). This feature represents part of the western extent of a former enclosure ditch revealed on the geophysical survey results.

Trench 7 (plan Fig.3g; section Fig. 3h; Plate 10)

5.19 This trench was 10m in length and aligned approximately north to south. A maximum depth of 0.6m was excavated through topsoil and subsoil before to reveal a single archaeological feature. The recorded layer sequence for this trench is summarised in Table 7.

Table 7: Trench 7 depositional sequence

Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation
700	0 – 300mm max	Dark brown sandy clay loam.	Topsoil/grass.
701	300 - 600mm	Dark reddish-brown sandy clay containing sparse small gravels / pebbles.	Subsoil horizon – alluvial in nature?
702	600mm +	Yellow / yellow-brown sand and greensand brash with 'pockets' of reddish-brown clay containing abundant small shell fragments.	Natural sub-strata.

Feature F708

5.20 This linear feature was aligned on an approximate north-east to south-west axis with dimensions in plan of 1.8m in length and a maximum width of 3.5m, with excavation revealing a steep sloping profile and concave base at a depth of 2.0m. It contained a sequence of fills composed of reddish-brown sandy clay containing occasional charcoal flecks and greensand pieces (uppermost fill 703); mid-dark brown sandy clay containing occasional greensand

pieces (upper fill 704); mid-brown sandy clay containing sparse small greensand pieces and gravels (upper fill 705); slightly mixed yellowish-brown clayey sand containing moderate greensand pieces and gravels (upper fill 713 - only present on south-east facing edge of feature); yellowish-brown clayey sand containing occasional greensand pieces (lower fill 706); yellowish-brown clayey sand containing sparse small greensand pieces and gravels (lower fill 707- only present on north-west facing edge of feature); mid-dark brown sandy clay containing sparse small greensand pieces and gravels (lower fill 712); yellowish-brown sandy clay containing sparse small gravels (tertiary fill 711- only present on north-west facing edge of feature); mid-dark yellowish-brown sandy clay containing moderate small gravels (secondary fill 709) and primary fill (710), composed of mid-light brown sandy clay containing abundant small shell fragments and sparse small gravels. Some of these fills may derive from a former slumped adjacent bank. A small quantity of Late Bronze Age pottery (706-7) and two sherds of possible Early Iron Age pottery (703), along with a quantity of animal bone, were recovered from various fills. This feature represents part of the south extent of a former enclosure ditch revealed on the geophysical survey results.

6. FINDS

Summary

- 6.1 A small assemblage of finds was recovered from the evaluation, included Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery, and some limited amounts of Romano-British and medieval pottery sherds. Animal bone, flint and slag were also present. Finds totals by material type are presented in Table 8 (see specialist reports for pottery quantifications).

Table 8: Quantification of finds

Context	Animal Bone		Fired Clay		Flint		Slag		Total No.	Total Wt (g)
	No.	Wt (g)	No.	Wt (g)	No.	Wt (g)	No.	Wt (g)		
202	2	80	1	20					3	100
303					1	3	1	80	2	83
310	4	129							4	129
312	4	63			1	5			5	68
317	3	50							3	50
611	3	45							3	45
613	16	488							16	488
703	8	13							8	13
704	2	88							2	88
705	1	322							1	322
706	3	188			1	6			4	194
707	1	4							1	4
709	5	229							5	229
710	3	158							3	158
Total	55	1857	1	20	3	14	1	80	60	1971

Methodology

- 6.2** All finds from the site have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. Finds were quantified according to material type within each context and the assemblage was then scanned by context to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented.

Prehistoric and Romano-British pottery (by Imogen Wood)

- 6.3** The pottery assemblage comprises 44 sherds weighing 1168g. The dates of which range from the Neolithic/Middle Neolithic (2/21g), Bronze Age (5/263g) Late Bronze Age (35/845g), Early Iron Age (1/6g), Late Iron Age/Romano-British (1/17g), to the Romano-British (2/16g) period. The condition of the pottery is generally good with relatively low abrasion. Most of the assemblage is Late Bronze Age Plain ware (contexts 703, 706 and 707) as distinguished by the characteristic wiping marks and in both Grog and Malvern rock tempers. The remainder of the Bronze Age pottery are in Grog and Malvern Rock tempers. There is one Middle Neolithic sherd (context 705) with decoration typical of the Fengate style, the second undecorated Neolithic sherd (context 312) is tempered with crushed vein Quartz with a broad Neolithic date. The Romano-British sherds (context 317) include two Black Burnished ware type with characteristic Poole Harbour fabric and burnished exterior. The second sherd (context 202) in a Malvern rock Fabric is typical of this region for the Late Iron Age/Romano-British period. The one possible Early Iron Age sherd is grey reduced in a fine silty fabric (context 703). This assemblage is typical of the region and demonstrates a broad period of occupation in this area.

Medieval pottery (by D. Carter)

- 6.4** This small assemblage was recovered from Trenches 3 and 5 and from features possibly representing quarry pits (F302, F304 and F504). The average sherd weight is 4g, some with very little abrasion apparent on any of the surfaces, suggesting they are in their primary depositional location. Two sherds weighing 4g were recovered from fill (301), eight sherds, weighing 56 grams, recovered from fill (303) and two sherds weighing 12g from fill (504). All of the sherds are unglazed body fragments, with the exception of one rim, in a coarse Upper Greensand derived fabric, commonly referred to as UGSD and two sherds representing South Somerset glazed redwares. The source for fabric UGSD is unconfirmed, however the Blackdown Hills area of South Somerset has been considered likely (Allan et al. 2010, 166). The rim sherd is from a probable jar or cooking pot and displays a pair of incised lines on its interior. This rim type may be paralleled with an example identified as no.844 from excavations undertaken at Ilchester (Leach 1982, Fig.89), which is dated to the late 12th / 13th century. This is in contrast to the two sherds recovered from Trench 5, which are heavily abraded and is likely these sherds are residual. Both are body sherds with signs of having been manufactured on the wheel. While these cannot be securely identified to a particular vessel form, they are considered to be of 13th to 15th century date. A spattered clear lead glaze is visible on both sherds. A date range of 12th to 15th century is considered likely for this assemblage.

Table 9: Summary of prehistoric and Romano-British ceramics

Context	No.	Wt (g)	Abrasion	Fabric group	Notes	Date
202	1	17	2	Malvern	Reduced coarse body sherd	Late Iron Age/ Romano-British
312	1	7	3	Crushed Quartz Temper	Body sherd	Neolithic
317	2	16	2	Poole harbour	Black Burnished ware type, burnished exterior surface and wiping marks visible	Romano-British
612	2	203	2	Grog Temper	Base sherd co-joining	Bronze Age
612	1	34	3	Malvern	Body sherd coarse ware	Bronze age
703	13	214	2	Malvern	Coarse ware sherds, plain upright rim and basal angle, body sherds	Late Bronze Age
703	1	6	3	fine silty	Grey reduced fine fabric	Possible Early Iron Age
704	2	26	2	Grog tempered	Basal sherds	Bronze Age
705	1	14	1	Silty fabric	Rim upper body sherd, with incised triangle and horizontal lines and majority of exterior surface covered in circular impressed dot decoration . Consistent with middle Neolithic Fengate style ware.	Middle Neolithic
706	7	95	2	Silty Grog tempered	Upright rim form, large coarse ware vessel. Body sherds. Oxidised.	Late Bronze age
706	1	11	3	Silty Grog tempered	Grey reduced body sherd, has been burnt post firing so no longer typical oxidised colour	Late Bronze Age
707	14	525	1	Silty Grog tempered	Lower body and one base sherd. Oxidised. Large coarse ware storage jar. Distinctive wiping marks visible	Late Bronze Age
TOTAL	44	1168				

Animal Bone (by Royston Clark)

- 6.5** A total of 55 animal bones weighing 1857g was recovered from the site, mainly from the enclosure ditch segments excavated in Trenches 3, 6 and 7. Considering much of the animal bone is of Bronze Age date, it is in very good condition, with a significant quantity of relatively unfragmented pieces. A total of 31 fragments (c.56% of the assemblage) were identifiable to animal species and bone type, with 21 fragments belonging to cattle, eight to sheep/goat and a single dog bone (a humerus from a relatively large dog). A possible small mammal bone was also recovered. The remaining unidentifiable material comprised mainly of probable cattle-sized long bone fragments.
- 6.6** With regard to the identifiable cattle bone, evidence from a mandible and teeth suggest that, in some cases, relatively young animals were killed, as well as more mature animals being present within the assemblage. Apart from the mandible fragments, (one of which was 100% complete), the cattle bones were largely legbones including scapula, humerus, radius, tibia and metapodials
- 6.7** Evidence for cattle butchery was noted. A distal fragment of a humerus had a chop-mark across its articular surface. A proximal radius and an astragalus also displayed possible evidence for dismemberment. Some of the smaller, cattle sized unidentifiable bone fragments may also have been caused by butchery activity. A cattle metapodial had clear gnaw-marks attributed to a dog. A cattle vertebrae fragment had undergone mineralisation of the bone structure, a relatively rare occurrence in archaeological animal bone assemblages. Apart from a relatively young mandible, in terms of tooth eruption, most of the sheep/goat bone belonged

to mature animals, suggesting that these animals were kept principally for their wool, and possibly for milk.

- 6.8** Most of the bone material was derived from contexts associated with an enclosure ditch of Bronze Age date. This small assemblage of animal bone has the potential to help interpret the overall function of the enclosure and any associated features if further excavation is ever undertaken on the site. It may, for example, be possible to determine with confidence whether the site was used for domestic, or for some form of ceremonial function (e.g. Allen et al 1995). The overall quality of the bone means there is potential to determine clear evidence for age at death, sex, as well as details regarding butchery and other post-depositional processes

Flint

- 6.9** Three pieces of worked flint, all fresh in appearance, and weighing 14g was recovered from the evaluation. One of these pieces is residual in nature and recovered from medieval context (303), with the remaining two pieces recovered from Bronze Age enclosure ditch contexts (312) and (706). All three pieces show evidence of retouching, with one snapped or broken piece, possibly from a tool such as a scraper.

Slag

- 6.10** A single piece of iron tap slag weighing 80g was recovered from medieval context pit F304.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1** The trench evaluation has established that the site contains a moderately deep soil profiles across the northern extent of the area, up to 0.7m in depth and becoming shallower across the remainder of the site. This comprised a topsoil, generally 300mm thick, overlying a subsoil horizon of uncertain, but possibly alluvial origin. This in turn sealed archaeological deposits in the northern extent of the site but appears to have been truncated elsewhere by other archaeological activity on the site, although this was unclear in places. Of note, the geophysical survey results in the northern extent of the site indicate a broad band of material, possibly accumulated while this area served as a drove or access road. This could explain the depth of soils, notably in Trench 1.
- 7.2** Archaeological deposits were present in all seven trenches excavated and represented by three phases of activity, including an undated phase. The most substantial component on the site was represented by a former enclosure ditch of Later Bronze Age date and revealed in Trenches 3, 6 and 7. This feature contained residual Neolithic pottery and was recorded on the geophysical survey results as part of an enclosure with a possible entrance in its southwest corner. The eastern extent of this feature is clearly visible on aerial photographs taken in 1990 (SHER 11911) and shows as continuous, giving the full dimensions in plan of this enclosure, including, where revealed in the trench evaluation, as approximately 3600m². Other features of either later prehistoric or Romano-British date comprised a further two ditches revealed in Trenches 2 and 3, interpreted as part of another enclosure on the geophysical results, but on excavation appears more likely to represent associated field boundaries (F203 & F314). The

projected alignment of one of these ditches F314, also appears to be present on the 1990 aerial photograph and would also suggest it represents part of a former boundary rather than part of an enclosure. A small quantity of pottery and animal bone was recovered, mostly from the enclosure ditch segments.

- 7.3** The evaluation has also identified evidence for medieval activity on the site, possibly representing quarrying, although the nature of the material extracted, if at all, is undetermined. This activity is represented by a number of large pits revealed in Trenches 3, 4 & 5, three of which contained a small quantity of 12th to 15th century pottery, F302, F304 and F503. A single piece of iron slag was also recovered from F304. Although pit F403 revealed in Trench 4, contained no dating evidence, the nature of this feature and proximity to similar features (large pits) may be attributed to the medieval phase of activity on the site.
- 7.4** An undated phase of activity on the site is represented by part of a track or drove way with associated flanking ditches and revealed in Trench 1 in the northernmost extent of the site. Although the origin of this feature is unclear, as no dating evidence was present, its depth below the ground surface and sealed by a well-established soil horizon could suggest a relatively early origin. Given the projected alignment of this feature to the south it would be expected to be present in Trench 2. This, however, is not the case, perhaps indicating that the trackway either terminates between the two trenches or possibly turns to the south-west or north-east. No evidence to support this was revealed on the geophysical survey. The remaining undated feature, and recorded on the geophysical survey results, comprises a former possible boundary ditch revealed in Trench 6 (F603).

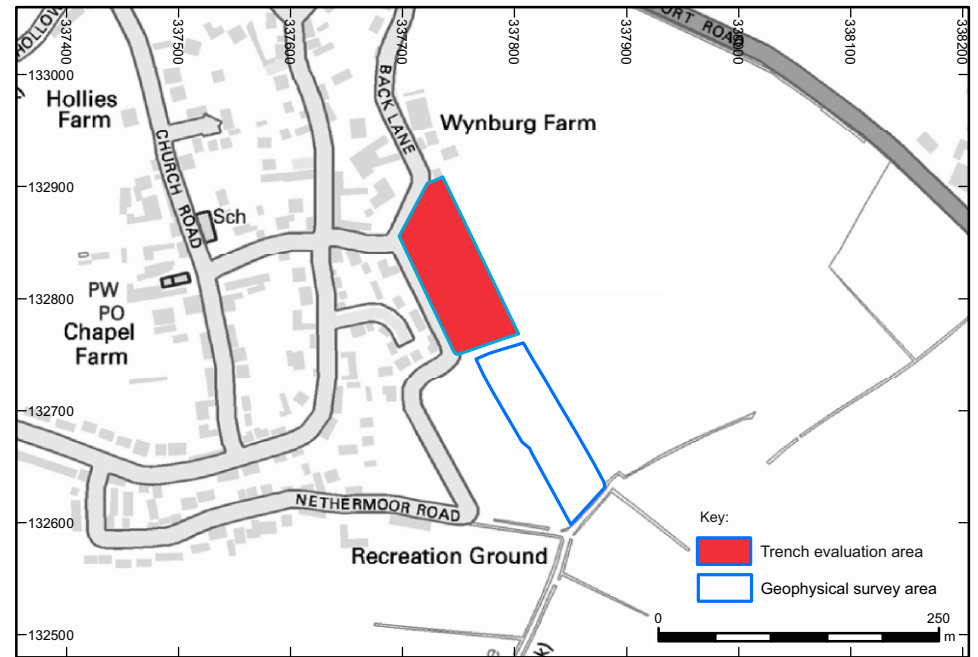
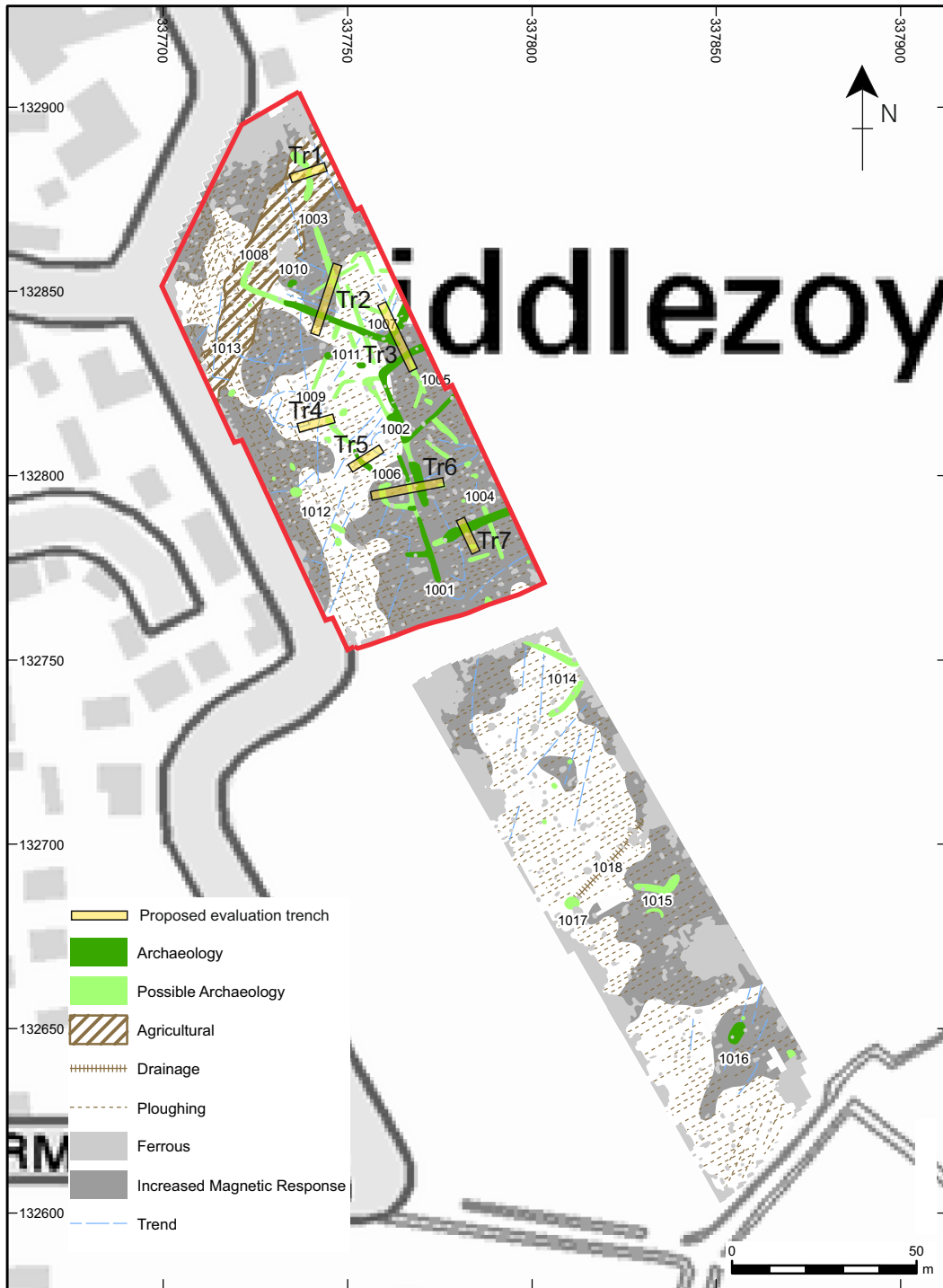
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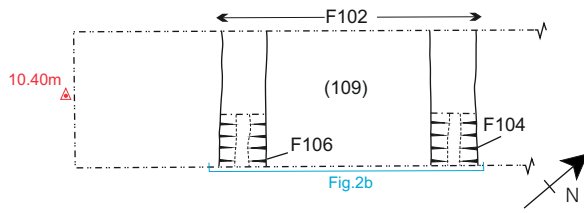
Leach, P., 1982. *Ilchester: Volume 1 Excavations 1974-1975*. Western Archaeological Trust Monograph No. 3: Bristol



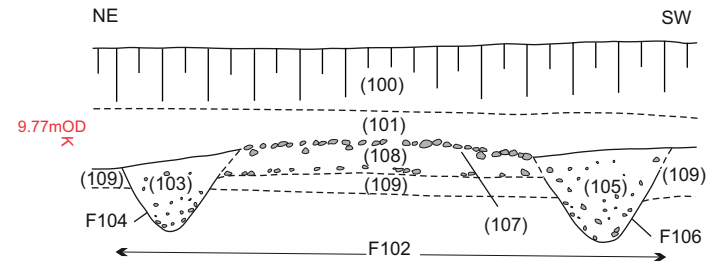
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Trench 1

a) Plan

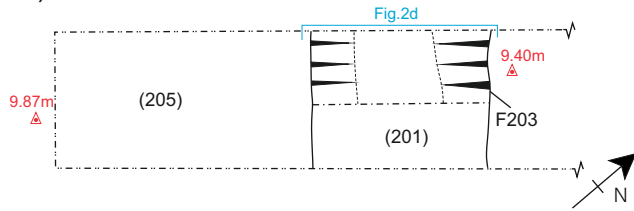


b) Track F102

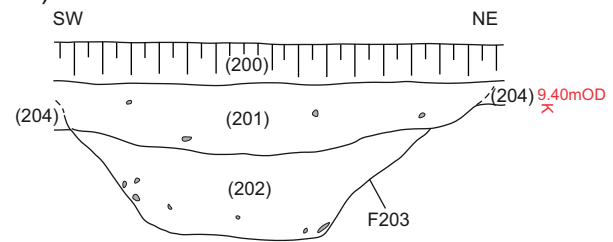


Trench 2

c) Plan

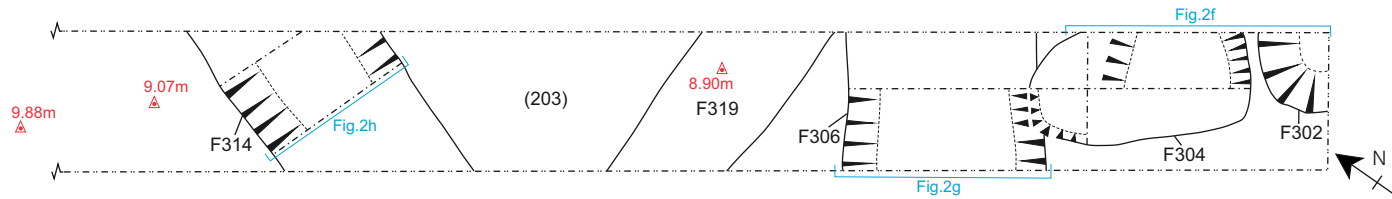


d) F203

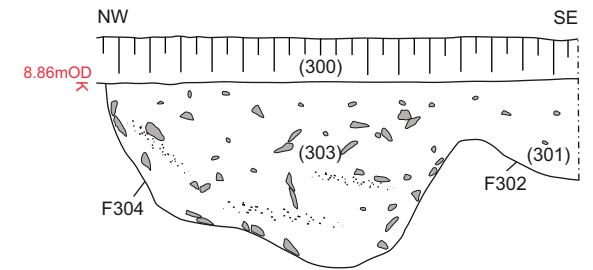


Trench 3

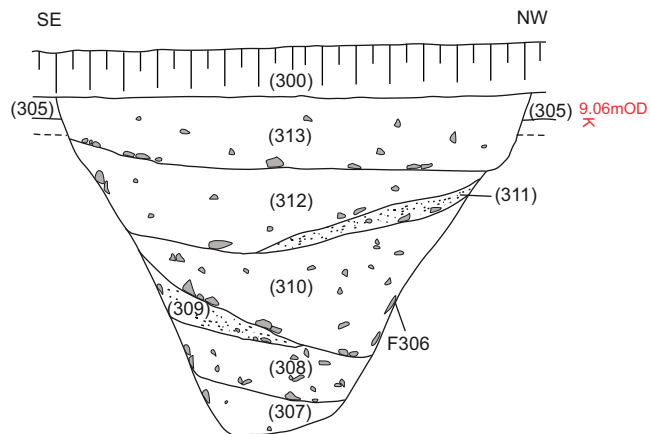
e) Plan



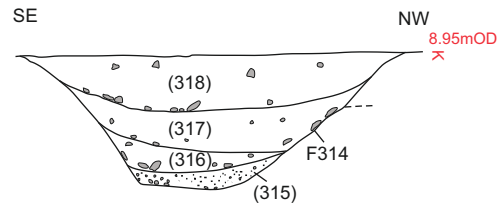
f) F302 and F304



g) F306

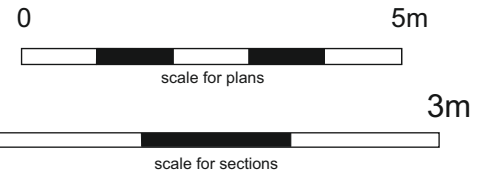



h) F315



Key:

-  Sand stone
-  Sand
-  Charcoal



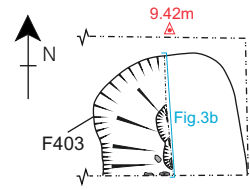
 AC archaeology

PROJECT
Back Lane, Middlezoy, Somerset

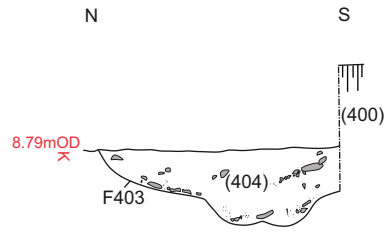
TITLE
Fig. 2: Plan and section drawings

Trench 4

a) Plan

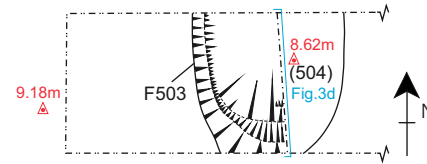


b) F403

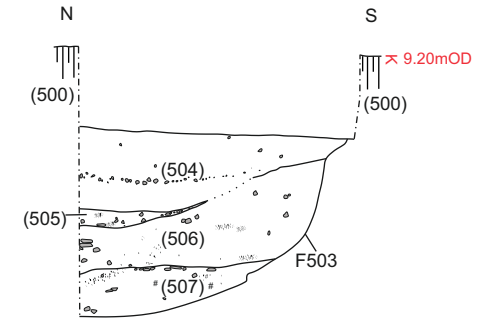


Trench 5

c) Plan

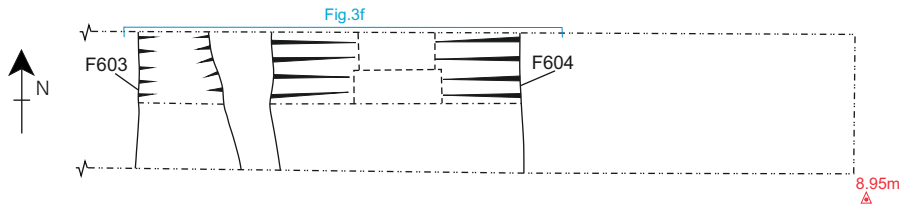


d) F503

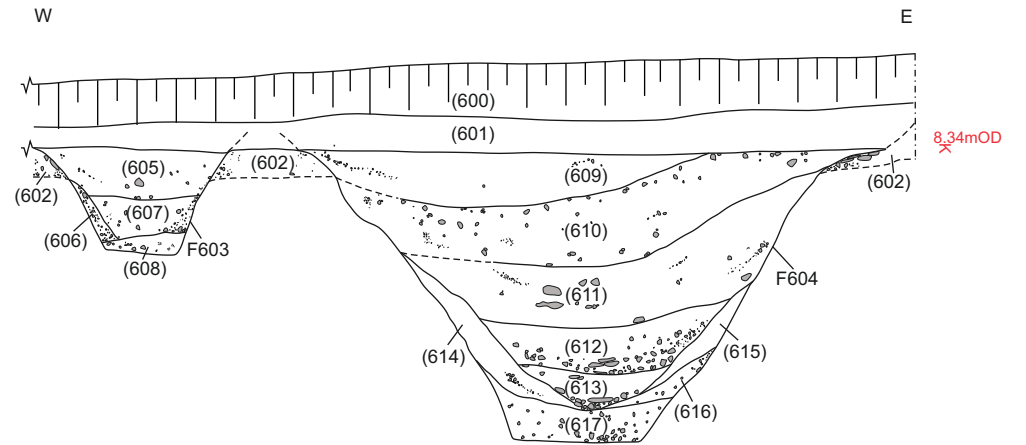


Trench 6

e) Plan

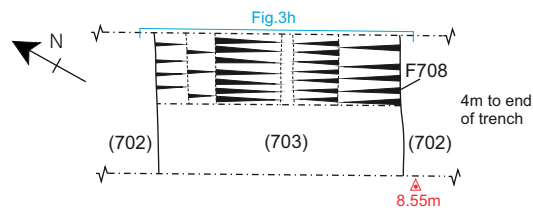


f) F603 and F604

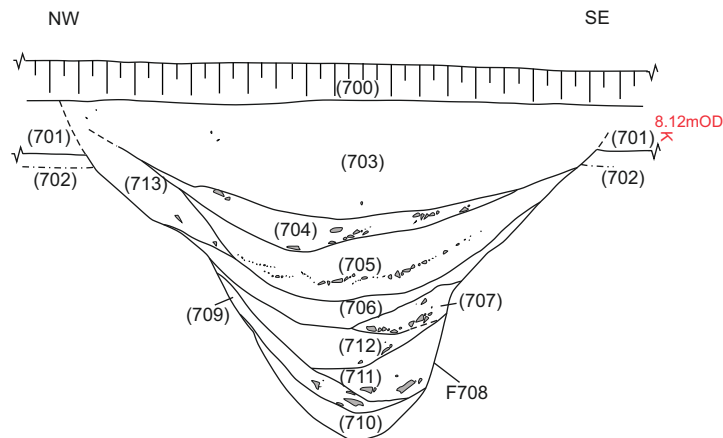


Trench 7

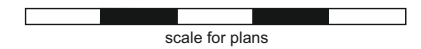
g) plan



h) F708

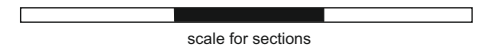


0 5m



scale for plans

0 3m



scale for sections



PROJECT

Back Lane, Middlezoy, Somerset

TITLE

Fig. 3: Plan and section drawings



Plate 1: Trackway F102, viewed from the north (scale 2m)



Plate 2: Ditch F203, viewed from the south-east (scale 1m)



Plate 3: Pits F302 and F304, viewed from the north-west (scale 2m)



Plate 4: Ditch F306, viewed from the north (scale 2m)



Plate 5: Ditch F314, viewed from the north-east (scale 2m)



Plate 6: Pit F403, viewed from the west (scale 1m)



Plate 7: Pit F503, viewed from the south-west (scale 1m)



Plate 8: Ditch F604, viewed from the south-west (scale 2m)



Plate 9: Pit F603, viewed from the south (scale 0.5m)



Plate 10: Ditch F708, viewed from the south-west (scale 2m)

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